

“Reducing the isolation and anonymity around us – this is just one of the very important roles of voluntary activities and co-operation. And this is even more important right now, as the economic situation of many of our fellow citizens is difficult,” said President Toomas Hendrik Ilves, at an event in Tallinn Teachers’ House to recognise the contribution of volunteers.

“Today, when unemployment is our biggest concern, people need help and support. And sometimes this can mean simple communication and action instead of being left alone. This is exactly what the volunteers and their organisations offer,” said the head of state, who awarded the Volunteer of the Year 2009 Letters of Merit to 17 people.

President Ilves admitted that when people do not know their neighbours, lose their friends amongst the turmoil of everyday business, and their next of kin are living far away, they are in the danger of being left alone with their problems, struggling under the burden of difficulties.

“But your activities, the activities of all the volunteers in Estonia, will help us to address neglect, indifference and disregard. Things that happen around us affect us all; we all need to take care of them together,” said the Head of State.

“Your activities confirm that the free will, good ideas, initiative, and persistence of people can help to make Estonia greater,” acknowledged the President of the Republic.

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