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President Toomas Hendrik Ilves, arriving in the United States of America for a working visit, last night handed over the Order of the Cross of Terra Mariana, Class IV, to the influential United States diplomat, Mr. Matthew J. Bryza, at the Estonian Embassy in Washington.

"This represents Estonia's acknowledgment and gratitude for the assistance you have offered to the co-operation between Estonia and the USA in promoting democracy and stability in Eastern and Southern Europe and in the Southern Caucasus region," said the Estonian Head of State. "This is the contribution of our two countries into making Europe a safer and more successful place."

President Ilves also highly regards the activities of Mr. Matthew J. Bryza in seeking solutions to Europe's energy security issues, increasing our energy-related independence and diversifying suppliers.

"For Europe, this is not just an issue of energy, but a part of our security," emphasised President Ilves.

The Estonian Head of State bestowed the decoration upon Mr. Matthew J. Bryza at the beginning of February, on the eve of this year's Independence Day.

Office of the President
Public Relations Department
Phone +372 631 6229