

“Võrumaa Masinaühistu (Võrumaa Machine Co-operative), which was established by farm owners in Võru County, is a place to be visited by all the Andreses and Pearus from Estonian villages to learn co-operative activities and to help our farmers to manage more rationally and prevail,” said the President, Mr. Toomas Hendrik Ilves, who visited Võrumaa Masinaühistu (Võrumaa Machine Co-operative) in Rõuge Parish this morning.

“I’m not encouraging anyone to turn back the clock, but I am reminding us, however, that there were approximately 600 machine co-operatives with over ten thousand members in Estonia before the last world war. And today, 70 years later, co-operatives are also offering Estonian farmers better opportunities for producing and marketing their produce,” the Head of State said.

Võrumaa Masinaühistu, which was established 14 years ago, brings together 62 farmers from Võrumaa and its main activities involve the sale of seed, feedingstuffs, fertilisers, crop protection chemicals, baling twine, drying grain cereals, and spare parts for electric fences, agricultural machinery, and trailers, as well as offering ploughing, land cultivation, hay seed sowing, hay mowing, hay and silage baling, and grain treatment services.

The activities of Võrumaa Masinaühistu were introduced to President Ilves by the Chairman of the Management Board, Mr. Mustmaa, board member, Mr. Ever Pindmaa, and manager, Mr. Jaak Kahro.

To highlight the beginning of Good Teacher Month, the Head of State also visited Võru 1st Basic School, where 39 teachers are currently teaching 312 students and where a Russian-speaking compound class has been established.

“Life itself has made integration quite natural and understandable here,” said President Ilves at Võru 1st Basic School, the director of which is Ms Helve Sibul. Võru Russian Basic School was recently merged with the school. “The warm, diverse environment that facilitates both learning and teaching between the school walls is highly perceptible and offers lots of security. I don’t doubt that students manage well with their lives after leaving this school.”

The Head of State acknowledged the school management’s work with both parents and

students before the schools were merged; this has mitigated most of the tension and created a pleasant atmosphere.

“Thanks to the work of good teachers, our younger generations will be wiser, better, more educated, and this will also echo throughout the whole of Estonia,” said President Ilves.

President Ilves met with senior citizens from Võru town and parish at the “Kannel” cultural centre and was told about their social activities on the international day of the elderly; he also met with the volunteers who are helping senior citizens to feel occupied and engaged in their everyday lives.

“Social activities and participation in civic activities allow senior citizens to remain alert and busy, as is evident from being here among you,” said the Head of State. “As long as people are healthy, they shouldn’t be left sulking in their rooms alone, as I know well, thanks to my own next of kin, that one can grow old with great dignity and maintain inner power.”

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