

The President, Mr. Toomas Hendrik Ilves, signed a resolution today to award state decorations to 99 people both in Estonia and abroad to celebrate Independence Day and to recognise their special service to the Republic of Estonia.

“On the eve of the 93rd anniversary of the Republic of Estonia, our state will bestow honorary decorations to thank and recognise people whose efforts have contributed to the promotion, maintenance and securing of Estonia’s independence,” wrote the Head of State in the introduction to his resolution.

“This the how the state of Estonia expresses its gratitude towards the people whose work and commitment in different spheres of life has made our country better and more caring, wiser and stronger,” President Ilves emphasised.

The Order of the National Coat of Arms, Class III, will be awarded to the current and former Ministers of Finance, Mr. Jürgen Ligi and Mr. Ivari Padar, who will be awarded with honorary decorations to recognise their large contribution to Estonia’s accession to the euro zone. For their work in helping Estonia to get ready to accede the euro zone, the Order of the Cross of Terra Mariana will be also awarded to the former Commissioner for Economy and Finance, Mr. Joaquin Almunia and the Commissioner for Enlargement, Mr. Olli Rehn.

The Order of the National Coat of Arms, Class IV, will be awarded to pedagogue and freedom fighter, Ms. Heli Susi, whose family supported the famous Russian writer and dissident, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, in writing the Gulag Archipelago, a book that shook the world, and to hide the manuscript. The Order of the National Coat of Arms will also be awarded to student rights campaigners, Mr. Heiti Tõnisson and Mr. Olev-Kõu Pärn.

The Order of the Cross of Terra Mariana will be awarded to an influential French philosopher, political scientist and essayist, Mr. André Glucksmann, who has discussed totalitarian regimes in detail; a long-term Lithuanian freedom fighter, Mr. Viktoras Petkus, who established the Estonian-Latvian-Lithuanian General Committee of National Movement, which set its goal on restoring independence in the Baltic states through peaceful means; a writer, Mr. Vadim Maxcheyev, who grew up in Estonia and was deported with his family to Russia, has dedicated his life to writing about people deported to Siberia and their descendants, and initiated the erection of a monument to the victims of mass repressions on the shores of River Vasyugan.

The Order of White Star is awarded to Mr. Vladimir-Georg Karassev-Orgusaar, a film maker, long-time journalist of Radio Free Europe and the initiator of the Fallen Freedom Fighter's Day.

Estonia thanks its Defence Force members who have fought bravely in the NATO-led operation in Afghanistan. The Order of the Cross of Eagle with Swords will be awarded to Staff Warrant Officer Andri Harkmann, who has served in the Defence Forces for approximately 20 years and was the Commander of Mine Clearance Security Team in Afghanistan; Warrant Officer Üllar Käggo, who has participated in five international missions and was raised to the position of a team commander, and Warrant Officer Karol Treial, who led his team through the most complicated situations in Afghanistan.

The state will use honorary decorations to acknowledge Ms Anu Raisma, who worked as a health care expert in the Lashkar Gah province, South-Afghanistan, as a reconstruction team member, and Mr. Tiit Meren, acknowledged cardiovascular surgeon, who worked at the Camp Bastion casualties' centre as a field surgeon.

Honorary decorations will be awarded to Police Lieutenant Colonel Alo Kirsimäe, one of the initiators of contemporary traffic police and surveillance, and Police Captain Kalmer Viska, who has served as an example to many countries for the identification of cyber crimes and related money laundering cases. National decorations will also be awarded to Border Guard Major Aivo Pinte, who has served in the border guard for seventeen years and is now the head of road border point at Luhamaa, and Security Police officers, Mr. Martin Arpo and Mr. Marlen Piskunov.

Estonia will thank and acknowledge researchers whose achievements have contributed to the development of the state in numerous fields. The Order of White Star will be awarded to Mr. Peep Sürje, a technology researcher and former Rector of Tallinn University of Technology; Mr. Kristjan Haller, a physicist and Vice Rector for Research of Tartu University; Ms Birute Klaas, a language scientist and the Chairwoman of the Estonian Language Council; Mr. Peeter Torop, a semiotic and professor of Tartu University; Mr. Jaak Panksepp, a professor of Washington University and honorary doctor of Tartu University in neuroscience; Ms. Irina Belobrovtsseva, professor of University of Tallinn and a wonderful researcher of the works of Mikhail Bulgakov.

Estonia will award honorary decorations to teachers who have inspired students to continue their education and therefore shaped the future face of Estonia. The Order of White Star will be awarded to Ms Viive-Riina Ruus, a pedagogical scientist and professor emeritus of the

University of Tallinn; Ms Helgi Klein, the Director of Tartu Hiie School and a long-term school headmistress of children with speech and hearing impairments; Ms Ivi Tivik, a meritorious violin teacher; and Ms Malle Reimann, initiator of the establishment of Vohnja School in Kadrina rural municipality, a long-term teacher and director of the same school.

Estonia thanks and honours its writers, musicians, artists, actors, and choir conductors whose creative efforts have enriched us all. The honorary decorations will be awarded to Ms Margarita Voites, a recognised opera singer and coloratura soprano; Mr. Uno Uiga, a beloved choir conductor and the founder of Tartu Boys' Choir; Mr. Leo Rohlin, professor emeritus of the Estonian Academy of Arts and one of the most well-known ceramic artists in Estonia; Ms. Leila Säälik, a long-term actor of Ugala Theatre; Ms. Virve-Elfriide Köster, a folk singer known as Kihnu Virve; Mr. Avo Keerend, one of the most long-serving graphical artists and book illustrators; Mr. Kajar Pruul, who has edited critical and essayistic pages of Vikerkaar (the Rainbow) magazine for a quarter of century, one of the most competent critics in Estonian literary life; Mr. Aivar Tommingas, actor from Vanemuine Theatre; a long-serving director of Tallinn City Museum, Ms Maruta Varrak; a sculptor, Ms Mare Mikof; a poet, Mr. Indrek Hirv; a writer, translator and cultural mediator, Ms Jelena Skulskaja; actors of Estonian Drama Theatre, Ms Ülle Kaljuste and Mr. Guido Kangur; the Director of the Estonian State Puppet and Youth Theatre, Mr. Meelis Pai; Mr. Joel Sang, a poet and literary critic; and Mr. Mart Orav, the editor of magazine Akadeemia (the Academy) and a researcher of history and culture.

The Order of the Cross of Terra Mariana will also be awarded to one of the most highly regarded Estonian-French translator, Mr. Jean Pascal Ollivry, known for translating the works of Anton Hansen Tammsaare into French; Mr. Riho Grünthal, the Professor of Baltic Finnish languages of Helsinki University and the Chairman of the Tuglas Association; and Mr. Markku Laukkanen, the Chairman of the Estonian Friendship Group of the Finnish Parliament. The Order of White Star will be awarded to Ms Slawomira Borowska-Peterson, one of the organisers of the Year of Chopin in Estonia and an organiser of support for the organisation of music studies of children with visual impairment.

Estonia thanks the journalists whose ideas and works have helped their audience to understand the world around us in a better and more extensive way. Honorary decorations will be awarded to the Chief Editor of newspaper Põhjarannik (the Northern Coast), Mr. Erik Gamzejev; a music journalist, Mr. Immo Mihkelson; and a writer, journalist and promoter of nature protection, Mr. Vladislav Koržets.

Estonia acknowledges the promoters of local life. The Order of White Star will be awarded to the art director and producer of Narva Studio Theatre, Mr. Juri Mihhaljov; the initiator of Jõgeva

TREFF, Mr. Igor Ellisson; Käsmu Village Elder and the founder of Käsmu Marine Museum, Mr. Aarne Vaik; the imitator of the Estonian Society of St. Petersburg, Ms. Viiu Fjodorova; one of the initiators and supporters of the Matsalu Nature Film Festival, Mr. Tiit Mesila; the restorer of Tõrva Church and founder of Chamber Hall, Mr. Ilmar Kõverik; and Mr. Agu Leivits, who has studied Estonian marshes for years, thereby contributing to the establishment of Soomaa National Park and Alam-Pedja Nature Reserve. The Order of the Estonian Red Cross will be awarded to Ms Viiu Orgmets, who helps children who have been deprived of parental care.

Estonian recognises entrepreneurs who have promoted national economy, and the Order of White Star will be awarded to the builder of one of the largest and most competitive shipping companies of the Baltic Sea region, the CEO of Tallink Group, Mr. Enn Pant; one of the owners of Bellus Furniture OÜ, which has been operating in Haljava, Lääne-Virumaa, for almost ten years, Mr. Rolf Kristian Relander; and Mr. Mati Nurm, the owner of the grain cultivating Puide farm in Valga county.

Estonia thanks the athletes who have brought their country fame and recognition and have served to enhance exercise habits in Estonian homes by setting a personal example. Honorary decorations will be awarded to the 2010 World Champion in Epee, Mr. Nikolai Novosjolov; the former midfielder of the Estonian football team and current football coach, Mr. Martin Reim; and a former basketball player and current teacher, Mr. Viktor Viktorov.

The Order of the Estonian Red Cross will be awarded to Ms. Anu Vainola from Pärnu and Ms Laine Rande from Jõgeva, who have donated blood more than one hundred times.

Estonia also thanks its friends and supporters abroad. The Order of the Cross of Terra Mariana will also be awarded to the Turkish Minister of Agriculture and Rural Life, Mr. Mehmet Mehdi Eker, who is the initiator of the co-operation between Estonia and Turkey in the sphere of agriculture; the former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Latvia, Mr. Aivis Ronis, who represented the Baltic states in the group involved in the development of NATO's new strategic concept; and a deputy of the Canadian Parliament and one of the initiators of the Black Ribbon Day – a memorial day for the European victims of communism and Nazism – Mr. Robert Rae. The Order of the Estonian Red Cross will be awarded to the trainer of Estonian paediatricians and the organiser of the treatment of Estonian children who are suffering from rare diseases in Finland, Professor Risto Rintala.

President Ives will award the honorary decorations on 23 February.

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