

In honour of Ms. Triin Vahisalu, the recipient of an international research award, the President, Mr. Toomas Hendrik Ilves, today organised a reception in Kadriorg in the company of Ms Vahisalu's family members and colleagues.

This year, Ms Vahisalu was awarded the title of Young Scientist of the Year by UNESCO and L'Oreal Group for her research in the field of plant molecular biology, involving the mapping of a gene that enhances the stress tolerance of plants. The gene considerably affects the course of the defence reactions in plants placed under stressful conditions, which are caused by a lack of water and an increase in the volume of contaminants in the atmosphere as a consequence of human activities.

The discovery is made even more important by the fact that in conditions where the contamination of the environment is increasing while water resources are rapidly diminishing such information represents a step closer to developing plants that in future can grow and bear fruit in dry and polluted areas.

In his acknowledgement speech, the President of the Republic said that the title of outstanding young scientist, with acknowledgment for the best doctoral thesis of Helsinki University and an article published in Nature magazine, all point towards the brilliant future of Ms. Vahisalu's research career.

"The award is given to those whose work has changed and will change the world. I wish that you could find some time to highlight research in Estonia, where education, the smart choice of speciality and the skills to publish the results of one's research work in practice will determine the welfare of all of us," said President Ilves in his speech.

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