

The President, Toomas Hendrik Ilves, in the Estonian Literary Museum today presented the Folklore Collection Awards 2011 of the President of the Republic to folklore collectors Leelo Kund, Margit Korotkova, Triin Kusmin and Age-Kristel Kartau.

Leelo Kund and Margit Korotkova, members of the Co-operation and Development Chamber Võhandu, collected materials on religion and consuetudinary from Setomaa. Triin Kusmin, Heritage Culture specialist of the State Forest Management Centre, has initiated the collection of heritage forest culture while Age-Kristel Kartau collected materials on professional heritage and alternative medicine within the framework of her master degree thesis.

President Ilves said, when handing over the awards, that the collection of folk traditions initiated by Jakob Hurt attached value to our own history and subsistence for our people. "Our folklore has been always characterised by a desire for independence and adoption of our own decisions. This is how the collection of folklore became one of the bricks in the foundation of our own country several decades later," President Ilves said.

"On the other hand, collected folk traditions help to preserve our language through changes, developments and fashion trends. Folklore contributes to our understanding of everything that has taken place in Estonia in different times and how our people have perceived it. Therefore, the collection and preservation of folk traditions is highly important. It helps us to understand and learn, not to forget about our past in the rush for everything that is new," President Ilves added.

The Estonian Head of State stated that our good folk tradition collectors understand this, and work everywhere from Setumaa to the beaches of Nõva studying both the endurance of folk traditions and today's modern alternative medicine. "All of this tells the story of our people," President Ilves emphasised.

President Ilves also expressed his pleasure with the fact that the tenth volume of a collection of runic songs, "The Old Harp", which was established by Jakob Hurt 125 years ago, was being presented today. This volume consists of runic songs from Paide and Anna parishes.

The Head of State award to the best folklore collectors was awarded to more than one hundred contributors of the Estonian Folklore Archive in 1935-1940. The award was re-established, at the initiative of the Estonian Literary Museum, in 1993, with some funding from the Cultural Foundation of the President of the Republic and the first awards were presented in February 1994. The general value of the monetary award is decided by the President in accordance with a respective proposal from the Estonian Literary Museum. This year's award amounts to 1,500 euros, divided between the nominees of the award.

The list of nominees of the recently re-established Folklore Collection Award of the President of the Republic is available here: www.president.ee

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