

The President, Toomas Hendrik Ilves, today awarded the prize for the Best Estonian Wooden Building 2012 to architect Emil Urbel, who designed a family house at Kukemõisa farm, Järva-Jaani.

The Estonian forest and timber sector is doing well, the export of wooden products is on the rise and the added value contributed by this sector was the largest in our processing industry last year, stated President Ilves, adding: in doing so, the timber industry is helping to keep our national export healthy and is providing employment opportunities for many of our people.

He admitted that considerably more wooden houses are being built by our neighbours, Finland and Sweden, two countries that also have an abundance of forests; therefore, Estonia should commit itself to reiterating the fact that wood is an environmentally sound and safe local material.

"Estonia has its experiences and knowledge and our wealth of available woodland gives us all we need to create wonderful, energy efficient wooden buildings. We have an abundance of forests in Estonia, yet have a love affair with concrete when it comes to building – that seems odd," told the Head of State.

He expressed his hope that in the near future wood will be used more in the construction of public buildings, in view of all the contemporary opportunities and new technologies available, using the new wooden Tammiste kindergarten building in Pärnu county that he visited last year as an example.

"This will set an example and inspire people to use wood to build family homes and apartment houses. And this will be an ideal opportunity to create jobs for people outside the large towns. Allow me to give you one figure – 86% of people employed in forestry are working outside Tallinn," said President Ilves.

The Wooden Building of the Year competition is organised annually by the Estonian Forest and Wood Industries Association to acknowledge the owners of outstanding buildings for the use of

the natural and renewable building material that is wood.

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