

The President, Toomas Hendrik Ilves, signed a decree today by which he will award decorations to 99 people to express the acknowledgment of the Republic of Estonia on the eve of Independence Day.

"The biggest gratitude of Estonia goes to people from different spheres of life both at home and abroad, to the people whose everyday commitment to their work, their calling and thereby to making Estonia great is worthy of acknowledgment by our country," President Ilves told. "The stories of the expertise of these people in sum shows how Estonia is getting bigger."

The Republic of Estonia awards the Order of White Star to acknowledge our talented scientists. These are professor **Jaak Kikas**, Director of University of Tartu Institute of Physics, one of the initiators and founders of Science Centre AHHA; **Anu**

**Reinart**

, Director of Tartu Observatory, a person who is promoting science and one of the initiators of the ESTCube student satellite project;

**Alvo Aabloo**

, professor of technology of polymeric materials of University of Tartu, initiator and co-ordinator of NGO Robootika (Robotics), and a person who has promoted Estonia's participation in the European Centre for Theoretical Studies in Nuclear Physics and Related Areas;

**Mati Koppel**

, Director of Estonian Plant Breeding Institute, agricultural scientist and breeder of varieties;

**Peep Palumaa**

, professor of genomics and proteomics of the Institute of Genetic Engineering of Tallinn University of Technology, whose research areas include biochemistry, biotechnology and structural and medical metalloproteomics and who was the first scientist working in Estonia to be elected as a life-time member of EMBO (the European Molecular Biology Organisation), which brings together 1,500 top natural science research specialists;

**Tarmo Soomere**

, marine scientist and mathematician, the Head of Wave Dynamics Laboratory of Institute of Cybernetics of Tallinn University of Technology, whose laboratory has made it to the top of the world within the framework of coastal technology studies;

**Heiki Pärdi**

, Research Director of the Estonian Open Air Museum, historian and ethnologist, researcher of rural architecture, author of a number of books;

**Marju Kõivupuu**

, folklorist, researcher of Estonian folk traditions, sacred places and folk medicine;

**Krista Kerge**

, language scientist, professor of applied linguistics of Tallinn University; Silvi Vare, Doctor of Philology, who has compiled the "Eesti keele sõnapered" (Families of Words in the Estonian language) dictionary in two volumes;

**Toomas Kukk**

, botanist, one of our best plant specialists, member of Nature Protection Commission of the Estonian Academy of Sciences and Editor in Chief of "Eesti Loodus" (Estonian Nature) magazine;

**Mare Pork**

, psychologist, management consultant, professor emeritus of Tallinn University.

On the eve of the Independence Day, the Order of the White Star will be bestowed on a number of Estonian cultural figures: **Mait Summatavet**, a living classic of Estonian interior architecture and product design, professor emeritus of the Estonian Academy of Arts;

**Rein Kotov**

, a film operator with characteristic signature, whose last film was "Mandariinid" (The Tangerines);

**Galina Grigorjeva**

, one of the most interesting modern Estonian composers;

**Aavo Ots**

, one of the leaders of our trumpet school, lecturer of the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre, who has conducted brass bands at both Estonian Song Festivals and at the Gaudeamus Baltic students' song festivals;

**Kadri Hunt**

, choir master and pedagogue, as well as mentor of the Estonian Radio Children's Song Studio and Saint Michael's Boys Choir;

**Anzori Barkalaja**

, Director of Viljandi Culture Academy of University of Tartu, folklorist;

**Neeme Kuningas**

, well-known creator of opera, operetta, musical and dance performances;

**Jaan Rekkor**

, actor in Endla Theatre, Pärnu, and the Estonian Drama Theatre;

**Aleksandr Ivaškevits**

, theatre and movie actor, tap dancer and choreographer for the Russian Theatre;

**Kaido Ole**

, painter;

**Margo Kõlar**

, composer and choir master, lecturer of the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre;

**Enno Tubli**

, composer and trumpet player who has led the "Popsid" brass band for 40 years;

**Kristiina Kaasik**

, painter;

**Raul Saaremets**

, promoter of musical culture and long-time host of the "Vibratsioon" (Vibration) radio programme; and

**Villu Tamme**

, singer and guitarist in J.M.K.E., protest musician of the period that preceded Estonia's regaining of its independence.

Order of the Cross of the Eagle will be awarded by the Republic of Estonia to acknowledge defence force members who have served in seven foreign missions – Junior Warrant Officer **Tii t Rooden**

and Junior Warrant Officer

**Eiko Õim**

; Order of the Cross of the Eagle will also be awarded to Colonel

**Aivar Kokka**

for his major services in developing the initial level of national defence in Estonia and enhancing the training level of the Army and preparing our units for dangerous missions in Afghanistan within the framework of the NATO-led operation; and to

**Kuido Külm**

, Head of the Tartu Unit of the Cyber Defence Unit of the Defence League, and a member of the Defence League since 1990.

The Republic of Estonia also thanks one of the creators and developers of the witness protection programme, Police Captain **Toomas Lõhmus** from the Central Criminal Police and **Marilis Sepp**

, Police Major and the Head of the Bureau of Analysis of the Police and Border Guard Board, as well as

**Henno Kuurmann**

and

**Olari Valtin**

from the Estonian Internal Security Service.

Order of the White Star for the promotion of business and entrepreneurship will be awarded to **Erkki Raasuke**

, who participated in the creation of a modern banking system and giving it an international dimension in Estonia and has also contributed to the public sector;

**Anne Samlik**

from Estravel, a long-standing member of the Executive Board of Estonian Travel and Tourism Association;

**Ruth Oltjer**

from Chemi-Pharm AS, developer of medical products;

**Edmund Smolarek**

, founder of Balti Spoon OÜ, which is also the biggest employer in Kuusalu rural municipality;

**David James O'Brock-Kaljuvee**

, CEO of Molycorp Silmet AS, who has significantly contributed to the development of the town of Sillamäe and North-East Estonia in general;

**Jaak Läänemets**

from Lääne-Virumaa, grain crop cultivator, promoter of rural life and co-operative efforts, and

who also manages the largest co-operative in Estonia, which brings together 127 grain crop cultivators;

**Andi Saagpakk**

, Chairman of the Executive Board of Saaremaa Dairy Processing Industry;

**Taavet Hinrikus**

, inventor and developer of TransferWise.

Estonia, famous for its e-governance, on the eve of its birthday would like to thank and acknowledge several promoters and developers of the sphere of information technology. Order of the White Star will be awarded to **Renee Trisberg**, cyber security specialist and contributor to the reliability and trustworthiness of e-elections;

**Jüri Jõema**

, developer of electronic communication network and services, CEO of the Estonian Association of Information Technology and Telecommunications;

**Raul Parusk**

, who initiated the "Vaata Maaailma" (Look Into the World) project;

**Valdo Kalm**

from EMT AS, supporter of IT education and promoter of the sphere;

**Jaan Priisalu**

, developer of the sphere of cyber security, Director General of the Estonian Information System's Authority;

**Ahto Kalja**

, who has been the project manager and developer of the X-Road project for 12 years and has achieved the acknowledgment of X-Road in Finland;

**Jevgeni Kabanov**

, founder of ZeroTurnaround software development company, doctor of informatics;

**Arvo Ott**

, Managing Director of Foundation eGovernance Academy (eGA), one of the initiators for the creation of X-Road.

Orders of the White Star for the development of civil society and democracy will be awarded to

**Urmo Kübar**

, who has led the organisation of NGOs (EMSL) for six years;

**Hille Hinsberg**

, promoter of civil society, expert in Praxis governance and the civil society programme;

**Rainer Nõlvak**

, initiator of the clean-up bees, "Teeme ära!" (Let's Do It), which started in Estonia and has now become global;

**Artur Taevere**

, one of the founders of the Heategu (Good Deed) Foundation and the Noored Kooli (Young People Back to School) education programme.

Decorations will be also awarded to the long-term chairman of the Estonian Communication and Service Workers' Trade Union, **Õie Väljas**; **Ellen Valter**, long-term initiator of the Estonian short film festival, Estdocs, in Canada;

**Enno Uibo**

, a long-time leader of the association of repressed Estonians, "Murtud Rukkilille Ühing" (the Broken Cornflower Society);

**Külli Must**

, who initiated the restoration work of Alatskivi Manor;

**Mai Jõevee**

, a teacher from Läänemaa and promoter of local life in Kullamaa.

Estonia acknowledges its doctors and promoters of social life. Order of the Red Cross will be awarded to surgeon **Aleksander Lõhmus** from the Department of Urology and Kidney Transfer of the Surgery Clinic of Tartu University Hospital for developing kidney replacement and transfer technologies; professor emeritus

**Arne Lepp**,

promoter of medical sciences, long-standing professor of anatomy of University of Tartu and compiler of the medical textbook, "Inimese anatoomia" (Human Anatomy) in the Estonian language;

**Margus Punab**

, andrologist and medical research specialist from Tartu University Hospital;

**Mari Majass**

, experienced children's surgeon from Children's Hospital of Tallinn;

**Märt Vähi**

, founder and initiator of NGO Lootuse Küla (Village of Hope), created for the rehabilitation of alcohol and drug addicts;

**Maie Salum**

, helper of children deprived of parental care;

**Malle Kobin**

, promoter of social life, long-standing leader of the Chamber of Disabled People of Hiiumaa and the Estonian Association of Foster Families.

The following promoters of educational life will be awarded Orders of the White Cross: long-term school mistress of Tartu, **Helve Raik**; former director of Läänemere Gymnasium of Tallinn and supporter of language immersion,

**Va**

**Ieri Novikov**

;

**Ene Lukka-Jegikjan**

, a folklorist and a pedagogue, who established, more than 20 years ago, the speciality of folk music at Viljandi Cultural College, which became the predecessor of Viljandi Folk Music Festival;

**Mai Suuder**

from Tartu, a special pedagogue and one of the pioneers of autism pedagogy;

**Ene Jakobson**

, folk dance teacher and the founder and leader of folk dance ensemble "Sõleke";

**Madis Habakuk**

, the founder of the first Estonian private institution of higher education that gives business education – Estonian Business School (EBS).

The Republic of Estonia also acknowledges people who stand for good journalism that expands the worldview. Orders of the White Cross will be awarded to **Viktoria Korpan**, one of the people who helped build up the Russian language edition of Postimees newspaper;

**Tiina Reinart**

from Maaleht, one of the keepers and promoters of editorial culture in printed Estonian journalism;

**Neeme Raud**

, long-standing foreign correspondent of the Estonian Broadcasting Company in the United States of America;

**Jüri Aarma**

, a cultural journalist.

Decorations of the Republic of Estonia will go to **Aldur Vunk**, a historian and the Director of Pärnu Museum; engineer **Mati**

**Tähemaa**

, who has worked in the sphere of broadcasting for more than 50 years and is one of the creators of the exposition of Estonian Broadcasting Museum;

**Madis Võõras**

, founder of the space unit at EE (Enterprise Estonia) and supporter of the Estonian students' satellite project;

**Ants Ärsis**

, organiser of the training of seamen and safe sea travel.

The Order of the Red Cross will be awarded to donors who have donated their blood more than one hundred times; **Kulle Leetla** from Jõgeva county, **Tiiu Parts** from Pärnu county and **Kalev**

**Palm**

from Põlva county.

The Republic of Estonia will acknowledge people who stand for the minorities and help to safe-keep their national specificities. Order of the Cross of Terra Mariana will be awarded to **Gri**

**gori Mussaljov**

from Russia, one of the leaders of Erza public movement and supporter of Erzas' rights in Russia. Order of the White Cross will be awarded to promoter of the Ukrainian community in Estonia,

**Vira Konõk**

and the researcher and recorder of the history of the local Russian community, bibliophile

**Aleksandr Dormidontov**

.

The athletes to be awarded the decorations are fencer **Julia Beljajeva**, individual world champion in épée in 2013;

**Heino Lill**

, a basketball player and basketball coach, Manager of the Sports Centre of Tallinn University of Technology;

**Rein Põldme**

, a long-term initiator and promoter of swimming of blind people and people with impaired vision;

**Viktor Mets**

, who has worked as youth football coach in Järvamaa for approximately 40 years.

The Republic of Estonia thanks its friends and supporters abroad. The Order of the Cross of Eagle will be awarded to **James Adkins**, Commander of the National Guard of Maryland, USA, Adjutant General, for developing co-operation with our Defence Forces and initiating a training project for helicopter pilots of the Estonian Air Force. Orders of the Cross of Terra Mariana will be awarded to

**Robert Nurick**, promoter of security related co-operation between Estonia and the United States of America, leading expert on European issues of the USA who has supported NATO enlargement;

**Ivo Daalder**

, former permanent representative of the USA at NATO, supporter and securer of the collective defence principle;

**Vinton Gray Cerf**

, computer scientist, developer of TCP/IP technology, whose research work was used to build up the e-governance system of Estonia;

**Alexander von Samson-Himmelstjerna**

from Hamburg, Germany, who has supported several projects that promote local life in Rõuge rural municipality;

**Manfred Glesner**

, supporter of Estonian educational life in the sphere of information technology, contributor to the modernisation of Tallinn University of Technology, professor of micro-electronics at Darmstadt University, Germany;

**Maris Ošlejs**

, promoter of cultural relations between Estonia and Latvia, introducer of the musical works of

Arvo Pärt and Veljo Tormis, Director of academic choir "Latvija";

**Kosaku Yamaguchi**

, representative of foreign investments and tourism in Japan on behalf of EE (Enterprise Estonia).

President Ilves will hand the decorations of the Republic of Estonia over on 23 February in Endla Theatre, Pärnu.

Office of the President

Public Relations Department

Phone +372 631 6229