

Dear chevaliers of decorations and your families,

„Estonia is grateful” – these three words best summarise the reason why we are here today.

By awarding the decorations on the eve of Independence Day the state wishes to thank the people of Estonia and the friends of Estonia whose work and commitment help protect, preserve and promote the Republic of Estonia.

A state decoration is a token of appreciation and recognition from the state to you – you who have achieved an extraordinary accomplishment, who have given more than was due in the line of your profession or service.

Among you there are world famous historians, writers and scientists; among you there are well known promoters of Estonian culture and sports, journalists and civil servants; and last but not least, among you there are people who advance local life in our villages and towns and preserve the strength of family ties.

Among you there are people who stand in defence of Estonia’s security, both at home and abroad. There are members of the Estonian Defence Forces who have shown their courage during service in international missions and policemen who guard our internal security.

It is from your thoughts and deeds that Estonia becomes stronger, that Estonia becomes greater, that Estonia becomes more caring.

The ability to care is the cornerstone of the society. The ability of the state to care means caring for its people. People can display their ability to care just by giving a warm smile to a passer-by, civil servants can show their caring by being considerate and helpful towards those who have turned to them for assistance. Being caring means being open-minded and open-hearted.

You are the embodiment of caring. Caring for the state of Estonia and for our compatriots.

Estonia thanks you for that.