

Distinguished recipients of state decorations, dear family members,

For me as president the day when I sign the decision to award state decorations is one of the most pleasant days of the year. It is once again an opportunity to confirm the values Estonia stands for, what Estonia considers to be important and what Estonia is grateful for.

There are not many recipients of state decorations. Consequently, your individual roles are highlighted the more. This goes both for those whose existing renown confirms their role to the public, and also for those who have previously not been as well known to the general public.

On last year's independence day, Rein Maran, the director of nature films and a past recipient of the Order of the White Star, spoke about the one and only Estonia we have. He said that "it is my language, my country, my people, and all the joys and pains of this country are in reality mine as well."

Indeed, they are the joys and pains of us all. Common to us all. Noticing and recognising them, sharing and alleviating them requires care from us all. Care for every single person. Care for Estonia.

Rein Maran, with his sharp, yet sensitive take on things, was of the opinion that we are only just beginning to become true citizens who know how to be demanding and who stand up for Estonia.

Distinguished recipients of state orders,

You have known how and have also been able to do all this, often earlier than others.

On the eve of our independence day Estonia thanks you for being industrious, thanks you for your excellence and honesty, and in a number of cases for your bravery. Often, you are mentors, an example to your colleagues and companions.

Here it is no longer important what exactly your profession is. Be it in the field of science, the furthering of local life, medicine, law and order, industry, enterprise, education... What is important is your dedication, what you do for Estonia and on behalf of Estonia. You do not complain or seek to blame anything on someone else, you do not let things go with the flow and reduce yourselves to being mere bystanders. You do things. This is how we obtain a better, more successful and friendly home. Just like we want it to be.

Estonia also thanks our friends abroad who have supported Estonia and the principles that Estonia holds dear. Democracy. Freedom of speech. The rule of law. A free press. This is the foundation without which a society that respects its members is impossible.

Dear family members, colleagues and friends of the recipients of the state decorations,

Without your support and understanding very many hopes and dreams would have certainly remained unaccomplished.

I thank you for your support.

Congratulations.

Long live Estonia.

[Estonia thanks and recognises 99 people with decorations on the eve of Independence Day](#)