

First Lady Evelin Ilves held a reception in the rose garden at Kadriorg today for the children born on the 20<sup>th</sup> of August two years ago and their parents.

A similar reception was held in 2009, when the parents of all of the babies born on the 18<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the restoration of Estonia's independence were presented with a pair of locally made booties in national folk patterns.

The First Lady said at the time that she hoped to stay in touch with the families in the years ahead and see how they were getting on.

"These boys and girls were born on the same day that the first generation of children who grew up in a completely independent Estonia became adults," the First Lady said in 2009. "They are the children who will be the adults running the country and our companies when we are old. They are our greatest resource and investment."

At the event in Kadriorg today, the First Lady said that the 20<sup>th</sup> of August is like a second birthday for Estonia.

"People who have been in – and survived – a terrible accident often say that they feel like they have been reborn," she said, "and that is what it is like for our country."

The First Lady said that anyone born a free citizen in a free, fully-grown country was very fortunate. "The Estonia you live in is the Estonia created by your mothers and fathers, and your grandmothers and grandfathers," she said. "All of us, together, are Estonia. That is something we should be made aware of and remind ourselves of every day from the cradle to the grave."

All of the toddlers at the reception received a copy of *Minu esimene raamat* /My First Book/ published by the Estonian Children's Literature Centre, finger puppets and a mini Estonian flag.

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