

Dear Estonian fathers,

I wish a Happy Father's Day to everyone here and to those who are with us in spirit!

I would like to start with heartfelt congratulations to the Father of the Year, whose name will soon be disclosed to us. Congratulations, both for today and to take home with you and share!

We often talk of the great expectations that society has for women and mothers. These expectations bind together family-related dreams and work-related success.

Expectations with regard to men and fathers are not, by any means, lower or smaller. The efforts of fathers to cope with these expectations are also worth acknowledging.

A family that only expects the father to bring home the bacon can never be the family of the father or mother of the year. Furthermore, families such as this cannot be too contented. Only families with fathers that bring home care and understanding in the most general sense can be happy.

We would also like to experience the care and cherishing from fathers that we can observe in the best families to extend towards life in Estonia overall. There are so many things that could be a bit better if the voice of fathers would be heard louder, such as in education, assessing the success of learning, and in the organisation of school life in general.

Life in Estonia would be better and more caring if we could become more like a family in matters that are important for all of us: more like a working family apart from being bosses and employees; more like a common nation instead of being leaders and those who are led.

Actually, we do not even have to make a very big effort to achieve this. We just have to want and be present in our thoughts.

Many fathers are away from their families on a daily basis due to their work commitments. This is a fact of life. Many fathers live apart from their children. This is also a fact. If we are present in our thoughts and lead shared and not distant lives, even families can overcome such times apart. And this is also something we need to want.

This day is usually called a red-letter day. Instead, we should call it a day of recognition or even celebration.

Today, we voice recognition and celebrate, each family in their own way, everything that we all quietly think about every other day: thank you for everything, dear fathers. We wish you lots of strength and health.