

Mr and Mrs President, ambassadors. Members of the Estonian delegation, ladies and gentlemen!

My name is Sven Salin, and it is a great honour and pleasure for me to represent the Estonian Swedes living in Sweden in addressing you and wishing you welcome to Sweden. Like your parents most of us left Estonia at the end of the second world war.

First of all I would like to thank you, Mr President and your wife, for participating in the celebration of the 20th anniversary of the inauguration of Ormsö church last summer. It was a great honour for us that you – like all previous presidents of Free Estonia – came to Ormsö.

Secondly I would like to express the gratitude from us living in Sweden for Estonia's very generous and liberal laws for minorities in Estonia, allowing even us living in Sweden to vote for and be members of the Cultural Council for the Swedish minority in Estonia.

One of the persons who worked very hard for the introduction of these laws into the first constitution of Free Estonia in 1920 was an Estonian Swede, Hans Pöhl. Some of us have written the first biography about him in Swedish and Estonian. You will of course receive the first copy of this book, when it is printed.

Finally I would like to invite you to a press conference and presentation of this biography on February 23 at 11 o'clock in S:t Mikael's Church in Tallinn.

Welcome and thank you!

Sven Salins hälsning till President Toomas Hendrik Ilves och hans fru Evelin, vid besöket på Eesti Maja i Stockholm, i samband med statsbesöket den 18 januari 2011.