

Estonian state leaders condemned the situation in which a Social Democratic Party member's e-correspondence unlawfully ended up at the headquarters of Estonia's Center Party, reports National Broadcasting. President Toomas Hendrik Ilves delivered on Jan. 18 an emergency TV address dedicated to the matter; Prime Minister Andrus Ansip and Riigikogu speaker Ene Ergma also expressed a negative opinion, saying that politicians who do not respect the constitution and the European human rights convention should not be in politics.

The Security Police (KaPo) found nearly 450 pages of printouts of e-mails of former Social Democratic Party MP, current European Commission's Estonian representation head Hannes Rumm when searching the home of Center Party secretary general and Riigikogu member Prit Toobal recently.

Toobal said that the correspondence was brought to them by former Social Democrat and current Center Party member Ivor Onksion, who offered it to the Kesknädal newspaper, in March last year. Toobal claimed that he had not ordered the materials and thus "did not pay attention to them." President Ilves delivered a speech in which he condemned Rumm's letters ending up in strangers' hands. Ilves said that there can be no justification for acquiring and spreading letters acquired by criminal means. "This is a crisis of political morals," stressed Ilves. "It will become the bankruptcy of our party politics if such activities are not clearly condemned. In the parties and in the Estonian society," said Ilves.

Ansip said that people who think that the confidentiality of messages is a tool in a political fight should not be in Estonian politics. "In the current case I, not being informed of details of the matter, also have a suspicion that they were investigating the correspondence of one organizer of the presidential campaign with other persons organizing the campaign. And this is extremely condemnable," said Ansip.

Ene Ergma said that hopefully the Center Party will give its evaluation to the matter. "I think that such a person's place is not in the Riigikogu, but you do understand that I have no right to say that he should leave."

Toobal said that since he has not engaged in illegal surveillance activities, he sees no reason to resign.

When the KaPo searched the headquarters of the Center Party and the home of Toobal at the beginning of January, they found over 400 pages of printouts of e-mails belonging to Rumm that should not have been in the hands of either the Center Party or Toobal, reports Postimees.

The e-mails date back to the time when Rumm was still a Social Democrat and active in politics; he was a member of the Social Democrats Riigikogu faction till last spring. From Sept. 1 last year, he heads the European Commission's representation in Estonia. The printouts were sent and received before autumn of last year.

KaPo searched the Center Party headquarters and Toobal's home in connection with a suspicion of a case of trading with influence on Jan. 6. KaPo is now also checking if the printouts constitute illegal private surveillance of another person with the aim of collecting data about him.

The Center Party said last week that Rumm's correspondence came to be in their rooms when a former Social Democrat, who used to work in Tallinn city council as an adviser, brought it there.

Rumm said he has no idea how his e-mail correspondence ended up in Toobal's office. He said his mailbox contained correspondence with around a hundred different people on different subjects. He confirmed that the correspondence definitely ended up in Center Party's rooms against his will and against the law.

He said the whole story has nothing to with his current job, as all of the correspondence dates back to the time when he did not yet work in the European Commission Estonian representation.