

"Russia's military activities in Ukraine, changing the borders of countries, justifying the occupation of Crimea with a fake referendum and applying continued pressure on rebuilding Ukraine as a state – this is how Russia itself is complicating its co-operation with Europe and the USA," stated President Toomas Hendrik Ilves at his meeting last night with John McCain and John Hoeven, influential senators from the United States of America.

Both the Estonian Head of State and the senators of the United States emphasised that in a situation where Russia is opposed to democratic values and has abandoned the basis for international law, the uniform, visible, consistent and defiant attitude of the European Union and NATO, who protect these values, is becoming more and more important.

"This means precise and effective sanctions, together with the activities that are required to increase NATO's presence along the eastern border of the alliance," President Ilves told. "We need some action because words alone are too weak. Our opponents no longer listen to words."

He acknowledged the clearly expressed support of the United States of America to the core values of NATO and the repeated confirmations of the US leaders regarding the unanimous validity of NATO's Article 5, collective defence, for all the members of the alliance as well as the additional contribution to the air security mission in the Baltic states offered by several allies: "These are deterrents that will enhance the security of NATO countries in the area."

President Ilves described the commitment of countries that support the promotion of democracy in Ukraine as important and something that requires political, economic and diplomatic support.

"Of course, the people of Ukraine will make their own choices, but are these, in fact, choices made by Ukraine that would be made without the presence of "green men" with Kalashnikov machine guns and pressure from Moscow that is being applied on Kiev to change the structure of the country," told the Estonian Head of State. "The government of Ukraine has every right to use force against the invaders of city governments and police stations, thereby protecting the security, safety and constitutional order of its country."

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