

Convened by President Toomas Hendrik Ilves, the National Defence Council was today given a comprehensive overview of the situation in Ukraine and its impact on European security. Also discussed at length was security in the Baltic and Nordic region.

President Ilves says that the Ukrainian crisis – which puts the strength of the shared values of a democratic Europe to the test – forces Estonia, like its allies and partners, to draw immediate conclusions, whether they be the need to fortify military defence, boost rapid response capabilities, reinforce relations with allies, launch exercises for the defence forces or act at the strategic decision-making level of the state.

The Head of State considers it important to turn particular attention to strategic communication, saying that at a time of crisis the management of information must be coordinated and centralised where decisions are taken. The state must be prepared to rein in information campaigns that are malicious or directly hostile in nature, whether stemming from foreign or domestic sources.

Commander of the Defence Forces Major-General Riho Terras presented a summary to the National Defence Council of the 11 years of operations of Estonian forces in Afghanistan and spoke about the mission of the country's soldiers in the Central African Republic.

The National Defence Council is an advisory body to the President of the Republic. Its members are the President of the Riigikogu, the Prime Minister, the chair of the Riigikogu's National Defence Committee, the chair of the Riigikogu's Foreign Affairs Committee, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Defence, the Minister of Finance, the Minister of the Interior, the Minister of Justice and the Commander of the Defence Forces. The council discusses and presents its positions on key issues from the point of view of national defence. There are both ordinary and extraordinary sessions of the council. Ordinary sessions are held every two months; extraordinary sessions are convened as deemed necessary by the President of the Republic.

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