

"Estonia and Turkey are both border states of NATO and have experienced drastic changes in the security situation in their regions," told the President, Toomas Hendrik Ilves, at his meeting with the Head of State of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who arrived for an official visit to Estonia.

"The illegal annexation of Crimea and persecution of its indigenous people, Crimean Tatars, requires our consistent attention and is as important as the international, efficient and visible co-operation of the anti-IS coalition to stabilise the situation in Syria and Iraq," stated the Estonian Head of State.

He described Estonia and Turkey as strong allies in NATO, highlighting Turkey's active participation in the NATO Centre of Excellence on Cooperative Cyber Defence in Tallinn, Estonia, as an example.

"Turkey is a strategic partner for the European Union, both at a regional and global level," said the Estonian Head of State.

When speaking about relations between Turkey and the European Union, President Ilves confirmed Estonia's continued support for the enlargement policy of the European Union. "Common values represent a corner stone and define a major component of the strict yet fair enlargement terms and conditions," emphasised the Estonian Head of State.

"Let us recall that the recently published European Commission's 2014 progress report on Turkey is mostly positive and emphasises that Turkey should continue to follow the EU path. In the past, we focused seriously on the trouble spots that were highlighted in the progress report on Estonia; the same attitude will help Turkey to achieve its goals," stated President Ilves. Every year, the European Commission issues reports on progress made by the candidate countries. The most recent report was published on 8 October of this year.

When speaking about bilateral relations, President Ilves stressed that Turkey has become the most preferred tourism destination for Estonia and is visited every year by approximately 50,000 Estonian people, while Turkish people represent the 4th largest portion of foreign students

studying in Estonia.

"However, our economic co-operation could be much broader and more extensive, particularly in the sphere of information communication and cyber defence," he admitted.

The Turkish Head of State will also meet the Speaker of the Parliament, Eiki Nestor, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Urmas Paet, during his visit to Estonia.

In the evening, President Ilves and Evelin Ilves will host an official dinner in honour of the Head of State of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, and his wife, Emine Erdoğan.

Evelin Ilves and Emine Erdoğan today visited the permanent Treasury exhibition at Kumu Art Museum and the Clinic of Medical Rehabilitation of East-Tallinn Central Hospital, which offers rehabilitation services to people with disabilities. The wives of the heads of state of Estonia and Turkey also took a walk in the Old Town of Tallinn.

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