

"You assumed the office in turbulent times. Estonia will do its utmost to help you keep the alliance strong," said President Toomas Hendrik Ilves upon the arrival of NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg to Estonia.

"After Russia's annexation of Crimea and its military involvement in Ukraine, our security environment is unpredictable – one in which international agreements guaranteeing security are no longer valid," President Ilves admitted.

"We should keep reinvigorating NATO in order to deter the current security challenges," the Estonian head of state said. "Strong NATO is the guarantor of our freedom and our – not just for Estonia, but for all 28 allies." President Ilves added that the NATO summit in Wales was successful, demonstrating the alliance's solidarity and determination; now it is time to implement the decisions.

President Ilves mentioned that the Readiness Action Plan approved in Wales also offers a solid framework for all allies to contribute to a more capable alliance. Among other things, the plan foresees the presence of NATO forces on the alliance's eastern border.

"A robust and visible allied presence here is the best way to deter anyone who challenges the current security architecture of Europe," President Ilves said. "Here, in a frontline state of the alliance, we know that freedom has a cost – that it does not come free."

Stoltenberg said that Estonia's contribution to its defensive capabilities, which currently stands at 2% of GDP, is not only important to the country's security, but also to that of NATO. He further praised Estonia as the leading country in the field of cyber security.

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