

Discussions at the working lunch between President Toomas Hendrik Ilves and NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg focussed on increasing the strength and visibility of the alliance, the security situation in areas close to NATO's borders and new threats.

"In the last year we've seen with our own eyes and experienced for ourselves how NATO has grown stronger and more decisive," the Estonian head of state said. "That's the only answer, and the only way we can deter those who attack not only the independence and territorial integrity of neighbouring states, but the democratic way of life of us all."

President Ilves and Secretary General Stoltenberg agreed that the visible presence of NATO in the region is of the utmost importance.

"We want to see more of a military presence of NATO's European allies here, too," President Ilves admitted.

Ilves and Stoltenberg said during their meeting that knowing in advance what is happening close to NATO's borders has become crucial in the current security situation, since the earlier that threats are detected the more effectively the alliance's members can work together to prepare for a variety of developments.

President Ilves said that in the future there will be no conflicts which do not come with wide-ranging cyber-attacks and precisely targeted propaganda. He encouraged NATO allies to make more use of the opportunities provided by the alliance's Tallinn-based cyber defence centre, as well as the strategic communications centre that recently opened in Riga.

Ilves and Stoltenberg said that the Eastern partnership countries that had chosen the path of reform – Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine – need the visible and tangible support of democratic countries, as this will help defend their right to independent choices free from the threat of economic or political reprisals and sanctions.

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