

At the 51st Munich Security Conference, the discussions on international foreign policy events focused – as expected – on the security situation in Europe, which has changed due to Russia's aggression and the war in Ukraine.

At the Munich Security Conference, which takes place from Friday until today, strong political addresses were made by the Chancellor of Germany, Angela Merkel; Vice President of the United States of America, Joe Biden; Senator John McCain; the President of Ukraine, Petro Poroshenko; and the foreign ministers of the USA, Germany, France and Russia.

President Ilves highlighted the words of Chancellor Merkel, who said that Russia has unambiguously violated the rules of peaceful co-existence in Europe by its aggression in Ukraine: the inviolability of state borders and the principles for the peaceful resolution of conflicts have been breached. Chancellor Merkel emphasised the importance of primarily focusing on finding a diplomatic solution.

During the discussion, the Estonian Head of State stressed that Russia has a decisive head start in the conflict by it waging war and supporting the war in Ukraine, and the Minsk agreements have, in effect, not been applied. Therefore, we should acknowledge the possibility that western nations will soon have to offer resolute support to the defensive capabilities of Ukraine. The crisis has reached a decisive stage.

He recalled, rather emotionally, that western countries did not use strength against the Soviet Union block when the Berlin Wall was erected in 1961 yet, despite this, the ideas of liberal democracy ultimately won and the wall was demolished.

President Ilves described the speech by the Vice President of the United States of America, Joe Biden, as historically vigorous and conveying a clear message, including a point of importance for Estonia: that the United States will never accept the policy of spheres of influence. Vice President Biden also emphasised, repeatedly, that each country must have the right to choose its own allies.

An emotional address by the President of Ukraine, Petro Poroshenko, showed that Ukrainians

are worn down by the war, and they are also tired of endlessly proving that Russian armed forces are fighting in their territory.

"I do hope that the efforts of President Holland and Chancellor Merkel towards achieving peace will end in a permanent peace treaty that restores the territorial integrity of Ukraine and adheres to international law," told President Ilves.

Meetings between the Estonian Head of State and the President of Finland, Sauli Niinistö, the former United States Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright and the President of Slovenia, Borut Pahor, also focused on the issue of Ukraine.

President Ilves took the floor in a panel with the Mayor of Kiev, Vitali Klitchko, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sweden, Carl Bildt, and the leader of well-known think-tank, International Crisis Group, Jean-Marie Guehenno, where he spoke about Estonia's reform experiences.

"Domestic policy and economic reforms along with reducing corruption are inevitable in Ukraine, and I recommend that you launch the important reforms right now despite the military activities in eastern Ukraine," were the words of the Estonian Head of State when he addressed the representatives and friends of Ukraine.

At an invitation-only dinner focusing on cyber issues, the President, Toomas Hendrik Ilves, stressed the importance of the two-factor authentication process used in Estonia. This means that one password is no longer sufficient in the cyber world to protect sensitive information, whereas two-factor authentication renders us less vulnerable to cyber attacks.

"As a large part of our everyday life now happens on the internet, we must be very careful and resourceful to protect everything. We must also be aware of possible threats in cyber space and the alternatives for protecting ourselves against such threats," said President Ilves.

Office of the President
Public Relations Department

Phone +372 631 6229