

President Toomas Hendrik Ilves:

I would like to acknowledge the efforts and perseverance of the leaders of Germany and France. Our task is to restore the peaceful coexistence in Europe, which has been shaken this past year. The achievements in Minsk represent an important yet fragile step in this direction.

The real values of an agreement can only be tested upon its implementation. Today, we maintain the hope that the military activities that have destroyed thousands of lives and forced hundreds of thousands of people to abandon their homes will be stopped. I do hope that the ceasefire in Ukraine will become and remain a reality. This is what the people of Donetsk and Luhansk look forward to, together with people throughout all of Europe.

By its aggression in Ukraine, Russia has violated the very foundations of international law – the inviolability of borders and the prohibition on the use of force in foreign relations. We continue to support Ukraine's attempts to restore peace and ensure the independence of its country, its sovereignty and the inviolability of its territory.

We cannot even begin to discuss the easing of sanctions by the European Union before we have seen some visible and tangible results – the removal of Russian weapons and military personnel from Ukraine, and Ukraine restoring control over its borders and territory.

The Ukrainian people through their courage, willingness to fight back and resolve set an example for all of those who value freedom, democracy and every country's right to decide upon its chosen policies and allies.

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