

The President, Toomas Hendrik Ilves, who is in New York for the high-level opening week of the General Assembly of the United Nations, held a public discussion on the current international security situation at New York University with Professor Mark Galeotti, a lecturer at the university.

President Ilves and Professor Galeotti also spoke about international crime, corruption and its influence on the political elite, cyber crime, information war and subversion activities aimed at crumbling safety and the feeling of security among countries. They also discussed how the western world should proceed to seek solutions to the so-called Russian hybrid threats, which take different forms.

When asked about the speech given by the President of Russia at the UN, the Estonian Head of State responded by saying that Putin's address did start by making reference to the establishment of the UN, but it failed to mention all the international laws that Russia has violated. President Ilves emphasised: "The agreement of democratic countries in implementing sanctions following the annexation of Crimea and events in Eastern Ukraine has produced effective results."

President Ilves also spoke about Trans-Atlantic relations and responded to questions concerning NATO's deterrence policies towards Russia.

"NATO's effective collective defence along the eastern wing of the alliance is highly important. For Estonia, NATO's military credible deterrence attitude, planning of defence capabilities, permanent presence of the allies and their regular exercises are all equally important," explained the Estonian Head of State.

He described the emergence of extremist forces in Europe as a growing threat to security; the sources that fund such activities are giving rise to particular worries.

"Extreme right and left political forces are having a greater influence on relations between countries, Trans-Atlantic relations included. Even today, we can already see how the principles of liberal democracy are questioned, which also means xenophobia aimed against refugees and

opposition to NATO," President Ilves added.

Background information: this year, the Center for Global Affairs and the New York University School of Professional Studies launched a Center for Global Affairs Initiative for the Study of Emerging Threats. The discussion between President Ilves and security expert Mark Galeotti, who investigates international crime, untraditional conflicts and Russia, was the opening event of the initiative.

Office of the President
Public Relations Department