

President Toomas Hendrik Ilves today began consultations with representatives of the Riigikogu factions in order to find a candidate for the post of the Commander of the Defence Forces.

The Head of State listened to the opinion of politicians who represent the Pro Patria Union, Res Publica and the Estonian Centre Party in the Riigikogu, and tomorrow and the day after tomorrow he will meet with representatives of the Social Democratic Party, the Estonian People's Union and the Reform Party.

After that, President Ilves will meet with high-ranking military officers, among others Chief of the General Staff Brigadier General Alar Laneman, Commander of the Estonian National Defence College Major-General Ants Laaneots and Estonian Defence Attaché in the United States of America and Canada Brigadier General Vello Loemaa in order to form his opinion on a candidate for a new Commander of the Defence Forces whom he will present to the Riigikogu after consultations with the Prime Minister and the Riigikogu National Defence Committee.

"It is very important that the Estonian Defence Forces would become a modern shield that is capable together with our allies to guarantee efficient protection of the Estonian state but also to contribute to NATO joint operations," President Ilves said.

"Seeking a candidate for the post of the Commander of the Defence Forces can not be a personal matter to be solved by one politician or one party, neither can it be a discussion topics of the election campaign," the Head of State stressed. "We need a Commander of the Defence Forces who enjoys the support of the Riigikogu, who can in cooperation with the Government lead our national defence away from the reefs of mutual mistrust and dissension."

On October 26, the National Defence Council unanimously supported the proposal of the President of the Republic to release from office Vice-Admiral Tarmo Kõuts who had submitted his letter of resignation and had announced his intention to run as a candidate in the next parliamentary elections. The Head of the State has already sent a corresponding draft resolution to the Riigikogu.

Public Relations Department of the Office of the President
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