

President Toomas Hendrik Ilves today at Kadriorg met with NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer who is visiting the capitals of all NATO allies prior to the upcoming Riga Summit.

The meeting focused on Afghanistan that is the most important NATO operation, situation in Georgia who is aspiring to alliance membership, cooperation between NATO and the European Union, but also expectations in connection with the Riga Summit.

"Success of the Afghanistan mission is very important both for NATO and Estonia, as it is the biggest operation in the history of the Alliance and the biggest all time foreign mission for the Estonian Defence Forces as there will be 120 Estonian servicemen participating in the mission by the end of the year," President Ilves said. "Stable Afghanistan means a securer Europe and a securer world where the threat of terrorism is smaller and the spread of narcotics more obstructed."

Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer gave recognition to Estonia's considerable contribution in Afghanistan.

At the meeting President Ilves and NATO Secretary General expressed their concern at tense relations between Georgia and Russia.

"Georgia has to feel that they have friends and allies who support them also in difficult times," President Ilves said.

Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer indicated that this year NATO started the Intensified Dialogue with Georgia that is a precursor to enter the alliance Membership Action Plan (MAP).

# **The President of the Republic met with Secretary General of NATO**

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