

At today's meeting with Estonia's County Governors, President Toomas Hendrik Ilves emphasised the necessity of cooperation to keep people living in the country and to lure them back. "A false notion that people who live in the country are second-rate is widespread in Estonia. We must change this opinion together," said the President of the Republic at the beginning of the meeting.

The County Governors gave overviews of developments in their counties. Highlighted problems included infrastructural developments and the status of county hospitals and the problems related thereto. The poor condition of roads, the shortcomings of public transportation, and educational topics were also discussed. The positive aspects that were emphasised included more participation of the population in the community activities, positive population growth in some counties, and a general improvement of life in rural areas.

Treated as separate topics were problems related to the centralisation of state authority, the role of county governments and county governors, and cooperation with local government associations.

President Ilves announced his plan to visit all the counties during his term of office and asked the county governors, when preparing for the visits, to place the greatest emphasis on meetings with local people.

At the end of the meeting, the President expressed his hope for active cooperation and mutual support, and promised to definitely keep meeting with the county governors in the future.

Public Relations Department of the Office of the President  
Kadriorg, 7 December 2006