

Today at the invitation of President Toomas Hendrik Ilves, the Latvian Head of State, Vaira Vike-Freiberga, along with her husband, made a private visit to the President's Ärna farmstead in Abja Rural Municipality. The Presidents spoke about the role of small nations in the European Union, as well as about the Union's neighbourhood policy and supporting democratic changes in Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine.

The Presidents of Estonia and Latvia, as Presidents of border states of the European Union and NATO, confirmed that one of their aspirations is a democratic Russia, where the people have a secure and prosperous life and where the government supports European values in neighbouring countries and not autocratic regimes.

President Ilves introduced his Ärna farm, which has been restored during the last 15 years, and where Hans Rebane, the one-time Foreign Minister of Estonia and last pre-occupation Ambassador to Latvia, was born. Presidents Ilves and Vike-Freiberga visited the farm of artist Anu Raud in Pärsti Rural Municipality and the Heimtal Museum.

As a Christmas present, the Estonian Head of State gave his Latvian colleague a *Mulgi* shawl, and President Vike-Freiberga gave President Ilves two books - *A Hundred Great Latvians* and her biography.

Public Relations Department of the Office of the President  
Ärna, 16 December 2006