

According to President Toomas Hendrik Ilves, the Removal of Prohibited Structures Act passed by the Riigikogu today is in conflict with the Constitution. Therefore, the President will not proclaim the law when the final text of the act with the signature of the President of the Riigikogu will be received by the Office of the President.

Today in Jõgevamaa, in the course of giving a social studies class to the students of the senior grades at the Luua Forest School, President Ilves made a political declaration. Among other things, he expressed concern about the conscious disregard for the principle of the separation of powers established by the Constitution.

“The Riigikogu factions were aware of the conflicts with the Constitution comprised in the Removal of Prohibited Structures Act and they did not conceal this knowledge. This was confirmed by the address of the Chairman of the Legal Affairs Committee of the Riigikogu, and the leading experts on constitutional law of the political parties that supported the legislation have admitted to me that a contradiction exists between the law and the Constitution,” said the Head of State. “Thus, the members of the Riigikogu who voted for this law did so in full knowledge of the fact that the President cannot, by his oath of office, promulgate the law. Therefore, some politicians were driven by a desire to use the so-called „Bronze Soldier“ issue merely to draw attention to themselves, not by a wish to find an effective solution.”

President Ilves believes such behavior is irresponsible. “I believe that today’s unconstitutional decision in the Riigikogu was a result of the tense pre-election atmosphere, not the desire to challenge the legal order of the Republic of Estonia. Nonetheless, domestic political expediency can in no way justify playing with the Constitution,” said President Ilves in his declaration.

In his presentation to the students at Luua Forest School, President Ilves confirmed his earlier position that finding a balanced resolution for the so-called Bronze Soldier issue and the clarification of Estonia’s tragic history to all our compatriots is a job for Estonia itself.

“I repeat once more that the memory of those who perished during the war must be honored and military graves cannot be treated as ordinary politics. I condemn all attempts to glorify or justify the activities of the Soviet Union that occupied Estonia under the pretext of commemorating victims of the war,” said President Ilves.

He added that Estonia must not let itself be troubled by Russia's baseless accusations that Estonia is trying to reassess history or glorify fascism. "I hope that the Estonian government together with other state institutions will work out solutions that will enable Estonian residents to commemorate the victims of war without hurting anyone's feeling," said the Head of State.

President Ilves made his position regarding the Removal of Prohibited Structures Act known already today in order to alleviate tensions that might arise as a result of the passage of this law.

The full text of the declaration is available on the President's website at www.president.ee

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