

Today, in Kadriorg, President Toomas Hendrik Ilves discussed the proposal to amend the national defence chapter of the Constitution.

“The idea of this proposal is to guarantee clarity—in parliamentary countries, the defence forces are subordinated to the government and the appointment of the commander of the defence forces is within the jurisdiction of the government,” said President Ilves at the meeting.

“Currently the Commander of the Defence Forces is appointed by the Riigikogu upon the proposal of the President. Unfortunately, this is a ceremonial solution and does not increase the clarity of the civil management chain of command,” said the Head of State. “The current system produces fuzziness and vagueness, which have resulted in dissention between the Minister of Defence and the Commander of the Defence Forces, whoever has occupied these positions.”

President Ilves has previously met with the representatives of all the Riigikogu factions regarding this question, as well as with Board of the Riigikogu, the parliamentary National Defence Committee, the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and the Commander of the Defence Forces. Last week, the National Security Council unanimously supported the proposal.

“I will do my best to achieve the broadest possible consensus,” affirmed the Head of State.

President Ilves will submit the draft of the law to amend the Constitution to the Riigikogu during May.

The situation in the country, against the background of last week’s unrest and Russia’s aggressive attacks, was also discussed at the meeting. The Head of State acknowledged that in this situation, consensus, resolution, as well as tolerance toward one’s compatriots must be demonstrated.

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