

Estonian President Toomas Hendrik Ilves met with Nino Burjanadze, the Georgian Parliament Speaker yesterday in Tbilisi, who spoke about the preparations for the parliamentary elections and the changes planned by the authorities to make sure that the elections planned for the spring will take place in a better political climate and are technically correct.

“Estonia is ready to help Georgia in every way, and also to send experts,” said President Ilves. “Estonia like all the countries that are interested in Georgia’s democratic development hope that your parliamentary elections will be free, transparent, and democratic in respect to the campaign and the technical execution,” President Ilves affirmed to Parliament Speaker Burjanadze.

At the meeting, the strengthening of civil society in Georgia was also discussed, and especially increasing the significance of the institution of ombudsman and the creation of public broadcasting. In case of both topics, the President thought it possible that Estonia could send recognized people in these fields to advise Georgia.

“For instance, I cannot think of a better person than Allar Jõks, who has served successfully for seven years as Estonia’s Chancellor of Justice, to assist in the development of Georgia’s ombudsman institution,” said the Estonian Head of State.

In Tbilisi yesterday, President Ilves also met with Levan Gatsetšiladze, Salome Žurabišvili and David Usupašvili, leaders of the Georgian opposition.

The Estonian Head of State stressed the importance of communications between the opposition and authorities, and noted that Estonia supports Georgia’s reform aspirations, not specific individuals.

According to President Ilves, the relations between the authorities and opposition should be characterized by cooperation, mutual respect and avoidance of steps that would push the society beyond the boundaries of peaceful political contest.

The Estonian Head of State told the opposition leaders about Estonia's readiness to send experts to Georgia to promote the strengthening of the activities of the national election commission and the institution of ombudsman, and the rapid creation of public broadcasting, and invited representatives of the opposition to Estonia to become familiar with the organization of elections as well as the activities of the public broadcasting.

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