

President Toomas Hendrik Ilves, who is on a working visit to France, met today with French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner. President Ilves affirmed that Estonia welcomes France's plans to rejoin NATO's military structure.

Speaking about the results of the NATO Summit in Bucharest, the Estonian Head of State noted that although Georgia and Ukraine did not receive MAP, these two countries actually received an even better result – confirmation of their future accession. “Georgia and Ukraine are states that have chosen the path of democracy. Our task is to ask ourselves – what can we do to help them?” President Ilves said.

In addition to questions related to NATO's future and military cooperation, also under discussion were the main objectives of the French EU presidency, including developments in energy and climate policies.

In the discussions about the future of the European Union, President Ilves said that Estonia's views are very similar to those of France. “We must understand that no country can stand alone on behalf its principles, and in the global context all the European Union member states are actually small”, President Ilves said and stressed that the European Union needs common policies regarding many issues.

President Ilves and Foreign Minister Kouchner also spoke about cultural cooperation between the two countries, including a discussion about the intensification of language instruction and the translation of books.

Within the framework of the visit, the Estonian Head of State will also meet this afternoon with Pierre Lequillier, chairman of the European Union Select Committee of the French National Assembly, Josselin de Rohan, chairman of the Foreign and Security Commission of the Senat, and Denis Badré who is the chairman of the French-Baltic Friendship Group of the Senat. The visit will end with a meeting with Thierry de Montbrial, president of French Institute of International Relations (Institut Francais des Relations Internationales).

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