

President Toomas Hendrik Ilves visited Spring Storm on Tuesday, the largest annual exercise of the Estonian Defence Forces.

According to the Head of State, Spring Storm-type exercises are very important for countries like Estonia, with reserve armies, "It is important for conscripts to exercise together at the battalion and brigade level."

At the Spring Storm headquarters in the Aidu quarry, the head of the exercise, Commander of the Army Colonel Indrek Sirel, provided the President of the Republic with an overview of the various phases of the exercise and the tasks assigned the members of the Defence Forces.

"I am happy to see that members of the reserve forces, who belong to the Battle Support Battalion, are participating for the first time this year in Spring Storm," President Ilves said, adding that if men who have completed their compulsory service do not receive systematic and sustained follow-up training after joining the reserves, we cannot speak seriously of a reserve army.

President Ilves expressed his satisfaction that the Latvians, who were represented by battalion staff last year, are participating with an entire company this time. "The military cooperation between our countries has always provided good results, both in history—for instance at the Battle of Võnnu, the 90th anniversary of which we will commemorate next year—as well as in the recent past, in BALTPAT, BALTDEFCOL and other multinational projects," President Ilves said.

The Head of State also visited the mobile headquarters of the First Infantry Brigade and heard Staff Commander Lieutenant Colonel Artur Tiganik provide an overview of the role of the brigade in the exercise. President Ilves also spoke with the members of the Alutaguse and Viru Brigades of the Defense League participating in the exercise.

The Head of State was accompanied by Lieutenant General Ants Laaneots, the Commander of the Defence Forces.

President Ilves paid a visit to the Spring Storm exercise

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