

Yesterday in Kadriorg, President Toomas Hendrik Ilves and Evelin Ilves received King Albert II and Queen Paola of Belgium, who arrived on a state visit to Estonia.

“Your state visit to Estonia is of historical importance, because it is the first time a Belgian Head of State has visited Estonia,” President Ilves said, adding Estonia values its good relations with Belgium as one of the founding members of the European Union and Estonia’s trustworthy and reliable partner in the European Union and NATO.

“We are thankful to Belgium, which opened the way for the alliance’s air defence mission in the air space of the Baltic countries,” President Ilves said to King Albert II, who is the Commander-in-Chief of the Belgian Army. “Estonia and Belgium are allies not only in Europe but also, for instance, in Afghanistan where the soldiers of both countries have served on a very important mission.”

The Estonian Head of State gave King Albert II an overview of Estonia’s developments during the last 17 years.

“It is important that the Estonian people increasingly perceive the positive effect of European Union accession on the development of the society, which is expressed by constantly increasing support for the European Community,” President Ilves said. He recalled that 80 percent of the Estonian population feels they have benefited from European Union membership and 74 percent are optimistic in respect to the future of the Community.

Belgian King Albert II and Queen Paola will be in Estonia until June 12th. The Belgian Head of State will meet with President of the Riigikogu, Ene Ergma, and Prime Minister Andrus Ansip; he will also participate in a business seminar, visit the Rocca al Mare Open Air Museum and the Kumu Art Museum, as well as make a tour of Tallinn’s Old Town. Queen Paola will also visit the Vodja School in Roosna-Alliku Rural Municipality.

President Ilves met with the King and Queen of Belgium

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