

President Toomas Hendrik Ilves met with representatives of the Federation of Estonian Student Governments (EÕL), the Federation of Estonian Student Unions (EÜL) and the Federation of Estonian Youth Associations (ENL) in Kadriorg yesterday, with whom he exchanged ideas about the participation of young people in the processes directing the course of society.

“Organizations established at the initiative of the citizenry—and primarily youth organizations—are the backbone for shaping the future of Estonia,” President Ilves said at the meeting, “therefore, the state expects greater activism from its young people, and a greater level of participation in state politics.”

Joonas Pärenson from the EÜL said that more use should be made of young people in working out the decisions that affect them; and all young people, regardless of their economic situations, should have the right to acquire a high-quality education.

The Head of State cited the passive participation of young people in the Riigikogu and local elections as a worrying trend—“yet voting, in the form of the e-elections, has been made as convenient as possible, so that even those young people who are studying abroad can cast their votes.”

“The EÕL feels that the point made by President Ilves about young people being more involved by participating in local and national elections is important,” said Deivi Sarapson, the Chairman of the EÕL Board, “we have brought student closer to the system of democratic election through our events, such as “101 Children to Toompea”, and through our general meetings.”

According to President Ilves, the participation of young people in the development of the state at the local level is very important and he called upon youth organizations to cooperate more closely with the federations of local governments, which are very interested in local development.

At the meeting, Olger Tali provided the Head of State with a summary of the “participation metro” developed by the ENL, which can provide a good picture of the opportunities available to young people for participating in society. “We hope that by working together we can increase

the involvement of young people in the state's decision-making," Tali said.

"The more active you are, the more you will be noticed," the Head of State stressed at the end of the meeting. "The more you express your ideas, the better known your activities will be."

Office of the President  
Public Relations Department  
Phone +372 631 6229