

Today, President Toomas Hendrik Ilves visited the large Spring Storm 2009 military exercises in West-Viru County. Today, President Toomas Hendrik Ilves visited the large Spring Storm 2009 military exercises in West-Viru County, which is an exercise designed to bond the infantry battalion comprised of 2008-09 conscripts and transfer it to the reserves along with its support units.

The Estonian Head of State, who is also the highest national defence leader, was provided an overview of the progress of the exercises by Lieutenant-General Ants Laaneots, the Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Forces. The President visited the battle positions and operational headquarters; he also met with officers and conscripts.

“The professionalism of the members of the Defence Forces is impressive,” President Ilves acknowledged. “Spring Storm is representative of the development of the Defence Forces, as well as a final exam for the conscripts.”

“Estonia’s national defence is based on two firm foundations – on our initial independent defence capabilities and on a collective defence that comprises the joint action of our NATO allies for the mutual assistance of Estonia in case of military threat,” President Ilves stressed. “In this way, Estonia’s defence capabilities are guaranteed by a national defence system that involves the entire society, and includes the country’s military, civilian, economic, social and psychological defence.”

According to the Estonian Head of State, all Estonian residents can contribute to the strengthening of the country’s defence capabilities, because Estonia’s independent defence capabilities can only be effective if we act as a united Estonia. “The guarantee of Estonia’s defence capabilities is not just the responsibility of our Defence Forces; every individual and organization can make a contribution,” the President said.

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