

The President acknowledged the professionalism of border guards in guarding the border and the organisation of rescue operations, and also their close co-operation with the Police, the Environmental Inspectorate, and professional fishermen "A well-guarded border is an essential part of any state's security. Estonia's border is well guarded," confirmed the President, Mr. Toomas Hendrik Ilves, today, as he visited the Vasknarva, Alajõe, and Mustvee border guard stations along the eastern border of Estonia.

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"I hope that the compound institution, which will result from the merger of the Police, Border Guard and Citizenship Board will honour the culture and traditions of the border guards," said President Ilves. "Everything that is good must be continued."

The Head of State is convinced that the compound institution will be established in a way that will maintain the strong protection of Estonia's external border with regard to staff, equipment and budget.

"Regardless of the name of the institution, border guards will still remain border guards and policemen - policemen," remarked President Ilves.

"When protecting our external border, we cannot even give a centimetre; on the contrary, there are some spheres, and in particular the sphere of technical solutions, which require consistent modernisation," the Head of State emphasised.

President Ilves, who arrived for a two-day tour in Ida-Virumaa yesterday, visited AS Audes, which manufactures loudspeakers and transformers in Jõhvi, familiarised himself with the Ida-Viru Enterprise Centre, and met with gymnasium students who are taking media training.

In Manor Hotel Meintack in Mäetaguse, the President met with leaders of local authorities, with whom he discussed the possible merger plans.

Today, President Ilves also visited Iisaku Museum and Gymnasium, where there is a border guard training class, and Vaikla recreation Village, operated by Tiiu Sepp and Alexander Dubrov in Iisaku rural municipality.

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