

Today in Kadriorg, President Toomas Hendrik Ilves met with NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer who arrived in Estonia on a farewell visit. The President presented him with the Order of the Cross of Terra Mariana 1st Class in recognition of his services to the alliance and its member states.

"You have done great and productive work as the NATO Secretary General and you have been a good friend and ally to Estonia in the post-accession years," President Ilves said. "You have also fixed the principle that there are no large or small, old or new members in NATO, but rather all NATO members are equal."

At today's meeting, the Estonian Head of State and NATO Secretary General recognized the importance of the alliance's members contributing to foreign missions both militarily and with civil projects, especially in Afghanistan. At the same time, the defense of NATO's own territory continues to be very important, and the readiness to do so must be visible, credible and, as a result, formidable.

"While stressing the importance of foreign operations, we cannot make concessions regarding the security of our own territory and vice versa - the challenges of the 21st century do not allow us to focus only on local problems," President Ilves said.

Also the preparation of the alliance's new strategic concept was discussed at the meeting between the Estonian Head of State and NATO Secretary General.

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