

This evening, the President of the Republic of Estonia, Mr. Toomas Hendrik Ilves, and the Head of State of Latvia, Mr. Valdis Zatlers, met with the Secretary of State of the United States of America, Ms Hillary Clinton in Germany. President Ilves is in Berlin to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall.

The meeting, which was initiated by Ms. Clinton, focused on trans-Atlantic relations and several international key issues.

The secretary of state and the presidents of Estonia and Latvia said that NATO's security is indivisible and this is equally ensured to all members of the alliance.

According to President Ilves, the relations between Estonia and the United States, like the other Baltic states and East-Europe, are laid down on a strong foundation. However, in a situation in which many of the old problems in Eastern Europe have been resolved and both the European Union and NATO have expanded considerably, efforts must be made on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean to maintain the special relations that have prevailed between the United States and East-European countries for the past 15 years.

"We do believe that this serves the interests of both of us," emphasised the Estonian Head of State.

The new strategic concept of NATO, which is to be based on visibility, credibility and pressure, was also discussed at the meeting.

The Presidents, Mr. Ilves and Mr. Zatlers and Secretary of State Ms. Clinton discussed the situation in the Balkans as well as Macedonia's and Serbia's prospects for accession to the European Union.

"The success of these reforming countries ultimately serves the interests of all of us, both the European Union and the United States of America," said President Ilves. "Macedonia and

Serbia will continue to need our support and understanding and it is our opportunity and duty to speed up their success story.“

When discussing the situation in the most important NATO operation in Afghanistan, everyone assured that the alliance must neither tire nor hesitate there.

“We will continue despite the difficulties and are convinced that NATO will be successful,” said President Ilves, who also emphasised the need to increase civil contribution to Afghanistan, which is required for both the political and economical reconstruction of the country.

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