

The President, Mr. Toomas Hendrik Ilves, met today in Kadriorg with the ambassadors of Finland and Norway, who presented their letters of credence to the head of state.

“It is symbolic and characteristic of the inter-connected relations between Estonia and Finland that the new Ambassador of Finland is presenting his letter of credence on the very same day as the opening of the Estonian House in Helsinki,” said President Ilves, when meeting with the Ambassador of Finland, Mr. Aleksi Härkönen, the former Foreign Affairs Advisor to the Finnish Head of State.

“This demonstrates the modernisation of our relations in the same way that the new Viro Centre on the northern shore of the Gulf of Finland is a new generation Estonian House, which helps to introduce Estonia, promote exports, acquire investments, and promote estophilia under the same roof; relations between the republics of Estonia and Finland are more and more focused on the future and our shared goals,” said the Estonian Head of State, recalling that next year both Tallinn and Turku will be the Cultural Capitals of Europe.

President Ilves and Ambassador Härkönen, who have known each other since 1993 when both were employed in the Washington embassies of their respective countries, also discussed regular co-operation. The Estonian Head of State said, among other things, that Estonia and Finland together are role models for closer co-operation in the Baltic Sea region.

“The excellent relations between the two of us can be an inspiring example for the whole region,” said President Ilves. “Let us both prepare for next year, when Finland will be the presiding country of NB8 and the Nordic Council of Ministers, while Estonia is presiding over the Council of the Baltic Sea States.”

In his meeting with the Norwegian Ambassador, Ms Lise Nicoline Kleven Grevstad, President Ilves thanked Norway for supporting a number of important projects in Estonia, the opening of the SOS Children’s Village in Põltsamaa being among the most recent.

The Estonian Head of State described Norway as “Estonia’s strong partner in NATO, as it shares our views of the new strategic concept for the future of the alliance”.

The Nordic-Baltic co-operation (NB8) was also discussed at the meeting; according to President Ilves, this is something to be developed and intensified.

The Estonian Head of State offered his congratulations to Norway for the conclusion of the border negotiations with Russia, which lasted for 40 years, and have now resulted in the signing of a border agreement between the two countries.

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