

The President, Mr. Toomas Hendrik Ilves, today moderated the “Nonproliferation, Arms Control and Disarmament: What’s Next?” panel today at the on-going, prestigious Munich Security Conference.

“This is an historical day, as today, here in Munich, the United States of America and Russia exchanged the letters of ratification of the START memorandum, which restricts the use of strategic nuclear weapons,” President Ilves said.

The Estonian Head of State stated that START only marks the beginning in the sphere of arms control.

“Some progress is also required in the sphere of tactical nuclear weapons and conventional weapons,” the Estonian Head of State emphasised. “The current situation, in which there is no balance with regard to tactical nuclear weapons in Europe and the CFE conventional arms control memorandum is not working, creates instability and will not contribute to real security.”

Apart from issues concerning arms control, the options for restricting the spread of nuclear weapons to Iran and measures to be taken with respect to North Korea, which already possesses such weapons, were also discussed.

Aside from the traditional arms control issues, President Ilves also emphasised the need for more efficient international co-operation in the sphere of controlling and anticipating cyber threats.

Mr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Germany and the current Chairman of the SPD Parliamentary Group; Mr. Ahmet Davutoglu, the Turkish minister of Foreign Affairs; Mr. Sergei Ivanov, Russian Deputy Prime Minister; Mr. Jon Kyl, a republican senator and arms control expert of the United States of America; and Ms. Ellen Tauscher, Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security of the United States of America, took part in the panel that was moderated by the Estonian Head of State.

Yesterday at the Munich Security Conference, the Estonian Head of State spoke regarding cyber defence and cyber security in general to the leaders of the future of more than twenty countries. His audience included the shapers of foreign policies in their respective countries, high-ranking civil servants, experts and analysts.

The impact of the financial crisis on general security and safety, cyber security, developments in the Arab world, and the future of Afghanistan will also be discussed at Munich, in what is the 47<sup>th</sup> such security and foreign policy conference.

President Ilves will return to Estonia on Sunday, 6 February.

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