

Over a period of 14 years, reserve officers have shown us that national defence is not a problem to be settled by someone else, from a distance, but national defence is the duty of each of us, said the President, Mr. Toomas Hendrik Ilves, yesterday at the general meeting of the Estonian Reserve Officers' Association.

The Head of State acknowledged the activities that people in Estonia are able to conduct on a voluntary basis in societies, associations and communities.

“However, as the highest commander of national defence, I am extremely pleased with organisations that bring the initiatives of citizens and national defence together,” said President Ilves, naming the Estonian Defence League and the Estonian Reserve Officers' Association : “I could not agree more with your mission statement, taken from Mr. Winston Churchill: “The reservist is twice the citizen”.”

President Ilves sees the strength of citizens' societies as one of our main defences against both internal and external threats that may endanger the democratic Republic of Estonia.

“Voluntarism expressed in defending our country or the defence will of our own citizens is the best deterrent a country can employ,” said the Head of State. “Aggressors must always consider that every citizen of such a country is its potential enemy, a fighter.”

“Therefore, the more of you who participate in our national defence system, the more will see how respected people from the cultural or business sector and civil service participate in Estonia's national defence, on a voluntary basis, and the stronger the example you show will be,” President Ilves said.

President Ilves: volunteers are our main deterrent

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