

“Defence and deterrence capabilities, visibility, solidarity and plausibility have made NATO the most successful international defence organisation,” stated the President, Toomas Hendrik Ilves, at today’s meeting with the NATO Secretary General, Anders Fogh Rasmussen. “During the second half of the 20th century, this greatly contributed to the birth of a democratic Europe; in the 21st century, NATO is relying, more than ever and more successfully, on the principles of smart defence.”

When speaking about the continuance of a long-term NATO air security mission in the Baltic states, the Estonian Head of State said, “We have clearly stated repeatedly that the air security mission is not only unavoidable in a military sense, but it also represents a good example of smart defence and an expression of NATO’s internal solidarity with respect to its member states.”

President Ilves reiterated that Estonia is admirably performing its duties in the alliance, is willing to consider increasing its monetary contribution to air security and, therefore, is entitled to expect support from its allies.

“Baltic air space is also NATO’s air space; it is NATO’s task to defend this air space. This can only be done by the fighters of NATO member states located in the Baltic states,” President Ilves emphasised.

According to his the President, it is important for us that the long-term solution regarding air security is adopted at the forthcoming NATO summit in Chicago, one of the key outcomes being the enhanced defence and deterrence capabilities of NATO.

“This would also mean the maintenance of trans-Atlantic relations, the contribution of the alliance’s European member states to the defence capabilities of their own dominion and, consequently, – for NATO – the continued presence of the US armed forces in Europe, enhancing NATO’s cyber defence ambitions,” President Ilves listed.

The Estonian Head of State and NATO’s Secretary General also discussed the alliance’s operation in Afghanistan and its possible developments after the end of the mission’s military stage.

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