

"Above all, the parliament itself can stand up for the reputation and dignity of parliament," President Toomas Hendrik Ilves said in a meeting with the Select Committee on the Application of Anti-Corruption Act. "I consider the parliamentary system to be an essential value and strength of Estonia. The Riigikogu is strengthened by the ethical and transparent behaviour of its members."

As the next evaluation of the Council of Europe Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) focuses on the prevention of corruption of lawmakers, and the general code of ethics and possibilities for self-regulation will also be discussed, today's meeting in Kadriorg also touched upon drawing up a code of ethics for Riigikogu.

Answering a question by the chairman of the committee, Andres Anvelt, regarding who should draw up the code of ethics, President Ilves said: "It is obvious to me that only the Riigikogu can impose rules of behaviour on its members. Therefore, no one else can compose the code of ethics."

According to the head of state, it would be natural to include representatives of non-governmental organisations and experts in the process, since considering these guidelines is important for society as a whole, not just parliament.

"But let us be honest with ourselves: the code of ethics only has an effect and meaning if it is taken seriously and if ignoring the principles of ethical behaviour draws strong condemnation," President Ilves emphasised.

The agenda of the meeting also included issues related to the funding of parties, the need to follow the traditions of legislation and transparency and the current state of fighting corruption in Estonia.

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