

For the survival of Estonia, we consider national defence that is visible, credible and a deterrent as highly important; at the same time, we should not forget that the security of Estonia and our people can only be defended as well as we safeguard our own internal security, told the President, Toomas Hendrik Ilves, at today's official reception to celebrate the 90th anniversary of the Estonian Border Guard.

In terms of citizenship and migration issues, the border guard and police together with the rescue board and security police are the keepers of Estonia's internal security on the walls of our state, based on the rule of law, stated the Head of State, adding: "You have the trust of me, both as your President and as a citizen."

Estonia's success in solving computer crimes or adeptness in guarding our borders sets an example for many countries, and people come here to learn, which is a strong endorsement, especially as we are reminded of the difficult start we had 20 years ago, told President Ilves. Additionally, our border guards have given a suitable 21st century definition to "reliable border" – the border is well guarded and we have well-trained men and modern technology – which is demonstrated by our quick apprehending of people who cross our border illegally and our highly smooth international co-operation; at the same time, we ensure the free movement of people, in compliance with the principles of Schengen visa space.

President Ilves highlighted the fact that those who safeguard our internal security must be closer to the citizens – more visible and powerful within the legal framework – and, among other things, we need better risk assessment than ever for that purpose; our risk evaluation must focus on public sentiment towards security and safety.

He considered as extremely important the sense of security experienced by officials who protect the internal security of Estonia, and, in doing so, the security of us all.

"First of all, it is your own strong conviction that the police and border guard can make Estonia and our people feel secure and, should this feeling waiver for some reason, you have wisdom and strength in sufficient quantities to have it restored," told President Ilves. "Security also means that large-scale changes within institutions are rational; they are best explained by saying that they give strength and will not reduce our motivation to work."

This also represents security in knowing that you have the best possible leaders who can stand for Estonia's security and that of their subordinates with equal passion, told the Head of State.

"Security is knowing that the country you serve will not consider the wage issues of its law and order structures as coldly as an accountant would. And if someone launches an attack against a law enforcement member, this is equal to an attack against the state and the state will mete out realistic punishment to the culprit," emphasised President Ilves.

He thanked the border guards and policemen for their service and their next of kin for the support and understanding that they provide.

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