

"The message of the US-Baltic summit is clear and visible: the security of the United States of America and Europe continues to be inseparable," told the Estonian Head of State, Toomas Hendrik Ilves, who yesterday met, together with the leaders of Latvia and Lithuania, Andris Bērziņš and Dalia Grybauskaitė, with the President of the USA, Barack Obama and the Vice President, Joe Biden.

"The Baltic states, just like a democratic Europe in general, needs the United States of America and the United States of America needs their European partner," told President Ilves. "The USA's presence is as important for us as it was in the 20th century when the United States ensured the security of democratic Europe during the cold war, giving hope that independence can be restored to those who had been deprived of their freedom and helped us to restore our independence."

According to the confirmation given by President Obama, the expression of NATO's collective defence or the validity of Article 5 is beyond any doubt; he described NATO as the axis for Trans-Atlantic co-operation.

The Baltic states and the USA with other allies have participated, as brothers in arms, in numerous NATO military operations, the most recent being the alliance's most complicated foreign mission to Afghanistan, and the US Head of State acknowledged Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania for the energy and vision they have contributed to NATO.

"Countries that jointly respect democracy and human rights often have no choice – they have to adopt decisive measures to protect their values and security, just like it happened after 2001," told the Estonian Head of State. "This is our responsibility – to confront evil and protect those who are weaker, the civil population included."

The situation that has emerged in Syria was also discussed at the US-Baltic summit. The use of chemical warfare is a horrible crime and a punishment to match must be meted out, President Ilves confirmed.

When discussing the defence co-operation between the USA and the Baltic states, President

Ilves said that no one should have reason to doubt – the United States of America as our ally in NATO is deeply and consistently interested in the independence and security of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. This fact is confirmed by joint exercises and trainings, numerous training programmes and mutual consultations.

"Europe will continue to seek the USA's commitment to our region, which includes giving the eastern neighbours of the European Union – provided that they have successfully done their homework – a chance to decide, freely and by themselves, where they want to belong, without being threatened and intimidated," emphasised the Estonian Head of state. "Here, the European Union and the United States will, once again, defend democracy and human rights together – the values that we believe in and attach importance to at international level."

He stressed the importance of signing an Agreement of Association with Ukraine at the European Union Eastern Partnership Summit in November and having the agreement initialised with Moldova, Georgia and Armenia.

"It is inevitable and our moral responsibility to give hope and a goal for those who are worth it and have taken the European way," told President Ilves.

Estonia shares its experiences and assistance with other reform-minded countries both in Europe and further afield, mostly focusing on e-governance, cyber security and the strengthening of civic society. The USA and Estonia are together leading a network for advising new democratic countries and their leaders, the LEND (Leaders Engaged in New Democracies).

According to President Obama, the Baltic states have become donors and set an example for countries that also want to be successful.

The Estonian Head of State emphasised: "The success story of the Baltic states, spun over the two decades after the restoring of their independence, will today encourage us to support the nations that have established democratic reforms as their target."

The Head of State of the USA, Barack Obama, acknowledged Estonia as a strong ally in NATO, being among the very few of the alliance that have contributed two percent of its GDP to national defence even in the economically complicated time and characterised President Ilves as an important promoter of Internet freedom and e-governance.

"Europe has the obligation of being a responsible ally, which will mean both a political and economic contribution to our common security," President Ilves confirmed.

The Estonian Head of State characterised the negotiations on the free trade agreement between the European Union and the USA as going smoothly and without hindrances and looking for solutions together as important. This could be the most ambitious free trade agreement that has ever been concluded and would join markets of more than 800 million people. Trade between the EU and the USA today contributes approximately one third of the global trade.

Presidents Obama, Ilves, Bērziņš and Grybauskaitė also discussed the co-operation in the Baltic Sea region and admitted close and daily co-operation between the Baltic and Nordic states, as well as on the Trans-Atlantic axis.

"We will be strong and enjoy more opportunities when we act together and pool our efforts for shared goals, starting from the environment and economy, use of information communication technology and transport and energy associations; the Baltic and Nordic states will be reliable partners for each other in settling these issues," confirmed President Ilves.

[Remarks by President Obama and the Presidents of Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia](#)

Office of the President
Public Relations Department
Phone +372 631 6229