

The President, Toomas Hendrik Ilves, who congratulated the Baltic Defence College on its 15th anniversary, invited Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania to contribute more to national defence.

"The current co-operation between the Baltic states has contributed to the integration of the three of us with NATO and allows us to use our defence resources smartly," the Estonian Head of State acknowledged.

He repeated the words he had said in his Independence Day speech on 24 February – there will always be a struggle for power in the world, a struggle for values, but also human rights and the essence of democracy.

"The events in Ukraine show that this struggle is also taking place within Europe. This conveys a loud and clear message to Estonia and the Baltic Sea region in general: we must do more in the sphere of national defence. Sufficient expenditures on national defence remain very important for us for security reasons – this goes for Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania," President Ilves emphasised.

"NATO will only remain reliable as long as the partners of the alliance remain reliable and responsible. The credibility of NATO in our region will depend both on the willingness of our allies to protect us and the efforts made by the Baltic states to spend some money on our defences. This is the main message I want to convey today," told the Estonian Head of State.

He encouraged the Baltic Defence College to enhance its academic visibility in the Baltic and Nordic region.

"You should make your voice louder in regional security matters," President Ilves encouraged. "Secondly, increase the proportion of cyber and IT issues in the military education curriculum. The cyber defence conference, which is due to discuss the teaching of cyber defence to officers and the component of cyber defence in the curriculum of officers, represents a significant step in this direction."

President Ilves: the Baltic states must contribute more to defence

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