Honourable Ms. Chairman,
Respected Members of the Riigikogu,
Dear guests!

As you know, the adopting and updating of the National Security Concept is prescribed in the Peacetime National Defence Act. The document, that was in effect until now, the National Security Concept adopted in 2001, dealt with the period when Estonia was on its way towards NATO and European Union accession. These goals have been achieved by now, and therefore, the need has arisen to update the National Security Concept.

I’m glad to stand before you today to present a document, that is the result of the long-term endeavours of many government agencies, that has been discussed twice at Government meetings, and has thereafter been approved at a Government Session. Both the Riigikogu National Defence Committee and Foreign Affairs Committee made their recommendations before the Government’s final deliberation, so that a whole list of their proposals are reflected in the document.

The National Security Concept is a basic framework document, which, in view of the National Security Policy goal, defines the evaluating of Estonia’s security environment and prescribes what should be done to achieve the goal of the National Security Policy. The National Security Concept deals with the basic guidelines for ensuring Estonia’s national security. Therefore, the National Security Concept has a double role: on the one hand, it is a foreign policy document, which deals with Estonia’s activities in the sphere of international politics; on the other hand, it is a framework document, which coordinates activities in, and establishes basic guidelines for, the domestic sphere. The National Security Concept encompasses both the goal of the National Security Policy and the means for achieving it, as well as gives a clear indication, in the foreign policy sphere, of how we see our international status.

Estonia’s national security is ensured by the coordinated harnessing of all internal and foreign policy means at our disposal. Therefore, the National Security Concept reflects several different spheres. The document brings forth the basic guidelines of Estonia’s National Security Policy, which are:
· To actively participate in the work of both NATO and European Union structures as well as to improve cooperation with other Member States;

· To participate, in accordance with our commitments and capabilities, in the international security system and corresponding cooperative endeavours;

· To develop military defence in cooperation with allies so as to ensure Estonia’s defence capability;

· To ensure the democratic development of society and to enhance the nation’s internal security;

· To enhance social, economic, and environmental stability.

The document is based upon the assumption that the National Security Policy can be dealt with as a whole only if Foreign Policy, Defence Policy, and Internal Security Policy are mutually coordinated.

The first chapter of the National Security Concept brings forth Estonia’s position in the international security environment and describes the threats to national security. Compared to the previous document, adopted in 2001, the overview of threats in the present document has changed and developed primarily in the so-called “soft threats” sector. At the same time, the basic principles of international relations haven’t changed, and states, as before, have differing and often conflicting interests. Therefore, in the National Security Concept there are also, side by side, both new and traditional security threats.

The most significant development affecting Estonia in the course of the last few years has been accession to NATO and the European Union, which brought with it both rights and commitments. Estonia’s interests and tasks in the new international environment are more extensive concerning both content and territory. More than before, Estonia’s national security is also being affected by security developments in geographically distant regions.

In addition to the change in Estonia’s international status, the international security environment as a whole has also changed: the relations between states are more complicated and faceted than before; various problems have become mutually intertwined; and together with the positive effects of globalisation, the threats associated with it have also become apparent.

After the 2001 terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, as well as in Madrid in 2003, it is clear, that international terrorism poses a much greater threat than ever before to the security of both states and individuals. Therefore, Estonia consistently participates in efforts directed against international terrorism, and supports the activities of all international organisations for preventing terrorism and its spreading. Estonia fulfils the United Nations Security Council resolutions directed against terrorism, and is a party to all the major international anti-terrorist conventions.

The second chapter of the National Security Concept deals with foreign policy in the ensuring of national security. The ensuring of Estonia’s national security is directly dependent upon the state’s international status, and therefore, foreign policy plays an
ever greater role in ensuring national security. Membership in NATO and the European Union has no doubt reinforced Estonia’s national security -- Estonia has become an essential participant in the contemporary European international relations arena. The ensuring of Estonia’s national security, which encompasses foreign policy, will, from now on, require greater efforts and resources.

To ensure national security, Estonia’s foreign policy must simultaneously follow four different but coordinated courses. These are: membership in NATO and the European Union; close relations with allies, primarily the United States; and participation in the development of the security environment of the Baltic Sea region. All aforementioned tangents of activity are, on their own, very essential, but at the same time, Estonia’s foreign policy is complete only as a result of the coordination of all these elements. In the field of achieving Foreign Policy goals, an important role is also played by Estonia’s active participation in other international organisations such as the UN, OSCE, and the Council of Europe. Participation in international organisations offers opportunities for increasing global and regional security, thereby ensuring Estonia’s national security. All these aspects are separately dealt with in the National Security Concept.

The third chapter of the National Security Concept is devoted to the military aspects of the National Security Policy. Estonia will protect itself in any circumstance and against an enemy of any superiority. Estonia’s military defence is planned as a North Atlantic Treaty Article 5 operation, and is ensured by cooperation with allied forces.

The functions of Estonian military structures have, after NATO accession, increased significantly -- in addition to the primary independent defence capability, it has also become a function of the military structures to ensure the allies’ collective defence.

The Defence Forces and the Defence League, along with the Ministry of Defence, ensure their readiness to fulfil the following basic national defence roles:

- collective defence and the management of international crises directly threatening the security of Estonia and/or other NATO Member States;
- demonstration of national sovereignty for the purpose of ensuring control over Estonia’s territory, territorial waters, and airspace;
- participation in international crisis management and peace operations, including European Union operations;
- international defence cooperation;
- assistance to civilian structures in the solving of emergency situations.

Estonia’s Concept of Military Operations and the Defence Forces structure is determined by the National Military Strategy, which is presently being drafted.

The fourth chapter of the National Security Concept deals with the ensuring of internal security. The enhancing of internal security, which encompasses the consolidating of the rule of law, is an essential part of Estonia’s National Security Policy -- within the changed international environment, internal threats are often caused by external factors. The strengthening of economic security, as well as the enhancing of social and environmental safety are also dealt with separately. Compared with the National Security Concept adopted in 2001, several new concepts
such as national security matters pertaining to power and energy, information technology, marine safety, and problems connected with HIV/AIDS are introduced.

Respected Riigikogu Members,

The goal of the Estonian National Security Policy is to preserve Estonia’s independence and sovereignty, territorial integrity, constitutional order, and public safety.

I would like to stress once more, that although Estonia’s NATO and European Union accession has markedly enhanced national security, it does not mean, that there is no longer a need for our consistent and systematic activity in the security and foreign policy sectors. But rather, it marks the beginning of a new era in the ensuring of Estonia’s national security. And the National Security Concept is the most essential document for establishing the guidelines in this field.

To be successful in these endeavours, the formulating of Estonia’s National Security needs to be supported both politically and materially, as well as with the resources that are used every day to defend our independence.

I thank you.