

His Excellency
Mr Boris Pistorius
Federal Minister of Defence
Federal Republic of Germany

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For more than four years, I have had the honour of serving the Estonian people as the Minister of Defence. I have also been privileged to work with you to support Ukraine and strengthen European security. These extraordinary years have required us to act with determination, speed and responsibility.

During this period, my guiding principle has been simple: we must act decisively, not hesitate. As a result, Estonia's defence spending has increased from two to more than five percent of GDP, we have significantly strengthened our military capabilities, close to doubled our armed forces; invested in ammunition, new weapons systems; developed air defence, coastal defence, indirect fire and drone capabilities and together with our Allies, established the Estonian Division.

Leadership, however, also means responsibility. Recent observations by Estonia's State Audit Office concerning the accounting of stocks within the Defence Forces and an ammunition acquisition for Ukraine, where the contractual partner failed to fulfil its obligations, have raised the question of political responsibility. While a minister does not conduct the day-to-day accounting of stocks nor negotiate procurement contracts, the minister ultimately bears responsibility for the defence sector as a whole.

I have therefore decided to take the political responsibility and resign as the Minister of Defence from next week.

I do so with a clear conscience and full confidence that we have made the right strategic choices for Estonian, European and Ukrainian security and defence.

Estonia's commitment to European and transatlantic security will remain unwavering and above all, we must continue our steadfast support for Ukraine. Ukrainians are fighting not only for their own freedom and territorial integrity, but also for the security of Europe. Europe must neither tire nor hesitate in supporting them and must continue to find ways to support the Ukrainians. Even if it comes with risks.

Thank you sincerely for your cooperation, trust and friendship over these years. I highly appreciate your leadership in further strengthening our close defence ties, from growing industrial cooperation to Germany's clear commitment to the security of the Eastern Flank of NATO. I am especially grateful to the 1st German-Netherlands Corps for assuming command responsibility for Estonia and Latvia, and for your personal presence in Valga this summer, as well as Germany's persistent contribution to NATO's Air Policing and Air Defence in Estonia, and for your significant role in the maritime domain on the Baltic Sea. It has been a privilege to work alongside you in strengthening our common security.

So, I wish you strength, determination and every success in carrying this responsibility forward.

Hanno Pevkur
Minister