

(TALLINN) - Estonian President Toomas-Hendrik Ilves is among European leaders who will not attend a Yalta summit in mid-May, his office said on Tuesday, citing a busy schedule as a reason.

"Estonian President Toomas Hendrik Ilves has got an invitation to attend the summit of East and Central Europe states in Ukraine but President Ilves cannot attend because he will attend the Lennart Meri conference held at the same time in Tallinn," the office told Estonian media.

Ukraine faces growing isolation as several EU presidents and the EU chief have voiced plans to miss the Yalta summit and the Euro 2012 football tournament over its treatment of jailed ex-premier Yulia Tymoshenko.

The fifth Lennart Meri Conference, "The Future of Democratic Capitalism", will be held May 11-13 and will be attended by prominent political analysts from a number of countries.

Writer, filmmaker and diplomat Lennart Meri, one of the most prominent politicians in Central and Eastern Europe in the 1990s was Estonian president in 1992-2001. Meri died in 2006.

The theme that unites this year's discussions at the conference is the viability and sustainability of the democratic market economy as the basis of contemporary Western society.

"The recession in Europe and the United States, the competition from authoritarian capitalism, the dissatisfaction of societies with their elites, and the decreasing relevance of the West in the global economy and world politics have all challenged democratic capitalism and will form the backdrop to our conference," the organisers said on the conference website.

"More concretely, we will address issues such as the economy of the eurozone, the relationships between key EU member states, recent changes in Russian society and politics, the crisis in Syria and the wider Middle East, the US presidential elections, developments in the cyber landscape, the agenda for NATO's Chicago Summit, and many other topical problems."

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