

Discussing the fate of the European Union in an interview published by Postimees on Monday, President Toomas Hendrik Ilves said that he does not understand the fear people have when encountering the word "federation."

Federalism, Ilves said, was first brought to life as a concept 200 years ago by US statesmen John Jay, James Madison and Alexander Hamilton.

At the time, the US faced a problem of how to reassure smaller states that they will be heard while guaranteeing larger states that their interests will not be neglected.

"My concern for the concept of federalism is that only few understand what it actually means. This tool, that is intended for the protection of the small, has been inverted. Until we have clarified [the concept], populists and 'geniuses' exploit that ignorance in every nation," Ilves said.

In a federation, he said, more decisions will be made locally than in Brussels. "As a matter of fact, I prefer not to use the term 'determined in Brussels,' because who in truth decides in Brussels? In reality it is the prime ministers of Estonia, Italy, Denmark and Luxemburg," Ilves said.

Additionally, the president criticized the idea of having direct elections for the EU presidency. "This will not materialize, as a directly elected president will always be French or a Portuguese, Spaniard, Italian or Romanian who has effortlessly learned French. These votes stack up," said Ilves.

Original article on the ERR News [webpage](#) .