

By Stephen Fidler

Toomas Hendrik Ilves says region as a whole shouldn't be criticized because of reaction of some of its governments

DAVOS, Switzerland—Estonian President Toomas Hendrik Ilves criticized what he called the demonization of all Eastern European countries by politicians elsewhere in Europe because of the reaction of some governments to the migration crisis

"We've seen a return to the demonization of Eastern Europe" as a whole, Mr. Ilves said in an interview on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum annual meeting. "The point is that Estonia has actually been very progressive," he added.

"It's important when senior politicians in large countries make blanket statements," he said.

He highlighted a comment this week from German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier, who told reporters that he hoped Eastern Europe wouldn't close itself off from the rest of the European Union.

Mr. Ilves said he got "dumped on at home" for being supportive of German policy on refugees in speeches and interviews "and then I read we're a bunch of troglodytes again."

He said there were already indications that EU funds might be directed away from countries in Eastern Europe, because they have failed to show solidarity over migration. "It's hard to argue with that," he said.

Governments including Hungary, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic have resisted German efforts to relocate a few of the million refugees that arrived in Germany and other northern European countries last year. The new Polish government has also been highly critical of Berlin's approach.

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