

What is currently happening in Ukraine is a battle between Europe and non-Europe; it is not solely a military issue, with Russian aggression as one party; instead, it is a conflict of values, a struggle between a closed and an open society, President Toomas Hendrik Ilves noted after meeting with Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko, Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk and Foreign Minister Pavlo Klimkin in Kiev today.

The Estonian Head of State expressed support for Ukrainian territorial integrity and President Poroshenko's efforts to find a solution to the conflict. This must entail a quick withdrawal of Russian armed units and military equipment from eastern Ukraine, and also closing the border to weapons shipments.

"As long as Russia has not admitted its participation in this conflict, we cannot consider its actions in finding a solution to the conflict reliable," President Ilves said.

He announced Estonia's willingness to admit to hospitals in Tallinn and Tartu those people who were seriously injured while fighting for Ukrainian freedom and to admit those injured in battle for follow-up treatment at the Seli Rehabilitation Centre.

At the meeting with Ukrainian leaders, the Estonian Head of State had in-depth discussions about the co-operation of Ukraine and the European Union.

"The Association and Free Trade Agreement is an issue between Ukraine and the European Union; it must be implemented and no third party should have a say in the matter," President Ilves said.

Ukraine has a chance, perhaps the last chance in our foreseeable future, to reform itself to be as successful and as economically and politically influential as Poland, the Estonian Head of State said.

He noted that in the frontline - like Ukraine has been for all of 2014 - many find it difficult to see

the future when the present has been shattered, and added, "But it is for the sake of the future, for the sake of children and their children, that Ukraine is waging the battles of the present. Both literally as well as metaphorically."

Any war will eventually come to an end and villages, towns, schools, factories and airports will be rebuilt; however, it is more difficult to build the trust and support of citizens. It should be based on the conviction of millions that Ukraine is the country of them all, that the country offers care and understanding, not bitterness and revenge.

"Political, constitutional and economic reforms are essential in building a strong and successful Ukraine, despite the extremely difficult current security situation," President Ilves stressed.

"Ukraine has an historic opportunity to build a democratic, functioning state that would meet the expectations of millions for reform, change and a better life," the Estonian Head of State said. "As a state, Ukraine needs support - the support of democratic countries, but most of all the support of its people, so that they would all feel as Ukrainian citizens."

He recalled the successful reforms of Estonia after the re-establishment of independence, outlining their most important keywords: "Resolve. Decisiveness. Trust in the youth. Open government that relies on the e-solutions of information technology and wards off corruption. Transparency in shaping a business climate based on laws and rules that would inspire trust in foreign investors. The general reforming spirit of the authorities and the realisation that unfinished reforms eat away at that very trust; that reforms are successful when they interlink."

President Ilves promised that Estonia would support Ukraine in every way in introducing and using its reform experiences.

President Poroshenko called the visit of the Estonian Head of State a strong show of support of great symbolic weight.

Office of the President

President Ilves met with Ukrainian leaders

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