

Ukraine chooses its own path and for this it has become a victim of aggression. The European Union as a whole must stand with Ukraine in its support to the country," President Toomas Hendrik Ilves said on the opening panel of the 11th Yalta European Strategy (YES) Annual Meeting. Due to the annexation of Crimea, the prestigious international conference is being held in Kiev this time.

In their opening speeches, the Estonian Head of State, Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko and President of the European Parliament Martin Schulz focused on the future of Ukraine, which is currently under Russian aggression, and, more generally, on European security.

President Ilves said 2014 was the year that Russia shattered the existing security architecture, and restoring peace on the European continent is our main task.

The Estonian Head of State recognised the work of President Poroshenko, who had just said he did not agree with those who claim that now is not the right time to launch extensive political and economic reforms in Ukraine, and had initiated an anti-corruption bill in the Verkhovna Rada, calling corruption a cancer that is paralysing Ukraine.

"It is a Herculean task to implement reforms in a country that is at war. However, serious reforms are absolutely vital for Ukraine," President Ilves said.

He recalled a study made by Deutsche Bank in 1990, which stated that Ukraine had the greatest potential for sovereignty or to succeed as an independent country and Estonia ranked lower. However, the purchasing power of Estonians is now three times higher than that of Ukrainians.

"Something went wrong here and now there is a chance, perhaps the last chance, to set it right," President Ilves said, assuring that many democratic countries are ready to support a reform-minded and democratic Ukraine.

"All successful countries have reformed themselves in a similar manner and all unsuccessful countries are similar in coming up with reasons for not implementing reforms," the Estonian Head of State said.

President Ilves took part in the digital communication discussion at the YES conference.

Over two days, more than 350 politicians and public, business and media figures from more than 20 countries discuss the subject "New Ukraine, New Europe, New World: Building and Defending". The conference deals with searching for answers to the internal and external challenges of Ukraine, discussing the possible threats that the events in Ukraine will pose for Europe and the world in general and how the allies of Ukraine could support the development of the country most effectively.

Yesterday, President Ilves met with Ukraine's head of state Petro Poroshenko, Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk and Foreign Minister Pavlo Klimkin in Kiev (see [here](#)).

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