

President Toomas Hendrik Ilves stated that 25 years ago he believed in the view of Francis Fukuyama – that democracy had won – but today our international relations have reached a stage he would never have wanted to experience.

The Estonian Head of State gave a presentation today with Andrei Illarionov, a former economic adviser to President Putin and current Senior Fellow at the Cato Institute, and the President of Freedom House, David J. Kramer, at XIX Open Society Forum, in the panel "The Art of Soft Power: the current political situation and tensions between the West and Russia".

The current security architecture in Europe, which relied on both the Helsinki Final Act and the Paris Charter, has now collapsed following Russia's aggression in Ukraine, stated President Ilves. According to the President, the reaction by the democratic West has been slow.

In the European Union, a uniform response has been the main problem; however, there are countries that would like to delay the sanctions for economic reasons – OK, OK; but let us make some money first, told President Ilves.

He admitted that he feels worried about the increasing influence of the extremist and neo-Nazi movement in Europe: "Extremism is our biggest enemy, in both the east and the very heart of Europe."

When asked whether he believes that NATO will be there to help Estonia in the event of a military attack, President Ilves responded by saying: "Of course. Should NATO fail to abide by the principles stated in Article 5, NATO would lose its credibility and collapse. And all the NATO members know this."

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