

The President, Toomas Hendrik Ilves, met today in Kadriorg with the President of the European Council, Donald Tusk, who made his first working visit to Estonia in his new post following a trip to Latvia, the current holder of the Presidency of the EU.

We are all shocked at the death of 12 people at the offices of Charlie Hebdo in Paris in the terrorist attack against our values and freedoms, as well as the tragic events in Paris that are continuing to unfold, said the Head of State at the beginning of the meeting.

According to the President, this painfully reminds us, once again, about how important it is for Europe to stand up for freedom of speech and opinion in a uniform, steadfast and unconditional manner, as journalism is an inseparable part of the common, shared values upon which our democratic Europe relies.

In terms of the security of Europe, both parties agreed that the sanctions against Russia due to its annexing of Crimea and support for armed separatists in Eastern Ukraine must remain in force as long as Russia continues to threaten the independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine. Today, there is no sign that the Kremlin is meeting its obligations arising from the Minsk agreements, which includes halting any support for separatists who threaten peace in several areas in Eastern Ukraine.

"We cannot yet see 'reset-policies' regarding Russia's approach," said President Ilves.

As for Ukraine, both the President of the European Council and the Estonian Head of State declared that Kiev must implement prompt political and economic reform, while the continued, visible and tangible support of the European Union for Ukraine must be professional and considered.

"Moldova and Georgia, who are partners of the European Union that have chosen the path of reforms, will also require our continued support," President Ilves emphasised.

The development of a common digital market in the European Union was also discussed in Kadriorg.

"Ending the fragmentation of the European common digital market should be one of the priorities of both the European Council and the European Commission. In this regard, we expect the European Commission to come up with an ambitious and future-orientated strategy to remove the main bottlenecks, which include data protection, copyrights and common sales rights in Europe. We also hope that the European Council will continue to focus on these issues," told President Ilves.

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