

"The emergence of right and left wing extremist political forces in Europe and their influence on relations between states, including trans-Atlantic relations, is one of the topics to be discussed in the future," said President Toomas Hendrik Ilves at a panel that focused on the future of Europe in the Brussels Forum.

"Europe shall remain strong if we continue to rely on shared values. Even today, many states are questioning the principles of liberal democracy. The sources that fund these political forces are of serious concern. I am afraid that these are among the most serious issues that we will face in the near future and may begin to influence relations between states," said the Head of State.

According to President Ilves, Europe must contribute more to maintaining and strengthening the trans-Atlantic bridge of relations within the new political conditions that have emerged: "The continuance of trans-Atlantic relations is not something to be taken for granted; we need to work to keep them strong."

The heads of state of Estonia and Poland, who had a bilateral meeting at Brussels Forum, discussed the options for closer regional and trans-Atlantic co-operation and for helping Ukraine, including giving assistance to refugees from Ukraine.

Presidents Toomas Hendrik Ilves and Bronisław Komorowski admitted the need for closer co-operation between the heads of state of Central and Eastern Europe states and, above all, continued security dialogue between the allies. At the initiative of President Komorowski, the presidents of Central and Eastern Europe states met in Warsaw last July to co-ordinate their positions prior to the NATO Summit in September. Similar regional co-operation must continue, both presidents concluded.

Brussels Forum is an annual, high-level meeting that concentrates on foreign and security policies. This year, it is taking place for the tenth time and brings together the most influential political, corporate and intellectual leaders from Europe and North America to address the pressing challenges currently facing both sides of the Atlantic.

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