

President Toomas Hendrik Ilves who is in Berlin and has been on his state visit to the Federal Republic of Germany since Monday, met yesterday with the Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel; the President of the Bundestag, Norbert Lammert; the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Frank-Walter Steinmeier; the Minister of Finance, Wolfgang Schäuble and the Minister of Defence, Ursula von der Leyen.

The Estonian Head of State stated that the European Union has demonstrated a united front in the sphere of foreign and security policy over the last year and a half, which has been largely shaped by the Federal Chancellor of Germany, Angela Merkel.

The message emphasised at the meetings in Berlin was that if the rules of international communication are violated by the use of military force in the immediate vicinity of the European Union, sanctions must remain in force until the intervention, condemned in unison, has ended.

Restoring trust in the euro area and the reform and budget capabilities of the European Union in general remains important. Estonia and Germany are fierce proponents of responsible budget policies and compliance with the stability and growth pact rules, which were established together, confirmed President Ilves. He stated that any solidarity exercised to help out countries in trouble can only be mutual and would assume the commitment of the country concerned and a responsible approach to solving any problems.

When discussing the economic relations between Estonia and Germany, President Ilves said that Industry 4.0, which has been christened the fourth industrial revolution in Germany, could be the very platform for close co-operation between Estonia and Germany, as it would allow us to combine the IT solutions developed in Estonia and the industrial performance of Germany. He described the emergence of the digital common market of the European Union as being of particular importance for smaller countries, and the conclusion of a free trade agreement between the EU and USA as important. Both Estonia and Germany are confident about the benefits offered by these projects.

The security situation on NATO's eastern wing was discussed at the meetings, as it has been influenced by Russia's activities in Ukraine and a notable increase in military activities in the region of the Baltic states. Germany shares our views and will contribute considerably to both our regional security by air security missions and a rotating infantry company. Estonia

appreciates this contribution highly. The presence of allied troops on NATO's eastern wing is a useful part of convincing deterrence, said President Ilves.

When discussing the eastern partnership countries, President Ilves emphasised that the challenge for the European Union involves offering encouragement to Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine to continue with integration, and to carry on implementing reforms to achieve the greater democratic reorganisation of society and the economy.

The common challenge faced by Europe of massive Russian propaganda aimed at creating a parallel reality that diverges from democratic values was also discussed at the meetings. Such activities and related campaigns are known as the "Weaponisation of information".

"Overall, the West needs to be better prepared to oppose these campaigns with fact-based, objective information," said President Ilves, in describing the process involved as the strategic communication of democratic values. He acknowledged the government of Germany for its substantial contribution to the preparations for launching ETV+ TV channel.

President Ilves will speak about e-integration in Europe at the umbrella organisation of German chambers of commerce, DIHK and pay a visit to the Bayer Pharma research centre in Berlin; tomorrow he will give a presentation at an influential think-tank, Körber Stiftung. Tonight, an Arvo Pärt composer concert will be organised to honour the visit of the Estonian Head of State at Berlin Concert Hall, followed by a reception by President Ilves to honour Federal President Gauck.

The Estonian Head of State was the first foreign leader to lay a wreath at the Neue Wache memorial that commemorates victims of war and violence, and he also visited the Bundeswehr Memorial to fallen soldiers and the monument to the people's uprising that took place in 1953 in East Berlin.

Tomorrow, President Ilves will fly to Kiel to meet with the Prime Minister of the Federal Republic of Schleswig-Holstein, Torsten Albig, and visit the University of Kiel and the research centre, GEOMAR, which focuses on the Baltic Sea and ocean studies. The Estonian Head of State will be in Hamburg on Thursday to meet with the sitting Mayor, Olaf Scholz, and speak at the conference of euro ministers of the federal republics of Germany and Hamburg-Estonian

## President Ilves met with the leaders of Germany in Berlin

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business forum, which is being organised to celebrate the state visit. He will pay a visit to HSBA business school to learn about the options for combining studies and practice and visit the Kühne&Nagel company.

Photos of the state visit of the President of the Republic to the Federal Republic of Germany are available from the photo galleries of the Office of the President at: <http://vpkfoto.ee/18-21-05-2015-riigivisiit-saksamaa-liitvabariiki/>

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