

In a meeting with the Slovakian President Andrej Kiska, Estonian President Toomas Hendrik Ilves said that Europe can only deal with the refugee crisis if the European Union is united, and it is an issue of the responsibility of Central and Eastern Europe.

"I am worried that the hesitation of some so-called Eastern European countries on the issue of the refugee crisis could cause a new rift in Europe, dividing us into west and east. This reproduces unfair stereotypes that we have always fought against," President Ilves said.

The European Union has shown solidarity with our problems and aspirations both before and after we joined; now it is time to reciprocate, the Estonian Head of State stressed.

"This isn't about numbers or quotas, it is about principle - that of solidarity, which is one of the values of the European Union," he said.

According to President Ilves, the discussions so far have focused on stopping the flow of refugees and protecting the outer borders of the bloc.

He highlighted the importance of a sensible and peaceful discussion and said: "The populist abuse of people's fears and insecurities should be avoided, yet, regrettably, many political parties in Europe are doing exactly that."

The Estonian and Slovakian heads of state stressed the importance of continued support for and attention to Ukraine.

Speaking about Estonian-Slovakian relations, President Ilves used the expression 'clear sky' and highlighted the IT co-operation between the two countries, expressing joy that President Kiska is accompanied by more than 20 digital and technology companies.

Tomorrow morning, the Tehnopol science park in Tallinn will host a public discussion with the participation of the Estonian and Slovakian presidents that will focus on how the two small countries could bring their products and services to global markets.

Office of the President  
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