

"Estonia's rapid integration with the European Union gave a clear message: countries that always rely on the principles of a state based on the rule of law and democracy can be successful, and honouring freedom of speech and the mutually respectful pursuits of the government and opposition are inseparable from these principles," said the President, Toomas Hendrik Ilves, who met with the Prime Minister of Georgia, Irakli Garibashvili, who is on a visit to Estonia.

"Georgia has implemented significant changes over the past decade and this has brought you visibly closer to the European Union and NATO. Hopefully, next year, there will no longer be a visa requirement for movement between Georgia and the European Union, and this is an important milestone along the road that we have travelled together," stated the Estonian Head of State.

Estonia is still willing to share our support, experiences gained during our euro-integration and NATO accession process with Georgia, confirmed President Ilves. He emphasised the close co-operation between the two countries in the sphere of e-governance; this will include both the activities of the central government and, for example, the e-elections pilot project.

The Estonian Head of State encouraged Georgia to continue with euro-integration – consistent reporting to the public by the government is an inseparable part of this process – and maintain the fundamental values of Europe.

"Essentially, this is an opportunity for the people of Georgia and an obligation of the political leadership of Georgia," he said, repeating what he had said during his visit to Tbilisi in June of this year. The Head of State of Georgia, Giorgi Margvelashvili, gave a memorable response back then by saying: "Today we are building up a free, democratic, European Georgia."

At this meeting with Prime Minister Garibashvili, President Ilves emphasised the importance of close, reliable and effective co-operation between the political leaders of Georgia in the name of a modern and safe Georgia. Such internal co-operation and a consistency in reforms that are independent from the changing of governments were some of the pre-requisites for the success enjoyed by Estonia, recalled President Ilves.

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