

President Toomas Hendrik Ilves and the Head of State of Finland, Sauli Niinistö, met today in Helsinki and discussed the options available for Estonia and Finland to work together in becoming the engine for launching the digital common market of the European Union.

"Close IT co-operation between Estonia and Finland will allow us today to establish some of the cross-border e-services, and in the process we could set an example for all of Europe to show how IT tools can be used to expand markets and promote the economy," said President Ilves after the meeting. "Finland has greatly contributed to the joint project and I highly appreciate the commitment of the Finns," he added.

According to President Ilves, co-operation with Finland could be followed with common digital data exchange between the other Nordic and Baltic states. "It is quite obvious that we cannot expect 28 member states to be ready for such a digital development at the same time; however, Estonia along with its neighbouring countries could become a pioneer in cross-border digital co-operation," remarked the Head of State.

There are several common data exchange fields, such as e-prescriptions, information exchange between tax boards and inquiries made on the movement of students. The Head of State admitted that such co-operation would require regulations and standards to ensure the appropriate handling of cross-border security issues and the willingness of various institutions to co-operate.

The presidents also discussed the European migration crisis and the security of NATO's east wing and European countries in general. "After the meeting, I can once again confirm that Estonia and Finland share an understanding of the security-related challenges that Europe is facing today," said President Ilves.

The Head of State will return to Estonia tonight.

Office of the President
Public Relations Department