

Europe is at the crossroads of change, in a transformational crisis, and yet we have come through worse, conceded President Toomas Hendrik Ilves in his address at Churchill's Europe Symposium in Zurich last night.

If Europe was able to cope in the chaos that followed World War II, when millions and millions of refugees were searching for a new home and some countries did not even have an independent government, Europe in 2015 should be able to cope in any case, President Ilves said in his speech to influential Swiss politicians, entrepreneurs and academics.

We have to help countries who have shouldered the burden of the refugee crisis, and share the load, he said, adding that the European Union needs an effective and homogeneous asylum policy and harmonised guarding of its external borders.

President Ilves underscored the fact that many of those fleeing from war have experienced the same horrors as those caught up in the terror attacks in Paris on 13 November, and that it is for that very reason that they have sought refuge in Europe.

The Head of State said that an unavoidable precondition to building European unity today is the boldness of national leaders. We don't want future generations to look back on us and ask why we did so little when so much was at stake, he concluded.

Read the [full speech here](#) .

The annual symposium of the University of Zurich is an event which commemorates the 'United States of Europe' speech delivered in 1946 by then British prime minister Winston Churchill in the Swiss city. Other notable figures to have spoken at the event include German chancellor Helmut Kohl, US secretary of state Henry Kissinger, Polish head of state Aleksander Kwaśniewski, European Commission president Romano Prodi and German president Richard von Weizsäcker.

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