

For Central and Eastern Europe, Poland along with Germany represent security policy and economic leadership, and close co-operation with these countries will give us all added security and strength for Europe in general, admitted President Toomas Hendrik Ilves at his meeting with the Head of State of Poland, Andrzej Duda.

Close relations between Estonia and Poland are important regionally, in NATO and within the European Union said the President of the Republic of Estonia. When he was elected head of state, Andrzej Duda made his first foreign visit to Estonia.

"We are friends who can discuss any topic, no matter how difficult," added President Ilves. The tête-à-tête between him and the Polish Head of State, which preceded the official component of the work meeting, was an extremely open and honest conversation.

The refugee crisis has brought Europe to a crossroads, and the direction that we take will determine our future – Estonia has chosen the direction of solidarity and a uniform European Union, confirmed the Estonian Head of State.

The progress of Europe and each and every one of us will be supported by European mentality, he emphasised.

"We all share the responsibility for Europe, no matter how long we have been a part of the European Union. Let us not divide ourselves into old and the new members but instead regard each other by the scale of our responsibility," said President Ilves, and continued: "Europe will always face new challenges; we must be ready to face them together, with the more efficient protection and control of the external borders of the European Union being one of them."

The heads of state of Estonia and Poland described the NATO Summit in 2016 in Warsaw as the most important security policy event of the decade, as it will strongly establish the deterrence policy of the alliance, including long-term rotating units that are deployed on the eastern wing of NATO. According to President Ilves, deterrence should also be extended to the cyber sphere.

Presidents Ilves and Duda spoke about the situation in Donetsk and Lugansk, where the military presence of Russia has not ended. The heads of state discussed the eastern partnership of the European Union, which will mean continued support to Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia, as long as these countries will continue to implement reforms.

In addition, President Ilves spoke about regional security in Warsaw at a conference held by the Center for European Policy Analysis (CEPA) in co-operation with the influential Polish newspaper Rzeczpospolita; the Editor in Chief of the Bartosz Węglarczyk newspaper was the moderator for the public address by the Estonian Head of State. Since December of last year, President Ilves has also been a member of the international Advisory Council of CEPA think tank, which focuses on Central and Eastern European studies.

The Estonian Head of State also took part in an international memorial event entitled "Sovereignty, Solidarity, Security. Lech Kaczyński and Central and Eastern Europe", which is being led by President Duda and held to recall the foreign policy contribution of the former president of Poland, Lech Kaczyński, in the integration of the eastern partners of the European Union, securing the safety of our region and enhancing the influence of Central and Eastern European countries. He is also remembered for saying: "solidarity is the ability to stand up for one's interests and speak up to defend others, even if this does not directly serve my own interests."

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