

President Toomas Hendrik Ilves, who today addressed the plenary sitting of the European Parliament, proposed the EU to add a fifth fundamental freedom to the current Four Freedoms of the free movement of people, goods, capital and services, which were established with the foundation treaties of the European Union – this fifth freedom would be the free movement of data, which would be an inevitable part of our common digital market.

The digital revolution could be as blessing for the single market – we can already see nascent pan-European markets in sectors like healthcare, banking and transport. We also need rules that would not restrict the distribution of innovative services in other sectors that are characteristic of the digital era, said the Estonian Head of State. Europe must create an economic space that relies on the fast movement of digital data, as much as possible, using the opportunities offered by the big data generated by our homes, cars and other increasingly connected devices.

We can decide either to move forward, together and strong, from this transformational crisis where Europe today stands or something quite different will happen, President Ilves said, and he went on to define this question of Europe's turning point: "The choice is ours".

When speaking of the refugee crisis, the Estonian Head of State was quite sure that the European Union can cope; however, we must act in solidarity with those Member States that bear the brunt of the crisis; we must take full control over the EU's external borders; we must have a functioning common asylum policy, which will also include returning illegal immigrants and we must calmly stand up against extremist politics and populism, which have been fuelled by the refugee and economic crises.

Is this so difficult when we look back to what Europe faced in the years after the Second World War, asked President Ilves.

He admitted that the relations between the European Union and Russia, which violated every major, foundational European security treaty by engaging in military activities through the Anschluss of Crimea and the invasion of the Donbas, will remain strained for some time.

Strategic patience is the keyword in our relations with Russia, emphasised the Estonian Head of State.

He met in Strasbourg with the President of the European Parliament, Martin Schulz, and introduced the World Bank's Digital Development report that was prepared under his co-leadership.

The address of President Ilves at the European Parliament can be viewed at the following address: <http://audiovisual.europarl.europa.eu/Assetdetail.aspx?id=59605b8b-61c3-4349-a054-a5a000c1c5a4>

Audio recording: <http://audiovisual.europarl.europa.eu/Assetdetail.aspx?id=a8a47d62-1f36-4b26-8db0-a5a000c074e4>

The full English text of the address is available from the following address: <https://www.president.ee/en/official-duties/speeches/11972-address-of-president-toomas-hendrik-ilves-at-the-european-parliament-february-2-2016/index.html>

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