

President Ilves, who gave a presentation and took part in presentations in Visby, Sweden, at Almedalen Week, does not believe in the probability of a post-Brexit disintegration of the European Union.

Since the referendum in the United Kingdom, in which the majority of the people there expressed their desire to leave the EU, an increase in the numbers of those who support the European Union can be noted in several Member States.

"I do believe that this is attributable to the cold shower that Brexit gave to many – people suddenly realise what they may stand to lose without the European Union," said President Ilves.

According to the President, more and more UK people are beginning to realise that "leaving the European Union is no longer a hilarious Monty Python sketch, but that it comes with realistic and serious consequences".

The Estonian Head of State admitted that the legal status of citizens of the various Member States of the European Union who have lived in the United Kingdom for decades would become insecure in the wake of Brexit.

According to President Ilves, after the Brexit referendum we will see Germany take a greater leading role in overcoming the difficult times that are ahead of us. Also, the President and Secretary of State of the United States of America were finally given a number in Europe that they can call to discuss topics that are of relevance for the European Union in general. "This is the number of Angela Merkel."

The main concerns expressed at Almedalen Week focused on the possibility of Brexit-centred arguments in the European Union "de-oxygenating the space" or dominating all the political attention, as Member States should also focus, together and in unison, on other important issues. An opinion that Brexit will increase, at least in the beginning, the importance of NATO as democratic Europe's protective alliance and the solidarity clause of the European Union will take the shape, figuratively speaking, of the olive branch.

Within Almedalen Week (also known as Politikerveckan or Political Week) in Visby, Gotland, which was first started back in 1968 by former Prime Minister of Sweden, Olof Palme, participants can listen to discussions on various issues ranging from global foreign and security policy to topics that concern the life of the local Swedish community.

Yesterday and the day before, the discussion partners of President Ilves in Visby were the former Minister of Foreign Affairs in Sweden, Carl Bildt, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland, Radoslaw Sikorski, senior editor of The Economist magazine, Edward Lucas, and American-Polish journalist and historian Anne Applebaum, among others.

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