

President Toomas Hendrik Ilves and Ieva Ilves today visited IT companies that operate in Tartu and met at Garage48 HUB Tartu with representatives of the community of local start-up companies to discuss recent developments in the business environment of Tartu.

Tartu start-up companies were represented by Rein Lemberpuu on behalf of Contriber, Garage48 HUB Tartu and SPARK; Aleksander Tõnnisson from Buildit hardware accelerator; Marti Soosaar from SportID; Priit Salumaa from Mooncascade; Triin Kask from GreenhouseCI; Jüri Kaljundi from Weekdone; Richard Murutar from SprayPrinter and Janek Timmas on behalf of Waystone.

The primary focus was given to the business environment of Tartu and an exchange of ideas on the reasons that make Tartu a good location for starting companies, as well as the efforts made to this end by the town, University of Tartu and the local business community.

The willingness of experienced entrepreneurs to contribute to the entrepreneurial activities of the local community was highlighted as an important aspect. The skills and knowledge required by starting entrepreneurs were discussed together with the possible contribution of experienced entrepreneurs to this aspect.

"As for President Ilves, his willingness to introduce local start-up companies internationally can be described as highly commendable. He is very interested in us sharing information with him about the events that take place in the IT sphere of Tartu and the companies that operate here, so that he can retweet our tweets to his followers on Twitter, for example," told Triin Kask, co-founder of GreenhouseCI.

President Ilves suggested some ideas for boosting the global dimension and visibility of local start-up companies and promised to contribute, as much as possible, to introducing Estonian start-up companies abroad after his term in office as the President of the Republic of Estonia has come to an end.

Rein Lemberpuu did take the chance to invite the Head of State to give a presentation at the sTARTUp Day business conference in Tartu on 9 December; more that one thousand

participants from the spheres of IT and business are expected to take part in the event. At the recommendation of President Ilves, a separate Twitter user account was created today for the community of Tartu start-up companies, named sTARTUpTartu, which will be used to share information about the event.

Two houses – sTARTUp Hub at Town Hall Square and SPARK building on Narva Road – which are just a stone's throw across the river from each other, have become the centres of IT, technology and hardware companies in Tartu. Today, more than 200 entrepreneurs from more than thirty different companies have come together under the roof of these buildings. According to Rein Lemberpuu, there are approximately 4,000 IT specialists in Tartu today and the number keeps growing.

Kadri Kõivik

Community at SPARK

Communication & Events at sTARTUp HUB & Garage48 HUB Tartu