

In his speech at the prestigious Wehrkunde Security Conference in Munich Germany today, President of the Republic Toomas Hendrik Ilves recalled that the opportunity to join the European Union forced the countries in the so-called great enlargement to make great changes, although this was complicated and often painful for countries that had escaped totalitarianism.

“However, our success is one of the greatest revolutions in contemporary Europe,” said the Head of State, who spoke about the European Union as a regional model for guaranteeing peace, security, and welfare. “The European Union said that if we want to join them, we must become similar to them. The East Europeans managed to achieve this.”

“However, this scenario is no longer open,” remarked President Ilves, who said that the countries with a GDP lower than the European Union average will not be admitted to the union, since many member nations are no longer ready for such an enlargement. “It will be a long time before we can speak of a new enlargement,” predicted the Estonian Head of State.

However, how to assure that peace, security and welfare, not unreformed and corrupt governments along with human rights violations, reign along the borders of the European Union, asked President Ilves. The EU Neighborhood Policy offers money to reforming countries, but does not provide the prospect of membership in the Union, which would force these countries to make the greatest changes.

“Of course, an alternative is NATO,” said the Estonian Head of State. “NATO could be the carrot that the European Union cannot provide to these countries today.”

President Ilves also called on the European Union to work out a uniform energy policy, recalling that the Union got its start as a coal and steel community. At that time, countries that had been at odds were able to surmount their differences, and the European Union needs the same consensus today.

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