

President Toomas Hendrik Ilves travelled to Moscow today to attend the funeral of Boris Yeltsin, the first President of Russia.

“We are indebted to President Yeltsin for one of the greatest geopolitical good deeds of the 20th century, because his bravery and determination in August 1991—during the attempted putsch—proclaimed the disappearance of the Soviet Union as a totalitarian regime and granted freedom to tens of millions of people,” said the Estonian Head of State.

“President Yeltsin opened the door to democracy for Russia, introduced freedom of speech, and a market economy—everything that the Russian people had lacked previously,” said President Ilves. “His many reforms could even set an example for Russia today.”

President Ilves said that Estonia is thankful to President Yeltsin for his help and support in the restoration of Estonia's independence and the recognition thereof.

“President Yeltsin demonstrated, and this is especially important to recall today, how a large nation can understand the aspirations of its small neighbour and Boris Yeltsin was also big enough to acknowledge Russia's history like it was,” said the Estonian Head of State.

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