

In Berlin yesterday, President Toomas Hendrik Ilves spoke about the importance of innovation and energy-related independence at the prestigious economics conference “Competition of the Continents: Germany and Europe Shape the Future”.

The topic of the speech by the Estonian Head of State was “The European Union: The Future of Global Competition”.

“The current thinking in the European Union does not give rise for optimism for two reasons,” said President Ilves. “Firstly, the failure of the Lisbon Agenda that dealt with the development of innovation and research, and secondly, the protectionism of the member states.” The Estonian Head of State warned that Europe’s competitors in this area are the United States and Asia.

“We need a better understanding and more detailed vision of where the world will be in 20-25 years,” said President Ilves, calling upon the European Union to contribute to the development of innovation and research. “One country, which has declared itself a superpower in the field of energy, uses gas and oil for foreign policy objectives,” said the Estonian Head of State, speaking about energy security and a common energy policy, which would not be subject to the principle of “divide and conquer”.

The speakers at the conference, which was attended by 1,800 German industrial leaders, included German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Jürgen R. Thumann, the President of the Federation of German Industries, and Peter Sutherland, the former Director-General of the WTO and current Chairman of BP and Goldman Sachs International.

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