

President Toomas Hendrik Ilves participated today at a meeting of the Presidents of the Baltic countries in Riga, which is dedicated to the end of the Latvian President's term of office.

At a meeting this morning, the Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian Heads of State discussed mutual cooperation, problems related to the European Union, questions of energy security, and the relations of the Community to its neighbors.

The three Presidents also participated in a presentation of an Estonian-, Latvian- and Lithuanian Internet dictionary and wrote greetings in their native language in the computer. "Blow wind and push my boat, send me to Courland," President Ilves wrote.

Janis Stradins, the President of the Latvian Academy of Sciences, presented Cicero Awards to the Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian Heads of State. The award has previously been presented to Vigdís Finnbogadóttir, the former President of Iceland, Václav Havel, the former President of the Czech Republic, and Finnish President Tarja Halonen.

The departing Latvian President Vaira Vike-Freiberga and Mr. Imants Freibergs hosted a luncheon for the Estonian and Lithuanian Presidents, Toomas Hendrik Ilves and Valdas Adamkus in Jurmala, which was also attended by the newly elected Latvian President, Valdis Zatlers, who plans to visit Tallinn on a working visit shortly.

At the Estonian Embassy in Riga this afternoon, President Ilves presented the Order of the White Star IV Class to poet Astrid Ivask for the promotion of Estonian-Latvian cultural relations. Along with her Estonian husband Ivar Ivask, Astrid Ivask assisted in the struggle for the freedom of the Baltic countries in the United States. For almost twenty years, Ivar Ivask published a literary magazine entitled World Literature Today (initially Books Abroad) in the United States, to which Astrid Ivask also contributed. After the death of her husband, Astrid Ivask donated his library to the University of Tartu, and established the Ivar Ivask Prize.

In Riga, President Ilves will also meet with the members of the Austrums Students' Association.

The Estonian Head of State will arrive back in Tallinn this evening.

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