

Yesterday President Toomas Hendrik Ilves received Stjepan Mesić, the President of Croatia, who is on an official visit to Estonia.

“The success of your homeland in building a stable, open, democratic, and rapidly development country should be a positive signal and encourage the other West-Balkan states,” said President Ilves.

The President of the Republic confirmed Estonia’s support for Croatia’s approach to the European Union and NATO.

“Croatia is worthy of receiving an invitation to join the NATO alliance at next year’s Bucharest summit,” confirmed the Estonian Head of State.

He acknowledged Croatia’s activity in international military missions, especially in Afghanistan, where Croatia is a supporter of the comprehensive approach—in addition to participating in the NATO-led mission, equal emphasis is placed on civil and developmental aid, which focuses on increasing administrative capabilities and projects related to human rights.

President Ilves called the negotiations conducted by Croatia to join the European Union impressive, but emphasized the need to shape public opinion both at home and among the European Union member states, in order to substantiate Croatia’s aspirations and explain its plans for the future.

“Once all the criteria are fulfilled, you will be standing at the threshold of the European Union, and I believe, this may be soon, if you continue your homework with courage and dedication, and at the present tempo,” said the Estonian Head of State.

President Ilves and Mesić noted with satisfaction that the relations between Estonia and Croatia have consolidated, especially in the field of tourism, which was helped by the opening of an air route between Tallinn and Dubrovnik last year.

“I am pleased that during the last few years Estonian investors’ interest in Croatia has increased, because our economic relations are to a great extent like an undiscovered island,” said President Ilves, recalling that Estonian companies invested almost 116 million kroons in Croatia last year.

In the evening, President Ilves and Mrs. Evelin Ilves hosted an official dinner in honor of Croatian Head of State Stjepan Mesić.

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