

President Toomas Hendrik Ilves and Evelin Ilves, who are on a state visit to Ireland, met today with President Mary McAleese and Dr. Martin McAleese, with whom they discussed bilateral relations and issues related to the European Union.

“Estonia has always felt a strong cultural attachment to Ireland,” President Ilves said at the meeting between the Heads of State. “In the European Union, we have similar goals in many fields, especially regarding the future shape of the European Union, guaranteeing European competitiveness in the world, and energy and climate issues.”

According to President Ilves, Ireland has set an example for Estonia as a country that has successfully used European Union membership to accelerate its development.

“Before accession, it was expected in Estonia that membership would continue rapid economic growth,” President Ilves said. He said this expectation has been fulfilled to a great extent and the Estonian people are increasingly feeling the positive impact of accession on societal development—which is expressed by constantly increasing support for the European Union. “To reach “full membership” we still need to achieve the totally free movement of labor and the adoption of the common currency, the euro,” President Ilves noted.

At the end of the meeting, the Heads of State together with Evelin Ilves and Dr. Martin McAleese planted a tree in the park near the presidential residence.

After the meeting, President Ilves headed to the Garden of Remembrance in Dublin to place a wreath in commemoration of those who have fallen fighting for Irish freedom.