

The state visit of President Toomas Hendrik Ilves to Ireland continued today with a meeting with Prime Minister Bertie Ahern, which focused on the Lisbon Treaty, the European Union's global competitiveness and neighborhood relations, as well as issues related to energy security and climate change.

Speaking of the Lisbon Treaty, President Ilves stressed that a smooth ratification process is in the interests of all the member states. Whereas, he believes that the greatest challenge finding a balance within the European Union leadership— the President of the European Council, the Union's highest representative for the foreign and security affairs, and the President of the Commission. "It should be considered that the first distribution of roles will create a precedent for the future," President Ilves said, adding that for Estonia, like for other smaller countries, it is important that a geographic and demographic balance is found and that the roles of these institutions are not duplicated.

Speaking about increasing the competitiveness of the European Union, President Ilves and Prime Minister Ahern recognized that there is no clear vision of how to proceed after 2010 when the current strategy ends.

"Estonia feels it is important to increase the competitiveness of all European Union regions through closer cooperation and more thorough integration," President Ilves said, "therefore we plan to actively contribute to the intensification of cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region."

At the meeting between the Estonian Head of State and Irish Prime Minister, energy- and climate-related topics were also under discussion. President Ilves stressed that the energy security of the European Union is directed related to energy and climate policies. "The import of electricity from third countries is one of the main risks for the domestic market and security of the European Union," the President noted, adding that this is closely related to global climate negotiations. "In a situation where, in the future, the European Union's energy producers must buy their entire CO2 quota at auction and third country producers do not have such an obligation, the production of third countries will clearly be more competitive."

After the discussion and lunch with Bertie Ahern, President Ilves had meetings with Senator Pat Moylan, Chairman of the Senate, and Brendan Howling, the Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives.

This evening, Irish President Mary McAleese will organize an official dinner in honor of President Ilves and Evelin Ilves.

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