

President Toomas Hendrik Ilves met yesterday in Kadriorg with Russian writer and dissident Vladimir Bukovsky, who is in Estonia at the invitation of the Open Estonia Foundation and NGO Open Republic.

At the meeting, a discussion was held on the international situation, with the focus on Russian relations with the European Union and NATO, as well as Russia's bilateral relations with its neighbors and other large European countries. The political situation in Russia after the inauguration of President Medvedev was also discussed and Bukovsky provided the Estonian Head of State with an overview of the activities of the opposition forces in Russia.

Speaking about Estonia's development after the restoration of independence and Estonia's cooperation with the countries that were once part of the Soviet Union, President Ilves talked about how Estonia has passed on its experiences in respect to the implementation of painful, but vitally necessary reforms to Georgia, Ukraine and Moldova. "Democracy, human rights and freedom of speech are values that Estonia defends and it finds a common language with the supporters of these values throughout the world," President Ilves said.

President Ilves thanked Vladimir Bukovsky for his systematic activities related to the dissolution of the Soviet empire and the mobilization of Western governments against violations of human rights in the Soviet Union.

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