

Discussions at the meeting of Estonian President Toomas Hendrik Ilves, who was on a working visit to Slovenia, with Slovenian Head of State Danilo Türk and the leaders of the government focused on the aftermath of the Georgian conflict and the problems of the Western Balkans.

Both the Estonian Head of State and the Slovenian leaders acknowledged the brokering activities of France as the presiding country of the EU during the Russian-Georgian conflict and expressed their hope that this time Russia will fulfill its promise to withdraw all its troops to pre-August 7th positions.

Support was expressed at the meeting for at least 200 civil observers from the European Union to be quickly sent to Georgia with a mandate that allows them to operate throughout the territory of Georgia.

“We have to continue to proceed from the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Georgia, pursuant to UN Resolution 1808 (2008) and resolutions preceding it,” President Ilves stressed.

“Estonia favors continued contacts with Russia, however, we also believe that all future decisions regarding cooperation between the European Union and Russia, including negotiations regarding the new cooperation treaty, are directly related to the fulfillment of the Sarkozy-Medvedev peace plan by Russia,” President Ilves said. “We think that the analysis of relations with Russia initiated in the European Union must deal with the issue of whether we share common values with Russia and what this means for our strategic partnership.”

According to the Estonian Head of State, it is also important that the European Union now plans to pay more attention to questions related to energy security.

The Estonian and Slovenia Presidents also more broadly discussed the situation in the neighborhood of the European Union, and emphasized the special need for the European Union to send a strong message of support to the neighboring countries that have chosen democracy and a market economy.

Speaking about the problems in the Western Balkans, Presidents Ilves and Türk stressed the need for vigorous support for this complicated European region, which is important for the stability of the continent.

“Estonia supports the European perspective of the Western Balkan countries and is providing concrete assistance that is based to great extent on our own reform experience,” President Ilves said.

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