

“It is best for Georgia to set its sights on the future, to find the best solutions for continuing political and economic reforms, and the strengthening of democracy,” the Estonian Head of State said at today’s meeting with Georgian Foreign Minister Eka Tkeshelashvili.

President Toomas Hendrik Ilves and Foreign Minister Tkeshelashvili spoke at length about the situation in Georgia after the Russian invasion, focusing on the delivery of humanitarian assistance and the possible solutions for the refugee problems.

President Ilves confirmed that Estonia continues to think it important that Russia fulfill all the requirements of French President Nicholas Sarkozy’s peace plan, which was concluded on August 12th and calls for the withdrawal of forces to pre-August 7th positions, as well as the right of refugees to return to their homes.

President Ilves welcomed the quick organization of the Georgia Donors’ Conference in Brussels and the European Commission’s plan to contribute a half a billion euros in aid projects to Georgia during the next few years. He also announced that Estonia will soon send its third aid shipment to Georgia, which is primarily intended for children and their mothers who are refugees.

“At the same time, we are still worried that the provision of humanitarian aid and the movement of foreign observers is restricted by Russian forces and South Ossetia separatists,” President Ilves said.

According to the Estonian Head of State, the Russian-Georgian conflict should result in the intensification of relations between the European Union and Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova, as European Neighborhood Policy countries, and the Community’s closer cooperation with trustworthy partners that share the same values, such as the United States, Canada and Turkey.

President Ilves affirmed Estonia’s continued support for Georgia’s reform policies.

“We encourage you to intensify your political and economic reforms, because the greater the democracy, the stronger Georgia is, and vice versa—the more Georgia is splintered into opposing sides, the better it is for Georgia’s enemies,” President Ilves told Foreign Minister Tkeshelashvili.

According to the Estonian Head of State, Georgia continues to deserve an action plan for NATO accession, which would bolster Tbilisi’s resolve to continue its in-depth reforms of the society.

“A MAP or roadmap for accession to the alliance is not an automatic NATO membership card, although traversing this roadmap is a homework assignment that is compulsory for entry into NATO,” President Ilves pointed out.

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