

“The global economic crisis will not let anyone remain a bystander. Estonia and Croatia must change their current attitudes in order to adapt as painlessly as possible to the conditions of the economic downturn, while also making the decisions that will lay a foundation for a new recovery,” President Toomas Hendrik Ilves said at his meeting with Croatian Prime Minister Ivo Sanader upon his arrival in Zagreb on an official visit.

In order to restore confidence in the financial sector, and prevent the negative external impact of countries making unilateral decisions, multifaceted cooperation is necessary at all levels, as is the avoidance of protectionist trade measures, President Ilves and Prime Minister Sanader stressed.

Estonian-Croatian economic relations were also discussed at the meeting. Almost one percent of the Estonian population visited Croatia last year as tourists, while the total trade turnover between the two countries was 110 million EEK. At the same time, Estonian companies have invested almost 116 million EEK in Croatia – primarily in real estate and tourism.

Croatia’s accession negotiations with the European Union were under discussion at the Estonian Head of State’s meeting with Luka Bebić, the Speaker of the Croatian Parliament. The host spoke in depth about the Croatian-Slovenian border dispute, emphasizing that Slovenia’s blocking tactics have made this bilateral issue a serious problem for Croatia in its negotiations with the European Commission.

“I hope that President Ahtisaari’s mediation mission initiated by the European Commission will assist in the resolution of this problem, and help Croatia and Slovenia to reach an agreement,” President Ilves said. “Estonia is a strong supporter of Croatia on its road to the European Union, just as we supported Croatia becoming a NATO member.”