

At today's meeting between the President, Mr. Toomas Hendrik Ilves, and the Vice Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, Mr. Zhang Dejiang, it was acknowledged that numerous opportunities are available for further co-operation between two countries, particularly in the sphere of trade and research.

"The speed and scope of economic reform in China is rather impressive, especially against the background of the current economic recession," said President Ilves.

"For China, Estonia's main advantage is its location – we are only separated by one country," said President Ilves, emphasising the possible significant role of transit trade in relations between Estonia and China. "Estonia could be one of the gates to the European Union, and also to the south."

"There is also potential for co-operation between our countries in the research sphere, such as information technology," said the Estonian head of state.

Facilitating closer communication between the citizens of the two countries by promoting contacts in the sphere of both tourism and culture was the first alternative for joint ventures that was highlighted by President Ilves.

Mr. Zhang Dejiang, Vice Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, affirmed that the economic and trading relations between Estonia and China have huge potential for development, and there are also several untapped opportunities available. He also assured that China is willing to assist Estonian enterprises enter the Chinese market.