

“We need to understand and trust in each other to make the most of the advantages that are brought to us by our location on one of Europe’s oldest and most important trade routes,” said President Toomas Hendrik Ilves. “We need to understand and trust in each other to make the most of the advantages that are brought to us by our location on one of Europe’s oldest and most important trade routes,” said President Toomas Hendrik Ilves yesterday at the international “Strategic Partnership 1520” forum, referring to the representatives of five European Union states and five CIS members as important co-operation partners of Estonia.

“I regard your presence here at this forum as evidence that normal co-operation between railway transport companies is possible,” said the Estonian Head of State, emphasising that the general recession will propel many countries into action “to be better and more flexible than ever”.

According to President Ilves, Estonia will develop its logistical capabilities in such a way as to make the most of the principles of the free movement of goods and services both in the European Union and Europe in general.

“Here in the European Union, we are most definitely interested in the movement of goods between our neighbours as fast and efficiently as possible and the movement of people as conveniently as possible,” admitted the Estonian Head of State. “The representatives of five countries of 1,520 European Union railroads are present here in Tallinn; therefore, this makes these issues extremely important for the Union as a whole.”

President Ilves also reminded of the need to develop both Via Baltica and Rail Baltica, the latter which is a huge challenge for all the Baltic states in establishing a reliable, properly working railroad connection with central Europe.

“We create more connections to offer greater and better services, to offer more opportunities,” said President Ilves, with reference to the soon-to-be-opened new railroad border station on the eastern border of the European Union, in Koidula. The Head of State added that beginning the erection of a new border station in Narva, too, would be highly beneficial for both Russia and the European Union.

“Today, the European Union’s strategic partnership with Russia means much more than a “friendship of nations”; in the 21st century, it definitely means good transport links and fast cross-border travel,” said President Ilves.

The Estonian Head of State, who also met with the President of Russian Railways, Mr. Vladimir Yakunin, ensured that Estonia with its open economic climate is very interested in successful co-operation with all the participants of the “Strategic Partnership 1520” participants.

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