

President Ilves said it is impressive how Iceland, which was fully dependent on the import of fossil fuels in the last century is now using 100 per cent of domestic renewable energy sources for electricity production. President Toomas Hendrik Ilves, who is currently on a state visit to Iceland, visited the Hellisheið geothermal station yesterday morning, where energy specialists and researchers spoke to him about Iceland's energy industry and problems related to the environment.

The energy sector of Iceland is unique due to its isolation from the European networks and the significant percentage of renewable energy sources used in primary energy consumption.

President Ilves acknowledged the activities of the Icelandic energy specialists and researchers, who have enabled Iceland to become a global leader in the sphere of geothermal or subsurface energy, in the way that Estonia is a key international player in the field of oil shale energy production.

"It is rather impressive how Iceland, which was fully dependent on the import of fossil fuels in the last century when the relative share of hydro and geothermal energy only amounted to 9 per cent of total energy consumption, is now using 100 per cent of domestic renewable energy sources for electricity production," said the Estonian Head of State. "And what is even more important is to see the Icelandic environment in the background and the people's responsible attitude towards nature."

The share of geothermal energy in Iceland's current energy supply is about 66 per cent, while the share of hydro power and fossil fuels (mainly oil) is 15 and 19 per cent, respectively. Therefore, 89 per cent of houses on Iceland are heated using energy generated by geothermal energy stations.

The Estonian Head of State also visited the Hella volcanic area, where his guide was the geologist and author Ari Trausti Guðmundsson. The Dean of the Geology Department of the University of Iceland, Mr. Magnús Tumi Guðmundsson, spoke about the recent volcanic eruptions and possible future scenarios. Representatives of the police and the civil defence spoke about the organisation of rescue operations and the activities of the volunteers during natural disasters. President Ilves also met with the farmers in the region, who relayed how the volcanic eruption has affected their lives.

The Estonian Head of State also visited Gullfoss waterfall, the Geysir hot water springs area, and Þingvellir National Park.

This evening, President Ilves will meet with the Prime Minister of Iceland, Mrs. Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir, who will give an official dinner in his honour in her summer residence.

Mrs. Evelin Ilves visited the Design Museum of Iceland yesterday morning, where she examined local design and handicraft.

Office of the President

President Iives acknowledges Iceland's energy market and researchers

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