

The President, Mr. Toomas Hendrik Ilves, gave a speech entitled “The “Old and New” Europe after the enforcement of the Lisbon Treaty” yesterday at the East Central European Centre at Columbia University. The Head of State discussed the effects that the global economic crisis has had on Trans-Atlantic co-operation in the internal lines of force within Europe.

According to President Ilves, the former gap between the developed Western Europe and the underdeveloped post-communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe is being replaced by differences that are formed by attitudes regarding budgetary discipline and economic development.

“While in recent times some politicians made it a habit to scare the employees of rich Western Europe with talk of “Polish plumbers”, it so happens that last year Poland was among a select few of the world’s democratic counties that boasted actual economic growth,” said President Ilves, showing that the positions of countries change faster than the stereotypes that were established during the decades of Cold War would suggest.

During his presentation, which lasted for approximately an hour, President Ilves analysed the possibilities for co-operation between the European Union and NATO, referring to the huge common interest that member states have in these two organisations, which are both highly important for Estonia.

“Regrettably, this co-operation leaves a lot to be desired at the moment, for a number of reasons, and this will diminish the influence of NATO and the European Union as organisations and their member states,” the Estonian Head of State added.

The President of the Republic is among the alumni of the reputable Columbia University in New York; he graduated from this university back in 1976.

President Ilves delivers presentation at Columbia University

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