

President Toomas Hendrik Ilves and first lady Evelin Ilves visited the Estonian school operating at Estonia House in New York yesterday and also attended a reception there in the evening for New York's Estonian community.

"Despite the obstacles thrown in our path by the global financial crisis, Estonia has proven itself to be one of those countries that values the principle that you can't borrow at the expense of future generations – one where we've kept the budget deficit and public debt under control," said the president in his welcoming speech to around two hundred of his compatriots.

"As a result, Estonia will be joining the Eurozone in the new year, which will put an end to the rumours about the devaluation of our currency and reassure investors," he added.

In his speech, the head of state showcased the 'Bringing Talent Home' programme launched by Enterprise Estonia in association with business organisations, which is designed to involve those who have left Estonia for various reasons in the social life of the country and in shaping the future of its companies.

"This isn't some abstract call to return to the fatherland," President Ilves explained. "It aims to extend job offers and partnership opportunities with Estonian companies to those who are looking to implement their skills and knowledge for the good of Estonia."

During his visit to New York's Estonian school yesterday morning, the head of state and the teachers from the school discussed the development of potential national support programmes, including for the adaption of the textbooks required to teach Estonian language and culture to the needs of the émigré community.

"More kids than in many other years – almost 60 – are attending the Estonian school here in New York this year," the president explained. "Add to that the international Estonian school in Brussels and all the other Estonian kids studying outside of Estonia, and we really do need to think about producing textbooks and devising the likes of e-learning programmes which meet their needs and suit their cultural environments."

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