

“The European Union is not utilising many of today’s information technology opportunities, as it was established before the onset of the Internet age,” admitted the President, Mr. Toomas Hendrik Ilves, at a meeting with the Vice President of the European Commission, Ms Neelie Kroes, who is also the European Digital Agenda Commissioner.

The Estonian Head of State reminded that today only one fifth of on-line sales and less than a tenth of on-line purchases are made cross-border, and more than half of the attempts to buy goods or services from another country fail.

“Even if the large Member States of the EU are not acutely sensing the need to act in response to their domestic market, smaller Member States and cross-border e-solutions on the verges of the European Union will contribute to closer integration within our common economic space,” President Ilves argued. “This will create new opportunities for both consumers and entrepreneurs, who will turn the European Union internal market into a home market for all of us.”

A legal framework of the European Union that abolishes any obstacles must be created to avoid national borders interfering with the development of the digital economy, said President Ilves, who also emphasised the importance of copyright, consumer rights regulation, and data protection, where the word “digital” should not create any inaccurate associations with regard to the protection of the weaker parties.

According to the Estonian Head of State, the possibilities for introducing cross-border digital signature and authentication and cross-border co-operation alternatives for commercial registers and e-procurement systems should be established.

President Ilves acknowledged the efforts of Commissioner Kroes in promoting the issues of a common digital market in the European Union.

“Thanks to your efforts, the European Commission is a good partner for e-minded EU Member States,” the Estonian Head of State conformed. “We do have a clear objective – to establish an extensive and successfully operating digital market in the European Union by 2015.”

Today, the Estonian Head of State will meet with Mr. Anders Fogh Rasmussen, NATO's Secretary General and the Vice President of the European Commission, Mr. Siim Kallas, who is also the European Transport Commissioner. Yesterday, President Ilves met with Mr. Herman van Rompuy, the President of the European Council.

The President of the Republic will return to Estonia tomorrow.

Office of the President
Public Relations Department
Phone +372 631 6229