

The President, Mr. Toomas Hendrik Ilves, arrived today in Jurmala, near Riga, for a one-day working visit at the invitation of the Latvian Head of State, Mr. Valdis Zatlers. During the meeting, the two presidents focused on the joint transport and energy projects of the region.

“Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania cannot be like an island cut off from infrastructure connections with the European Union. Therefore, the Rail Baltica railroad and the Via Baltica road projects must be continued, in order to provide us with rapid connections to the rest of Europe,” President Ilves emphasised.

According to the Estonian Head of State, Baltic co-operation in the second decade of the 21st century means, above all, specific joint projects, the most important being in the sphere of transport and energetics.

“I really want to hope that Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, supported by Poland, will reach both a political and economic agreement to show that the Rail Baltica railway links are useful for all of us,” President Ilves said.

He also added that the European Commission is willing to co-ordinate all of these efforts.

“Estonia hopes that Latvia will adopt specific investment decisions, which are required to complete the Stage I reconstruction works on the Valka-Riga section of Rail Baltica in the near future,” President Ilves said. He reiterated that Estonia will finish the renovation of Tallinn-Tartu-Valga railroad by the end of this year and passenger trains will be able to travel at the maximum speed of 120 km/h on this section.

“Secondly, Estonia is making a proposal for commencing close co-operation between the concerned institutions of both countries to open intra-state train traffic using the current Tallinn-Tartu-Riga railway,” said the Estonian Head of State.

Presidents Ilves and Zatlers also discussed the future of the energetics of the region.

“This year’s expansion of Nord Pool Spot to Latvia and Lithuania is the prerequisite for the establishment of a common Northern Baltic electricity market,” the Estonian Head of State emphasised.

The President assured that the establishment of a regional liquefied gas terminal is the most realistic alternative for the diversification of gas supplies of the Baltic region, with such a terminal servicing Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Finland. The President added: “Hopefully, we can overcome narrow national interests when choosing the location of the terminal and make a choice that would be the most appropriate to meet the interests of the Baltic region.”

In Jurmala, the two heads of state also discussed the defence-related co-operation between Estonia and Latvia in both a regional and wider, NATO context.

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