

“Kazakhstan plays an important role in Central Asia and in generally maintaining stability and security,” said the President, Mr. Toomas Hendrik Ilves, to Mr. Nursultan Nazarbayev, the President of Kazakhstan, who arrived in Estonia for a state visit.

President Ilves acknowledged Kazakhstan's efforts during the Presidency of the Organisation of Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) in 2010 and the work done by Kazakhstan as this year's leading country of the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation, which is aimed, among other things, at promoting cultural and religious diversity. Kazakhstan also holds this year's presidency of the OIC, Organisation of Islamic Conference, and continues to promote close contacts between the east and the west and a convergence of different understandings.

“During its current negotiations to join the World Trading Organisation (WTO), Kazakhstan can rely upon Estonia's support,” President Ilves assured. “We also support the swift launching of negotiations for entering into a new partnership and co-operation agreement between the European Union and Kazakhstan.”

He reminded that Estonia and Kazakhstan live at crossroads of large trade routes – the Hanseatic Road and the Silk Road – and added: “These historic relations should be revived and connected. Oil and gas are now moving from the east to the west along the Silk Road, while innovative technologies and many other things travel from the west to the east.”

Estonian harbours are ready to help Kazakhstan to reach the sea and global trade,” said President Ilves.

The Estonian Head of State described the committee of the governments of the two countries as successful. Working groups have been established in spheres of mutual interest – transport, transit, energy, information technology.

“I do not doubt that the economic relations between our two countries will be boosted by the agreement to facilitate investments and mutual protection, signed today in Kadriorg by the Estonian Minister of Economic Affairs and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan,” said President Ilves.

He encouraged everyone to view the relations between two countries in a scope wider than just economic interests, as “The principles of e-governance, which extend a state externally and expand beyond its borders, as one of the keys to Estonia’s success, is an experience we can share with many, Kazakhstan included, without being ashamed. And if we are to add opportunities for studying in Estonia universities, within the framework of student exchange, or our first, internationally supported steps in the sphere of cyber security, we will see how many levels communication between Estonia and Kazakhstan could cover.”

Presidents Ilves and Nazarbayev had a long discussion regarding the situation in Central Asia. According to the Estonian Head of State, economic and trade relations between the European Union and Central Asia could be more active, particularly in the spheres of energy and transport; also, closer co-operation is needed to ensure more efficient border control and to prevent drug trafficking.

“Naturally, the European Union still attaches high importance to the dialogue on the issue of human rights – above all, ensuring the freedom of media and the fundamental rights of citizens – with Central Asian countries and the environmental protection agenda is also essential,” said the Estonian Head of State. “As for NATO, the alliance has expressed its wish for co-operation regarding Afghanistan, where Central Asian countries have contributed to providing both the transit corridors for international security forces and also participated in various civilian projects in Afghanistan. For years, Kazakhstan has shown special responsibility and commitment to building up a peaceful Afghanistan.”

In relation to President Nazarbayev’s state visit, the Estonian State Archivist, Mr. Priit Prisko, and the Minister of Communications and Information of Kazakhstan, Mr. Askar Zhumagaliyev, signed an agreement of co-operation in the sphere of archives.

President Nazarbayev will today meet with the Speaker of the Riigikogu, Ms Ene Ergma, and the Prime Minister, Mr. Andrus Ansip. In the evening, the Estonian Head of State will hold a dinner to honour the guest. Tomorrow, the Head of State of Kazakhstan will meet President Arnold Rüütel and Mr. Edgar Savisaar, the Mayor of Tallinn.

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