

“Lithuania is a reliable partner for Estonia; this is demonstrated by the fact that you have become the first country in our list of target countries for investments,” said the President, Mr. Toomas Hendrik Ilves, to the Lithuanian Head of State, Ms Dalia Grybauskaitė, who arrived in Estonia for a one-day working visit.

The Estonian and Lithuanian presidents assured that both countries are currently successfully emerging from the economic crisis; the same can be observed – with some exceptions – all over European Union.

“I do not doubt that the EU and all its Member States will be soon richer for the experience, this being the knowledge that responsible economic and budget policy can provide the urgently needed feeling of security,” said the Estonian Head of State.

President Ilves also described as important the modification of the current procedure for the payment of agricultural subsidies, in which the support paid can differ by several times in some countries against the new member states, although the expenses for the purchase of agricultural equipment or fertilisers are the same everywhere.

Presidents Ilves and Grybauskaitė discussed the neighbourhood policies of the European Union, with an emphasis on Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova and Belarus.

“The government in Minsk, which talks to its people in the language of batons and imprisonment, is not fit to be a part of today’s Europe. In this case, the European Union should use powerful words to provide balance, by uniting its voice with its mind; the pressure on the Belarusian regime needs to be powerful and efficient, with all sanctions very accurately aimed,” President Ilves told.

He confirmed that the European Union neighbourhood policy is not about influencing any changes made by a country.

“Our wish is simple: we want democratic, successful and future orientated countries, countries that have a realistic view of the world, be they neighbours or part of the European Union,” President Ilves said. “The reforms that are encouraged and supported by the European Union are aimed at improving the living standards of the people of these countries.”

According to the Estonian Head of State, it is quite natural that the European Union highly appreciates European values and European experiences, which we are are willing to share, should anyone want them.

“In 20 years, the co-operation between the Baltic states has added new colour to the emotions of becoming decoupled from the empire, and co-operation aimed at joining important international organisations has turned into specific projects,” said the Estonian Head of State, and he mentioned transport connections with the rest of Europe and building a new nuclear power plant in Lithuania as the most essential.

“The success of these projects will demonstrate the real substance and strength of our co-operation,” President Ilves emphasised. “When can we take a high-speed train from Estonia, through Latvia and Lithuania, to Berlin? When will we finally have a modern Via Baltica, which connects all of us and then runs further, to Poland? When will the Baltic states no longer be an energy isle, separated from the rest of Europe? The answers to these questions will also represent our evaluation of the health of our regional co-operation in the 21st century.”

President Ilves characterised as positive the fact that the stage of selecting between two candidates has been reached in the building of a new nuclear power station in Lithuania.

“Estonia is still interested in participation in the Visaginas nuclear power station,” President Ilves assured, adding that Eesti Energia is currently considering the offers of two potential investors. “Let us hope that the negotiations for finding and involving a strategic investor will be successful and the new nuclear power station will be a project that will really enhance the energy security and independence of the region considerably.”

The Estonian Head of State assured the support of his country in developing the energy security centre in Lithuania into a NATO Centre of Excellence, as is the alliance’s cyber defence centre in Tallinn.

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