

“A strong Europe shall rely upon the responsibility and sense of duty that the European Union Member States have regarding both their own state and the EU as a whole,” said the President, Mr. Toomas Hendrik Ilves, at a meeting with Finland’s new Prime Minister, Mr. Jyrki Katainen, who arrived in Estonia for his first working visit as head of his country’s government.

“Estonia and Finland have both survived the last economic recession by implementing strong cuts and a strict fiscal policy and we are also expecting behaviour as responsible from the other countries,” President Ilves emphasised. “With Finland, we have formed the view that the southern ‘crisis countries’ of the European Union must work hard to get the assistance loans and demonstrate their abilities to impose some efficient saving measures.”

The Estonian Head of State described focusing upon new threats and mutual co-operation to stand against them as important.

“Cyber defence and cyber security represent a sphere in which all the IT-smart Nordic countries can develop mutual co-operation, and both Estonia and Finland are definitely among such countries,” President Ilves told.

He recalled the cyber defence alliance, which Estonia established, and where information technology specialists commit their free time, at their own free will, to improving the cyber security of their country.

“Such beneficial co-operation between the public sector and the state should characterise any co-ordinated cyber defence activities in all the Nordic countries,” told the Estonian Head of State. “A number of globally recognised technology companies that have the skills to provide the Nordic countries with a well-needed cyber defence shield can be found in this area, if supported by our countries.”

President Ilves expressed his pleasure with Finland’s co-operation with the NATO Centre of Excellence for Co-operative Cyber Defence in Tallinn and characterised Finland’s cyber defence policy, which is to be complete by the end of the next year, as a good learning reference for other countries.

“Estonia has no doubt whatsoever that both the European Union and NATO must pay more attention to cyber security, particularly in the sense of co-operation between the member states, but also as an effort promoted by two influential organisations,” President Ilves assured.

“Estonia wants the European Union to create civilian and military cyber defence capabilities, which would become a part of our common security and defence policy, while Estonia and Finland, with the other Nordic states, would be the initiators in developing the capability.”

When discussing the relations between Estonia and Finland more specifically, President Ilves described these relations as good, close and often relying upon shared opinions and positions.

“We could use the word “special relations” in this regard, which is proven by the co-operation pursued by our countries when solving mutual, regional and European Union issues,” told the Estonian Head of State to Mr. Katainen, the new Prime Minister of Finland, adding: “Your term in office as the minister of finance of your country confirmed that when handling the economic and financial life of our countries, we have both prioritised the same values – conservatism and balance.”

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