

The Estonian Head of State, Toomas Hendrik Ilves, who arrived at the United Nations 66th General Assembly, took part yesterday in the opening discussion, “The Power of Open”, of the international initiative “Open Government Partnership”, at the invitation of Barack Obama and Dilma Rousseff, the presidents of the United States of America and Brazil.

The “Open Government Partnership”, which was announced by presidents Obama and Rousseff a year ago and currently includes 46 countries, encourages the governments of all these countries to greater openness, transparency, the involvement of citizens and the strengthening of civil society in general.

“Estonia’s experience proves that a successful state, in the contemporary meaning, means liberty of speech and journalism, the supremacy of law, restraining corruption and the involvement of civil society; these are the elements that lay the foundation for any democracy and a state that is based on the rule of law,” President Ilves told. “The opposite of this is a closed society based on fear, and this is seldom made better by economic stability, which some countries enjoy.”

The Estonian Head of State acknowledged the initiative of the presidents of the United States and Brazil, which also involves the commitment of countries who have joined the “Open Government Partnership” to develop, for next year, national action plans for increasing transparency and reducing corruption in their respective countries.

“Estonia is ready to share its experiences here, in the same way that we have always supported democratic changes aimed at building up or strengthening democratic, civil societies,” the Estonian Head of State emphasised.

Before yesterday’s discussion, President Ilves had a brief conversation with the US Head of State, Barack Obama; they also touched upon the European Union e-health work group, which President Ilves chairs. President Obama expressed his wish to receive a more substantial overview of the progress of this project in the future.

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