

During a two-day working visit to Poland, President Toomas Hendrik Ilves met with President Bronisław Komorowski and Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski and focused on the next European Union budget, energy security and the Eastern Partnership.

According to President Ilves, for the European Union's next 2014–2020 budget, it is most important that the European common market and the underlying bases of free competition apply to all branches of the economy and all the member states.

Presidents Ilves and Komorowski jointly recognised that the system for direct aid in the common agricultural policy, which sometimes means differences of up to six times in the levels of some member states, is not sustainable and distorts internal competition in the European Union.

“We are all in the same internal market, where seed, fertiliser, agricultural equipment and fuel cost everyone the same amount, but one part of Europe just gets many times more money,” President Ilves said.

At his meeting with Komorowski and Sikorski, as well as yesterday at the opening panel of the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR) annual meeting, President Ilves stated that in Europe we must get beyond the simplified division of Europe into West and East.

“The division of the European Union member states into old and new, or East and West is no longer valid. Only as a united Europe, thinking and acting together, can we overcome the current crisis,” President Ilves said.

While in Poland, President Ilves also raised the topic of energy security, by emphasising the need to diversify energy supply. “The diversity of supply sources and channels increases the energy security of the Baltic Sea Region. Estonia and Poland definitely plan to cooperate in this area,” Ilves added.

At the meeting with Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski, the European Union Eastern

Partnership was discussed. President Ilves noted that the Eastern Partnership programme must provide effective assistance for target countries in their convergence with the European Union, but just as important is the activeness and interest in cooperation of the target countries themselves. "Only those can be helped who want to help themselves, which is why we expect a greater contribution from the target countries in the name of common goals," Ilves added.

The head of state will arrive back in Estonia tonight.

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