

President Toomas Hendrik Ilves, who met with the Lithuanian Head of State, Dalia Grybauskaitė, and the Lithuanian Prime Minister, Andrius Kubilius, in Vilnius today, stressed that Europe's decision makers and responsible states must belong to the core of the European Union.

"But who is the core of the European Union and of Europe more generally? The 17 member states of the euro area? Definitely not. There is Germany and Finland, along with Estonia and, of course, Sweden, Denmark and Poland. The core also includes those who are characterised by responsibility," the Estonian Head of State said.

According to him, responsibility also means understanding that the world needs an economically and politically strong, united European Union, and no matter how hackneyed it may sound, having countries drop out of the European Union or the euro area is not in the interest of any of us.

"Although the European Union has changed and inevitably will be divided for some time to come into faster and slower member states," President Ilves said, "it is in Estonia's and Lithuania's national interests that we are among the faster states, in the core of Europe, which means the circle of decision makers. We have both proven that we deserve this place."

The Estonian Head of State affirmed that Europe is at a crossroads, and there is no turning back to the European Union of a few years ago. "The choices are either increased integration, a continued debt trap, or ... We have to find the correct path for the entire EU and for our countries."

President Ilves warned that if the governments and politicians of the members states speak to their people about Europe, the European Union and the euro area indirectly with half-truths, dissatisfaction may deepen in many countries and spread into the streets and not only against Wall Street.

Speaking about Estonian-Lithuanian cooperation, President Ilves said that now and in the near future cooperation does not consist of making declarations but of supporting and carrying out

important projects.

“These definitely include Rail Baltica, the fast railway connection between the Baltic countries and the rest of Europe, the new nuclear power plant, the intensification of energy security, and united action in the name of the NATO air policing mission,” the Estonian Head of State said. “Let’s be frank, as is the custom between friends – we assess the strength of Baltic cooperation through the joint activities in the name of joint projects.”

At the Estonian Head of State’s meeting with President Dalia Grybauskaitė and Prime Minister Andrius Kubilius, the European Union’s close neighbours and the need for a coordinated and united neighbourhood policy were also discussed.

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