

“The European Parliament should set an example in strengthening parliamentary power for the national representatives of the European Union Member States. This is of utmost importance during the current crisis, as the future of our union is largely dependent on whether the people of different countries feel that they are being addressed and considered enough”, told the Estonian Head of State, Toomas Hendrik Ilves, at his meeting today with the President of the European Parliament, Jerzy Buzek.

“Let us admit today that some countries living beyond their means and abilities is harshly affecting all of us: Europe has been unable to be sufficiently European,” President Ilves stated.

According to him, the debt crisis in several euro zone countries is influencing the European Union as a whole and currently it seems that categorising the EU into the faster responding and more responsible member states on the one side and the slower and problematic countries on the other seems inevitable.

“When speaking of responsibility, I do not mean each country’s context for the organisation of economic and financial issues; instead, responsibility stands for joint support for Member States that are drowning in their difficulties,” the Estonian Head of State confirmed. “The European Union must restore its internal stability and political and economic influence; this is an objective that we should always keep in mind.”

Presidents Ilves and Buzek described the situation of suspended restoration of the European Union’s economy as ‘worrying’, and they mentioned the increasing lack of trust as one of the reasons for the situation.

“The general decrease in trust will also contribute to reduced investments and consumption; the slowdown in global economic growth limits export, while the urgent need to balance budget restricts internal demand in Europe.” This is how the Estonian Head of State described the near future of the EU, where the growth in gross domestic product will quite probably be inhibited next year and may only begin to restore slowly in 2013.

President Ilves names the European Union internal market as one of the sources of new

economic growth; until now, it has not operated with the required power. Several opportunities have been neglected here – for example, the service sector and the use of IT developments to enhance cross-border online services and e-trade.

President Ilves attached high importance to the European Parliament contributing to the modification of the Common Agricultural Policy in order to change the current system for the payment of direct agricultural aid.

“The situation where the level of direct aid may differ as many as six times among different EU Member States is not sustainable and only distorts internal competition within the European Union,” emphasised the Estonian Head of State.

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