

“Estonia and Finland are like two boat crews of fellow travellers on the Baltic Sea who support each other but are sometimes separated by storms; however, they have never lost each other from sight and soon again sail on, side by side,” said the President, Toomas Hendrik Ilves, who today hosted the Finnish Head of State, Tarja Halonen, who arrived for a visit to Tallinn.

This is Tarja Halonen’s departing visit to Estonia as the Finnish Head of State. The honorary company of the Estonian Defence Forces was lined up to honour her in Kadriorg, and the national anthems of Finland and Estonia were played.

According to President Ilves, the Estonian Head of State can only speak in Estonian with another head of state on one occasion, when speaking to Tarja Halonen, who spoke in Estonian in the University of Tartu slightly before the Euro referendum in autumn of 2003, when she said, “Welcome to the European Union.”

“This expresses the special warmth and closeness of the relations between Estonia and Finland and trochaic tetrameter folklore, which is called runic verse in Estonia and Kalevala verse in Finland, is not the reason for that. Over the past two decades, we have found support, understanding, assistance and allies in each other, even in situations where we have been competitors,” told the Estonian Head of State. “We think and act in similar ways in the European Union.”

“Finland, like Estonia, has one of the most responsible budget and financial policies of the European Union countries. We have both observed the rules, which we adopted ourselves, and respected the commitments to the European Union and the euro zone. This will give both of us the right to demand the same attitude from others,” President Ilves emphasised.

“The 20th century has challenged us, but we have prevailed as nations and countries and Finland and Estonia stand on solid ground at the beginning of the 21st century,” assured the Estonian Head of State.

President Ilves presented the the Finnish Head of State with two watercolours by the well know Estonian artist, Valli Lember-Bogatkina, which depict views of Tallinn.

Finnish President Tarja Halonen made her last visit to Estonia as a head of state

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