

At his meetings with the President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins and Prime Minister, Enda Kenny, President Ilves discussed the position of small countries in today's Europe, the future of the European Union and the opportunities available for international co-operation in the sphere of cyber security.

"We understand each other well as small countries, the smallness of our countries is also our strength; our national identity is based on culture which we've highly valued and kept safe throughout history," said President Ilves, who also discussed the survival of small languages in his first meeting with President Higgins, who was elected to the office late last year.

Challenges faced by the European Union and the future of the Communities, considering the economic situation in the euro zone and the Irish referendum on the European Union Fiscal Treaty, which is to take place early this summer, were also up for discussion at the meetings.

Prime Minister Kenny expressed his hope that people would vote yes in the Fiscal Treaty referendum.

"As both in Ireland and Estonia support for the European Union has been high, historically, it will help us to overcome this difficult period," President Ilves said. "Small countries will cope as they abide by the rules and laws and are responsible. This shared understanding brings us together as countries," added the Estonian Head of State in his meeting with Prime Minister Kenny.

President Ilves emphasised, both in the presentation that he gave yesterday at the Institute of International and European Affairs (IIEA) and during the meetings with President Higgins and Prime Minister Kenny, the need for international co-operation in ensuring cyber security, inviting Ireland to co-operate with the NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence in Tallinn.

Within the framework of the meeting, President Ilves invited the President of Ireland to pay an official visit to Estonia.

President Ilves and Mrs. Evelin Ilves will return to Estonia tonight.

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