

President Toomas Hendrik Ilves met today in Kadriorg with Francis Maude, British Minister for the Cabinet Office, who is responsible for the co-ordination of cyber issues in the United Kingdom.

Minister Maude acknowledged Estonia's international e-image and the specific achievements made in the IT sphere by the state as well as the private and third sectors.

President Ilves also emphasised the importance of extensive co-operation between all the stakeholders, together with important joint domestic efforts on cyber issues: "While a figurative firewall between the private and public sectors has contributed to the establishment of liberal democracy in Europe and elsewhere for centuries, today, in the light of cyber threats, we sense a stronger need for co-operation between the private and public sectors. In other words, it is time to learn to co-operate, and break the firewall."

When speaking about IT development, Minister Maude suggested an historical parallel, saying that like the Industrial Revolution started in England two hundred years ago, we are all facing a global revolution today, with data being the raw material instead of steel.

President Ilves and Minister Maude had a lengthy discussion about e-health development and cyber security issues. The Estonian Head of State chairs the European Union e-health work group, which will introduce its final report next week in Copenhagen to the EU health care ministers. President Ilves is also one of the supporters and proponents of cyber security issues.

Minister Maude's delegation will remain in Estonia for three days to learn more about Estonia's experience in developing and using public e-services. The delegation will visit the NATO Centre of Excellence for Co-operative Cyber Defence and the ICT Demo Centre, meeting representatives of Skype and several start-up companies.

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