

"The Arab Spring" has made it quite clear to even the most hesitant in the European Union that we desperately need close relations with Turkey, one of the few that is capable of understanding and influencing the development of Middle Eastern countries towards stability and civil liberties," told the President, Toomas Hendrik Ilves, at a meeting with Ahmet Davutoglu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey.

Turkey, which enjoys cultural and historical links to both the east and west, can give the new Arabian leaders a chance to learn how to build up a modern and successful country – provided that they wish to do it themselves, admitted the Estonian Head of State. According to him, Turkey has become a bridgehead, connecting Europe and countries that are just trying to find their way.

"Contemporary Turkey, a strong partner of the European Union, is exceptionally important for balancing and problem-solving purposes in the region and in general," acknowledged President Ilves. "And in addition, Turkey is one of the most dynamically growing countries in Europe."

The Estonian Head of State repeated the words he spoke two years ago in Ankara to Abdullah Gül, the President of Turkey: "The European Union will not be complete without Turkey."

President Ilves and Foreign Minister Davutoglu also discussed the upcoming NATO summit in Chicago.

"We all need a well-considered and sustainable strategy for NATO efforts in Afghanistan, before and after the departure of the allied forces. We will need a larger and more specific commitment to ensuring cyber security, which is one of the most important challenges for NATO allies and partners," told the Estonian Head of State.

He also expressed his hope that Turkey would become a full member of the NATO Centre of Excellence for Co-operative Cyber Defence in Tallinn.

**President Ilves: Turkey is important for balancing and problem-solving purposes**

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