

The President, Toomas Hendrik Ilves, who is currently on a working visit to the United States of America, held meetings with Nicolae Timofti, President of Moldova; Rosen Plevneliev, President of Bulgaria; Moncef Marzouki, President of Tunisia; and Atifete Jahjaga, President of Kosovo, within the framework of the United Nations (UN) General Assembly week.

At all of these meetings, President Ilves emphasised Estonia's continued willingness to share its IT experiences and offer its assistance in the development of e-governance and public e-services.

"We have successfully implemented e-governance and our people can complete their income tax returns electronically and take part in e-elections. The principles of e-governance and related principles accelerate the modernisation of countries, reduce corruption and increase transparency," told President Ilves.

The Estonian E-governance Academy only recently launched a mobile ID application in Moldova; this will increase governance efficiency and help to fight corruption; Estonia has also advised Moldova on matters related to legislation on e-governance and the digitisation of paper registers. We also have close co-operation in the sphere of IT with Bulgaria and Tunisia; Estonia helps with e-governance development and updates. President Ilves also welcomed Tunisia's accession to the Freedom Online Coalition; this summer, the coalition joined 17 countries.

At the meeting with Nicolae Timofti, President of Moldova, President Ilves assured that Estonia will continue to support the enlargement of the European Union.

"We encourage and support those who are courageous and undergo reform. Moldova sets a good example for the other countries of the Eastern Partnership," stated the Estonian Head of State.

"The doors to the European Union can only be opened by doing consistent homework," President Ilves told. "The largest negotiations concerning accession to the European Union are held with the population of the countries concerned for the successful implementation of

required reforms," admitted President Ilves.

According to President Ilves, a Moldova that is democratic, economically successful and offers its citizens security is an important step towards solving the Transnistrian conflict.

At their meeting, the Bulgarian President, Rosen Plevneliev, and President Ilves mostly focused on the economic situation in Europe and the crisis suffered by the euro area.

"For the purpose of solving economic issues, Estonia and Bulgaria are linked by responsible fiscal policies," told President Ilves.

The Estonian Head of State confirmed his earlier position at the meeting; responsible countries cannot always be there to help those not abiding by the rules – "This is not sustainable."

When discussing the situation in the Balkans, President Ilves told: "As a member of the European Union and NATO, Bulgaria is an important country in the Balkans for securing stability in this area. A Balkans that is democratic, respects the rule of law, is free from conflict and consistently strives towards the European Union is important for Europe as a whole."

At his meeting with the President of Tunisia, Moncef Marzouki, the Estonian Head of State acknowledged Tunisia for the democratic developments it has achieved so far.

"Everything that we see as the cornerstones of the nature of democracy – institutional structure, supremacy of law, development of civic society, ensuring fundamental rights and freedoms, economic growth, low level of corruption – will take years, and they require effort, political capital and will," told President Ilves at the meeting.

President Ilves hopes that Tunisia will continue with its transition to a democratic system and open economy. Estonia is willing to offer its support to this end and assist with information technology solutions that will speed up the implementation of reforms, reduce corruption and

enhance transparency.

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