

The European Union needs a new Convention of the Future of Europe, where the Member States, meaning its citizens, can adopt decisions regarding the organisation of the future Europe, told the President of the Republic of Estonia, Toomas Hendrik Ilves, and Giuliano Amato, who has been the Prime Minister of Italy on two previous occasions, at a discussion held in the European University Institute (EUI), Florence.

The current decision-making mechanisms of the European Union are slow, clumsy and get in the way of rapid progress, stated President Ilves and Giuliano Amato, the Vice President of the Convention of the Future of Europe, which drafted the Constitution of Europe.

They both see the future of the EU as more federal and consider the possibility of the European Parliament having two chambers, in which one chamber would equally represent all the Member States, and the other chamber would be elected according to the current procedure, as one of the options.

However, President Ilves warned against so-called trans-European elections that would inevitably include advantages for larger Member States.

"This will break the European Union," he said. "National identity and the interests of all the Member States must be respected. This is a part of the solidarity that the European Union relies upon."

The Estonian Head of State emphasised that as the European Union is not a project for the elite only, it is not sufficient for governments and politicians to discuss the future of our community: "There must be a discussion and debate among the citizens of the European Union to determine what the future of the community will be."

The Estonian Head of State is currently on a working visit to Italy. He met with entrepreneurs interested in Estonia at the Chamber of Commerce of Milan, opened an exhibition by artist Epp-Maria Kokamägi within the framework of days of Estonian culture and visited an exhibition of nature photos by Remo Savisaar and Fred Jüssi. Today, President Ilves will speak about cyber security within the context of the European Union at the University of Florence.

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