

"Estonia trusts the European Union," stated the President, Toomas Hendrik Ilves, in summarising the results of the last public opinion poll, which showed that 74% of the Estonian population supports Estonia's membership of the European Union, while 63% support being a part of the euro area. Such support positions Estonia as the European Union Member State with the greatest confidence in Europe.

President Ilves, who gave a presentation at today's State Chancellery seminar – where the passing of ten years since Estonia closed the accession negotiations with the European Union was discussed – said: "Over the years, despite all our domestic political issues, our opposition politicians or government members have never blamed our economic woes on the European Union, and we must respect them for having the courage not to opt for this solution. Support for the European Union is much lower in countries where politicians have chosen the opposite direction."

When speaking about the future of the European Union, President Ilves mentioned operating an internal market, above all, in digital form, and the free movement of services as the most important aspects. He also mentioned the national protectionist trend of thinking, which is being courted in some southern EU states, as a worrying trend.

President Ilves supported the idea of Trans-Atlantic free trade between the European Union and the United States of America as that would enhance the competitiveness of the European Union and make it stronger at a global level, particularly at times characterised by the strong rise of Asia.

"We need a contemporary e-Europe," told President Ilves and he recommended that Estonia focus, during its Presidency in 2018, on e-services, cyber defence and computerisation in general as the red line issues that are important for the EU as a whole.

"Estonia also has an opportunity, during its Presidency, to focus on something that we can do well ourselves and can encourage others to follow suit," said the Head of State.

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