

"The issue of democratic legitimacy in the European Union is mostly caused by the situation whereby the EU Member States that abide by common rules help those who do not comply with agreements. This is a situation that contributes to the spread of anti-euro populism in Europe," told the President, Toomas Hendrik Ilves, yesterday, when giving a presentation in Brussels at a series of lectures of the independent European Policy Centre think tank "Visions for Europe: making the best out of the crisis?" which will focus on European issues.

According to President Ilves, federalism is one possible solution for improving democratic legitimacy or the participation of its citizens in the European Union.

"A two-chamber European Parliament would help to match the interests of the large and small Member States," added the Estonian Head of State.

President Ilves told the members of the think tank who are involved with the policies of the European Union and diplomats of the European Union about the experiences and choices made by Estonia during the recession, which helped it emerge from the crisis.

"Estonia did fulfil then and still fulfils now the rules that we agreed upon in the European Union," President Ilves emphasised.

The Estonian Head of State stated in his address that a working EU internal market would be required to ensure the economic growth of the Member States. The Head of State supported the idea for the establishment of a Trans-Atlantic free trading zone, TAFTA, and stressed that Europe must also start to take security more seriously and contribute more to defence expenditure.

Today, the Estonian Head of State will give an opening address at the high-level seminar "Empowering the Nordic-Baltic Economy – and inspiring Europe" held by the Baltic Development Forum and Microsoft. He will discuss the IT success stories of the Nordic and Baltic states and the new challenges that accompany the opportunities offered by the digital era.

In the afternoon, President Ilves will give an opening address at a conference organised by the European Parliament focusing on data protection and privacy issues, "Building the Digital Fortress: a Toolkit for Cyber Security". The Head of State will speak about privacy in cyber space, cyber crime and ethical issues related to data protection.

Within the framework of his visit, President Ilves will also meet with Rigmor Aasrud, Minister of Administrative, Reform and Religious Affairs of Norway.

Office of the President
Public Relations Department
Phone +372 631 6229