

"Estonia's and Poland's co-operation in the European Union and NATO is getting closer and closer, particularly in the sphere of defence and security policy, which serves to prove that we have shared interests and objectives and we have a common understanding of the world around us," told the President, Toomas Hendrik Ilves, who met with the Polish Prime Minister upon his arrival in Estonia today.

The Estonian Head of State described the co-operation between the two countries on issues pertaining to the development of the European Union as close; Poland's leading role in the talks concerning the new European Union budget, resulting in a good deal for Europe in general and our region, serves as one example of the co-operation.

"We now await approval of the budget in the European Parliament before we begin to focus on the establishment of transport and energy connections that are of importance for both Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland," told President Ilves. "The modern and fast Rail Baltica connection, which should be established through the joint efforts of the Baltic states and Poland, will connect the Baltic states with the rest of Europe."

The Estonian Head of State expressed his pleasure with the launching of euro debates in Poland, saying that "Estonia is ready to share its experiences and will be a strong supporter of Poland's accession to the euro zone, provided that Poland is ready. We also support the convergence of Latvia and Lithuania to the euro zone. If all these countries adopt the euro, this would serve as strong proof of the credibility and strength of the euro."

The euro is not only of economic importance for Estonia, by bringing new foreign investments and jobs, but it also conveys a political meaning, as it will intensify our co-operation within Europe and with the immediate participants that are involved in the adoption of the most important decisions, President Ilves told.

He described the participation and support of Poland as a large regional country for NATO's air security mission to the Baltic states as important, emphasising that Estonia and Poland both attribute importance to modern defence capabilities and they both invest approximately 2% of their GDP into their respective defence budgets.

"I can also see new levels for possible co-operation, such as in the air and rocket defence system established by Poland, which is also important in a general regional context," said President Ilves.

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