

President Ilves, who arrived on a state visit to Ottawa, confirmed at his meetings yesterday with the leaders of the Canadian Parliament, Noël A. Kinsella, Andrew Scheer and Peter Van Loan and the Prime Minister, Stephen Harper, that Estonia sees as indispensable the prompt conclusion of negotiations on a free trade agreement between Canada and the European Union and the conclusion of the agreement.

"It is quite customary and even inevitable that democratic states, based on the rule of law, will simplify mutual trade to stand up against mercantile countries that indulge in state capitalism," told the Estonian head of State.

"Even without any agreements, Canada is still one of the important strategic partners for the European Union, both politically and economically; the free trade agreement will just be a formalisation on paper of this situation," said President Ilves. "The negotiations began back in 2009 and now it is time they reached their conclusion in both Brussels and Ottawa. Let us sign the agreement."

A free trade agreement between the United States of America and the European Union would be a logical continuation of this agreement, enhancing the economic influence of both North America and the European Union, stated President Ilves at a lunch at the Canadian Parliament, given by the influential Canadian politician Peter Van Loan.

Co-operation between the states and entrepreneurs of Estonia and Canada in the spheres of information communication technology and cyber security were discussed in length at the meetings between the Estonian Head of State and the political leaders of Canada. President Ilves invited Canada to join the NATO Centre of Excellence for Cooperative Cyber Defence in Tallinn.

"In the cyber war – the first battles of which have already taken place – there will be no strategically bad or geographically good locations for any country. Everyone will be equally attackable or defenceless, or, vice versa, we can be defendable, if we pool together our efforts as NATO allies," told President Ilves.

The Estonian Head of State, who yesterday flew from Ottawa to Toronto, will today speak about the future vision of the European Union at an influential economic forum, Economic Club of Canada; he will also meet with members of the Estonian-Canadian Chamber of Commerce and Estonian entrepreneurs in Canada. He will visit the IT-centred Waterloo/Kitchener technological region and the Canadian Centre of Innovation, Communitech, where he will give a public presentation on e-governance and cyber security issues. Representatives of Tallinn University of Technology and Waterloo University will sign a memorandum of co-operation there, and Estonian entrepreneurs will meet with business partners.

Tonight, President Ilves and Evelin Ilves will meet the local Estonian community at the Estonian House in Toronto. Tomorrow, 4 May, at the Day of Civil Action, which has acquired an international dimension, the Estonian Head of State and Evelin Ilves will participate in "Let's Do It" 2013 by cleaning up the Jõekäärü Youth Camp, which Toomas Hendrik Ilves himself attended as a child.

Evelin Ilves will today visit the retirement and nursing home, Ehatare, for elderly Estonians.

The following people are included in the official delegation that is accompanying the President of the Republic: the Minister of Education and Research, Jaak Aaviksoo; the Minister of Cultural Affairs, Rein Lang; members of the Riigikogu, Liisa Pakosta and Imre Sooäär; Secretary General of the Minister of Cultural Affairs, Paavo Nõgene; Undersecretary for Europe and Transatlantic Co-operation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mart Laanemäe, Vice Rector for Research of Tallinn University of Technology, Erkki Truve and the leader of Cyber Security Programme, Marko Kääramees, member of the Management Board of Cybernetica AS, Aivar Usk; Manager of NOW! Innovations Üllar Jaaksoo.

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