

"The term 'federalism' has been hijacked by those who do not know what they are talking about. Federalism is the best way to combine the interests of the small and the great; the interests of small states are better protected in a federal system. If it is in our national interests to preserve our state, language and culture, in today's world, there are certain things we must do together in order to be strong together," President Toomas Hendrik Ilves said at the discussion held on the occasion of Europe Day.

The discussion organised by the Estonian Representation of the European Commission, where the speakers included President Ilves and barrister Jüri Raidla, focused on the future of the European Union.

One of the main forward-looking questions is the issue of the two-chamber parliament: the upper house, where all states are equally represented, and the lower house with proportional representation, President Ilves said.

According to him, the current crisis demonstrates that in today's Europe, there is almost no distinction made between "old" and "new" Europe anymore, because the union is divided into countries that follow the agreed rules and countries that violate these rules, and the ones violating the rules are not "new".

"Estonia supports a strong Europe," President Ilves assured. "If we want Europe to be a force to be reckoned with in the world, we also need hard power. NATO and the EU have a combined population of 900 million, which yields enormous power for the protection of democracy in the world."

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