

After his speech at the UN General Assembly, President visited Boston and the adjacent university town of Cambridge yesterday, where he spoke at two top international universities.

The head of state spoke about e-state as an economic engine at the MIT Sloan School of Management and gave a lecture on cyber security and transatlantic relations at The Fletcher School of Tufts University.

Recent discussions and developments have re-activated the discussion about the tensions between privacy and safety, personal freedoms and security throughout the world, the Estonian Head of State said, according to whom cyber defence and personal freedoms can also be compatible.

"The desire to preserve freedom does not mean that cyberspace does not need rules or laws," President Ilves stressed. "In the cyber world, we are still on Thucydides' island of Melos; where the strong do what they want and the weak acquiesce. Therefore, we require agreements, norms and standards in cyberspace – but these must not contradict the fundamental democratic values."

Speaking about the spying scandal that recently caused an international uproar, the Estonian Head of State said that the problem cannot be resolved by legislation that restricts the freedom of the Internet or the freedom of speech.

"Those of us, for whom democratic values are important, want to find a suitable balance between three factors – security, privacy and the free movement of information. An encouraging example is Estonia, where the residents are provided with a secure e-services system while being ranked first for Internet freedom for the third year in a row," said President Ilves.

At The Fletcher School, the Estonian Head of State also spoke about transatlantic relations, emphasising that Europe must seriously attend to its contribution to NATO's common defence. President Ilves also expressed his concern that the so-called "Snowden case" has increased anti-American sentiments in Europe. On the other hand, in the U.S., the isolationist mood has increased among the political movements on both the left and the right.

"In any case, Estonia supports the preservation of the role of the U.S. as the world's leader," he affirmed. "Since North America and Europe continue to share basic values, we must work to preserve our close cooperation."

At the Sloan School of Management, President Ilves appeared with Professor Alex Pentland, and entrepreneur and business student Xenia Menzies. The discussion was moderated by Professor Fiona Murray. The topics of the panel discussion included information and communications technology and the role played by innovation in the development of enterprise. The Estonian Head of State introduced Estonia's e-governance solutions to the students and professors, and also spoke about how, in Estonia, ICT education in the schools, as well as the e-governance solutions, including a secure ID guaranteed by the state, have fostered the development of entrepreneurship and innovation.

In Cambridge, President Ilves met with MIT President Rafael Reif and Tufts University President Anthony P. Monaco. The possibilities for cooperation in the fields of education, science, entrepreneurship and e-governance were discussed. President Ilves also met with Estonian students from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Harvard University, which are located in Cambridge.

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