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TOP NEWS



Zambian Foreign Minister Kabinga J. Pande and Estonian Foreign Minister Urmas Paet in Tallinn, 8th October

Paet: The EU-Africa Summit Should Not Be Postponed

Oct 8 - Estonian Foreign Minister Urmas Paet met with his Zambian colleague Kabinga J. Pande in Tallinn. It was the first visit by an African minister since Estonia's re-independence.

Matters related to the upcoming European Union - Africa Summit, as well as opportunities for co-operation in development projects and tourism were discussed.

The Estonian and Zambian ministers found that the EU-Africa Summit scheduled for December should definitely take place. Foreign Minister Paet remarked that the possibility of postponing the summit due to Zimbabwe's attendance has recently been under discussion. "We are of the opinion that the EU-Africa Summit should certainly take place, since the relations between the EU and Africa should not suffer due to one individual," Paet said.

Paet confirmed that Estonia condemns the crimes committed in Zimbabwe during President Robert Mugabe's reign, and holds him accountable for the

decline of the state. "However, President Mugabe should not be allowed to possess the key for developing EU-Africa relations, and the summit should not be postponed indefinitely," Paet emphasized. The foreign minister added that Zimbabwe must certainly be dealt with so that democracy can gain a foothold there. "We place faith in Zimbabwe's close neighbours, including Zambia," Paet said.

The ministers also discussed questions regarding development co-operation. "Over half of the European Union's development co-operation resources go to Africa, and with increasing resources, Estonia will also begin to focus more on African nations," Paet asserted. The foreign minister also confirmed Estonia's willingness to share its experiences in the field of information technology with Zambia.

The Zambian foreign minister gave an overview of the preparation of his nation's constitution, programme for economic revival, the battle against corruption, and opportunities for tourism.

HER MAJESTY'S VISIT TO ESTONIA



Queen Silvia at the opening of Johan Skytte monument.

Her Majesty Queen Silvia of Sweden Participated In the Celebration of the 375th Anniversary of Tartu University

Oct 5 - Her Majesty opened a monument to Johan Skytte, initiator of the University of Tartu, laid a cornerstone to the future rehabilitation centre created by the Estonia Agrenska Foundation in Tammistu and took part in the ceremonial meeting held on the occasion of the anniversary.



Her Majesty Queen Silvia and Professor Alar Karis, Rector of the University of Tartu.

President Ilves: Without the University of Tartu There Would Be No Estonian State

5 Oct - According to President Toomas Hendrik Ilves, without the University of Tartu Estonians would not have become a cultural nation and would not have been able to create their own state in 1918.

In a speech given at the ceremony marking the 375th anniversary of the foundation of the University of Tartu, President Ilves called upon the University of Tartu to pursue the ideal of a universitas, an environment that provides a universal education.

"It would be erroneous to think that universitas only means a wide choice of courses. What a university offers is not important. What is important is the kind of education the students receive," said President Ilves.

Drawing a parallel with the concept of paideia known from Ancient Greece, which only considered people that were educated in every possible way to be perfect, President Ilves referred to the excellent education received by the founders of the nation at the University of Tartu. "If we had not had our own intelligentsia at the end of the 19th century—our own doctors, journalists, clerics and lawyers—we would not have been ripe to create our own state in 1918," said the Estonian Head of State.



President Toomas Hendrik Ilves and Her Majesty Queen Silvia descending from the Toomemägi in Tartu.

FOREIGN NEWS

Paet: Giving Georgia NATO Membership Action Plan Would Encourage Continuing Reforms

3 Oct - **Estonian Foreign Minister Urmas Paet attended a meeting of Baltic and Benelux foreign ministers in Jurmala, Latvia.**

At the meeting, the ministers discussed the European Neighbourhood Policy, the EU Reform Treaty, energy issues, and NATO enlargement.

In discussing the European Neighbourhood Policy, the ministers agreed that the EU as a whole must focus equally on southern as well as on the eastern dimension. "We need to avoid a situation in which some member states advocate the southern dimension of the Neighbourhood Policy and others the eastern dimension," said Paet.

The Estonian Minister also said that the European Neighbourhood Policy should be as flexible as possible and allow for each country to be approached on an individual basis. "Nations differ by their pace of development and achievements," Paet noted. "Naturally, the commitment of the aspiring nation, and its contribution to the goals of the Neighbourhood Policy, are extremely important," he emphasized.

The foreign ministers also discussed the EU's visa requirements. Foreign Minister Paet mentioned that the EU should take steps to simplify the visa process for citizens of Georgia. "Estonia supports starting the visa facilitation process for Georgia," he confirmed.

In talking about NATO enlargement, Foreign Minister Paet said it was essential to provide NATO Membership Action Plan for Georgia at the next NATO summit, as it would send the right signal and encourage Georgia to continue its reforms.

When the Reform Treaty was discussed, the participants agreed that the set timeline must be followed. "Estonia is satisfied with the Reform Treaty project, and we would like for the reform process to move forward," Paet asserted.

The foreign ministers agreed that meetings in the same format would be held on a yearly basis.

Baltic Prime Ministers Consider It Necessary to Raise the Question of Border Crossings at the EU-Russia Summit

Oct 3 - **The prime ministers of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania agreed at their meeting in Dikli, Latvia that the question of border crossing queues should be raised at the summit between the European Union and Russia in Mafra.**

Estonian Prime Minister Andrus Ansip, Latvian Prime Minister Aigars Kalvitis and Lithuanian Prime Minister Gediminas Kirkilas agreed that long queues are a problem on the border of the European Union. That is why this question should be considered an issue between the EU and Russia.

The second important topic discussed by the prime ministers was energy. They agreed to follow common energy strategies that would ensure joint activities and co-operation between power companies in increasing service reliability and the connection of local power systems with those of the European Union.

The prime ministers also considered important to continue with co-operation in Ignalina nuclear power

plant project. At the moment, the project is in the environmental impact assessment phase. At the end of next year there will be enough information to make decisions about the size of the plant and about the possible division of capacities.

Prime Minister Ansip emphasized that the most important decisions connected to the project should be reached by consensus between the partners. The partners must also have a complete overview of the basics connected with the project.

President Ilves: Joining the Schengen Visa Zone Is a Great Opportunity for Many

Oct 4 - **"Joining the Schengen visa and legal zone must finally eliminate our feeling of being peripheral, of course, only if we ourselves make the effort," President Toomas Hendrik Ilves, who paid a visit to Valga County, said at the Valga-Valka border checkpoint.**

As of December 21st - when Estonia will join the common Schengen space - the edges of Valga, Võru, Viljandi and Pärnu Counties that butt up against Latvia will no longer be on the edge of Estonia, but in the interior of the European Union, the Head of State said.

"I hope that local governments and businesses will energetically make the most of the opportunities provided by Schengen," said President Ilves, mentioning the Lübeck-Narva corridor and Pskov-Livonia euro-region as examples.

Speaking of internal security, the Head of State emphasized the need to compensate for the visible disappearance of the border guards on the Estonian-Latvian border.

"This entails very close cooperation between the police, special services, customs and tax officials, and of course the border guards of the two countries," said President Ilves. "And naturally, this cooperation to manage risks must not be limited to Estonia and Latvia, but must be internationally as extensive as possible."

The disappearance of border controls on the Estonian-Latvian border must leave behind our readiness to temporarily restore these controls if necessary, as has happened in the European Union, said the Head of State, in answer to a question regarding the fate the present border control and customs buildings.

Nordic and Baltic State Secretaries Discussed Opportunities for Co-operation in Reconstructing Afghanistan

5 Oct - **Secretary General of the Estonian Foreign Ministry Matti Maasikas attended a meeting of state secretaries from Nordic and Baltic countries (NB8) in Helsinki.**

During the meeting, the situation in Afghanistan, as well as Nordic-Baltic co-operation in various international organizations was discussed.

Maasikas stated that Afghanistan is a touchstone for the co-operation of the international community. "International organizations, especially the EU and the UN, should increase their activities in Afghanistan," he said. The secretary general emphasized Afghanistan's importance to Estonia, since it is a receiver of both development co-operation and military contributions.

The state secretaries discussed co-operation opportunities in the field of consular aid in states

where some of the Nordic or Baltic countries do not have representations.

A meeting of the state secretaries of the Nordic-Baltic countries (NB8) occurs on an annual basis. Next year, the meeting will be organized by Estonia.

DEFENCE NEWS

President Ilves Met with Members of the Valga Brigade of the Defence League

Oct- 4 **President Toomas Hendrik Ilves met with members of the Valga Brigade of the Defence League. "The Defence League – this is a civil initiative, the free expression of will of a free citizenry to protect its country," President Toomas Hendrik Ilves, who paid a visit to Valga County, said at a meeting with members of the Valga Brigade of the Defence League.**

"I thank you, members of the Defence League, who have devoted your free time, energy, and skills to protect Estonia," said the Head of State. "The defence of Estonia in the 21st century also means taking action during large catastrophes.

President Ilves acknowledged the work that the Defence League does with young people and highly praised the activities of the Women's Home Defence. "The Women's Home Defence definitely needs greater recognition and support," the Head of State asserted.

President Ilves confirmed that he understands the need to modernize the equipment of the Defence League and also supports legislative solutions for regulating the relations between the members of the Defence League and their employers.

At the meeting, cooperation between the Valga Brigade of the Defence League and the local government, as well as the Latvian voluntary national defence organization, was discussed.

DOMESTIC NEWS

Estonia Planning to Make Public Sector Document Handling Paper-Free

Oct 4 - **Estonian government endorsed a draft filed by State Secretary Heiki Loot which calls for scrapping paper in public sector document handling by 2011.**

The purpose of the draft is to speed up the shift to electronic document handling by institutions of the public sector, spokespeople for the government said.

According to the draft, most ministries and the State Chancellery must switch to digital exchange of documents between their document management systems by Dec. 3, 2007 at the latest.

The ministries of justice, defence and foreign affairs would switch to electronic handling of documents by the beginning of next October. The deadline for county governments, boards and inspectorates is May 5, 2008.

The Estonian Informatics Center in 2006 set up Document Exchange Center, an electronic environment for automatic sending of digital documents from one document management system to another.

ECONOMIC NEWS

Currency rates in kroons:

http://www.eestipank.info/dynamic/erp/erp_en.jsp

(Bank of Estonia)

Prime Minister Ansip: We Have to Make Strategic Choices in Estonian Energy Policy

Oct 4 - **In his energy-related speech at the Public Servants' Forum, held in Narva, Prime Minister Andrus Ansip stated, that Estonia has to consider changes in its energy policy.**

According to the Prime Minister, Estonia basically has four strategic choices which include investing in the renewal of oil-shale boilers, significantly increasing the share of renewable energy, looking towards nuclear energy or starting to import energy in larger volumes and thereby increasing Estonia's energy dependence.

The head of government said that Estonia cannot choose only one of the four strategic options. "We have to use all of the solutions, the question concerns their mutual balance," said Ansip.

94 per cent of electricity produced in Estonia is generated from oil shale. "Today, Estonia is able to produce more electricity than we consume," Ansip said. The oil-shale boilers of the Narva Power Plants are obsolete. After 2016 a large amount of production capacity will fall off, which needs to be replaced or renewed. "However, we should not completely abandon oil shale," said the Prime Minister, and added that we have to invest significantly more in effective technology and energy-related research and development activities.

In speaking about renewable energy, the Prime Minister reminded the fact that the government heads of the EU agreed in the spring that the share of renewable energy will be increased to twenty percent of the final consumption of energy by 2020. "Estonia is very close to achieving this objective," Ansip said.

In using nuclear energy, we have two real possibilities - joining the Lithuanian or Finnish project. "This decision cannot be made in a rush, the economic profitability of the projects should be considered," said Ansip.

European Commissioner: Estonia Must Keep Reserves, Accede to Euro Soon

Oct 04 - **Estonia's Siim Kallas, Vice-President of the European Commission, said Estonia must keep certain reserves in the present conditions and adopt the euro as soon as possible.**

Kallas admitted that 10-11 percent economic growth could not last long in the European space.

But he simultaneously hinted that there was no reason for panic because 4-5 percent growth was good and 6-7 percent growth would be very good.

Kallas said that everybody had confirmed until the present that the situation would not pass out of control, but recommended that it was necessary to be ready for any scenario.

"I am an optimist, after all, but I have always believed that it is better to take a black scenario and be prepared for it.

Kallas said that therefore Estonia should keep certain reserves.

"The sooner we switch to the euro, the better," he added.

Estonian Luxury Yacht Builder Earns Net Profit of EUR 2.1 Million

Oct 8 - **AS Luksusjaht (Luxury Yacht Ltd), a small boat builder based at the Roomassaare Port of Estonia's Saaremaa Island, last year earned a net profit of 33 million kroons (EUR 2.1 mln), nearly 52 percent more than the previous year.**

It appears from the consolidated financial year report of the company that its turnover increased by nearly 41 percent to 97 million kroons, while its operating income grew by 60 percent to 105 million kroons.

In the breakdown by countries Luksusjaht earned 87 percent of its turnover from Sweden, 12 percent from Finland and about one percent from Estonia.

Exports by A. Le Coq Brewery up 22 Percent

Oct 4 - **Exports by the Estonian brewery A. Le Coq in the third quarter of this year amounted to 17.8 million liters, an increase of 22 percent over the same period a year ago.**

Total sales by the company climbed 7 percent to 106.2 million liters.

The company sold 10.5 million liters of water in the first nine months of the year. Sales in Estonia in the first half of the year grew 11 year-on-year by volume to reach 69 million liters.

A. Le Coq said its market share on the market for non-alcoholic and juice drinks was 32 percent and on the beer market 40.4 percent in the first half of 2007, putting it in second place in Estonia.

It was the market leader in juices, water, cider, and long drinks with respectively 31, 26, 46 and 50 percent. A. Le Coq is a holding of the Olvi beverage group of Finland.

Estonia's Liviko Buys Latvian Alcohol Wholesaler L.I.O.N. & Ko

Oct 4 - **The Estonian company Liviko, one of the largest producers and importers of alcohol in the Baltic states, has acquired 100 percent of the shares of the Latvian alcohol importer and wholesaler SIA L.I.O.N. & Ko.**

Consolidated sales by the two companies in 2007 are estimated to reach 1.8 billion kroons. The parties have agreed to keep the details of the deal confidential.

The Estonian Competition Board approved the acquisition at the end of August.

The brands that L.I.O.N & Ko represents in the Baltics include Nemiroff, Freixenet, and Cinzano.

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