TOOMAS ILVES

- **Recent President of Estonia**

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Toomas Hendrik Ilves served as president of Estonia from 2006-16. Ilves is notable for making Estonia one of the most digitally advanced nations through progressive policies that invested heavily in the future.

Estonia is an enviable model of digital governance, offering government e-services in voting, banking, healthcare, transportation, and education. During his presidency Ilves introduced initiatives such as the "Tiger leap" programme for Estonian schools: to equip them with computer labs and to get them all online.

Ilves was born to Estonian refugees and raised in the United States. After holding several jobs in the United States and Canada, he moved to Munich in 1984 to work as an analyst and researcher for Radio Free Europe, eventually becoming head of the radio's Estonian desk.

From 1993-96 he served as Estonia's ambassador to the United States, Canada, and Mexico. In 1996 Ilves began serving as the country's Minister of Foreign Affairs, a post he held until 1998, and again from 1999 to 2002.

Ilves' political career advanced when he was elected to the Riigikogu, the Estonian national legislature, in 2002 and to the European Parliament in 2004, beginning negotiations that resulted in Estonia's admittance to the European Union in 2004. He ran for the presidency of Estonia as the candidate of the Social Democratic Party and was elected in 2006.

The Estonian Parliamentary Election of 2007 was the world's first nationwide vote where part of the voting was carried out in the form of remote electronic voting via the internet. Ilves used his office to further integrate Estonia into both the European Union and NATO and to strengthen the country's ties to the United States. Since November 2016, Ilves has co-chaired The Global Futures Council on Blockchain Technology, a working group set up by the World Economic Forum focusing on how blockchain technology can be used to improve the security of the internet.