



LATVIAN INSTITUTE OF  
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS



LATVIJAS REPUBLIKAS SAEIMA

AGENDA for the 6th annual high-level international conference



# BALTIC EU CONVERSATIONS 2021

*Is Europe Getting Better?*

# 12 MARCH 2021 ONLINE

SETTING: ONLINE VIDEO CONFERENCING

**8.45–9.00 (EASTERN EUROPEAN TIME, EET): ONLINE SIGN-IN**

9.00–9.15: *OPENING ADDRESSES*

- **Ināra Mūrniece**, Speaker of the Parliament of Latvia
- **Andris Sprūds**, Director of the Latvian Institute of International Affairs, Professor at the Faculty of European Studies of the Riga Stradins University
- **Andris Kužnieks**, Acting Head of the European Commission Representation in Latvia

9.15–10.00: *KEYNOTE CONVERSATION ON EU TRADE POLICY*

The EU is the largest trading bloc in the world. It is one of the three largest economies. The recent Brexit, as well as the conclusion of multiple free trade or investment agreements between the EU and its partners around the world to combat protectionist pressures, are revealing some landmark modifications to the EU. How the future of the EU Trade Policy will be shaped from now on is to be addressed in this keynote conversation.

- **Valdis Dombrovskis**, Executive Vice-President of the European Commission, EU Commissioner for Trade

Moderated by **Margarita Šešelgyte**, Director of the Institute of International Relations and Political Science of Vilnius University

**BREAK: 10.00–10.15**

10.15–11.30: *Panel Conversation: Europe After a Stress Test for Democracy*

Populism, Euroscepticism, neo-conservatism, challenges to the rule of law, the manipulation of information spaces, the amplification power of social media, and insufficiencies in media literacy are only few of the issues that European democracies have been experiencing in recent years. The COVID-19 pandemic and related physical freedom restrictions have been an additional challenge to the liberal democratic system in the last year. Whether European Union member states and the European Union itself have weathered these stress tests for democracies is to be addressed in this panel conversation.

- **Vita Anda Tērauda**, Chair of the European Affairs Committee of the Parliament of the Republic of Latvia
- **Valdis Zatlers**, former President of the Republic of Latvia
- **Johannes Pollak**, Rector of the Webster Vienna Private University, Chairman of the Institute for European Politics (IEP) Board of Directors
- **Sandra Fernandes**, Professor at the University of Minho, Researcher at the Research Center for Political Science (CICP), Portugal

Moderated by **Kai-Olaf Lang**, Senior Fellow of the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP)

**BREAK: 11.30–11.45**

Conference livestream available online: [www.liia.lv](http://www.liia.lv) | [www.saeima.lv](http://www.saeima.lv) | [www.tspmi.vu.lt](http://www.tspmi.vu.lt)  
[www.icds.ee](http://www.icds.ee) | [www.delfi.lv](http://www.delfi.lv) | [www.baltictimes.com](http://www.baltictimes.com) | [www.tepsa.eu](http://www.tepsa.eu) and social media accounts

Tweet your comments and questions SLI.DO: #92396

@LIIA\_LV | #LIIAsem | #BEUC2021 | @EU\_Commission | @Jekaba11 | @ICDS\_Tallinn | @EFPI\_EST | @TSPMI



11.45–13.00: *Panel Conversation: Reanimating the European Economy in a Climate-Change Aware Environment*

The adoption of the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027 and its NextGenerationEU instrument came as a new boost for COVID-19 pandemic-damaged EU economies. Meanwhile, the necessity to achieve climate neutrality by 2050 requires major technological and structural change. Whether the European Green Deal is on the right track with its European Climate Law – in spite of the pandemic – will be addressed in this panel conversation.

- **Andrius Kubilius**, Member of the European Parliament, former Prime Minister of Lithuania
- **Céline Gauer**, Director-General - Head of the Recovery and Resilience Task Force of the European Commission
- **Zoltan Pogatsa**, Assistant Professor at the University of West Hungary (University of Sopron)
- **Mārtiņš Āboliņš**, Senior Economist at Citadele Bank

Moderated by **Inna Šteinbuka**, Chairwoman of the Fiscal Discipline Council of the Republic of Latvia, Professor at the University of Latvia

**BREAK: 13.00–13.30**

13.30–14.45: *EFPI/ICDS Parallel Panel Conversation: Is European Strategic Autonomy Growing Stronger?*

The debate on European Strategic Autonomy and European sovereignty has expanded from the field of defence to the economy, trade, industrial policy, technology and foreign policy. At the same time it has become more global in scope, reflecting not just the dependence of European security on the U.S., but also the impact of the rise of China and growing great power competition. Europe must determine and defend its interests and values on the global stage - with partners whenever possible, but alone when necessary. How to strengthen European sovereignty without undermining the transatlantic relations, while making Europe less vulnerable to China is to be addressed in this panel conversation.

- **Urmas Paet**, Member of the European Parliament, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Estonia
- **Zanda Kalniņa-Lukaševica**, Parliamentary Secretary (Vice-Minister) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia
- **François Heisbourg**, Senior Advisor for Europe at the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS)
- **Hans-Christian Hagman**, Senior Advisor and Head of Strategic Analysis at the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Moderated by **Kristi Raik**, Director of the Estonian Foreign Policy Institute

**Hosted and broadcasted from Tallinn by the Estonian Foreign Policy Institute/International Centre for Defence and Security (ICDS) on [www.icds.ee](http://www.icds.ee)**

13.30–14.45: *IIRPS VU Parallel Panel Conversation: What is the Temperature of the European Neighbourhood Policy?*

The European Neighbourhood Policy is among the central instruments of the EU's engagement with its regional partners. But success rates and the intensities of relations differ. How the situation in Belarus is affecting the EU, the EU's conclusions after the presidential election in Moldova, and how to deal with multiplicity of challenges and humanitarian crises in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region are to be addressed in this panel conversation.

- **Arnoldas Pranckevičius**, Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania
- **Lolita Čigāne**, former Chair of the European Affairs Committee of the Parliament of the Republic of Latvia
- **Arkady Moshes**, Director of the EU's Eastern Neighbourhood and Russia Research Program at the Finnish Institute of International Affairs

Moderated by **Ramūnas Vilpišauskas**, Jean Monnet Chair Professor at the Institute of International Relations and Political Science of Vilnius University

**Hosted and broadcasted from Vilnius by the Institute of International Relations and Political Science of Vilnius University (IIRPS VU) on [www.tspmi.vu.lt](http://www.tspmi.vu.lt)**

Conference livestream available online: [www.liia.lv](http://www.liia.lv) | [www.saeima.lv](http://www.saeima.lv) | [www.tspmi.vu.lt](http://www.tspmi.vu.lt)  
[www.icds.ee](http://www.icds.ee) | [www.delfi.lv](http://www.delfi.lv) | [www.baltictimes.com](http://www.baltictimes.com) | [www.tepsa.eu](http://www.tepsa.eu) and social media accounts

Tweet your comments and questions SLI.DO: #92396

@LIIA\_LV | #LIIAsem | #BEUC2021 | @EU\_Commission | @Jekaba11 | @ICDS\_Tallinn | @EFPI\_EST | @TSPMI



LATVIAN INSTITUTE OF  
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS



LATVIJAS REPUBLIKAS SAEIMA

### 13.30–14.45: *LIIA Parallel Panel Conversation: Are the Constant Crises Toughening Up the European Union?*

The EU has experienced a multiplicity of crises during its existence. Most of them have been met with the closer and deeper integration of EU countries. Some of these crises have had a short time span, some still linger with lasting effects. For instance, while Brexit seems to be over, the migration crisis still needs to be resolved with the intended new European migration governance system. Past and current crises are to be addressed in this panel conversation.

The panel will also present the new book "Crises as the Destiny of the European Union". The book from 12 March will be available at [www.liia.lv](http://www.liia.lv).

- **Mihails Kozlovs**, Member of the European Court of Auditors
- **Lucia Mokra**, Professor, Comenius University, Bratislava, Chairperson of the Board of Trans European Policy Studies Association (TEPSA)
- **Antoinette Primatarova**, Programme Director on European Union, Centre for Liberal Strategies
- **Rem Korteweg**, Head of the Europe in the World unit, Clingendael – the Netherlands Institute of International Relations

Moderated by **Kārlis Bukovskis**, Deputy Director of the Latvian Institute of International Affairs, Fulbright Fellow at the Johns Hopkins University SAIS

Hosted and broadcasted from Riga by the Latvian Institute of International Affairs on [www.liia.lv](http://www.liia.lv) / [www.saeima.lv](http://www.saeima.lv)

**BREAK: 14.45-15.00**

### 15.00-16.00: *Closing Keynote Conversation on the EU's Future and Place in the World*

The future prospects for the European Union in this changing world must be continuously asserted. The EU has become more resilient after the last decade's crises and challenges. What the Community's grand strategy should be and how it must position itself and interact in an increasingly complex and demanding world is to be addressed in this closing panel conversation.

- **José Manuel Durão Barroso**, Chair of Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, former President of the European Commission and former Prime Minister of Portugal

Moderated by **Edijs Bošs**, Associate Professor at the Faculty of European Studies of the Riga Stradins University

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

### OUR PARTNERS:



RAHVUSVAHELINE KAITSEUURINGUTE KESKUS  
INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR DEFENCE AND SECURITY  
EESTI · ESTONIA



VILNIUS UNIVERSITY  
INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE



EESTI VÄLISPOLIITIKA INSTITUUT  
ESTONIAN FOREIGN POLICY INSTITUTE



Ministry of  
Foreign Affairs  
Republic of Latvia

### INFORMATIVE SUPPORT:



*Is Europe Getting Better?*

**12 MARCH 2021**  
**ONLINE**

Conference livestream available online: [www.liia.lv](http://www.liia.lv) | [www.saeima.lv](http://www.saeima.lv) | [www.tspmi.vu.lt](http://www.tspmi.vu.lt)  
[www.icds.ee](http://www.icds.ee) | [www.delfi.lv](http://www.delfi.lv) | [www.baltictimes.com](http://www.baltictimes.com) | [www.tepsa.eu](http://www.tepsa.eu) and social media accounts

Tweet your comments and questions SLI.DO: #92396

@LIIA\_LV | #LIIAsem | #BEUC2021 | @EU\_Commission | @Jekaba11 | @ICDS\_Tallinn | @EFPI\_EST | @TSPMI