

Conference program

60 Years of the European Project

3 April 2017

Venue: Saeima (the Parliament of the Republic of Latvia), 6/8 Jēkaba Street, Riga

9.00-9.30: Morning coffee and registration

9.30-10.00: Opening addresses

- Andris Sprūds, Director of the Latvian Institute of International Affairs
- Inna Šteinbuka, Head of the European Commission Representation in Latvia

Keynote speech:

- Ināra Mūrniece, Speaker of the Parliament of Latvia

PANEL 1: 10.00-11.30: Prospects of the European Project

The period from 2008 to 2016 has been difficult for the EU. Although the challenges of the sovereign debt crisis and mass migration have now receded, anti-EU populism is on the rise across the continent. Political forces that feed on fear and euro-scepticism have become mainstream. Are there common trends between the Brexit vote and elections and referendums in many EU countries, including France, Netherlands and Germany in 2017? What lies underneath the claims of disunity, and what do European citizens expect from the EU?

Moderator: Kārlis Bukovskis, Deputy Director, Latvian Institute of International Affairs

- Lolita Čigāne, Chair, European Affairs Committee of the Parliament of Latvia
- Pia Ahrenkilde Hansen, Director, DG Communication, European Commission
- Wolfgang Wessels, Professor, Centre for Turkey and European Union Studies, University of Cologne
- Richard G. Whitman, Director, Global Europe Centre, University of Kent
- João Carlos Espada, Director, Institute for Political Studies, Catholic University of Portugal

11.30-12.00: Coffee break

PANEL 2: 12.00-13.00: Rebooting the EU's Economy

Positive growth indicators after the economic and financial crisis have generated a certain optimism that the European economy is back on track. The implementation of the Investment Plan has strengthened expectations for a stable and growing European economy. At the same time, sluggish growth and calls for fiscal responsibility, the need for structural reforms to increase productivity and global competitiveness, as well as demands for increased investor activity and a reduction of unemployment figures are all still high on the agenda. Are these a legacy of the European financial crisis or challenges of era of new technology?

Moderator: Ramūnas Vilpišauskas, Director, Institute of International Relations and Political Science

- Rolf Strauch, Member of the ESM Management Board responsible for Economics, Policy

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Strategy and Banking, European Stability Mechanism

- Niels Thygesen, Chair, European Fiscal Board
- Iain Begg, Professorial Research Fellow at the European Institute, London School of Economics and Political Science
- Mārtiņš Kazāks, Chief Economist, Swedbank Latvia

13.00-14.00: Lunch break

PANEL 3: 13.00-13.45: ERASMUS+ roundtable: Youth as Agent of Europeanization

The Erasmus programme has been an influential life-altering project for the millions of young people and today's professionals. The programme was established in 1987, and now has transformed into Erasmus Plus program. The people-to-people engagement that the programme provides has been transforming youth into messengers of Europeanization. What are the prospects of the Erasmus+ Programme among today's disenfranchised youth, and will it help keep the European project alive for years to come?

Moderator: Sintija Broka, Researcher, Latvian Institute of International Affairs

- Lolita Čigāne, Chair, European Affairs Committee of the Parliament of Latvia
- Richard G. Whitman, Director, Global Europe Centre; Professor, University of Kent
- Severin Fischer, Senior Researcher, Center for Security Studies at ETH Zurich

14.00-15.30: BREAKOUT SESSIONS

PANEL 4A: The EU Neighbourhood: Any Enlargement for the next Decade?

The EU's neighbours appear to be drifting away from the European project both in the East and in the South. Diverging perceptions of Europe, and differing interests and aspirations towards the EU have recently become more apparent. Although the conclusion of the EU-Ukraine DCFTA has been made possible, has the deal lost its momentum? Are there any effective mechanisms apart from EU membership that can lead to mutually beneficial relationships and long-lasting stability between the EU and its neighbours?

Moderator: Ilvija Bruģe, Researcher, Latvian Institute of International Affairs

- Andris Razāns, Head of Policy Planning Unit, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia
- Arkady Moshes, Programme Director, Finnish Institute of International Affairs
- Katarzyna Wolczuk, Professor, University of Birmingham; Associate Fellow, Chatham House
- Linas Kojala, Director, Eastern Europe Studies Centre, Lithuania (TBC)

PANEL 4B: On the Path to a European Defence Union: Internal and External Security Prospects

The refugee crisis, the war in Ukraine and the risk of a US withdrawal from NATO have forced many countries to reconsider their attitude towards the collectivisation of defence and internal security forces. Although France and Germany have recently proposed the creation of the European Defence Union, some countries remain sceptical. Can the European Defence Union and enhanced cooperation in the Justice and Home Affairs sectors respond to the security demands of the European population? Would the European Defence Union substitute or a supplement NATO?

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Moderator: Māris Andžāns, Researcher, Latvian Institute of International Affairs

- Jānis Kažociņš, Adviser to the President of the Republic of Latvia
- Mike Winnerstig, Deputy Director of Research, Swedish Defence University
- Eugeniusz Smolar, Senior Fellow – Member of the Board, Centre for International Relations, Poland
- Emmet Tuohy, Senior Research Fellow, Estonian Center of Eastern Partnership

PANEL 4C: The Security Dimension of the Energy Union

Although energy security stands high on the EU's agenda, a number of challenges still persist. Are EU member states willing to relinquish their sovereignty on energy issues and move towards an "ever closer" energy union? Can Nordstream 2 deliver a decisive blow to European unity, or could it become a genuine commercial project?

Moderator: Kristīne Bērziņa, Transatlantic Fellow, German Marshall Fund of the United States

- Roberts Zīle, Member of the European Parliament
- Samuele Furfari, Adviser to the Director General, DG Energy, European Commission
- Severin Fischer, Senior Researcher, Center for Security Studies at ETH Zurich
- Jaroslav Neverovič, former Minister of Energy, Republic of Lithuania

15.30-16.00: Coffee break

PANEL 5: 16.00-17.00: EU-US Relations and the Future Global Role of the Block

The EU is redefining its role in the world while the global order seems to face profound transformations. The contemporary global environment is turbulent, complex and challenging as geopolitical competition returns to the international agenda. The new US president has expressed a different opinion on many traditional US policy positions. Are these changes contributing to the emergence of critical differences in the Western world, between the EU and the US?

Moderator: Edijs Bošs, Docent, Riga Stradins University

- Zanda Kalniņa-Lukaševica, Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia
- Nathalie Tocci, Deputy Director, Istituto Affari Internazionali; Special Adviser to EU HRVP Federica Mogherini
- Ian Anthony, Director, SIPRI's European Security Programme
- Jan Joel Andersson, Senior Analyst, European Union Institute for Security Studies

17.00: Concluding remarks

17.15: Coffee, food and wine

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