



LATVIAN INSTITUTE OF
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS



LATVIJAS REPUBLIKAS SAEIMA

AGENDA for the 5th annual high-level international conference (as of 3 March 2020)



BALTIC EU CONVERSATIONS 2020

Reinventing Europe?

3 APRIL 2020

VENUE: SAEIMA (THE PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LATVIA),
6/8 JĒKABA STREET, RĪGA

8.15–8.55: MORNING COFFEE AND REGISTRATION

9.00–9.15: *OPENING ADDRESSES*

- Ināra Mūrniece, Speaker of the Parliament of Latvia
- Andris Sprūds, Director of the Latvian Institute of International Affairs
- Andris Kužnieks, Acting Head of the European Commission Representation in Latvia

9.15–9.45: *KEYNOTE CONVERSATION*

- Valdis Dombrovskis, Executive Vice-President of the European Commission
- Margarita Šešelgyte, Director, Institute of International Relations and Political Science, Vilnius University

1st PANEL: 9.45–11.00 (room 108 "Baltiešu zāle")

The Political Realities of the EU: Between Brexit and Renewed European Leadership

The European Union has changed since the 2019 European Parliament elections and the appointment of the new European Commission. Considering Brexit and an unclear future in terms of the further deepening and widening of the European Union, is this the end of the road for the rapid EU integration of the last three decades? What can Europeans expect from the new legislative cycle? Will the new European Commission and European Parliament reinvent the EU?

MODERATOR: Steven Blockmans, Head of EU Foreign Policy, Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS)

- Marju Lauristin, former Member of Member of the European Parliament and Minister of Social Affairs of Estonia
- Frank Schimmelfennig, Professor, ETH Zürich

COFFEE BREAK: 11.00–11.30

2nd PANEL: 11.30–12.45 (room 108 "Baltiešu zāle")

The MFF 2021–2027: Enabling an Economic Climate for the Future

The multiannual financial framework is among the most complex games in EU decision-making. Players are juggling numerous aspects and arguments: national interests, economic growth in the short and long term, domestic political processes, EU-level needs and interests, and the personal preferences of individual decision makers. The trick is to both predict future economic trends and satisfy immediate needs. Enabling the future is the goal. What will the future economic climate be? What place does the climate have in the future MFF? What is possible and what is impossible for the post-Brexit MFF?

MODERATOR: TBA

- Zanda Kalniņa-Lukaševica, Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Latvia
- Mihails Kozlovs, Member of the European Court of Auditors
- Zsolt Darvas, Professor, Senior Fellow at Bruegel

LUNCH BREAK: 12.45–13.30 (SAEIMA CANTEEN, 11 JĒKABA STREET)

Tweet your comments and questions:

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3A - ICDS PANEL: 13.30–14.30 (room 108 "Baltiešu zāle")

European Strategic Autonomy: Between Wishes and Plans

The EU has been looking for options in defence and security for decades. The most recent decade has accelerated this search, and has witnessed the creation of PESCO, an action to improve military mobility within the EU, as well as discussions on the European Defence Fund becoming part the next multiannual financial framework. The EU is building Strategic Autonomy in the defence field, while differences in opinion within the EU and between the EU and its traditional defence partners remain. Is unity on European Strategic Autonomy achievable? Will NATO countries that are outside the EU be effectively included?

MODERATOR: Kristi Raik, Director, the Estonian Foreign Policy Institute

- Eric Povel, Programme Officer, Afghanistan/Operations, Belgium, Germany, The Netherlands, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, NATO Public Diplomacy Division
- Mike Winnerstig, Head of the Department of Security Policy at the Swedish Defence Research Agency (FOI), member of the Royal Swedish Academy of the War Sciences
- Rem Korteweg, Head of the Europe in the World unit, Clingendael – the Netherlands Institute of International Relations

3B - IIRPS VU PANEL: 13.30–14.30 (room 206 "Budžeta un finanšu komisijas zāle")

Rejuvenation of the Eastern Partnership: Between Needs and Hopes

Although there have been proclamations that the Eastern Partnership has fulfilled its task and is no longer necessary because DCFTAs have been concluded with Georgia, Ukraine and Moldova, it still remains the central format of discussions between the six countries. Can the Eastern Partnership be re-vitalized? Where do Armenia and Azerbaijan stand in their collaboration with the EU? Is Belarus lost for the EU?

MODERATOR: Māris Andžāns, Senior Researcher, Latvian Institute of International Affairs

- Kristian Fischer, Director, Danish Institute of International Studies
- Arkady Moshes, Director of the EU's Eastern Neighbourhood and Russia Research Program, Finnish Institute of International Affairs

3C - LIIA PANEL: 13.30–14.30 (room 306 "Saeimas komisiju sēžu zāle")

Modern Democracy in the European Union: Between Process and Substance

Populism, Euroscepticism, neo-conservatism and the defence of principles of rule of law have all become hot-button issues. The manipulation of information spaces, challenges to traditional mass media, the increased popularity and amplification power of social media, and media literacy – these are the ways that modern technology has been changing today's political process. Does this mean that democracy should also modernise? Are these just signs of the times, or is an actual opportunity for more direct democracy on the rise?

MODERATOR: Inna Šteinbuka, Professor, University of Latvia

- Vita Anda Tērauda, Chair of the European Affairs Committee of the Parliament of Latvia
- Lucia Mokra, Professor, Comenius University, Bratislava, Chairperson of the Board of Trans European Policy Studies Association (TEPSA)
- Johannes Pollak, Professor, Director of Webster Vienna Private University, Chairman of the Executive Board, Institute for European Politics (IEP), Germany

COFFEE BREAK: 14.30–15.00

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4th PANEL: 15.00–16.15 (room 108 "Baltiešu zāle")

The EU and the US in the Global Arena: The West and the Rest

The world has been a fast-changing place over the last decade, from Russia's increasingly hostile foreign policy to China's growing self-awareness and exercising its economic, political and military muscles. In the West – while mutual economic integration and military interdependence are still there – political outlooks tend to diverge more and more often. What does NATO's increased suspicion towards China mean? Are the current Western foreign policy divergences just a phase?

MODERATOR: Edijs Bošs, Associate Professor, Riga Stradiņš University

- Volker Perthes, Director, German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP)
- François Heisbourg, Senior Advisor for Europe at the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS)
- Ian Kearns, Associate Researcher, Latvian Institute of International Affairs

16.15: CONCLUDING REMARKS, REFRESHMENTS

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Ministry of
Foreign Affairs
Republic of Latvia

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