



BALTIC EU CONVERSATIONS 2019

Awaiting Political Change

5 APRIL 2019
SAEIMA (THE PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LATVIA)

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

8.15–8.55 **Morning coffee and registration**

9.00–9.30 **Opening addresses**

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

Keynote speech:

- Ināra Mūrniece, Speaker of the Parliament of Latvia

PANEL 1: 9.30–10.45

The Political Renewal of the European Union (room 108 “Baltiešu zāle”)

This year, 2019, will be a year of change in the European Union. Not only will the EU have one less member state, but also a new European Parliament and a new European Commission. These changes could be both unfortunate and fortunate. Additionally, the Romanian Presidency will hold the Sibiu Summit on the future of the EU on 9 May. Hence, the aim of this panel is to understand the future political shape of the European Union and its institutions in the years to come.

Moderator: Ruslanas Iržikevičius, Editor-in-Chief, Publisher, the Lithuania Tribune

- Valdis Zatlers, former President of the Republic of Latvia
- Alojz Peterle, Member of the European Parliament, former Prime Minister of Slovenia
- Matti Maasikas, Deputy Minister for EU Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Estonia

10.45–11.15 **Coffee break**

PANEL 2: 11.15–12.30

The MFF 2021–2027: A Work in Progress (room 108 “Baltiešu zāle”)

Ongoing discussions and negotiations on the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), for the 2021–2027 period, are slowly revealing the potential outcome. Although the 2 May 2018 proposal by the European Commission maintains the traditional methodology, the suggested increase of overall budget and new issues to be covered are ambitious. Hence, the aim of this panel is to determine the expected shape of the next MFF and the outcomes of the MFF negotiations.

Moderator: Morten Hansen, Head of Economics Department, Stockholm School of Economics in Riga

- Zanda Kalniņa-Lukaševica, Parliamentary Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia
- Alexandre Holroyd, Member of the French National Assembly
- Mihails Kozlovs, Member of the European Court of Auditors

12.30–13.30 **Lunch break (Saeima Canteen, 11 Jēkaba Street)**

BREAKOUT SESSION 3A: 13.30–14.30

The European Information Agenda and Modern Democracies (room 108 "Baltiešu zāle")

Recent years have demonstrated that modern technologies necessitate adjustments to the democratic system. The abuse of information and communication technologies and mass media by demagogic politicians, foreign powers and irresponsible businesses has become increasingly evident. Fake news, propaganda, and media and political illiteracy are among the central points of concern. Hence, the aim of this panel is to answer the question of how European Union institutions can better help to cope with or adjust to the current challenges created by the information space.

Moderator: Kristi Raik, Director of the Estonian Foreign Policy Institute

- Andris Piebalgs, former European Commissioner for Development
- Guna Šnore, Strategic Communications advisor to the Prime Minister of Latvia
- Mihai Sebe, researcher, European Institute of Romania

BREAKOUT SESSION 3B: 13.30–14.30

European Defence Structures: A Process in the Making? (room 206 "Budžeta un finanšu (nodokļu) komisijas zāle")

A build-up of European security and defence structures is starting to take shape. Since the establishment of PESCO at the end of 2017, the establishment of the European Defence Fund, and the increasing discussions on military mobility between EU member states, the plans have been becoming clearer. Russia's new foreign and defence policy trends, the United Kingdom leaving the EU, and worrisome signals from the United States have triggered more self-reliance in the EU. Hence, the aim of this panel is to depict future European defence policies and systems.

Moderator: Margarita Šešelgyte, Deputy Director of the Institute of International Relations and Political Science, Vilnius University

- Jānis Garisons, State Secretary of the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Latvia
- Sławomir Dębski, Director of the Polish Institute of International Affairs
- Sandra Fernandes, Assistant Professor, University of Minho, Centre for Research in Political Science

BREAKOUT SESSION 3C: 13.30–14.30

EU Tactics in a Time of "Trade Wars" (room 306 "Saeimas komisiju sēžu zāle")

The purpose of the creation of the EU was to facilitate trade, both among the member states and with third countries. The EU and its member states have gained substantially from economic growth and the trade in goods and services globally. Recent years have demonstrated a re-emergence of protectionist sentiments and even trade wars. Hence, the aim of this panel is to explain what the EU's tactics are in the current international trade environment, and what they should be.

Moderator: Inna Šteinbuka, Professor at the University of Latvia

- Peter Balas, former Deputy Director General for External Trade, European Commission
- Ettore Greco, Executive Vice President, Italian Institute of International Affairs
- Viljar Veebel, Researcher at the Baltic Defence College

14.30–15.00 **Coffee break**

PANEL 4: 15.00–16.15

The EU and the US: A Friend in Need is a Friend Indeed? (room 108 “Baltiešu zāle”)

The last couple of years of relations between the European Union and the United States have not been easy or easily predictable. Both sides of the Atlantic have been exchanging strong rhetoric, while simultaneously preserving collaboration on trade issues, on military issues, and on global governance and geopolitical stability issues. Several leading EU member state politicians share a similar worldview with the current US elite. Hence, the aim of this panel is to predict how relations between the EU and the US will look in the run-up to the next US presidential elections in 2020.

Moderator: Edijs Bošs, Associate Researcher at the Latvian Institute of International Affairs

- Anthony Russell Brenton, Former British Ambassador to Russia; Fellow at the University of Cambridge
- Sven Sakkov, Director of the International Centre for Defence and Security
- Kai-Olaf Lang, Senior Fellow, German Institute for International and Security Affairs

16.15

Concluding remarks, refreshments

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