



11. IKGADĒJĀS AUGSTA LĪMEŅA STARPTAUTISKĀS KONFERENCES PROGRAMMA

ES sarunas 2026

Sargājot nākotni

2026. GADA 10. APRĪLIS

Norises vieta: Latvijas Republikas Saeima,
Jēkaba iela 6/8, Rīga

EU Conversations

AGENDA

FOR THE 11TH ANNUAL HIGH-LEVEL
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

The EU Conversations 2026

Protecting the Future

10 APRIL 2026

Venue: The Parliament of the Republic of Latvia,
6/8 Jekaba street, Riga

CONFERENCE AGENDA

8:40^{EET} **Morning coffee and registration**

9:00^{EET} **Opening addresses**

8:00^{CET}

The Baltic Hall

- **Daiga Mieriņa**, Speaker of the Parliament of the Republic of Latvia
- **Andris Kužnieks**, Head of the European Commission Representation in Latvia
- **Dr. Una Aleksandra Bērziņa-Čerenkova**, Director of the Latvian Institute of International Affairs

9:15^{EET} **Opening Keynote Conversation:**
8:15^{CET} **Foreign Policy for Europe**

The Baltic Hall

The foreign policy of the European Union is dedicated to protecting its citizens and upholding the EU's values and interests on the global stage, including the promotion of peace, security, a rules-based international system, multilateralism, international trade, and democratic principles. The world is changing, and a multipolar order is emerging. Therefore, this Conversation aims to determine the extent of the EU's autonomy and power in the emerging global order.

Moderator: **Jakob Hallgren**, Director, Swedish Institute of International Affairs

- **Baiba Braže**, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia

9:45^{EET} **Panel Conversation:**
8:45^{CET} **Political Like-Mindedness in Europe**

The Baltic Hall

Political like-mindedness in Europe is essential for its survival. The ability of member states and like-minded neighboring countries to align is shaped by historical experiences, cultural identities, and contemporary geopolitical challenges. Political like-mindedness in the EU and political alliances drive collective action. Therefore, this Conversation aims to examine the drivers of ideological alignment in the EU and to identify those who contest European unity.

Moderator: **Dr. Funda Tekin**, Director, Institute for European Politics (IEP), Germany

- **Edmunds Cēpurītis**, Chairman of the European Affairs Committee of the Saeima of the Republic of Latvia
- **Ville Kaunisto**, Member of the Parliament of Finland
- **Dr. Ágnes Vadai**, Member of the National Assembly of Hungary
- **Dr. Tomáš Strážay**, Director, Research Center of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association

10:45^{EET} **Coffee break**

9:45^{CET}



11:15 EET
10:15 CET

Panel Conversation:
Budget for Europe 2028-2034

The Baltic Hall

The next Multiannual Financial Framework will set the EU's priorities for a period marked by geopolitical uncertainty and economic transition. The needs are great, as Europe craves investment in boosting competitiveness, social cohesion, climate action, digital transformation, and most importantly, security. Therefore, this Conversation aims to examine the design of the next EU budget to meet rising strategic demands while maintaining unity and fairness among its citizens.

Moderator: **Dr. Lucia Mokrá**, Chairperson of the Board, TEPSA

- **Dr. Roberts Zile**, Vice-President of the European Parliament
- **Dr. Eulalia Rubio**, Associate Senior Research Fellow, CEPS
- **Dr. Thomas Damsgaard Tørsløv**, Chief Economist, Think Tank EUROPA (online)

12:15 EET
11:15 CET

Interim Keynote Conversation:
Security for Europe

The Baltic Hall

Europe's role in a changing global landscape continues to evolve, shaped by shifting dynamics and growing interdependence. In recent years, the EU and its member states have placed greater emphasis on strengthening resilience, fostering strategic cooperation, and deepening partnerships with key allies. Against this backdrop, this Conversation aims to reflect on Europe's current position, highlight its progress, and explore the shared efforts needed to ensure a stable, secure, and prosperous future for its citizens.

Moderator: **Dr. Helga Kalm**, Deputy Director, International Centre for Defence and Security

- **Yves Leterme**, Former Prime Minister of Belgium (online)

13:00 EET
12:00 CET

Lunch break



13:45 EET
12:45 CET

Parallel Conversation: **Europe's Geopolitical Partners and Challengers**

The Baltic Hall

The EU's neighborhood traditionally has been a place for political altercations and geopolitical struggles in one way or another. The Southern, Eastern and now Nordic regions have caused concerns and tensions that the EU member states must stand united against. The EU is urgently assessing and balancing its strategic interests with values-based engagement and long-term commitments. Therefore, this Conversation will examine the strategies and concepts that the EU needs to adopt to prevent and overcome the dangers it is facing from outside.

Moderator: Dr. Margarita Šešelgyte,
Director, Vilnius University Institute of International Relations and Political Science

- **Egils Levits**, President of the Republic of Latvia (2019-2023)
- **Dr. Thomas Gomart**, Director, French Institute of International Affairs
- **Dr. Hans Mouritzen**, Senior Research Fellow, Danish Institute for International Studies

14:45 EET
13:45 CET

Coffee break

13:45 EET
12:45 CET

Parallel Conversation: **The EU and its Eastern Neighbors**

Budget and Finance (Taxation) Committee meeting room

Some of Europe's eastern neighbors are unfriendly and hostile towards the rule-based world order, Western civilization and the European Union. The EU continues sanctioning and denouncing Russia for its violence against Ukraine, while concerns and hybrid confrontations in the Baltic Sea region are becoming more frequent. Diplomatic tools, economic sanctions, and a military buildup in Europe have not resulted in strategic recalculations in Russia or ceased Russia's violent and risky behavior. Therefore, the aim of this Conversation is to examine the remaining options for Europe to de-escalate Russia's aggressive behavior.

Moderator: Dr. Louise van Schaik, Head of Unit, EU and Global Affairs, Clingendael

- **Reinis Pozņaks**, Member of the European Parliament
- **Dr. Anaïs Marin**, Associate fellow, Russia and Eurasia Programme, Chatham House
- **Tuomas Iso-Markku**, Senior Research Fellow, Finnish Institute of International Affairs



The Baltic Hall

EU enlargement remains the strongest transformative instrument for the EU. Enlargement demonstrates both the EU's attractiveness and the modernization power of pre-accession conditionality. Enlargement is never without geopolitical rationale and often the political and merit-based requirements diverge. Therefore, this Conversation will examine the expectations and realities that EU decision makers will be facing with regards to Eastern European and Western Balkan countries accessing the organization.

Moderator: **Dr. Michael Holmes**, Lecturer, Catholic University of Lille

- **Dr. Giulio Venneri**, Deputy Head of the Enlargement Strategy and Coordination Unit, DG ENEST, European Commission (online)
- **Kristina Baleišytė**, Minister Plenipotentiary (COELA), Permanent Representation of Lithuania to the EU
- **Martin Vokálek**, Executive Director, EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy



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