



Saeima of the Republic of Latvia

Inter-parliamentary conference
"Exploring the Emerging Axis: Iran-Russia Cooperation and Implications for
Israel, Latvia, the Baltics, and Europe"

June 10th, 2024

6/8 Jekaba Street, Saeima, Riga

Program

- 09:00 – 09:30 Arrival of participants
- 09:30 – 09:45 Opening remarks by **Edwards Smiltēns**, Secretary of the Presidium of the Saeima

09:45 – 11:15 **DISCUSSION I**

The Challenges Posed by Russia

Exploring Russia's Strategic Motivations and Actions: Implications for the Baltics, Europe, and Beyond

Discussion Points:

- **Strategic Motivations Behind Russia's Actions in Ukraine:** What are the geopolitical objectives of Russia in Ukraine and how do these ambitions affect the security landscape of Europe and the Baltics?
- **Russia's Influence in the Middle East and Africa:** How is Russia leveraging relationships with Syria, Libya, and other nations to extend its influence, and what are the implications for global security and economic stability?
- **Cyber and Information Warfare:** In what ways is Russia engaging in cyber operations and information warfare to undermine democratic institutions in Europe and beyond, and how can these threats be countered?
- **Energy Politics and Economic Leverage:** How is Russia using its energy resources as a tool of geopolitical influence, particularly in Europe, and what strategies can be employed to reduce energy dependency?

Moderator: - **Mārtiņš Daugulis**, Faculty of Social Sciences, Riga Stradins University

Panellists: - **Dumitru Minzazari**, Department of Political and Strategic Studies, Baltic Defence College
- **Sarah Masha Feinberg**, Senior Researcher and Head of Great Powers Research Program at Tel Aviv University's Elrom Center for Air and Space Studies
- **Eerik-Niiles Kross**, Member of Riigikogu, Estonia
- **Jānis Dombrova**, MP, Member of the National Security Committee of the Saeima

Discussion, Q&A

Inter-parliamentary conference organised in close partnership with European Leadership Network

11:15 – 11:45 Coffee break

11:45 – 13:15 **DISCUSSION II**

The Challenges Posed by Iran

Iran's Regional Ambitions and the Threat to Stability: Evaluating the Implications for Israel, the Middle East, and Europe

Discussion Points:

- **Nuclear Ambitions and Regional Security:** How do Iran's nuclear ambitions pose a threat to regional stability, particularly to Israel, and what can be done to prevent escalation?
- **Proxy Warfare and Militant Support:** In what ways is Iran's support of proxy groups like Hezbollah and Hamas affecting the security landscape of the Middle East and what are the broader implications for Europe?
- **Iran's Influence in Syria, Iraq, and Yemen:** How is Iran's involvement in these countries' affairs affecting regional power dynamics and what can be done to mitigate negative outcomes?
- **Economic Sanctions and Diplomatic Efforts:** How effective have international sanctions and diplomatic efforts been in curbing Iran's aggressive postures, and what alternative strategies could be considered?

Moderator: - **Lahav Harkov**, Senior Political Correspondent at Jewish Insider, Misgav Institute for National Security & Zionist Strategy fellow

Panellists: - **Helga Kalm**, Director of Lennart Meri Conference
- **Danny Citrinowicz**, Research Fellow in the Iran Program at the Institute for National Security Studies (INSS)
- **Meir Javedanfar**, Iranian Diplomatic and Security Studies lecturer at Reichman University, Israel
- **Boaz Bismuth**, Member of Knesset (*online intervention*)
- **Emanuelis Zingeris**, Member of Seimas, Lithuania

Discussion, Q&A

13:15 – 14:30 Buffet lunch

14:30 – 16:00 **DISCUSSION III**

Synthesizing Insights and Formulating Policy Solutions

Bridging Divides: Toward a Coherent Strategy Against the Iran-Russia Axis

Discussion Points:

- **Identifying Common Ground for Policy Action:** Based on the challenges identified in the previous sections, what are the areas of consensus among international actors for policy action?
- **Role of NATO and the EU in Countering the Iran-Russia Axis:** How can these institutions be leveraged to form a cohesive strategy against the challenges posed by Iran and Russia, particularly with regards to collective defense and diplomatic efforts?
- **Enhancing Cyber Security and Information Integrity:** What collaborative efforts can be made to bolster defenses against cyber threats and misinformation campaigns orchestrated by state actors?
- **Promoting Energy Independence and Economic Diversification:** How can countries most dependent on Russian energy transition towards greater energy independence, and what role can renewable energy play in this process?
- **Strengthening Multilateral Diplomacy:** What diplomatic initiatives can be introduced to reduce tensions and promote stability in regions affected by Iran and Russia's actions, with a special focus on the Middle East and Africa?

Moderators: - **Mārtiņš Daugulis**, Faculty of Social Sciences, Riga Stradins University
- **Lahav Harkov**, Senior Political Correspondent at Jewish Insider, Misgav Institute for National Security & Zionist Strategy fellow

Panellists: - **Airis Rikveilis**, National Security Advisor to the Prime Minister
- **Sarah Masha Feinberg**, Senior Researcher and Head of Great Powers Research Program at Tel Aviv University's Elrom Center for Air and Space Studies
- **Gideon Saar**, Member of Knesset (*video intervention*) (tbc.)
- **Marko Mihkelson**, Member of Riigikogu, Estonia

Discussion, Q&A

16:00 – 16:30 Concluding remarks by **Rihards Kols**, Chair of the Saeima Foreign Affairs Committee

End of conference