



## FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE



■ Rihards Kols,  
Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee

The Foreign Affairs Committee (the Committee) is one of the 15 standing committees of the Saeima. The Committee focuses on matters pertaining to foreign affairs: transnational agreements, draft laws on the ratification of international conventions and other forms of international agreements, prepares and assesses reports of the Committee and the Saeima on important international events, reviews the candidacies of ambassadors extraordinary and plenipotentiary, analyses and reviews the work of Latvian embassies as well as the implementation of the national foreign affairs policy. The Committee is also engaged in the development of bilateral and multilateral cooperation, collaboration with foreign affairs committees of other national parliaments, and is actively engaged in parliamentary diplomacy.

### SUBCOMMITTEES

The Foreign Affairs Committee of the Saeima has one subcommittee: the Baltic Affairs Subcommittee, the work of which is closely linked to the activities of the Baltic Assembly. The Baltic Assembly is an inter-parliamentary cooperation organisation of Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania, with 14 elected Members of the Saeima as its members.

### COMPOSITION

The principles for the establishment of the Committee is determined by the Rules of Procedure of the Saeima. In the 13<sup>th</sup> Saeima, the work of the Committee is headed by its Chair, Rihards Kols. To see the current composition of the Committee, visit the Saeima website [www.saeima.lv](http://www.saeima.lv).

### THE FOREIGN POLICY DEBATE AT THE SAEIMA

Since the convocation of the 9<sup>th</sup> Saeima, annual foreign policy debate is

organised at the Saeima to strengthen the parliamentary scrutiny of the national foreign policy. Before the debate, which is held on 26 January, the day of the *de jure* recognition of Latvia, the Committee, in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, assesses the annual report of the Minister of Foreign Affairs on the achievements and future priorities of the foreign affairs policy.

### MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS DURING THE 13<sup>TH</sup> SAEIMA

#### SUPPORT FOR THE SOVEREIGNTY AND TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF UKRAINE

In response to the escalation of current regional and diplomatic relations conflicts, the Committee has developed a practice of firm and timely response, vigorously condemning violations of international law. During the 13<sup>th</sup>

### CHAIRS OF THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Convocation	Name	Tenure
5 <sup>th</sup> Saeima	<b>Aleksandrs Kiršteins</b>	26.07.1993 – 06.11.1995
6 <sup>th</sup> Saeima	<b>Indulis Bērziņš</b>	16.11.1995 – 02.10.1997
	<b>Andris Rubīns</b>	15.10.1997 – 13.05.1998
7 <sup>th</sup> Saeima	<b>Guntars Krasts</b>	12.11.1998 – 04.11.2002
8 <sup>th</sup> Saeima	<b>Inese Vaidere</b>	15.11.2002 – 06.02.2004
	<b>Rihards Pīks</b>	06.02.2004 – 08.03.2004
	<b>Artis Pabriks</b>	18.03.2004 – 11.08.2004
	<b>Aleksandrs Kiršteins</b>	11.08.2004 – 14.06.2005
	<b>Vaira Paegle</b>	15.06.2005 – 06.11.2006
9 <sup>th</sup> Saeima	<b>Andris Bērziņš</b>	17.11.2006 – 02.11.2010
10 <sup>th</sup> Saeima	<b>Ojārs Ēriks Kalniņš</b>	04.11.2010 – 17.10.2011
11 <sup>th</sup> Saeima	<b>Romualds Ražuks</b>	20.10.2011 – 21.12.2011
	<b>Ojārs Ēriks Kalniņš</b>	21.12.2011 – 04.11.2014
12 <sup>th</sup> Saeima	<b>Ojārs Ēriks Kalniņš</b>	10.11.2014 – 06.11.2018
13 <sup>th</sup> Saeima	<b>Rihards Kols</b>	Since 20.11.2018

Saeima, statements of this nature were mostly issued in regard to the Russian aggression against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, and both the Foreign Affairs Committee and the Saeima have repeatedly condemned these unacceptable actions.

### **POST-BREXIT RELATIONS: RIGHTS OF THE CITIZENS OF LATVIA AND THE UNITED KINGDOM, TRANSNATIONAL RELATIONS**

The Committee worked on a number of draft laws aimed at regulating the post-Brexit relations between Latvia and the United Kingdom, including an agreement on the post-Brexit rights of the citizens of Latvia and the United Kingdom in the respective countries, and deliberating on matters pertaining to social insurance, benefits, and other issues.

### **COLLABORATION WITH THE DIASPORA**

Since adoption of the Diaspora Law during the last few months of the 12<sup>th</sup> Saeima, the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Saeima is actively overseeing adherence to the transitional provision periods and is involved in solving diaspora-related matters, as well as developing and implementing future strategies. The work of the Committee is aimed at providing opportunities for Latvian nationals to strengthen their Latvian identity, their sense of nationality, and develop an active and mutual collaboration with Latvia.

### **PROMOTING FOREIGN TRADE AND FOREIGN ECONOMIC TIES**

The work of the Committee strengthens the position of Latvia in foreign trade and foreign economic ties, thus promoting economic vitality and the respective market demand, while also improving competitiveness by supporting small and medium-sized industries and strengthening production chains that ensure the welfare and quality of life for the citizens of Latvia.

To ensure effective completion of these tasks, members of the Committee also

take part in creating a strong image of the state and promoting a more effective and efficient use of state budget funds that are allocated for national image development activities, while being aware of the improvements needed in the distribution of the functions of the state authorities coordinating these activities.

### **TAKING A STANCE AGAINST HISTORICAL REVISIONISM; ADDRESSING HISTORICAL ISSUES**

The Committee has actively insisted on a comprehensive view of European history in order to prevent the resurgence of totalitarian regimes, to protect the sovereignty and independence of all European countries, to strengthen the unity of Europe and the European citizens, and to promote a common view of the crimes committed by the totalitarian Nazi and communist regimes.

In addition, the Committee focused on the initiative regarding the future of the Victory Monument in Riga Victory Park. An idea took shape within the Committee that the area surrounding the Monument could be transformed in accordance with the Victory Square development plan of the first independence period of Latvia, and that informative plaques could be installed in the park to reflect the historical context of the Monument.

### **STRONG OPPOSITION TO THE FALSIFICATION OF THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION RESULTS IN BELARUS**

Following the illegitimate Belarusian presidential election of 9 August 2020, the Committee immediately urged to hold a new election in line with internationally recognised standards, while providing the opposition with equal access to all state-controlled mass media and allowing the opposition to participate in the election on equal footing. The Committee also adopted a statement, declaring that Latvia does not recognise the election results published by the Belarusian

authorities and that the mandate based on these results cannot be considered to be obtained in a democratic way and thus legitimate.

### **RAISING GLOBAL AWARENESS OF SIGNIFICANT ISSUES**

The Foreign Affairs Committee actively draws the attention of international organisations on important items in the Committee's agenda. In April 2021, the Committee adopted a statement on solidarity with the Czech Republic, in which it called on the member states of the European Union (EU) and NATO to agree on coordinated action to respond strongly to the destructive actions of the Russian intelligence services against the interests and security of the EU and NATO member states and to take appropriate response measures.

### **EXPANDING INTERNATIONAL PARLIAMENTARY COLLABORATION**

During the 13<sup>th</sup> Saeima, the Committee has expanded collaboration with foreign affairs committees and members of other national parliaments. The Committee has established or re-established close and active collaboration in both regional and international formats, including with the committees of the Parliaments of Lithuania and Estonia, Poland, the Czech Republic, Germany, the United Kingdom, Ireland, the United States, and other countries, by regularly, as needed, reaching agreements on joint public statements and national positions on foreign policy matters.

### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

Address: Jēkaba iela 10/12,  
Rīga, LV-1811, Latvia  
Phone: +371 67087315  
Fax: +371 6708 7350  
E-mail: [arlietu.komisija@saeima.lv](mailto:arlietu.komisija@saeima.lv)