AGENDA

EUROPE IN A CONTESTED WORLD:

BUILDING SECURITY, RESILIENCE AND COMPETITIVENESS

TEPSA Lithuanian Pre-Presidency Conference
19 - 20 November 2026

VENUE: Vilnius University Institute of International Relations and Political Science (VU IIRPS), Vokiečių St. 10, Vilnius

Co-funded by the European Union

All times are indicated in EET

Day 1 (Thursday 19 November)

11:30 - 12:30 **Registration & Lunch**

12:30 - 12:50 **Welcome & Opening Remarks**

An overview of Lithuania's current role in the European Union, its European policy priorities, and the main objectives and intentions for the upcoming Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the EU.

- **Margarita Šešelgytė,** Director, VU TSPMI
- **Lucia Mokrá,** Chairperson of the TEPSA Board

12:50 - 13:00 **Video address by Prime Minister of Lithuania Mindaugas Sinkevičius**

13:00 - 13:40 **"TEPSA's Recommendations for the Lithuanian Presidency"**

Presentation of TEPSA's recommendations for Lithuania's upcoming Presidency of the Council of the EU, followed by comments and discussion.

- **Kęstutis Budrys,** Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania
- **Ilke Toygur**, Director, Global Policy Centre, IE University & TEPSA Board Member (Moderator)

13:40 - 13:55 **Coffee Break**

13:55 - 15:15 **Panel discussion I**

"Europe's Defence Moment: From Strategic Awakening to Deliverable Capabilities"

As Europe responds to a fundamentally changed security environment, the debate is shifting from strategic awakening to the delivery of credible defence capabilities. The discussion will examine how the EU can turn political commitments and increased defence spending into concrete military capacity, while supporting joint procurement and a stronger, more integrated European defence industrial base. It will also consider what Europe can learn from Ukraine's defence and innovation ecosystem, and how EU defence initiatives can reinforce NATO and transatlantic security without creating unnecessary duplication.

- **Kęstutis Budrys**, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania
- **Margarita Šešelgytė,** Director, Vilnius University Institute of International Relations and Political Science
- **Andrius Kubilius**, European Commissioner for Defence and Space
- **Ian Bond**, Deputy Director, Centre for European Reform (CER)
- **Ramūnas Vilpišauskas**, Jean Monnet Chair Professor, VU TSPMI (Moderator)

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Day 2 (Friday 20 November)

08:30 - 09:00 **Registration & Morning Coffee**

09:00 - 10:00 **Panel discussion II**

“The Next MFF: Can Europe Fund Security, Competitiveness and Enlargement at Once?”

How should the EU finance its growing ambitions while preserving its long-standing priorities? The discussion will examine how the next Multiannual Financial Framework can balance cohesion and agriculture with increasing demands in defence, competitiveness, support for Ukraine and enlargement. It will consider whether the current EU budget model is fit for a more geopolitical Union, what trade-offs Member States will face, and whether new priorities should be financed through the EU budget, common borrowing or separate instruments. The panel will also address how these choices can be made without deepening divisions between older and newer Member States.

- **Linn Selle**, Head of Europe Centre, DGAP
- **Justinas Mickus**, Senior Policy Analyst, STRATA
- **Ingrida Šimonytė**, Former Prime Minister of the Republic of Lithuania
- **Ramūnas Dilba**, Chief Adviser to the President of the Republic of Lithuania, Environment and Infrastructure Group
- **Vytautas Kuokštis**, Professor, VU TSPMI (Moderator)

10:00 - 10:15 **Coffee Break**

10:15 - 11:30 **Panel discussion III (Parallel Session)**

“Preparedness as a New European Security Paradigm: Borders, Societies and Critical Infrastructure”

What should preparedness mean for Europe in an era of overlapping military, hybrid, climate and technological risks? The discussion will explore how the EU can strengthen external border management while upholding fundamental rights and solidarity among Member States, and what lessons frontline countries can offer on civil preparedness and whole-of-society resilience. It will also consider whether preparedness should become a permanent, cross-cutting priority across EU policymaking.

- **Vilmantas Vitkauskas**, Head of the National Crisis Management Centre
- **Dainius Žalimas**, Member of the European Parliament
- **Vitalis Nakrošis**, Professor, VU TSPMI
- **Meltem Müftüler-Bac**, Professor of International Relations/ Jean Monnet chair, Sabanci University
- **Ieva Giedraitytė**, Associate Professor, VU TSPMI (Moderator)

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Day 2 (Friday 20 November)

10:15 - 11:30

Panel discussion IV (Parallel Session)

“Working Longer in an Ageing Europe? EU Member States Should Automatically Link the Statutory Retirement Age to Life Expectancy”

Europe is ageing rapidly, placing growing pressure on pension systems, public finances and labour markets. One proposed response is to automatically link the statutory retirement age to life expectancy. But would such a system be both sustainable and fair? Longer lives do not affect all countries, occupations and social groups equally, and the ability to work longer depends on health, working conditions and labour-market opportunities. Organised as part of the #LT27EU debate series, this debate will examine whether linking retirement age to life expectancy can strengthen social and economic resilience, or whether it risks placing too much of the burden of demographic change on individuals.

Organised as part of the #LT27EU debate series in collaboration with Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania

LT27EU

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA

- **Daumantas Stumbrys**, Associate Professor, VU FSF
- **Andrius Romanovskis**, President, Lithuanian Business Confederation
- **Jean-Louis De Brouwer**, Director of the European Affairs Programme, Egmont Institute
- **Ieva Petronytė – Urbonavičienė**, Assistant Professor, VU TSPMI (Moderator)

11:30 - 11:45 **Coffee Break**

All times are indicated in EET

Day 2 (Friday 20 November)

11:45 - 13:00

Panel discussion V

“Making Enlargement Credible Again: Ukraine, Moldova, the Western Balkans and the Future Shape of the EU”

What would it take to make EU enlargement a credible and sustainable process for both candidate countries and the Union itself? The discussion will examine the European paths of Ukraine, Moldova and the Western Balkans, including how to balance geopolitical urgency with accession criteria, democratic reforms and European values. It will also consider how further enlargement could reshape the EU and what institutional and policy changes may be needed to prepare the Union for new members.

Funded by the Horizon Europe Project “Invigorating EU Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy for a Resilient Europe”





- **Funda Tekin**, Director, Institut für Europäische Politik & Scientific Lead of InvigoratEU
- **Viktor Zamiatin**, Director of Political and Legal Programmes, Razumkov Centre
- **Karolina Štelmokaitė**, Vice-Minister of the Ministry of Energy of the Republic of Lithuania
- **Frank Schimmelfennig**, Professor, ETH Zurich
- **Lina Strupinskienė**, Associate Professor, VU TSPMI (Moderator)

13:00 - 13:30

Closing Remarks

- **Ramūnas Vilpišauskas,** Jean Monnet Chair Professor, VU TSPMI
- **Jim Cloos**, Secretary-General, TEPSA

13:30 - 14:00

Farewell Lunch

About TEPSA

The Trans European Policy Studies Association (TEPSA) was established in 1974 as the first transnational research network in the field of EU affairs. It comprises leading research institutes throughout Europe, with an office in Brussels. Its aim is to provide high-quality research on European integration to stimulate discussion on policies and political options for Europe. This is achieved by the interaction between the European and national institutions as well as the academic and research community. TEPSA is active on a wide range of research topics, focusing on differentiated integration, the EU's external relations, democratic participation and citizens' engagement.

More information on its activities can be found at http://www.tepsa.eu.

About the Institute of International Relations and Political Science

The Institute of International Relations and Political Science (IIRPS) is an academic institution specialising in social and political sciences, which holds faculty status at Vilnius University. IIRPS has been present in the academic and political life of Central and Eastern Europe and the Baltic region since its establishment in 1992

More information on its activities can be found at https://www.tspmi.vu.lt/en/

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