



PRESIDIUM OF THE SAEIMA

The work of the Saeima is managed by its Presidium, which is elected from among the MPs at the beginning of the Saeima's term of office. The Presidium consists of five MPs. Currently, the Speaker is Ināra Mūrniece, the Deputy Speakers are Dagmāra Beitnere-Le Galla and Inese Libiņa-Egnere, the Secretary is Andrejs Klementjevs and the Deputy Secretary is Marija Golubeva.

The new convocation of the Saeima usually elects the Presidium at its first plenary sitting. Nominations for positions in the Presidium are submitted by MPs in writing, and voting on all nominees appointed for each position is held simultaneously in an open ballot procedure by using ballot papers. The nominee who receives the most votes is elected; however, the number of votes should not be less than the majority of votes of the MPs present.

The Presidium determines the internal regulations of the Saeima, gives opinions on the documents submitted, forwards these documents for further consideration as prescribed by the Rules of Procedure, prepares the agendas of plenary sittings and performs other organisational functions.

The members of the Presidium are supported by the staff of their offices.

Meetings of the Presidium are usually held once a week (on Mondays), and they are convened by the Speaker. During the Speaker's absence, meetings are convened by one of the Deputy Speakers. The meetings are attended by the heads of all organisational units of the Saeima, thus ensuring performance of all tasks determined by the Presidium. Meetings of the Presidium are usually held in the Red Room of the main building of the Saeima, but the Presidium may convene at another time and place.



Presidium of the 13th Saeima

The Council of Parliamentary Groups is formed in order to determine and coordinate the activities and strategies of parliamentary groups and political blocs within the Saeima, as well as to resolve issues which are not covered by the Rules of Procedure. This Council is composed of the Presidium and one MP from each parliamentary group and political bloc. Decisions of the Council of Parliamentary Groups are only advisory.

SPEAKER

The Speaker represents the Saeima, chairs and maintains order during plenary sittings, as well as ensures that the sittings are held in accordance with the Rules of Procedure. The Speaker also chairs the meetings of the Presidium, as well as sittings devoted to answering parliamentary questions, during which MPs hear answers to their questions submitted to the Prime Minister, line ministers or the Governor of the Bank of Latvia about matters within the competence of these officials.

Plenary sittings are usually held once a week (on Thursdays) in the main building of the Saeima. Ceremonial sit-

tings, during which the Speaker delivers a ceremonial address, are held twice a year: on 4 May in honour of the anniversary of the convening of the Constitutional Assembly and the renewal of independence of the Republic of Latvia, and on 18 November in honour of the anniversary of the proclamation of the Republic of Latvia. The Speaker may temporarily assume the duties of the President of Latvia if the latter is out of the country, resigns or is removed from office, dies or for any other reasons is unable to fulfil the duties of the office.

The Speaker is a member of the National Security Council, which coordinates a unified national security policy implemented by the highest public officials and institutions.

The Speaker devotes considerable time to developing diplomatic relations by meeting foreign dignitaries, delegations and ambassadors, as well as by paying official and working visits to other countries. Once a year, the Speaker invites representatives of the diplomatic corps, namely, ambassadors accredited in the Republic of Latvia and honorary consuls, to a meeting



■ First sitting of the 13th Saeima



■ Speaker's standard

with MPs, and within the framework of the annual meeting of the heads of diplomatic missions of the Republic of Latvia abroad, the Speaker and other MPs meet the ambassadors of the Republic of Latvia.

A significant duty of the Speaker is to work with documents, submissions and letters sent by various institutions and individuals.

Besides the official duties, the Saeima Speaker also fulfils duties as a Saeima member and participates in the work of several Saeima committees and sub-committees.

The Speaker's standard – a white flag with a cross having the same colour proportions as the national flag and the large national coat of arms in the top right-hand white segment – is usually displayed in the Speaker's office, on his/her car, or on other means of transport which he/she uses.

Speakers have established several traditions in the Saeima. Each January, the Speaker invites other MPs, participants of the Barricades, journalists, and the public at large to light a bonfire by the main building of the Saeima to commemorate the Barricades of 1991. Another tradition is the annual spring

community work day, which is a symbolic birthday gift to Latvia. Before Christmas, the Speaker, together with children and other MPs, takes part in a creative Christmas workshop outside the main building of the Saeima on Jēkaba iela, which concludes the parliamentary charity activities.

The Presidium has established the Certificate of Merit, which is awarded to persons for their contribution in reaching national development goals set by the parliament.

DEPUTY SPEAKERS

During the Speaker's absence and upon mutual consent, his/her duties are carried out by one of the Deputy Speakers. The Speaker and Deputy Speakers also share routine responsibilities, such as chairing plenary sittings, Presidium meetings and sittings devoted to answering parliamentary questions, as well as meeting with foreign public officials.

SECRETARY AND DEPUTY SECRETARY

The Secretary and the Deputy Secretary arrange for the recording of minutes during plenary sittings and, if necessary, read out documents during

plenary sittings, check the transcripts and supervise the work of the Saeima Administration by agreeing upon the division of their responsibilities.

HISTORY

- People's Council:
President **Jānis Čakste**
- Constitutional Assembly:
President **Jānis Čakste**
- 1st Saeima: Speaker **Fridrihs Vesmanis** (up to 20 March 1925), then Speaker **Pauls Kalniņš**
- 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Saeima:
Speaker **Pauls Kalniņš**
- **Jāzeps Rancāns**, Acting Speaker of the Saeima in exile
- Supreme Council:
Chairman **Anatolijs Gorbunovs**
- 5th Saeima: Speaker **Anatolijs Gorbunovs**
- 6th Saeima: Speaker **Ilga Kreituse** (up to 26 September 1996), then Speaker **Alfreds Čepānis**
- 7th Saeima: Speaker **Jānis Straume**
- 8th Saeima: Speaker **Ingrīda Ūdre** (now Latimira)
- 9th Saeima: Speaker **Indulis Emsis** (up to 24 September 2007), then Speaker **Gundars Daudze**
- 10th and 11th Saeima:
Speaker **Solvita Āboltiņa**
- 12th and 13th Saeima:
Speaker **Ināra Mūrniece**