



## EUROPEAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE



■ Vita Anda Tērauda, Chairperson of the European Affairs Committee

The Committee monitors the implementation and cost-efficiency of EU Structural Funds' investments. Responsible ministries present their progress reports to the Committee on quarterly basis. The Committee also cooperates with the European affairs committees of other parliaments of the EU member states and candidate countries.

### COMPOSITION

The European Affairs Committee has always been one of the largest committees of the Saeima. According to the Rules of Procedure, each parliamentary group must nominate at least one of its MPs to the Committee. The number of MPs representing each parliamentary group is proportional to the number of seats it has in the Saeima. Work of the Committee is coordinated by consultants and the representative of the Saeima to the Permanent Representation of the Republic of Latvia to the European Union.

### APPROVING NATIONAL POSITIONS

The European Affairs Committee approves national positions prepared by the government. When important

The European Affairs Committee (hereinafter – Committee) was established in November 1995, at a time when the government of Latvia submitted its application for accession to the EU to Spain, which was the presiding country of the Council of the European Union at the time. Back then, the task of the Committee was to oversee harmonisation of national laws with EU legislation. In 2001, the Committee was authorised to represent the Saeima on EU-related matters.

The role of the Committee changed when Latvia became a full-fledged member of the EU on 1 May 2004. Since then its areas of competence include review and adoption of national positions, monitoring of EU funds' investments, closer involvement of NGOs and civil society in EU's legislative processes, as well as cooperation with EU countries and the parliaments of the EU's neighbouring countries.

### FUNCTIONS

According to the Rules of Procedure of the Saeima, the European Affairs

Committee represents the Saeima in EU affairs. The Committee approves national positions before they are communicated to the Council of the European Union. If necessary, it also monitors the compliance of draft laws considered by the Saeima with EU legislation. The Committee meets ministers on a regular basis in order to discuss the progress achieved by relevant ministries on EU matters.

### CHAIRPERSONS OF THE COMMITTEE

Convocation	Name	Tenure
6 <sup>th</sup> Saeima	<b>Māris Gailis</b>	16.11.1995 – 08.02.1996
	<b>Anatolijs Gorbunovs</b>	08.02.1996 – 08.08.1996
	<b>Edvīns Inkēns</b>	30.09.1996 – 02.11.1998
7 <sup>th</sup> Saeima	<b>Edvīns Inkēns</b>	12.11.1998 – 04.11.2002
8 <sup>th</sup> Saeima	<b>Guntars Krasts</b>	21.11.2002 – 21.07.2004
	<b>Oskars Kastēns</b>	12.08.2004 – 06.11.2006
9 <sup>th</sup> Saeima	<b>Vaira Paegle</b>	16.11.2006 – 02.11.2010
10 <sup>th</sup> Saeima	<b>Imants Viesturs Lieģis</b>	04.11.2010 – 17.10.2011
11 <sup>th</sup> Saeima	<b>Zanda Kalniņa-Lukaševica</b>	20.10.2011 – 03.11.2014
12 <sup>th</sup> Saeima	<b>Lolita Čigāne</b>	06.11.2014 – 05.11.2018
13 <sup>th</sup> Saeima	<b>Vita Anda Tērauda</b>	Since 20.11.2018

legislative initiatives or strategic issues are considered, the minister who will represent Latvia at the relevant Council of the European Union must first present the position prepared by the government to the Committee and when it is approved by the Committee the minister is allowed to present it to the Council of the EU as Latvia's official position. If the Committee rejects the position approved by the government, the relevant ministry must amend the position in accordance with the recommendations of the Committee before presenting it to the Council.

## WORK OF THE COMMITTEE AFTER THE TREATY OF LISBON

The Treaty of Lisbon gives national parliaments greater opportunities for involvement and influencing of the legislative process of the European Union. According to the Treaty, all draft EU laws are sent to national parliaments. Parliaments are then given eight weeks to formulate an opinion on the compliance of these draft laws with the subsidiarity principle. If one third of national parliaments concludes that particular area cannot be regulated ef-

fectively at the EU level, the draft must be revised. In other words, the Treaty of Lisbon has expanded the functions of the European Affairs Committee to scrutiny over draft laws of the European Union and when necessary formulating Saeima's opinion on compliance of the proposed EU laws with the principle of subsidiarity.

## COOPERATION WITH OTHER SECTORAL COMMITTEES OF THE SAEIMA

The European Affairs Committee cooperates with other sectoral committees of the Saeima by holding joint meetings where current EU issues are discussed and Latvia's position on developments and processes within the EU is defined.

## COOPERATION WITH OTHER PARLIAMENTS

The Committee regularly meets with its counterparts from other parliaments of the European Union member states during COSAC (Meeting of the Chairpersons of the Conference of Parliamentary Committees for Union Affairs of the Parliaments of the Eu-

ropean Union). Participants of this Conference facilitate the exchange of information and best practice among national parliaments and member state line ministries, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission. Furthermore, representatives of the European affairs committees of the national parliaments of the European Union can jointly agree on the need to address specific issues by putting them on the agenda of the EU.

## HOW CAN I FOLLOW THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE?

Agendas, publicly available documents and press releases of Committee meetings are available on the webpage of the Saeima. Most Committee meetings are open to the public. To attend a meeting, please contact the Committee to arrange for visitor's pass and bring an ID with you.

### CONTACT INFORMATION

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