



SOCIAL
COHESION
RADAR



Society Integration
Foundation
Republic of Latvia

International conference
Society Cohesion Radar
9 November 2023, Riga

Speakers of the Conference

#cohesion



Zaiga PŪCE

the Society Integration Foundation

Zaiga Pūce is the Director of the Secretariat of the Society Integration Foundation (Sabiedrības integrācijas fonds) of the Republic of Latvia.

She has gained experience in both the private and public sectors. She has been working in the non-governmental sector for more than 15 years, implementing both educational and cultural projects and defending the interests of civil society. She was a Council Member in the Latvian Civic Alliance (Latvijas Pilsoniskā alianse) and a Board Member in the Contemporary Culture NGO Association (Laikmetīgās kultūras NVO asociācija). Zaiga is keen to organize and develop the system for providing support to non-governmental organizations in a wide variety of fields and to attract the necessary support for the field of integration as a whole. With her work, she stands for the creation of a cohesive, open and emphatic society.

Iveta KAŽOKA

Centre for Public Policy PROVIDUS

Iveta Kažoka is the Director of the Public Policy Center "Providus" and the leading researcher specializing in issues relating to good governance, citizen engagement and social cohesion.

Her most intriguing research topic of the last few years: manifestations of social tension in Latvian society and their impact on Latvian politics.



Ieva BĒRZIŅA

Centre for Security and Strategic Research, National Defence Academy of Latvia

Dr. Ieva Bērziņa is a Senior Researcher at the Centre for Security and Strategic Studies, National Academy of Defence of the Republic of Latvia, and an Associated Professor at Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences.



She obtained a Ph.D. in political science (comparative politics) from the University of Latvia. Her doctoral thesis compared Western political consulting techniques with Russian political technology and explored their impact on political campaigning practice in Latvia. Her current research interests cover such interdisciplinary areas as comprehensive national defence, strategic communication, Russia's strategy and communication, patriotism and nationalism.

Dr Ivars AUSTERS

University of Latvia

Dr. Ivars Austers is a Professor of Social Psychology at the University of Latvia.

He began his professional activity in social psychology with studies of social groups. He was also interested in people's ability to change perspective, or the conditions in which people are able to guess/assume what other people are thinking. While conducting these studies, Ivars obtained a Doctorate at Stockholm University, as well as a job at the University of Latvia. His research interests are social identity, perspective shifts, decision making, driver psychology.



Dr. Klauss BÜNKE (Klaus BOEHNKE)

Constructor University Bremen gGmbH

Dr. Klaus Boehnke is a Professor of Social Science Methodology at Constructor University in Bremen, Germany.

The topics of political socialization, intergenerational value transmission, and social cohesion are his primary research focuss. He was President of the International Association for Cross-Cultural Psychology from 2018-2020.





Dr. Džons LANONS (John LANNON)

migrant support organisation, Doras.

Dr. John Lannon is CEO of the refugee and migrant support organisation, Doras.

He has also worked as a lecturer and researcher at the University of Limerick where he specialised in project and programme management, and as a consultant with a range of international development and human rights NGOs. John holds an MA in Peace and Development Studies, and a PhD in Management of Human Rights information.

Markuss LUKSS (Markus LUX)

Robert Bosch Stiftung

Markus Lux has been at the Robert Bosch Stiftung in Stuttgart since 2002. He is currently Senior Vice President Global Issues, responsible for the topics Democracy and Immigration Society.



He studied History and Politics at the universities of Mainz and Riga. From 1993 to 1996 he worked for the German public television channel "ZDF" in Mainz. From 1996 to 2002 he was a Visiting Lecturer at several universities in Latvia and a Researcher at the »Jews in Latvia« Museum in Riga.



Olga SETNIKA (Olga SÕTNIK)

Estonian Ministry of Culture

Olga Sõtnik is the head of the Cultural Diversity Department at the Estonian Ministry of Culture.

She has been involved in various projects and initiatives related to social integration, equality policies, language learning, and cultural diversity. She has also served as a member of the Estonian Parliament and the Deputy Mayor of Tallinn.



Māra MAKLAKLINA-TEILORA (MCLAUGHLIN-TAYLOR)

Ar Pasaules Pieredzi Latvijā

Māra McLaughlin-Taylor is actively involved on the board of Ar Pasaules Pieredzi Latvijā and teaches English at Riga Technical University, government institutions, and private businesses.

Born in New York City to a Latvian mother and American father, Māra has always had her foot in two cultures. In 2019, she relocated to Riga with her husband. Shortly thereafter, isolated in her apartment during COVID, Māra drew on her education as a social worker, and started to have recorded conversations with both locals and expats on the meaning of culture and belonging, which she published under the name "Saprotu."

Lolita TOMSONE

"Žaņa Lipkes memoriāls"

Lolita Tomsons is the Director of the museum "Žanis Lipke Memorial" in Riga, Latvia.

The memorial commemorates a human rescue operation devised by Žanis (Jānis) Lipke, a Latvian dock worker and smuggler, who succeeded in saving the lives of over 50 Jews from the Riga Ghetto during the Second World War. She studied at Hebrew University in Jerusalem and the Latvian Academy of Culture, worked as a journalist for radio "Free Europe" and published articles about Jewish culture and social politics in the magazine "Rigas Laiks" and other media outlets.



She is inspired by "silent heroes" - people who have gone against the grain and overcome fear to help their persecuted fellow human beings. Lolita is a social activist for women's rights and has organized protests to protect trees in Riga.



Jukai ZENG (Yukai ZENG)

NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence,
Singapore

Yukai Zeng is a data scientist by training that employs a data-driven analytical approach in his work. He works as Assistant Director of International Engagements at the Singapore Ministry of Defence Communications Organisation.

His role includes researching societal resilience (to pandemics, disasters, etc.) and perceptions related to national defence issues. With over a decade of experience, his insights inform strategic communication policies, and contribute to the planning and insights generation for strategic communications campaigns.

Dr. Klāvs SEDLENIEKS

Riga Stradiņš University

Dr. Klāvs Sedlenieks is a social anthropologist and currently holds the position of Associate Professor at Riga Stradiņš University.

He has studied topics ranging from corruption, to peace, informal economy, anthropology of state and kinship. He has consulted various public authorities regarding policies on various society-related questions. Dr Sedlenieks has done fieldwork in Latvia and Montenegro.



Dr. Vida MONTVĪDAITE (Vida MONTVYDAITĖ)

Government of the Republic of Lithuania

Dr. Vida Montvydaitė has been Director of the Department for National Minorities to the Government of the Republic of Lithuania since 1st July 2015.



Vida Montvydaitė previously served as Minister-Counsellor of Consulate of the Republic of Lithuania in Sejny (Poland). She pursued her professional career in activity of the public administration sector with a focus on national and ethnic minority groups.

Her experience in administration management, international cooperation, including academic work, is substantial. Vida Montvydaitė is a Doctor of Philosophy in Humanities and a qualified historian. Ms Montvydaitė has published academic articles on Lithuanian Diaspora history, politics and ethnic identity.

Liene DAMBIŅA

Children's Hospital Foundation

Liene Dambiņa is the Head of the Children's Hospital Foundation and Co-founder and Chairman of the Board of the Children and Adolescent Resource Center.



Liene has been working in the field of children's health and welfare for over 14 years. Among other significant contributions, she has been working on improving the living space of the Children's Hospital, including the creation of a Parents' Home, helping children with autistic spectrum disorders through practical support, raising the awareness on autism at the national level, which resulted in the first allocation of state funding, as well as the creation of community-based services for teenagers with mental health problems and addiction risk.



Georgs RUBENIS

Learning Center "Centrs ZIN" and Foundation "Fonds Plecs"

Georgs Rubenis is the Head of the Learning Center "Centrs ZIN" and a Board Member of the Foundation "Fonds Plecs".

Georgs is a teacher, a lecturer and he is active in various public organizations. In 2022, he was elected to the Board of the Latvian Civil Alliance - LPA (Latvijas Pilsoniskā alianse) and is currently the Chairman of the LPA Board. He is actively involved in representing the interests of the non-governmental sector, promoting public participation and openness and traceability in national decision-making processes.



Dr. Marcins VROŃSKIS (Marcin WROŃSKI)
SGH Warsaw School of Economics

Dr. Marcin Wroński is an assistant professor at the SGH Warsaw School of Economics. He is a fellow of the World Inequality Database (Paris School of Economics, France), Global Labor Organization (Essen, Germany), and teaching fellow of CERGE-EI Foundation (Prague, Czech Republic).

He is a consultant (external) at the World Bank (Global Poverty & Equity Group). His main scientific interests include economic inequality, economic history, and economic policy.

Dr. Andris SAULĪTIS
University of Latvia.

Dr. Andris Saulītis serves as a Senior Researcher at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, University of Latvia.



As a Visiting Fellow at the Collegio Carlo Alberto in Turin, Italy, Andris is currently undertaking a project on tax morale and the shadow economy, supported by the prestigious Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions Postdoctoral Fellowship, funded by the European Commission. With an interdisciplinary background, anchored by an MA in social anthropology from The New School, USA, and a PhD in sociology from the European University Institute, Italy, he adeptly harnesses qualitative, quantitative, and experimental research methods to delve into economic issues. His past contributions, including assessments of the informal economy in the Balkans and evaluations of the long-term impacts of forex loans on Latvian households, spotlight his expertise in probing economic disparities and opportunities in Eastern Europe.



Baiba ZŪZENA

"Commercial Education Center"

Baiba Zūzena has gained an extensive experience in the field of media by managing the TV3 group in Latvia for over a decade. Baiba is now an entrepreneur, the head of the business training and consulting company "Commercial Education Center" (Komerzizglītības centrs).

She believes that openness, holistic and contextual thinking, and willingness to learn new skills and gain new knowledge are the best way to success. Knowledge has always had an immense power. Today's world demands rapid adaptation to increasingly complex market situations and technological growth. Therefore, the value is not in what you know now, but rather how quickly you can learn and how skillfully you can apply your knowledge and skills to accomplish what you are set out to do.

Ludmila FADEJEVA

Latvijas Banka

Ludmila Fadejeva is a principal economist at Latvijas Banka. Her main research interest is the analysis of monetary policy effects on income and wealth inequality, prices, and labour.



She represents Latvijas Banka at the Price Setting Microdata Analysis (PRISMA) and the Household Finance and Consumption (HFCS) Working Groups in the European Central Bank (ECB). She holds Master degree in Specialized Economic Analysis awarded jointly by Universitat Pompeu Fabra and Universitat Autònoma de Barcelon. She is also a PhD candidate in Economics and Management from the University of Latvia.