

Lithuania 1990 – 2021: 31 years of Independence and 17 years in the European Union

08.03.2021 – ONLINE – 17.30/18.30 CET

Lithuania: from an occupied state to an independent actor, a historical perspective

In the first panel session we will debate the events which brought to the declaration of independence on March 11, 1990. With scholars and experts, but also witnesses, we will discuss the identity of the national movements and their aspirations.

It will be of the utmost relevance to identify whether and, if so, which European values and aspirations lay behind the Independence movements and behind the declaration itself.

Was there already an idea of a potential EU accession?

Beyond political, social and economic freedom, social justice and equality, what were the main aims and expectations behind the declaration of independence?

Speakers:

PhD Ritys Bulota – Professor at the Vytautas Magnus University (Kaunas, Lithuania) and at the University of Bologna (MIREES Programme, Italy). He is an expert in National political movements in Central and Eastern Europe and regional Baltic studies. He will focus on the national movements asking for independence in Lithuania. He will also bring his personal experience to the debate.

PhD Robert Van Voren - Human Rights expert and post-Soviet space and transition specialist. He is also teaching at VMU and is the chair of Vytautas Magnus University's (VMU) Andrei Sakharov Research Centre for Democratic Development. He will mainly address Lithuania's transition to a democratic state based on the rule of law, how "European" the country has become and what Soviet influence still remains, how they see their position in Europe, the Russian threat.

10.03.2021 – ONLINE – 18.00/19.00 CET

Lithuania's accession to the EU in 2003: hopes, aspirations, and the state of play today

During this panel session we will debate with experts, journalists and politicians the main steps towards EU accession in 2003 and the Lithuanian hopes behind it, both at a popular level and at a political one. We will also discuss the current Lithuanian hopes in the EU today and the country's aspirations for its role in the EU in 2021.

Which were the main hopes behind EU accession?

Was there consensus about EU accession as an achievement?

Which part of the political landscape or the general audience, if existent, was eurosceptical, or at least not enthusiastic about EU accession?

What attitudes exist towards the EU across the current Lithuanian political spectrum? How do Lithuanians perceive their country's role in the EU?



Speakers:

Petras Auštrevičius, MEP

Klaudijus Maniokas, Chairman of the board of the consulting firm European Social, Legal, and Economic Projects (ESTEP)

Daiva Jakaite, Head of the EP Liaison Office in Lithuania.

12.03.2021 – ONLINE – 13.30/14.30 CET

Celebrating Lithuanian independence: remembering to revive

In the third and last panel, in celebrating 31 years of Independence we will cover the following questions with politicians, experts, and Lithuanian officials in the EU institutions and at the regional level, as well as with other European actors in whose countries democratic transitions or revolutions contemporary took place.

What changed after EU accession for Lithuania? What are the common points with other EU countries in this regard?

What is the European perspective on the changes that have taken place in Lithuania since its independence and its accession to the EU?

Is there any form of Euroscepticism nowadays affecting perceptions of the EU in the country? How is the EU described in the media? How can this perplexity towards the EU be fought on a daily basis?

Future scenarios also will be taken into account.

Speakers:

Commissioner Sinkevičius (tbc)

Sandro Gozi, MEP, President of the European Federalists

Member of the Lithuanian Parliament (tbc)