



“GAME-CHANGER” The Baltics Under Pressure

Witness Biographies

Laima Andrikienė

Chair of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the Lithuanian Parliament (Seimas)

Laima Andrikienė was born in 1958 in Druskininkai, Lithuania. She received a degree in economics and math from Vilnius University in 1980 and completed her doctoral studies in 1994. Andrikienė was elected to parliament in 1992. She has since served on numerous committees, such as the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the Committee on International Trade, the Committee on European Affairs, the Committee on Budgets, and the Subcommittees on Security and Defense and Human Rights.

Andrikienė has received many awards, including the Order of the President of Georgia (2014); MEP of the Year 2018 Award in International Trade (The Parliament Magazine) (2018); and the Royal Order of Isabella the Catholic, Kingdom of Spain (2020). She speaks Lithuanian, English, Russian, and Spanish.

Marko Mihkelson

Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Estonian Parliament (Riigikogu)

Marko Mihkelson was born in 1969 in Valga, Estonia. He studied history at the University of Tartu, earning his MA in history in 1999. Mihkelson began working at the newspaper “Postimees” in 1993 as a world news editor, eventually becoming Editor-in-Chief. From 2000 to 2003, he served as the director of the Baltic Centre for Russian Studies.

Mihkelson was first elected to parliament in 2003 as a member of the Pro Patria and Res Publica Union and has served on and chaired multiple committees, including the Foreign Affairs Committee, the European Union Affairs Committee, and the National Defence Committee. He has received numerous awards, including Officer of the Order of the Orange-Nassau of the Netherlands (2018); Officer of the Order of Merit of the Hungarian Republic (2018); and the Cross of Merit, 2nd class (2016).

Mihkelson served on the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe as head of the Estonian delegation from 2003 to 2007. He also represented the Estonian delegation at the NATO Parliamentary Assembly from 2011 to 2019. He is a member of the International Centre for Defence Studies Supervisory Board, the Tallinn Rotary Club, the Estonian Reserve Officers' Association, and the Estonian Defence League.

Mihkelson has written two books: "Venemaa: valguses ja varjus" ("Russia: In Light and Shadows"), in 2010, and "Murdeajastu" ("Era of Dramatic Changes") in 2018, as well as many articles on foreign policy in the Estonian and international press. In his free time, he enjoys golf and tennis. He is married and has one daughter.

Rihards Kols

Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Latvian Parliament (Saeima)

Rihards Kols was born in 1984 in Riga, Latvia. He is a member of the Saeima, the Parliament of the Republic of Latvia, since his re-election in 2018. Kols serves as the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Saeima and as the Representative of the Saeima to the OECD.

Kols is also the Deputy Chairman of the political party "National Alliance", a guardsman at the National Guard of the Republic of Latvia, a member of the European Leadership Network, and a Millennium Fellow at Atlantic Council.

Prior to his current duties, Kols was the Deputy Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Saeima, a member of the European Affairs Committee of the Saeima, and a member of the Parliament. He also served as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Parliamentary Secretary of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Latvia, and an international affairs analyst at the Latvian British Chamber of Commerce.

Kols has extensive experience working as a legal consultant for several legal offices and he is an active participant in the non-governmental sector. He is the founder and a member of the board of the NGO "Latvian Flag," a member of the board at the "Youth Centre for Competence," and member of the board of the "European Movement in Latvia." Kols holds a Master's degree in Diplomatic Studies from the University of Westminster, The Diplomatic Academy of London, as well as a professional Bachelor's degree in Legal Studies from the School of Business Administration Turība. He is married and is currently raising two daughters.