Centrum Balticum Foundation

Members of the International Advisory Board
Chair of Advisory Board: President Tarja Halonen

Tarja Halonen was elected as the first female President for the Republic of Finland in 2000. She was elected for the second term in 2006. President Tarja Halonen has worked during and after her term of office with sustainable development both in Finland and in international assignments.

Chair of Centrum Balticum Board: Mayor Aleksi Randell

Aleksi Randell is the Mayor of Turku as well as the Chairman of the Board of the Centrum Balticum Foundation. Previously, he has worked as the Chairman of the City Board of Turku, as the Special Adviser to the Minister of Communications of Finland, and as the Secretary-General of the National Coalition Party's Youth League.
Matti Anttonen is Under-Secretary of State for External Economic Affairs in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA) of Finland. Prior to his current position Anttonen served as Director General of the Department of External Economic Relations. During 2008-2012 he served as Finland’s Ambassador to Russia. In 1994-2002 he worked first as Director for Russia and later as Deputy Director General of the Division for Russia, Eastern Europe and Central Asia at the MFA. Anttonen has worked in Finnish diplomatic missions in Washington DC and at the Permanent Mission of Finland to the UN in Geneva. He holds Master’s degrees both in economics and in modern history.

Dirk Ahner was Director General for Regional Policy in the European Commission before he retired at the end of 2011. Since then he continues to be active as Special Advisor to the European Commissioner for regional development and as visiting Professor to the College of Europe and to the European Policy Research Centre of Strathclyde University. He is member of the editing board of a journal on the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESiF) as well as of several advisory bodies.

Torbjörn Becker has been the Director of the Stockholm Institute of Transition Economics at the Stockholm School of Economics since 2006. He is also a board member of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), SSE Russia, and several research institutes in Eastern Europe that are part of the FREE network. His work focuses on macro, debt, capital markets and economic crises and has been published in top academic journals and several books. He holds a PhD from the Stockholm School of Economics.

Per Carlsen is a Senior Advisor for the Baltic Development Forum and a former Danish Ambassador for Latvia (2010-2015), the Russian Federation (2005-2010) and Lithuania (1997-2001). He has held several other positions in different Danish Ministries. Carlsen was also the Director of the Danish Institute of International Studies from 2001 to 2005. Carlsen has studied history and Russian language at Copenhagen University.
Inga Cerniuk

Inga Cerniuk has worked as Chancellor in the Ministry of Energy of the Republic of Lithuania since 2012. Prior to that, she served as the Head of Law division of the ministry. From 2005 to 2010 Cerniuk held several positions in the National Commission for Energy Control and Prices. Prior to that she worked as Jurist in several companies and she has also been a chair or a member of board in many companies. Cerniuk speaks English, Russian and Polish. She holds a Master’s degree in Law from Mykolas Romeris University.

Leonid Gokhberg

Leonid Gokhberg is First Vice-Rector of the Higher School of Economics (HSE). He is also Director of HSE Institute for Statistical Studies and Economics of Knowledge (ISSEK). Professor Gokhberg’s area of expertise is indicators on science, technology and innovation (STI) as well as foresight and policy studies in this area. He has served as Consultant for the OECD, Eurostat and UNESCO among others. He is also a member of the Global Innovation Index Advisory Board, OECD Government Foresight Network, OECD and Eurostat working groups and steering groups of several other distinguished international and national initiatives. Gokhberg holds PhD and Dr. of Sc. degrees in Economics.

Mikko Hautala

Mikko Hautala has served as Foreign Policy Adviser of the Cabinet of the President of the Republic of Finland since 2012. Prior to this Hautala served as Minister and Deputy Head of Mission in the Embassy of Finland in Moscow (2011-2012), as Senior Diplomatic Adviser to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland (2007-2011) and as Second/First Secretary of the Permanent Representation of Finland to the European Union (2002-2007). Hautala holds a Master’s degree both in Political History and in Slavonic Languages at the University of Helsinki.

Danuta Hübner

Danuta Hübner, Poland’s first-ever European Commissioner, has been a Member of European Parliament since 2009. Currently she is the Chair of the Committee in Constitutional Affairs as well as member of the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs and the Delegation for relations with the United States. Hübner was entrusted as Commissioner with the regional policy portfolio in 2004. Earlier she has served in several ministerial positions in Polish government, for example as Minister for European Affairs. She has studied at the Warsaw School of Economics where she obtained an MSc (1971) and a PhD (1974). She has been awarded with five doctorates honoris causa by European universities.
Ruslanas Iržikevičius

Ruslanas Iržikevičius is the founder and Editor-in-Chief of Lithuania Tribune, the largest English language publication in Lithuania founded in 2009. Prior to this he worked at the Bank of Scotland and at a range of embassies in Vilnius as a Press and Political Officer. He is keenly interested in the Baltic region, Nordic/Baltic cooperation, as well as Russia and Central and Eastern Europe with a focus on politics and security, information warfare and transatlantic cooperation. Iržikevičius graduated from the University of Edinburgh in 2001 with an MA with Honours in History.

Nils Karlson

Nils Karlson is the Founding President and the CEO of the Ratio Institute (2002) and Associate Professor in Department of Politics at Uppsala University. Prior to his current positions Karlson held several positions in different Swedish universities and other organisations. He has been a member of the board in several international and national organisations and bodies. He holds a PhD both in Political Science and Economics. Karlson has led numerous research projects and has published over 25 books and numerous scientific articles and book chapters.

Andres Kasekamp

Andres Kasekamp is Professor of Baltic Politics at the University of Tartu. He graduated from the University of Toronto and gained a PhD in modern history from the School of Slavonic and East European Studies at London University in 1996. He has been a Visiting Professor at Humboldt University Berlin and the University of Toronto. He worked as the Editor of the Journal of Baltic Studies and is currently the President-Elect of the Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies. As the founding Director of the Estonian Foreign Policy Institute from 2000 to 2013, he has become a well-known commentator on international relations.

Andrius Kubilius

Andrius Kubilius is a Lithuanian politician who has been a member of the Lithuanian Parliament Seimas since 1992. Kubilius served twice as Prime Minister (1999-2000 and 2008-2012) of Lithuania. He was the Chairman of the Homeland Union – Lithuania Christian Democrats from 2003 to 2015. In the current legislative term, he is the Leader of the Opposition of the Seimas, as well as Member of the Committee on Budget and Finance and the Committee on European Affairs. Since 2015 he has been a member of the Advisory International Council of Reforms for the President of Ukraine. Kubilius graduated from the Faculty of Physics in Vilnius State University in 1979.
Jarmo Lindberg has worked as Chief of Defence of Finland since August 2014. Prior to this Lindberg served as Commander of the Finnish Air Force and Deputy Chief of Staff Logistics and Armaments. From 2004 to 2008 he served twice in the Defence Command and as a Commander of Lapland Air Command. Prior to that Lindberg served in many positions in the Finnish Air Force. He has graduated from the Air Force Academy and also holds a PhD (H.C.) at the University of Turku.

Taneli Lahti is an EU official, currently working in DG Economic and Financial Affairs of the European Commission. He served until spring 2016 as Head of Cabinet of Valdis Dombrovskis, Vice-President (VP) of the European Commission for the Euro and Social Dialogue. In 2014 he served as Head of Cabinet of VP Jyrki Katainen and in 2009-2014 as adviser to VP Olli Rehn. Before his appointments to the cabinets he worked for several years on EU-Russia relations in the Commission and in the Foreign Ministry of Finland. Lahti holds a PhD in Economics from the University of Erlangen-Nürnberg and a Master’s degree from the Turku School of Business and Administration.

Vladimir Mau has served as Rector of the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration (RANEPA) since 2010. Mau is an honored Economist in the Russian Federation. He is Doctor of Economics and holds also a PhD at Pierre Mendes France University. His main research focus is economic history and the history of economic thought in Russia and the USSR. Since 1991 Mau participated in the development and implementation of economic reforms in Russia, including working as Advisor to the Chairman of the Russian Government. Mau also served as Head of the Working Center for Economic Reforms of the Russian Government.

Igor Maximtsev is the Rector of St. Petersburg State University of Economics. He serves also as Chairman of Association of vice-rectors for International Relations of St. Petersburg Universities. He is the Head of St. Petersburg Department of International Higher Education Academy of Sciences and a member of Presidium of the Council of Rectors of St. Petersburg Universities for the International relations. Maximtsev is also the Deputy Head of the Advisory Council on Economics of the Higher Certifying Commission of the Russian Federation. He is the author of more than 120 publications including those on educational issues. He speaks fluent English and Spanish.
Roland Methling

Roland Methling is the Mayor of the City of Rostock in Germany. He was first elected in 2005 for a period of seven years and was then re-elected in 2012. Prior to that, Methling has been employed by the City of Rostock and he has been responsible for the organization of the Hanse Sail and further large festivals like the 777th City Anniversary and the Rostock Millennium Festivities. From 1978 to 1990 he worked for the Rostock harbour administration. Methling studied at the University of Rostock and finished his studies as a graduate for technical cybernetics and automatic control engineering.

Boris Mints

Boris Mints is the founder and Chairman of Yegor Gaidar Foundation. He also serves as the Chair of the Board of Directors at an investment company O1 Group, which was founded in 2004. In addition Mints serves as Chair or Member of several boards of international and national organisations and companies. Mints graduated from Theoretical Physics in 1980 from the Physical Faculty of the Ivanovo State University. He holds a PhD in the Engineering Sciences.

Olaf Osica

Olaf Osica is Director for risk assessment at PolitykaInsight. He is a Manager and Consultant with over 10 years record of working at the junction of the public/governmental and think-tanks sectors in Poland. From 2011 until 2016 he was an Executive Director of the Centre for Eastern Studies (OSW) in Warsaw. He continues at OSW as Chairman of the Advisory Council. He holds a PhD in social and political science from European University Institute in Florence. Osica has authored numerous analyses and reports on the future of European Union, European Neighbourhood Policy, transatlantic security, and regional cooperation.

Artis Pabriks

Artis Pabriks has been a Member of the European Parliament (Member of Committee on International Trade, Substitute of Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs) since July 2014. He is the EP’s Chief Rapporteur on the EU-Canada free-trade agreement and on the European Border and Coast Guard Regulation. Prior to this Pabriks served as a Member of the Parliament of Latvia in 2004 and later was appointed as Minister of Foreign Affairs until 2007. From 2007 until 2010 he was again Member of the Parliament. During 2010-2014 Pabriks was Minister of Defence. He graduated from the University of Aarhus, Denmark, receiving PhD in political science in 1996.
Volker Perthes has served as CEO and Director of SWP, the German Institute for International and Security Affairs since October 2005. Since September 2015, Perthes has also been serving as a UN Assistant Secretary General and Senior Advisor to the UN Special Envoy for Syria. Perthes is a frequent commentator in German and international media on German and European Foreign and Security Policy, International Relations and geopolitics, regional dynamics and transitions in the Middle East.

Seppo Remes is the founder and Chair of the investment company EOS Russia (2007). He is currently also member of Advisory Boards of Alexander Institute, Pan-European Institute and Gaidar Institute. Remes worked in Russia from 1993 to 2015. He served as corporate Vice President, Russian Affairs, at Neste (Fortum) in 1993-2001. Later he was CEO of Investment Company Vostok Energo and Director of Vostok Nafta (2001-2004), both investing in Russian energy sector. He has been a board member of several Russian companies. He was elected as the Director of the Year in 2013 by Independent Directors’ Association together with Russian Council of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs.

Veiko Spolitis was elected as a member of the Latvian Parliament Saeima in 2014 and since then he is member of the standing Defence and Internal Affairs Committee. In 2010-2014 he served as Deputy Minister of Defence, and in 2005–2013 as a scholar and program director at the Riga Stradins University. As a former Director (1999-2001) of the Civic Education Project Baltic branch office his areas of research are governance and civil society in the Baltic States, European studies, and politics of regionalism. He co-authored several EU research projects, regularly commented on the Baltic political developments in international and Baltic media outlets, as well as published in international journals.

Andris Spruds is the Director of the Latvian Institute of International Affairs. He also holds the position of Professor at Riga Stradins University. Spruds has an MA in Central European History from the CEU in Budapest, Hungary, and in International Relations from University of Latvia. He has also obtained a PhD in Political Science from Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland. Spruds has been a visiting student and scholar at Oxford, Uppsala, Columbia and Johns Hopkins Universities, as well as the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs and Japan’s Institute of Energy Economics.
Felix Tschudi is the Chairman and owner of the Tschudi Group. He attended the Royal Norwegian Naval Academy and served as Sub-Lieutenant in the Royal Norwegian Navy. He earned a Second Mate’s certificate from merchant navy colleges in the UK, a BSc (Econ) from London School of Economics and an MBA from INSEAD, France. Before joining the family company Tschudi & Eitzen in 1989, he worked for the trading and finance house AWT specialising in trade finance with Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Tschudi is and has been a member of board in several international organisations.

Taavi Veskimägi has served as CEO of Estonian electricity and gas transmission system operator Elering AS since 2010. Previously Veskimägi was active in politics: from 2003 to 2005 he was the Minister of Finance of the Republic of Estonia and before that a member of the Estonian parliament Riigikogu and Chairman of the Res Publica faction. From 2005 to 2006 Veskimägi was the Vice President of the parliament and until 2007 the Vice President of party Pro Patria and Res Publica Union.

Jarmo Viinanen is a career diplomat currently serving as Ambassador of Finland in Stockholm. Prior to his current engagement Viinanen served as Permanent Representative of Finland to the United Nations (2009-2014). At the UN he held several positions of trust, among them Chairman of the board at UNICEF. During 2000-2009 Viinanen worked in the Office of the President of Finland as Secretary General and Diplomatic Advisor. His previous postings abroad include Washington D.C., Tel Aviv and Vienna. Viinanen has a keen interest in economic, cultural and security policy development in the Baltic Sea region. He is the Chairman of the delegation at the John Morton Center at Turku University.

Ramūnas Vilpišauskas is a Director and Professor of the Institute of International Relations and Political Science, Vilnius University. In 2004-2009 he worked as Chief Economic Policy Advisor to the President of Lithuania Valdas Adamkus and the Head of Economic and Social Policy Group. Vilpišauskas was also appointed to coordinate the team of advisors to the President (2006-2009). He has been a Visiting Fellow at several universities in the USA and Canada, a Fulbright scholar at the Columbia University, conducted research at a number of European institutions including European University Institute. Vilpišauskas has graduated both from Vilnius University and Lancaster University.
Stefan Wallin has been a Member of Parliament in Finland since 2007. He has served as Government Minister for the Environment and Nordic cooperation (2006-2007), Minister for Culture, Sports and Gender equality (2007-2011) and Minister for Defence (2011-2012). He was Chairman for the Swedish Peoples Party in 2006-2012. Wallin is also a member of the City Council in his hometown Turku and member of the board of the Regional Council of Southwest Finland. Since 2014 Wallin has been chairing the Swedish Cultural Foundation. Before entering politics Wallin was a news journalist. He holds a Masters degree in Political Science at the Åbo Akademi university in Turku.

Stefan Widomski, former Senior Vice President of Nokia Corporation, was born in Poland but has lived in Finland since 1966. First he worked at Nokia Electronics as Manager, then as Director of Eastern Trade and subsequently as Vice President and eventually as Senior Vice President (Eastern Trade and International Business Affairs) of Nokia Corporation. During his career Widomski has served as member and as Chair of several boards and working groups, for example as Chair of the Finnish-Russian Chamber of Commerce in 1995-2001. He also worked as Senior Adviser at Russia Programme of the Finnish Fund for Innovations and Development (2004-2006). He is a regular speaker and member of panels in various conferences and seminars.