

President of Latvia Egils Levits nominates his state university council members

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Today, on 31 January, President of Latvia Egils Levits nominated his representatives to councils of 14 state universities.

'Higher education and science are a key driver of national development,' said the President of Latvia Egils Levits. According to President, strategic development is one of the main responsibilities of these university councils. 'One of the primary goals of research universities is to be internationally competitive and offer excellent higher education and innovative research environment with good equilibrium of fundamental and applied research activities. On top of these, University of Latvia is also on an important mission for our nation. It strengthens and promotes the development of Latvia as a nation state, which requires a specific focus on social sciences, humanities, and legal studies. It is a shared objective of art and culture universities, as well. All of them nurture our national culture, passing our traditions on to next generations and supporting creativity. Applied science universities, on the other hand, are primarily responsible for training competent professionals that our society and economy needs. They also focus on growing their capacity for research, especially the applied kind,' stressed President Levits.

President's list of nominees is a result of careful selection and personal meetings with several dozens of candidates, who have also been endorsed by experts in respective fields. According to the law, President of Latvia cannot nominate council members who have direct relations with respective university and they must hold prominent position in their discipline.

'It was important for me to hear what candidates can offer to the development of their potential universities before I included them in the list. I am positive that their activities on university boards will make our higher education more future-oriented and competitive,' Egils Levits indicates.

As Law on Higher Education Institutions regulates, President is entitled to nominate one member of university council in each of state universities. Senate of respective university and Cabinet of Ministers may each nominate between two and five other council

members depending on the type of university.

List of university council members delegated by President of Latvia Egils Levits (research universities):

Valters Ščerbinskis: Council of the University of Latvia.

Valters Ščerbinskis is a graduate of University of Latvia History and Philosophy Faculty who holds a master's and doctor's degree in history. He currently works as the chief editor of the National Encyclopedia. His former occupations include a position of a leading researcher of the National Archives of Latvia. His main research subject is political history of Latvia in 1918-1940. Mr Ščerbinskis is also a scientific consultant for a number of history books, scientific publications, and books about various historic events.

Reinis Bērziņš: Council of Riga Stradiņš University

Reinis Bērziņš acquired his master's in business administration (MBA) at the Swiss Business School. He also holds a master's degree from Riga Graduate School of Law study programme 'Law and Finance'. Mr Bērziņš currently studies Business Management at Stanford University. He has worked as the head of ALTUM, a state-owned development finance institution, since 2015 and serves as the member of the supervisory board of the Three Seas Initiative Investment Fund. Mr Bērziņš is a member of the advisory board of the University of Latvia and chair of the advisory board at the BA School of Business and Finance. Reinis Bērziņš has worked for several leading credit institutions.

Andris Ambainis: Council of the Riga Technical University

Andris Ambainis acquired his master's and doctor's degree in computing at the University of Latvia, Faculty of Physics and Mathematics. He continued his studies at the University of California, Berkeley, where he attended its PhD programme. Mr Ambainis is currently a professor at the University of Latvia, Faculty of Computing, and is a member of University of Latvia Constitutional Assembly, full member of the Latvian Academy of Science and professor at the Institute for Quantum Computing of the University of Waterloo. Andris Ambainis has authored numerous scientific publications. His academic achievements in quantum computing have allowed Latvia to become one of the leading research hubs in Europe.

Laimdota Straujuma: Council of the Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies

Laimdota Straujuma acquired her PhD in Economics at Institute for Economy of the Latvian Academy of Science and has studied business administration at the Lancashire School for Business and Enterprise at the University of Central Lancashire. Ms Straujuma is the member of Latvia's National Productivity Board and board member of NGO "Latvijas Formula 2050" (Latvian Formula 2050). She has worked as the Chair of the Saeima Sustainable Development Committee, member of Education, Culture and Science Committee and Budget and Finance (Taxation) Committee during the 12th convocation. Laimdota Straujuma has also served as the Prime Minister of Latvia and Minister for Agriculture.

List of university council members delegated by President of Latvia Egils Levits (applied science universities):

Toms Torims: Council of the Daugavpils University

Toms Torims has graduated from doctoral programme of Transport and Mechanical Engineering Faculty at the Riga Technical University. He is currently a research fellow and Latvia's representative at the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN). One of his scientific career goals has been closer cooperation between CERN and High-Energy Physics and Accelerator Technology researchers from Latvia. Mr Torims has also organised regular negotiations between CERN management and member states. He has also acted as a liaison officer between CERN and Cabinet of Minister of Latvia.

Andris Grafs: Council of Liepāja University

Andris Grafs acquired his master's degree in social sciences at the Riga Stradiņš University and currently works as the Vice-President of the Baltic Institute of Corporate Governance and its head of its Riga Office. He also lectures at the Riga Stradiņš

University Faculty of Communication. Mr Grafs is a member of Corporate Governance Advisory Board created by Ministry of Justice and a chair of advisory board consulting municipal enterprises and shareholder representatives of the Riga City. His professional experience also includes work for the Cabinet of Ministers working group for accession to Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.

List of university council members delegated by President of Latvia Egils Levits (culture universities):

Kaspars Putniņš: Council of Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music

Kaspars Putniņš is one of the most renowned artistic directors for chamber orchestra in Europe. He has been the principal director of Latvian Radio Choir since 1994 and works as the musical director of Swedish Radio Choir. Mr Putniņš regularly conducts Collegium Vocale Gent (Ghent), Hamburg NDR Chamber Choir, Berlin RIAS Chamber Choir and many other leading choirs of Europe as guest conductor. He has also given masterclasses and implemented young musical talent education projects for upcoming European choral music students and professionals.

Dace Melbārde: Council of Latvian Academy of Culture

Dace Melbārde acquired her PhD in social sciences at the University of Latvia and PhD in Arts at the Latvian Academy of Culture. She is currently a member of the European Parliament, Vice-Chair of Committee on Culture and Education. Ms Melbārde has served as the Latvian Minister for Culture, Director of the Latvian National Centre for Culture and Country Director Latvia - British Council. She has experience in both culture policymaking and implementation, various leadership positions, organising of large-scale culture events, including Song and Dance Celebration. She has also been Latvia's national UNESCO expert.

Valts Ernštreits: Council of the Art Academy of Latvia

Valts Ernštreits acquired his PhD in philosophy at the Tartu University. He currently leads the Livonian Institute at the University of Latvia and is also its lead researcher. Mr Ernštreits also holds research position at the Tartu University's Institute of Estonian and General Linguistics. He is an advisor to the Minister for Culture of the Republic of Latvia and formerly served as the president of the State Cultural Capital Foundation. He has authored scientific publications on topics like linguistics, literature, digital content generation, Latvian place names and other topics. Mr Ernštreits is also a published author of poetry, has translated poetry from other languages, edited and compiled other publications. His other interests include visual arts and his works have been exhibited in a number of art projects.

List of council members delegated by President of Latvia Egils Levits(applied research universities):

Mārtiņš Bičevskis: BA School of Business and Finance

Mārtiņš Bičevskis is a professional lawyer trained by the Faculty of Law of the University of Latvia. Mr Bičevskis has acquired extensive business and strategic business planning and development experience. With more than 20-year experience in management of large publicly owned enterprise on behalf of public bodies, he has accrued impressive experience in development and delivery of good corporate governance policies. He has led initial public offerings of stock companies on the main list of the Baltic stock exchange and led implementation of several international technology projects for start-ups.

Sandra Rozenštoka: Council of Latvian Academy of Sport Education

Sandra Rozenštoka heads the Sports medicine, sports traumatology and rehabilitation centre "Sports laboratory". She is the president and CEO of Latvian Association of Sports Medicine, director of Riga Stradiņš University Sports Medicine internship programme, chief sports physician of Latvian Paralympic Committee, and international paralympic classification expert of the International Paralympic Committee. Ms Rozenštoka has taken part in several Paralympic Games as the chief sports physician of the Latvian Paralympic squad.

Jānis Priede: Council of Rēzekne Academy of Technologies

Jānis Priede holds master's and doctor's degree in economics issued by the University of Latvia. He has extended his academic training with wide international experience acquired through internships at Columbia University in the City of New York, Fulda University of Applied Sciences, University of Iceland, and other higher education establishments. Mr Priede is the Chair of the Scientific Council of the Latvian Productivity Board and editorial board member of the National Encyclopaedia. He is the associate professor at University of Latvia and Head of Department of Economics at the Business, Management and Economics Faculty of University of Latvia, guest lecturer at Riga Graduate School of Law, Tartu University and Fulda University of Applied Sciences.

Kristaps Klauss: Council of Ventspils University of Applied Sciences

Kristaps Klauss has completed Ventspils University of Applied Sciences Master of Business Administration programme and currently works as the CEO of NGO Latvian Woodworking Federation, Vice-President of Latvian Chamber of Industry and Commerce and Chair of the Supervisory Board of SIA "Meža un koksnes produktu pētniecības un attīstības institūts/ Forest and Wood Products Research and Development Institute". He also serves as Deputy Chair of the Forrest Faculty Advisory Board at the Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies and member of the advisory board of Latvian State Forest Research Institute "Silava". Mr Klauss is also active on Forrest Advisory Board of the Ministry for Agriculture, Climate Policy Roundtable of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development and National Energy and Climate Council of Ministry of Economics.

Arnis Sauka: Council of Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences

Arnis Sauka acquired his Master of Business Administration from Faculty of Business, Management and Economics at the University of Latvia. He continued his academic education at the Jönköping International Business School (Sweden), University of London (UK), University of Siegen Business Administration Faculty (Germany) where he acquired his PhD. Mr Sauka holds professorship at the Stockholm School of Economics in Riga and is the head of its Sustainable Business Centre. Arnis Sauka is the founder of Business, Innovation and Regional Development Centre and has worked as Vice Rector for studies and science at the Ventspils University of Applied Sciences. His broad research interests include areas such as shadow economy, strategic management, business competitiveness, business policies and small and medium size enterprise management.

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