



UBI IRIS, IBI MEL

UBI APES, IBI SALUS

RĪGA STRADIŅŠ UNIVERSITY INTERNATIONAL STUDENT CONFERENCE 2025

Abstract Book

SOCIAL SCIENCES



RSUSP
EST. 1993



RĪGA STRADIŅŠ
UNIVERSITY



Rīga Stradiņš University
**INTERNATIONAL STUDENT
CONFERENCE 2025**

March 24th—25th, 2025

Abstract Book

SOCIAL SCIENCES



Rīga, Latvia

Rīga Stradiņš University International Student Conference 2025
(Rīga, March 24th—25th, 2025): Abstract Book – Social Sciences. – Rīga: RSU, 2025, 43 p.

Authors are responsible for their Abstracts.

Layout: Krista Velta Purbērziņa

Front cover: Agnese Gabriela Celma

© Rīga Stradiņš University Student Union, 2025
Rīga, Dzirciema Str. 16, LV-1007

ISBN 978-9934-9325-2-6

Dear students,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the International Student Conference in Health and Social Sciences 2025 at Rīga Stradiņš University (RSU). This conference has become a cornerstone event for aspiring researchers and young professionals, fostering academic excellence, innovation, and international collaboration.

This year's conference will be particularly remarkable, gathering over 5000 participants and featuring 432 student presenters from 13 countries, including Latvia, Poland, Serbia, Lithuania, Italy, the United Kingdom, and many more. Their research will be evaluated by an esteemed international jury of 175 experts from 12 different countries, ensuring a high standard of academic rigor and professional insight. The program is extensive, with 39 research sections, 35 hands-on workshops, 4 panel discussions, and 12 social events and excursions, providing an enriching experience for all attendees.

RSU takes immense pride in facilitating this global scientific dialogue, offering young researchers an opportunity to engage with distinguished professionals and peers. The submission of 558 research abstracts this year—the highest in the conference's history—demonstrates the growing significance of this platform in shaping the future of health and social sciences.

Our commitment to advancing knowledge extends beyond this event. Through continuous collaboration with international institutions and experts, RSU strengthens its role as a leading research and educational hub. This year, we are especially honored to welcome Dr. Guillem Bouilleau from France, who will not only serve as a jury member but also mentor participants in the Medical Wrestle simulation competition on March 24th. Additionally, teams from Estonia and Lithuania will actively contribute to the conference's dynamic exchange of ideas and expertise.

As we embark on these two days of insightful discussions and groundbreaking research presentations, I encourage you to embrace this opportunity to expand your academic horizons, establish new collaborations, and contribute to the advancement of science. Let this conference be a source of inspiration and a stepping stone toward your future achievements.

Once again, welcome to the International Student Conference 2025 at Rīga Stradiņš University. I wish you all a productive and inspiring conference experience.

Thank you!

Professor Aigars Pētersons
RECTOR OF RĪGA STRADIŅŠ UNIVERSITY

Dear friends and guests of Rīga Stradiņš University,

The International Student Conference in Health and Social Sciences (ISC) is the largest annual student-led scientific event at Rīga Stradiņš University (RSU). This year marks the 11th anniversary of the international conference and the 75th year of RSU students presenting their research. Organized for the 11th consecutive year by the RSU Student Council, the ISC has grown into the largest student-organized conference in the Baltics. It provides students with a platform to present their research through both oral and poster presentations.

A defining feature of the ISC is that it is organized entirely by students. A dedicated team of volunteer students invests nine months in meticulous planning to ensure the success of the conference, which takes place each March.

Beyond academic excellence, this conference also celebrates the rich culture and history of Riga. The Art Nouveau architecture, prominently featured in our conference visuals, is more than just a backdrop - it represents excellence, creativity, and innovation. These same principles drive us as researchers, medical professionals, and future scientists.

If you look closely, you will notice that the symbol of this conference - the bee - holds deep significance. Bees represent community, collaboration, and perseverance - values that not only define this conference but also resonate with each student and scientist. Much like bees that work together in harmony to create something greater than themselves, we too grow through shared knowledge, cooperation, and a commitment to a common purpose.

I want to emphasize that this conference focuses on utilizing science for a greater purpose. In a time when the world faces global health challenges, humanitarian crises, and rapid scientific advancements, our roles as students, researchers, and medical

Laura Sabīne Taurmane

CHAIR OF RSU INTERNATIONAL STUDENT CONFERENCE 2025

Organising Committee

Laura Sabīne Taurmane

Chairperson of Organising Committee

Kristīne Berķe

Assistant of the Chairperson of Organising Committee

Annija Līga Legzdīņa, Sandis Bulduris

Project Coordinators

Matīss Pumpurs

Head of Science Affairs, RSU Student Union

Guna Skuja

Assistant to the Head of Science Affairs, RSU Student Union

Zane Apele, Karlīna Elza Arāja, Evelīna Jansone, Laura Čerpakovska

Public Relations

Līga Pūsepa, Elizabete Romanovska

Local Jury Coordinators

Lilija Banceviča, Agnese Gabriela Celma

International Jury Coordinators

Ance Anete Ravina, Rihards Irbe

Social Science Jury Coordinators

Arvis Pauliņš, Everita Binde, Madara Elza Rudzīte

Participant Coordinators

Ieva Veipa, Santa Luīze Stivriņa

Activist Coordinator

Dana Šēra, Mariss Priekulis

Panel Discussions Coordinators

Anna Marija Ancāne, Sāra Krustiņa

Workshop Coordinator for Health Sciences

Katrīne Liepzare, Anna Apīne

Workshop Coordinator for Social Sciences

Lauma Zdanovska

Collaboration Conferences Coordinator

Germans Lapšovs, Kristers Šmits, Raivis Bricis, Megija Florentine, Laura Lazdāne

Sponsorship Coordinators

Tomass Krastiņš, Mārtiņš Bode

Technical Coordinators

Dāvis Kannenieks, Džiliāna Heinrihsone

Ambassador Programme Coordinators

Milāna Marija Stroka, Valērija Meinardte

Tour & Social Programme Coordinators

Patrīcija Paula Mūrniece, Inga Barvika

Opening & Closing Ceremony Coordinators

Aleksandrs Oborins, Rihards Seržāns

Student Simulation Championship Medical Wrestle Coordinators

Valters Vilis Zvaigzne

Crown it in Riga: The ISC Dental Case Competition Coordinator

Artūrs Vecbaštiks

Financial & Visa Coordinator

Laura Melngalve

Webpage Developer

Darja Allemane

Translator

Scientific Committee

Prof. Jānis Grasis
Prof. Signe Bāliņa
Assoc. prof. Agnese Dāvidsone
Assoc. prof. Aleksandrs Fillers
Assoc. prof. Inga Kudeikina
Assoc. prof. Marta Urbāne
Assoc. prof. Klāvs Sedlenieks
Assoc. prof. Romāns Putāns
Asst. prof. Anda Rožukalne
Asst. prof. Alnis Stakle
Asst. prof. Ivans Jānis Mihailovs
Asst. prof. Mārtiņš Daugulis
Aleksandrs Potaičuks
Artūrs Bikovs
Beāte Livdanska
Elīna Vroblevska
Heidi Reinson
Ieva Puzo
Kata Fredheim
Lelde Metla-Rozentāle
Leonards Budņiks
Māris Cepurītis
Vineta Kleinberga
Ruta Siliņa
Waleed Gumaa

Contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Organising Committee | 6 |
| Scientific Committee | 7 |
| POLITICAL SCIENCE | 10 |
| DIGITAL NEWS MEDIA NARRATIVES ABOUT LATVIA. CASE STUDY OF TRADITIONAL VALUES Rebeka Zvirbule | 10 |
| THE SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE IN THE ASSESSMENT OF THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CHILD IN LITHUANIA AND LATVIA Priscilla Wilson | 11 |
| STRATEGIC APPROACH TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE DEFENSE INDUSTRY - COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE CASES OF LATVIA AND FINLAND (2025) Zintis Sils | 12 |
| NARRATING DURING WAR: ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNICATION BY THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF UKRAINE Zanda Zelma Lece | 13 |
| DECISION-MAKING STRUCTURE IN LATVIA DURING THE COVID-19 CRISIS Patriks Gabriels Nainiņš | 14 |
| TAIWANESE NATIONALISM AMID TAIWAN-US RELATIONS Kristians Liberts | 15 |
| FRAMING WAR FOR POLITICAL GAIN : THE REFLECTION OF TURKEY'S MILITARY OPERATIONS IN SYRIA IN THE RHETORIC OF R. T. ERDOGAN (2016–2024) Alise Egija Bezručko | 16 |
| THE SECURITY CHALLENGE OF EU, NATO COOPERATION, AND TURKEY'S ROLE Dilge Özcoşkun | 17 |
| REPOWЕРЕU: THE EU'S DIVERSIFICATION STRATEGY Ada Adamska | 18 |
| ANALYSIS OF THE CAUSES OF LOW TURNOUT OF LATVIAN VOTERS IN EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ELECTIONS COMPARED TO GERMANY Dominiks Perševics | 19 |
| IDEOLOGICAL APPROACHES OF THE 14TH LATVIAN PARLIAMENT POLITICAL PARTIES TO NATIONAL SECURITY ISSUES Gustavs Pāgrabs | 20 |
| EFFECTIVENESS OF WESTERN SANCTIONS IMPOSED AGAINST RUSSIA AFTER ITS FULL-SCALE INVASION OF UKRAINE IN 2022 Vartans Apikjans | 21 |
| LEVERAGE OF SMALL STATES ON DECISION MAKING PROCESS IN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS: AN ANALYSIS OF LATVIA'S PARTICIPATION IN THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE Ieva Cimermane | 22 |
| RUSSIA'S DETERRENCE POLICY: IMPLICATIONS FROM THE WAR IN UKRAINE 2022-2024 Emīls Edmunds Reķis | 23 |

COMPARISON OF THE GOALS OF THE LITHUANIAN AND ESTONIAN CAMPAIGNS FOR NON-PERMANENT MEMBERSHIP IN THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL

Ance Anete Ravina 24

LAW 25

HUMAN CAPITAL RESOURCES IN THE EMPLOYMENT OF PRE-RETIREMENT AGE PEOPLE

Laimrota Litavniece 25

CORPORATE FRAUD: A CROSS-JURISDICTIONAL CRIMINAL LAW ANALYSIS OF ITALY AND THE USA

Francesco Primiceri 26

CORPORATE ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY: LEGAL EVOLUTION, RECENT TRENDS, AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES

Francesco Primiceri 27

LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CONSUMER PROTECTION IN LATVIA IN RELATION TO THE RETURN AND EXCHANGE OF GOODS

Diāna Bambāne 28

THE LEGAL DYNAMICS OF VETO POWER UNDER 49 TEU: IMPLICATIONS OF BACKSLIDING MEMBER STATES ON EU INFLUENCE, EU ENLARGEMENT, AND POLITICAL INTERESTS

Rihards Irbe 29

ENTRAPMENT RISKS AND SAFEGUARDING HUMAN RIGHTS: HOW THE EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS SETS THE STANDARD

Aleksandra Lemańska 30

ECONOMICS 31

THE ROLE OF SUSTAINABLE PACKAGING IN CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR: A CASE STUDY FOR THE BRAND MADARA

Evelīna Katrīna Karņevska 31

OPPORTUNITIES OF USING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN DIGITAL MARKETING COMMUNICATION

Egita Blaus 32

THE APPROACH OF COMPANIES AND ORGANIZATIONS TO SUSTAINABILITY IMPLEMENTATION: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF THE EU TAXONOMY REGULATION IN THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS IN LATVIA

Rita Strojēva 33

BRAND POSITIONING THROUGH STRATEGIC NARRATIVE: A CASE STUDY OF THE SPECIALITY COFFEE MARKET

Ralfs Cimermanis 34

ANALYSIS OF BRAND "ZIEDU GURU" DIGITAL MARKETING COMMUNICATION

Viktorija Koržeņevska 35

A HEALTH LITERACY PERSPECTIVE FROM THE USE OF MARKETING TOOLS

Ieva Vāvule, Santa Bormane 36

Sponsors & Partnerships 37**General Sponsors & Partnerships 41**

POLITICAL SCIENCE

DIGITAL NEWS MEDIA NARRATIVES ABOUT LATVIA. CASE STUDY OF TRADITIONAL VALUES

Author: *Rebeka Zvirbule*¹

Scientific research supervisor: *Elizabete Elīna Vizgunova-Vikmane*¹

¹ *Rīga Stradiņš University, Latvia*

Keywords. Russia; Latvia; Traditional values; Russian media

Objectives. In light of the Russian Federation's ambitions to become the main representative of traditional values internationally, both in its official foreign policy and in its state and state-funded media, and disinformation campaigns about Latvian top officials regarding traditional values, the narratives of Russia's state and state-funded media have to be identified. The identification of narratives provides insight into Russia's construction of Latvia in the context of traditional values.

Materials and methods. Qualitative methods will be applied. Firstly, document analysis will be used to examine Russia's Foreign Policy Concepts, National Security Strategies (2009–2023), the Constitution, laws, and key speeches and reports to define "traditional values" and identify keywords. Secondly, narrative analysis will be used. Using keywords, articles from TASS, RIA Novosti, Gazeta.ru, and Lenta.ru (2012–2024) will be manually selected and analyzed via NVivo12 to identify dominant narratives. The results will be interpreted using social constructivism.

Results. The first most common narrative is "Latvia is destroying Russian culture and history". The second most common narrative is "Latvia is destroying traditional family values". The third most common narrative is "Latvia is violating international law and human rights". The fourth most common narrative is "Latvia does not support LGBTI+ rights". The fifth most common narrative is "Latvia is dependent on the West".

Conclusions. In Russia's strategic documents, the role of the EU has diminished over time from a strategic partner to a threat. Starting in 2013, Russia has emphasized the importance of traditional values and constructs the West as a threat. Russia positions itself as a defender of traditional values. Narratives framing Latvia as opposed to traditional Russian values emerged in 2014 and surged after 2020, peaking in 2024. Four key narratives present Latvia as opposed to Russian traditional values, with one aligning Latvia with them.

THE SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE IN THE ASSESSMENT OF THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CHILD IN LITHUANIA AND LATVIA

Author: *Priscilla Wilson*¹

Scientific research supervisor: Dr. *Anna Broka*¹

¹ *Rīga Stradiņš University, Latvia*

Keywords. Society; Health; Welfare; Social Welfare; Social work in child and youth wellbeing

Objective. The assessment of a child's best interests is a fundamental principle in child protection, rooted in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). This study investigates the practices, methodologies, and systemic challenges faced by social workers in Lithuania and Latvia as they strive to safeguard children's well-being. The research aims to understand how social workers navigate complex socio-legal frameworks while balancing children's rights, family dynamics, and societal influences.

Materials and methods. Using Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, Complexity Theory, and Critical Social Theory as conceptual lenses, the study examines how child welfare assessments balance children's rights, family dynamics, and societal influences. Through qualitative analysis of interviews with social work professionals, the study identifies critical themes as discussed in the results section.

Results. The findings emphasize the significance of a holistic approach to child welfare assessments. Social workers highlighted the necessity of interprofessional collaboration to address the multifaceted needs of children. However, systemic barriers, including limited resources and entrenched cultural attitudes, were identified as significant obstacles. The study also revealed gaps between legislative frameworks and their implementation in practice, emphasizing the challenges of aligning policies with real-world scenarios.

Conclusions. The research concludes that child-centered approaches are essential for effective child welfare practices. Enhancing training for social workers, improving resource allocation, and fostering interprofessional cooperation are critical to bridging the gap between policy and practice. These measures are essential to address systemic challenges and ensure that assessments of children's best interests align with the principles of the UNCRC.

STRATEGIC APPROACH TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE DEFENSE INDUSTRY - COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE CASES OF LATVIA AND FINLAND (2025)

Author: **Zintis Sils**¹

Scientific research supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. sc. pol. **Māris Andžāns**¹

¹ *Rīga Stradiņš University, Latvia*

Keywords. Defence industry; Innovation; Resilience; Supply chains; R&D

Objectives. Intensity of war in Ukraine has revitalised the requirement of adequate conventional capabilities, as well as a large, and to a degree, self-sufficient national defence industry. EU has achieved an unprecedented levels of defence spending – 1.9%. This is reflected in EU efforts to strengthen supply chains and local production, essentially ushering a new era of rearmament and reindustrialization. The new security landscape has noticeably affected the defence strategies of bloc's states on the Eastern border. Main objective of this research is to analyse and compare strategies directed towards development of defence industry in Latvia and Finland, as both states face comparable threat levels, but have historically taken different approaches towards national security.

Materials and methods. Qualitative research methods - document analysis, including Latvia's State Defence Concept (from 2003 to 2023 iterations), Defence industry and innovation strategy (2025), Finnish Defence Policy Reports (2004 to 2024), Materiel Policy Strategy (2023) as well as normative acts derived from the policy papers. Comparative analysis is then employed.

Results. Finland has created an innovation driven defence ecosystem, providing large assortment of tools for supporting R&D and production activities, such as strategic partnerships and financial support. Latvian approach, while applying Finnish concepts such as strategic partnership and prioritisation of supply chain security, is new and as such, most of industry support instruments are still in development or haven't been adequately tested.

Conclusions. Finnish approach towards development of defence industry is a result of decades long strategy aimed towards total and integrated defence system. Finland has succeeded in creation of strong, resilient and internationally competitive defence industry, while Latvian approach has been created as a response to changing security perceptions in wake of 2014 and 2022, and as such, still requires more instruments, especially with regards access to financial investment, R&D and international representation.

NARRATING DURING WAR: ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNICATION BY THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF UKRAINE

Author: *Zanda Zelma Lece*¹

Scientific research supervisor: *Māris Cepurītis*¹

¹ *Rīga Stradiņš University, Latvia*

Keywords. Narratives; Communication; Humour; Social media; Twitter; X; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine

Objectives. Nowadays, war takes place both on the battle and in the information field. Russia's full-scale war of aggression against Ukraine also includes an overarching propaganda campaign waged through traditional media and social media. As the war continues for the third year, it is worth exploring how the main institution responsible for external communication, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine (MFA of Ukraine), manages its social media communication and whether it uses humour which was a unique aspect of communication by Ukraine's officials at the very beginning of the war. To research communication by the MFA of Ukraine during the third year of the war, the construction of the strategic narrative is described, and original tweets and replies on the MFA of Ukraine's "X" account in English from 24 February 2024 to 24 February 2025 were selected. This selection was examined under qualitative content analysis, focusing on the aspects of the content: intent (why was it used), form (visual, textual), semantics (how is it communicated), and impact (reach, retweets, likes).

Materials and methods. Literature review, selection, structuring, and analysis of the MFA of Ukraine's original tweets and replies on the "X" English account from 24 February 2024 to 24 February 2025.

Results. The results would outline the main communicative tools, manners, topics, and statistics of the MFA of Ukraine and whether humour was used during the third year of the war. The results will allow for further political context research.

Conclusions. Data collection analysis could demonstrate the main narratives and how they are being shaped by the MFA of Ukraine. Correlations on the most effective ways of communication could be revealed.

DECISION-MAKING STRUCTURE IN LATVIA DURING THE COVID-19 CRISIS

Author: ***Patriks Gabriels Nainiņš***¹

Scientific research supervisor: ***Romāns Gagunovs***¹

¹ *Rīga Stradiņš University, Latvia*

Keywords. Covid-19 crisis; Decision-making; Cabinet of Ministers; Crisis management; Inter-institutional coordination

Objectives. The Covid-19 crisis necessitated rapid and effective decision-making at the national level. In Latvia, a multi-level decision-making structure was established, comprising the Cabinet of Ministers, the Crisis Management Council (CMC), the Operational Management Group (OMG), Saeima (parliament) and the Center for Disease Prevention and Control (CDPC). During the crisis, issues related to effective policymaking, public health security, and the implementation of international recommendations at the national level became highly relevant. The development of such policies in Latvia presented challenges related to decision-making structures and inter-institutional coordination. The study aims to analyze Latvia's decision-making structure during the Covid-19 crisis, evaluate the impact of WHO recommendations, and identify the strengths and weaknesses of the specific decision-making model.

Materials and methods. Qualitative research method – document analysis. The theoretical framework – new institutionalism. Analytical basis – laws, Cabinet of Ministers regulations, decrees, publications and other materials.

Results. The role and influence of each actor involved in decision-making varied depending on their functions and authority. Several issues emerged during the decision-making process: 1) weak coordination and communication between institutions, causing delays in the implementation of decisions, 2) insufficient flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances, 3) limited implementation of WHO recommendations.

Conclusions. The multi-level decision-making structure enabled rapid responses, however, inter-institutional coordination was inadequate, often reflected in weak communication. WHO recommendations were provided to Latvia, but their implementation depended on political and economic factors. Decision-making was hindered by the lack of clear role and responsibility distribution among institutions, as well as insufficient flexibility. Consequently, it was concluded that the adopted decision-making strategy was not sustainable for long-term crisis resolution.

TAIWANESE NATIONALISM AMID TAIWAN-US RELATIONS

Author: *Kristians Liberts*¹

Scientific research supervisor: Dr.sc.pol. *Una Aleksandra Bērziņa-Čerenkova*¹

¹ *Rīga Stradiņš University, Latvia*

Keywords. Taiwan; Nationalism; Taiwan-US relations

Objectives. The Master's thesis "Taiwanese nationalism amid Taiwan-US relations" aims to examine how the rising prominence of a national, democratic, independent Taiwanese identity may impact relations between Taiwan and the United States, its main security guarantor, given the US' historic one China policy that opposes changes to the status quo and does not support Taiwanese independence. The recent rise of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) within Taiwan along with increasingly tense cross-strait relations is a cause for concern not just for the region, but for the global economy, given Taiwan's strategic importance as one of US' main trading partners and one of world's main supplier of advanced computer chips. The main research goal of the thesis is thus to determine whether there is a link between nationalistic sentiment in Taiwan's domestic politics and US and Taiwanese relations in the international environment and, if it exists, what impact it has on the political and economic relations of Taiwan and the US.

Materials and methods. The work uses constructivist theory and the concepts of identity and national interests for its theoretical framework, aiming to use qualitative research methods such as process tracing, discourse and text analysis to examine both domestic attitudes and the bilateral relations between both actors and verify the hypothesis and draw further conclusions.

Results. The results may offer an insight into whether domestic Taiwanese nationalism has a meaningful impact on the political and trade dynamics between Taiwan and its external partners.

Conclusions. The conclusions will offer insight on how the current trajectory of Taiwan's domestic politics might influence the dynamics between the US, Taiwan and China and tensions in the Taiwan Strait.

FRAMING WAR FOR POLITICAL GAIN : THE REFLECTION OF TURKEY'S MILITARY OPERATIONS IN SYRIA IN THE RHETORIC OF R. T. ERDOGAN (2016–2024)

Author: *Alise Egija Bezručko*¹

Scientific research supervisor: *Māris Cepurītis*¹

¹ *Rīga Stradiņš University, Latvia*

Keywords. Turkey; Syria; Erdogan; Military operations; Political rhetoric

Objectives. This study examines the reflection of Turkey's military operations in Syria in the rhetoric of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan from 2016 to 2024. The research explores how Erdogan's discourse on military interventions—including operations such as Euphrates Shield, Olive Branch, Spring Shield, and Peace Spring—have been strategically constructed, emphasizing themes of national sovereignty, security, and counterterrorism. By identifying these rhetorical themes, the research investigates how this framing serves as a tool to enhance his political popularity. Grounded in Nicholas Onuf's constructivist approach, the study highlights the role of rhetoric in shaping public perception.

Materials and Methods. The research employs a qualitative content analysis of Recep Tayyip Erdogan's speeches and government documents, focusing on themes such as national security, sovereignty, and terrorism. To contextualize the role of Erdogan's rhetoric, the study examines voting results and public opinion data to assess the role his discourse on military interventions in Syria plays in shaping his popularity.

Results. Preliminary findings suggest that Erdogan's rhetoric consistently frames military operations in Syria as essential for safeguarding Turkey's national security and sovereignty. This narrative has successfully mobilized nationalist sentiments, positioning Erdogan as a defender of Turkey's interests and contributing to fluctuations in his approval ratings, which often rise during periods of military engagement and heightened rhetoric emphasizing national security concerns.

Conclusion. This study concludes that Erdogan's rhetoric on military operations in Syria was framed around themes of national security, sovereignty, and counterterrorism, thereby mobilizing nationalist sentiment. By constructing these interventions as existential to Turkey, R.T. Erdogan's rhetoric played a significant role in shaping his popularity, as reflected in fluctuating electoral results and public opinion during periods of heightened rhetoric and military engagement. Grounded in Nicholas Onuf's constructivist framework, the findings demonstrate how discourse shapes public perception.

THE SECURITY CHALLENGE OF EU, NATO COOPERATION, AND TURKEY'S ROLE

Author: *Dilge Özcoşkun*¹

Scientific research supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. sc. pol. *Kārlis Bukovskis*¹

¹ *Rīga Stradiņš University, Latvia*

The main objective of this article is to study the evolving security dynamics within the EU's challenges on geopolitical tensions and security. The aim is to value the EU's responses to the challenges, its strategic alignment with NATO, and the integration of member states into the EU framework, as well as, Turkey's role in European security and the evolving nature of EU foreign policy.

A qualitative analysis of existing literature and policy documents is used, including historical EU security strategies and the EU's strategic compass, to value the trajectory of European security policy and EU-NATO military collaborations, forming conclusions about the EU's future global security role.

The EU's security strategy has shifted from economic integration to a focus on geopolitics, due to the Ukraine crisis and global threats. Key developments include:

Strategic Autonomy and NATO: The EU seeks autonomy but acknowledges NATO's irreplaceable role, with both organizations complementing each other in defense and crisis management.

Turkey's Role: Turkey's strategic importance has grown, especially in Black Sea security, balancing NATO and EU interests.

Internal EU Tensions: EU divisions persist over defense spending, Turkey's role in handling relations with Russia, reflecting the challenge of balancing the values with geopolitical realities.

Conclusions. European security is shifting as the EU struggles to balance its normative values with global geopolitics. The EU must adapt to a world where strategic autonomy and military capabilities are essential, while NATO remains a key partner. The EU's success will depend on overcoming internal divisions, integrating new members, and strengthening defense and crisis management. Turkey's role is important, as its geopolitical position improves EU security. The EU must mediate its ideals with the realities of global power dynamics to maintain influence in the future security architecture.

REPOWEREU: THE EU'S DIVERSIFICATION STRATEGY

Author: *Ada Adamska*¹

Scientific research supervisor: Dr. *Alina Lengauer*²

¹ *Adam Mickiewicz University, Poland*

² *University of Vienna, Austria*

Keywords. European Union; Energy Policy; REPowerEU; Energy Transition

Objectives. In May 2022, in response to the energy and climate crises, and directly to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the European Commission launched the REPowerEU Plan. It addresses the urgent need to diversify energy supplies to enhance energy security and rapidly reduce the European Union's (EU) dependence on Russian fossil fuel imports by accelerating the clean transition, hence achieving a more resilient and efficient energy system and a true Energy Union. This study aims to analyse key developments in EU energy policy, with a focus on the EU's diversification strategy under the REPowerEU, and evaluates its effectiveness in addressing current and future challenges in energy markets.

Materials and methods. Socio-legal research methods.

Results. The REPowerEU is not legally binding on EU Member States, but merely outlines a set of actions and measures (strategy) across four areas: energy savings, diversifying energy imports, smart investment, substituting fossil fuels and speeding up Europe's clean energy transition with renewable electricity and fossil-free hydrogen – all of which should be taken together and thus structurally transform EU's energy system. This requires substantial financial resources and an approach tailored to national contexts, including targeted investments in infrastructure.

Conclusions. The REPowerEU Plan has already contributed to significant progress in the above-mentioned areas. However, the EU remains confronted with numerous challenges regarding energy policy that require a better balance between rapidly achieving energy security, with diversification as its key component, and upholding the EU's commitment to sustainability and climate neutrality.

ANALYSIS OF THE CAUSES OF LOW TURNOUT OF LATVIAN VOTERS IN EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ELECTIONS COMPARED TO GERMANY

Author: *Dominiks Perševics*¹

Scientific research supervisor: *Romāns Gagunovs*¹

¹ *Rīga Stradiņš University, Latvia*

Keywords. European Parliament; Elections; Politics; Democracy; Political participation

Objectives. To examine the causes of the low turnout of Latvia in the European Parliament elections compared with turnout in Germany. Although Latvia has been an independent democratic state for more than 30 years and has integrated into the European Union since 2004, it has some of the lowest indicators in terms of voter turnout among EU Member States, while Germany has a much higher voter turnout. As elections are one of the most important aspects of the realization of democracy, the turnout of citizens in elections to the European Parliament and other institutions is important, as low participation of citizens can be perceived as a weakening of democracy.

Materials and methods. The research uses document analysis, a qualitative method, to study the activity of Latvian and German citizens in the last three European Parliament elections.

Results. Although turnout in Latvia has increased minimally in the last three European parliamentary elections – 30.24% in 2014, 33.53% in 2019, and 33.82% in 2024 – it is nevertheless relatively low, while in Germany, it was 48.10% in 2014, 61.38% in 2019, and 64.74% in 2024. Low voter turnout in Latvia may be attributed to the Soviet one-party system, which has led residents to believe that their voices are not valued. Latvian residents think the number of Latvian deputies in the European Parliament is too small to influence political decisions.

Conclusions. In Germany, historically more enduring democratic traditions and trust in the political system contribute to higher electoral turnout. Distrust of political forces and the state's slow economic development negatively affect Latvian voters' turnout.

IDEOLOGICAL APPROACHES OF THE 14TH LATVIAN PARLIAMENT POLITICAL PARTIES TO NATIONAL SECURITY ISSUES

Author: *Gustavs Pagrabs*¹

Scientific research supervisor: *Romāns Gagunovs*¹

¹ *Rīga Stradiņš University, Latvia*

Keywords. Latvian parliament; Ideological approaches; National security; Political parties, NATO, EU

Objectives. Regarding the evolving events of the geopolitical situation in the world, national security has become one of the primary concerns for Latvia. Thus, the aim of the study is to analyze the ideological approaches of political parties and political party unions in the 14th Latvian Parliament and how their ideological stance influences their perspective and attitude towards the ever so increasing national security issues.

Materials and methods. The research is sustained using a qualitative method, specifically document analysis, focusing on the 14th Latvian Parliament political party programs, their social media publications and relevant news articles.

Results. The findings indicate diverse ideological approaches among all the 14th Latvian Parliament political parties. Five out of the seven political parties seek to resolve foreseeable national security issues by maintaining strong ties with both NATO and the EU. However, one political party advocates for a more independent Latvia, proposing a path that distances the country from NATO and the EU. Additionally, one out of the seven political parties take a neutral stance in this matter, neither fully supporting nor opposing further integration with the previously mentioned international organizations.

Conclusions. The ideological approaches of the 14th Latvian Parliament political parties and political party unions reflect a fine balance between the current geopolitical state of the world and vast domestic and national security issues. Both NATO and the EU play a vital role in the shaping and resolving of national security matters, with most political parties advocating for stronger ties with these international organizations to address emerging threats. However, the differing positions taken by some of the political parties, particularly those often associated with populism, tend to raise concerns in resolving national security debates, significantly influencing Latvia's ability to respond to future external or internal challenges.

EFFECTIVENESS OF WESTERN SANCTIONS IMPOSED AGAINST RUSSIA AFTER ITS FULL-SCALE INVASION OF UKRAINE IN 2022

Author: *Vartans Apikjans*¹

Scientific research supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. sc. pol. *Māris Andžāns*¹

¹ *Rīga Stradiņš University, Latvia*

Keywords. Economic sanctions; Russia-Ukraine war; Russia's economy and trade; The United States; The European Union

Objectives. Russia has started a full-scale war against Ukraine on 24 February 2022. Consequently, the world has reacted. Being Ukraine's allies, the United States and the European Union spearheaded their efforts to employ economic sanctions to apply pressure on Russia for starting the war. The United States and the European Union have employed sanctions on Russia before, in 2014, for taking over Crimea, but those sanctions had limited effect on Russia's economy, as they did not particularly target Russia's exports of natural gas and oil, specifically into the member states of the EU. After 2022, the sanctions targeting Russia's oil and gas industries have been applied to hamper Russia's revenues, which it uses to fund the war against Ukraine.

Materials and methods. Qualitative research method – document analysis. Documents included for analysis include the sanctions lists of the United States and the European Union, including documents clarifying the measures employed against Russia in detail starting 2022, and graphs/charts with information relating to the effects the sanctions have had and are expected to have on Russia's economy and trade from 2022 and onward.

Results. It was concluded that the economic sanctions imposed by the Western nations (The US, and the EU countries) have impacted Russia's economy and trade compared to the time before the sanctions were imposed starting 2022. Once the sanctions targeting Russia's economy's oil and gas sectors, started to be employed fully and become stricter over time, Russia's behavior has changed and adapted accordingly. Russia started to pivot and focus its trade on countries like China, India, and Iran.

Conclusions. The economic sanctions employed after the full-scale war in Ukraine have been able to influence Russia's economic behavior and trade in the short- and long- term.

LEVERAGE OF SMALL STATES ON DECISION MAKING PROCESS IN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS: AN ANALYSIS OF LATVIA'S PARTICIPATION IN THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE

Author: *Ieva Cimermane*¹

Scientific research supervisor: Asst.Prof.. *Mārtiņš Daugulis*¹

¹ *Rīga Stradiņš University, Latvia*

Keywords. Latvia; OSCE; International organizations; Small states; Institutional liberalism

Objectives. The end of the Cold War marked a period of rapid emergence of new and democratic states. Predominantly, these were small and economically less developed states with low ability to influence regional politics. Membership in international organizations provides small states with a platform to highlight issues relevant to themselves and their regions, be “heard”, initiate and promote agenda that can influence global decisions. Latvia is a member state of the most influential international organizations, including the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which is unique for its broad representation. While its decisions are not legally binding, the organization is characterized by decisive and relatively swift action in political decision-making. The hypothesis put forward in the master’s thesis is that the participation of small states including Latvia in international organizations can influence global agenda under certain circumstances.

Materials and methods. Qualitative research methods are used to achieve the research goal. The first chapter analyzes institutional liberalism theory and Iver Neumann’s sub-theory on small states, emphasizing the role of organizations in ensuring the influence of small states by enabling them to participate in setting the agenda of the international community and regional governance structures. The second chapter describes the development of OSCE and its role on the global scene, giving the context. The third chapter provides an in-depth analysis of Latvia’s participation in the OSCE analyzing OSCE documentation and conducting interviews with the diplomatic representatives of Republic of Latvia.

Results. The analysis concludes that the hypothesis is confirmed – small states can play a significant role in international organizations under certain circumstances.

Conclusions. They can influence global processes by utilizing the decision-making mechanisms of international organizations, which are based on consensus, by building coalitions with like-minded countries, by advocating for the “rule of law” based international order and to fight against desinformation, especially during the crisis situations.

RUSSIA'S DETERRENCE POLICY: IMPLICATIONS FROM THE WAR IN UKRAINE 2022-2024

Author: *Emīls Edmunds Reķis*¹

Scientific research supervisor: *Toms Rātfelders*¹

¹ *Rīga Stradiņš University, Latvia*

Keywords. Russia; Deterrence; Ukraine; Defense policy

Objectives. As it is evident, Russia's brutal and unprovoked war against Ukraine has imposed significant cost on Russia's military forces. Such costs can affect its deterrence posture, thus the aim of the research is to understand how Russia's war in Ukraine has impacted Russia's approach to deterrence policy.

Materials and methods. To achieve the goal of the research paper, the author will employ content analysis of Russia's deterrence policy before and during its war against Ukraine. Primary sources include Russia's official policies regarding its deterrence posture during prior to and during the war. As well as several secondary sources which are analytical papers produced by think tanks.

Results. Preliminary results showcase a swift shift from a balanced conventional and nuclear deterrence policy prior to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, to a deterrence policy that practically solely bases on nuclear forces as its conventional forces have dwindled after the start of its invasion in Ukraine. The results are supported by reports of a high casualty rate among Russia's military forces, as well as significantly fewer major military exercises which indicate Russia's damaged conventional forces. Furthermore, such exercises serve as a conventional deterrent and their absence hurts Russia's conventional deterrence posture.

Conclusions. Preliminary results indicate that Russia's shift towards nuclear deterrence may have a negative effect on Western aid for Ukraine, as Russia's deterrence posture may convince NATO that Russia is not afraid to endure nuclear strikes, if it employs them first. Such dynamics between the two parties may deter NATO and its allies from providing aid for Ukraine. This also resonates with the stability–instability paradox, which showcases Russia's nuclear deterrence efforts aimed at deterring a major war, as Russia's conventional forces are lacking in strength.

COMPARISON OF THE GOALS OF THE LITHUANIAN AND ESTONIAN CAMPAIGNS FOR NON-PERMANENT MEMBERSHIP IN THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL

Author: *Ance Anete Ravina*¹

Scientific research supervisor: *Māris Cepurītis*¹

¹ *Rīga Stradiņš University, Latvia*

Keywords. Estonia; Lithuania; United Nations Security Council (UNSC); Non-permanent membership; Campaign strategies; Status seeking theory

Objectives. The United Nations Security Council plays a crucial role in maintaining international peace and security. For small states seeking to enhance their global influence, gaining non-permanent membership in the UNSC represents a significant opportunity to participate in shaping international affairs. This paper compares the campaigns undertaken by two Baltic states, Lithuania and Estonia to secure non-permanent UNSC seats. Objectives of this study are, first of all, to compare and contrast the goals and strategies employed by Lithuania and Estonia during their campaigns for non-permanent membership in the UNSC. Second, analyse these efforts through the lens of status seeking theory, examining how small powers attempt to enhance their international standing. Third, to evaluate the effectiveness of these campaigns in achieving their objectives. And, finally, to identify any similarities or differences between the approaches taken by the two countries.

Materials and methods. Qualitative document analysis of official campaign materials, speeches, and policy statements from Lithuania and Estonia during their UNSC campaigns. Comparative case study approach, examining the strategies used by each country. Semi-structured interviews with key officials involved in the campaigns where possible.

Results. The results of the study indicate that Estonia was more successful at setting new agenda items like cybersecurity and environmental security issues during its campaign period. Lithuania focused more on protecting journalists and civilians in conflicts during its campaign. Both countries highlighted Ukraine security as a priority due to Russian actions threatening regional stability during their campaign periods.

Conclusions. In conclusion, small powers can successfully influence the UNSC through agenda-setting, niche diplomacy, and cooperation with other powers during their campaign periods. Even though both countries faced limitations as small powers they were able to leverage their memberships effectively during the campaign periods.

LAW

HUMAN CAPITAL RESOURCES IN THE EMPLOYMENT OF PRE-RETIREMENT AGE PEOPLE

Author: *Laimrota Litavniece*¹

Scientific research supervisors: Mag.sc.soc., Mag.sc.hum. *Ginta Elksne*¹, Dr. sc. soc. *Maruta Pranka*¹

¹ *Rīga Stradiņš University, Latvia*

Keywords. Employment, labour market, employment obstacles, pre-retirement people, integration.

Objectives. As the population declines there is a need to integrate more people into the labour market by paying attention to pre-retirement age, which enhances cultural and social capital. By bringing more people from different social groups into workplace, the labour market can be enriched with necessary skills helpful not only in the individual development but in overall collective well-being.

Materials and methods. The study covers analysis of content, statistical data and the acquisition, processing and analysis of qualitative data. It includes pre-retirement people who are not active labour market players and those who are employed, but at a greater risk of experiencing difficulties with job because of their age. Data has been collected in social services in Riga and Rezekne and the State Employment Agency. The obstacles faced by people of pre-retirement age and the factors characterizing successful integration are analysed by interviews.

Results. It was found out that the participants have encountered a different attitude from employers due to their age. The support of associations is essential for people in pre-retirement with disabilities to be employed. Non-working participants who have experienced serious health problems indicate, they would be willing to learn new skills necessary for work and are aware of several motivational aspects. As a determining factor for active involvement in employment job seeker's own individual activity is emphasized.

Conclusions. There are resources useful in employment among those aged 55 to 64 who are looking for work and those who have some health condition but see that they could learn new skills useful in job market. Personal and environmental aspects are more valued than individual factors and a person's ability to do a particular job. Both job seekers and employees feel undervalued, because employer look more at age than experience or knowledge base when evaluating cooperation.

CORPORATE FRAUD: A CROSS-JURISDICTIONAL CRIMINAL LAW ANALYSIS OF ITALY AND THE USA

Author: *Francesco Primiceri*¹

Scientific research supervisors: Mg. Sc. pol. *Romāns Gagunovs*¹

¹ *Rīga Stradiņš University, Latvia*

Keywords. Corporate Fraud; Ethics; Legal Frameworks; Governance; Compliance; Cross-Jurisdictional Law; Corporate Culture; Accountability.

Objectives. Corporate fraud is a major challenge to international corporate governance, combining a distinctive mix of legal and ethical issues and wide-ranging consequences. This study considers the complexity of corporate fraud as it relates to implications for governance, public trust, and the interactive relationship between compliance and moral accountability.

Materials and methods. The research adopts a multidisciplinary approach, reflecting on regulatory frameworks, such as the Sarbanes-Oxley Act and the European Market Abuse Regulation, and ethical theory, including utilitarianism and deontology. Real-world case studies, including the Enron and Volkswagen scandals, are used to support analysis of practical challenges in dealing with corporate fraud.

Results. The results prove the dual role of legal and ethical strategy in curbing corporate fraud. Structural regulatory frameworks offer protection to the organization from negligence, but ethical leadership becomes equally important in inculcating a culture of integrity and transparency. However, problems of harmonization of international standards of laws and enforcement in a fair manner are observable specifically in cross-border cases.

Conclusions. Corporate fraud is not something that can be combatted only through legal compliance; ethical management and good governance are indispensable. Cross-jurisdictional cooperation processes require further enhancements by policymakers, while whistleblower protection must be further developed in the same sphere. The structural and procedural measures should be enhanced by the leaders of the organizations, which must integrate ethical values more actively into their management systems. These are not only for the protection of the public interest but also to strengthen the business part of the corporate governance system against new challenges.

Topic Areas

CORPORATE ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY: LEGAL EVOLUTION, RECENT TRENDS, AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES

Author: *Francesco Primiceri*¹

Scientific research supervisors: Mg. Sc. pol. *Romāns Gagunovs*¹

¹ *Rīga Stradiņš University, Latvia*

Keywords. Corporate environmental responsibility, sustainability, EU environmental directives, environmental crimes, “polluter pays” principle, environmental prevention, ecological restoration, corporate compliance, regulatory frameworks, environmental law enforcement.

Objectives. The study looks at the history, current developments, and potential ramifications of business’s growing accountability for environmental harm. It examines regulatory frameworks, such as the EU’s Directive (2024/1203), and how they influence corporate accountability, highlighting the connection between environmental sustainability and company operations.

Materials and Methods. In order to investigate the development of corporate responsibility for environmental damage, this study uses a qualitative examination of legal documents, such as Italian law and EU Directives. Important regulatory landmarks, including Directive 2004/35/CE and Directive 2024/1203, are compared. Case studies and court interpretations are used to assess the practical ramifications in order to comprehend enforcement difficulties and how business practices align with regulatory objectives.

Results. Corporate accountability has increased as a result of legislative advancements that prioritize environmental protection and rehabilitation. The combination of preventative measures and principles like “polluter pays” has resulted in severe fines for non-compliance. The report draws attention to enforcement weaknesses and the ongoing difficulty of striking a balance between ecological protection and economic growth.

Conclusions. A greater understanding of the necessity of incorporating sustainability into company operations is reflected in the development of corporate environmental responsibility. Even if legislative frameworks like Directive 2024/1203 have strengthened accountability procedures, there are still issues with international cooperation and enforcement. Businesses must make environmental concerns a top priority in their strategy in order to ensure compliance, promote sustainable growth, and make significant progress. In order to close the gap between the goals of legislation and real-world results, policymakers and regulators must also strengthen monitoring and support for efficient implementation.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CONSUMER PROTECTION IN LATVIA IN RELATION TO THE RETURN AND EXCHANGE OF GOODS

Author: ***Dāna Bambāne***¹

Scientific research supervisors: Ph. D. **Dace Tarasova**¹

¹ *Rīga Stradiņš University, Latvia*

Keywords. Consumer Rights; E-Commerce Regulation; European Union Directive; Dispute Resolution; Legal Interpretation; European Court of Justice Case-law.

Objectives. This study investigates the complexities of consumer rights in the context of the expanding e-commerce market in Latvia. It specifically focuses on the harmonization of Latvian legal norms with key EU directive, particularly Directive 2011/83/EU on Consumer Rights and Regulation (EU) 2017/2394 on Consumer Protection Cooperation, to assess their impact on fair practices. The research aims to highlight regulatory and practical challenges faced by consumers and traders in Latvia and 1-2 cases by ECJ.

Materials and methods. The research employs a comparative and analytical approach. It reviews national implementation through key legislative acts such as the Latvian Consumer Rights Protection Law and the Civil Law (the Fourth Part). Case law from Latvian and ECJ courts and decisions by the Consumer Rights Protection Centre are critically analysed.

Results. The findings reveal notable gaps in the practical application of consumer protection laws. Issues such as insufficient consumer awareness, varying interpretations of legal provisions and non-compliance by traders persist. ECJ case law, PTAC decisions and court cases highlight recurring problems with return policies, misuse of contractual terms, and limited access to effective dispute resolution mechanisms.

Conclusions. The study underscores the need for targeted reforms to address challenges in Latvia's consumer protection framework. Key recommendations include:

1. Enhancing public awareness campaigns to inform consumers of their rights under EU directive and national laws.
2. Introducing standardised procedures for product returns and exchanges to minimise ambiguity and conflicts.
3. Implement obligatory written communication of key consumer rights at the point of purchase, such as withdrawal rights and warranty conditions.
4. Investing in digital tools and platforms for efficient dispute resolution and improved transparency in e-commerce practices.

THE LEGAL DYNAMICS OF VETO POWER UNDER 49 TEU: IMPLICATIONS OF BACKSLIDING MEMBER STATES ON EU INFLUENCE, EU ENLARGEMENT, AND POLITICAL INTERESTS

Author: **Rihards Irbe** ¹

Scientific research supervisors: Asoc. prof. Dr. iur. **Karina Palkova** ¹

¹ *Rīga Stradiņš University, Latvia*

Keywords. EU Enlargement; EU Accession; Veto Leverage, legal aspects.

Objectives. This research aims to critically analyze the veto power conferred by Article 49 TEU and how it is utilized by member states undergoing democratic backsliding, such as Hungary and Poland, to exert influence over the European Union (EU) enlargement process. It will further assess the broader implications of such influence, focusing on the extent to which national political interests override the foundational values of the EU, thereby challenging the EU's legitimacy as a value-driven entity.

Article 49 TEU allows European states to apply for EU membership but doesn't guarantee accession, as member states can veto candidates. This paper explores how such vetoes serve domestic agendas, undermining EU principles and enlargement coherence.

Approach to research (Methodology): The research paper is conducted by means of socio-legal method (non-doctrinal). The grammatical and systemic method is used to interpret Article 49 TEU. The analysis will explore the implications of veto power in the enlargement process, with a specific emphasis on democratic backsliding.

Results. The decision-making process for EU enlargement is ultimately shaped by political factors, and not solely based on Article 49 TEU. Candidate countries must meet criteria and maintain good relations with all EU members. This raises the question: why can countries that fail to uphold EU values (as seen in Hungary and Poland) still exercise veto power over candidate states?

Conclusions. The enlargement process as regulated in Article 4 TEU is influenced by the veto power of individual member states leaving room for heavy leverage in negotiations. To maintain its legitimacy as a values-based union, the EU must legally balance political interests with its core values during enlargement. A clearer, rule-based system for veto power could ensure it's used only for clear violations of EU values.

ENTRAPMENT RISKS AND SAFEGUARDING HUMAN RIGHTS: HOW THE EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS SETS THE STANDARD

Author: **Aleksandra Lemańska**¹

Scientific research supervisors: dr hab. **Dobrosława Szumilo-Kulczycka**¹

¹ *Jagiellonian University, Poland*

Keywords. Anterior segment optical coherence tomography; Pachymetry; Central corneal thickness

Objectives. The purpose of the study was to evaluate the correlation and agreement in central corneal thickness (CCT) measurements obtained by Heidelberg Anterior, Heidelberg Spectralis and Optovue AngioVue optical coherence tomography (OCT).

Materials and methods. This was a prospective, single-center study. Thirteen medical records of patients who visited ophthalmologist in Pauls Stradiņš Clinical University Hospital were analysed. Each patient underwent Heidelberg Anterior, Heidelberg Spectralis and Optovue AngioVue OCT pachymetry performed by the same examiner. Data were analysed using MS Excel and IBM SPSS 27. Intraclass correlation analysis was used to evaluate the correlation between measurements. Agreement in CCT measurements was evaluated by the Bland – Altman plot method.

Results. Twenty-six eyes of 13 subjects were enrolled. 69.2% of patients (n=9) were female. 30.8% of patients (n=4) were male. The median age was 72 years (range, 34-88 years). The median measurements of CCT by Heidelberg Anterior, Heidelberg Spectralis and Optovue AngioVue OCT were 559 μm (range, 490-621 μm), 549 μm (range, 492-597 μm), 551 μm (range, 487-612 μm), respectively. The intraclass correlation coefficient between the measurements was ranging from 0.953 to 0.986, which is highly statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). The 95% limit of agreement (LoA) in CCT between Heidelberg Anterior and Heidelberg Spectralis OCT was 31.51 to -16.97 μm . The 95% LoA in CCT between Heidelberg Anterior and Optovue AngioVue OCT was 15.62 to -2.39 μm and between Heidelberg Spectralis and Optovue AngioVue OCT 20.48 to -21.79 μm .

Conclusions. The highest agreement in measurements with narrowest 95% LoA was identified between Heidelberg Anterior and Optovue AngioVue OCT. CCT values obtained by Heidelberg Anterior OCT are comparable to those obtained by Optovue AngioVue OCT. Further research is needed to confirm whether CCT measured by these two methods have similar repeatability within and between examiners.

ECONOMICS

THE ROLE OF SUSTAINABLE PACKAGING IN CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR: A CASE STUDY FOR THE BRAND MADARA

Author: *Evelīna Katrīna Karņevska*¹

Scientific research supervisors: Mg.Sc.Soc. **Kristīne Blumfelde-Rutka**¹

¹ *Rīga Stradiņš University, Latvia*

Keywords. Consumer behaviour, sustainable packaging.

Objectives. Product packaging has a major impact on environmental pollution, with over 80 million tonnes of packaging waste produced directly in the EU in 2022. There is significant confusion among consumers about sustainable product manufacturing, packaging, its benefits, and how it differs from conventional packaging. This study aims to analyse the role of sustainable packaging in consumer purchasing decisions when choosing cosmetics products: a case study of the brand Madara. Materials and methods. Monographic research method – used to gather information about consumer behaviour and its influencing factors, as well as the concept of sustainable packaging and its significance in consumer behaviour. Secondary data analysis – applied to identify sustainable packaging trends in the cosmetics industry as well as to describe the sustainable packaging of the brand Madara. The quantitative research method – used to gather respondents' opinions and attitudes toward sustainable packaging to assess its importance in the case of the brand Madara.

Results. To encourage consumers to choose sustainable packaging, it is essential to identify the current barriers – price, difficulty in understanding, which packaging is sustainable, and limited availability. Most respondents were unaware that the packaging of the brand Madara products is sustainable. The significance of sustainable packaging in purchasing Madara products – 40 % of respondents felt that it has a neutral impact on their purchase decision, while nearly 24 % partially agreed that it influences their desire to buy Madara's products.

Conclusions. To increase consumer awareness of Madara's sustainable packaging, it is recommended to include QR codes on product packaging with details on its production, benefits, environmental impact, and recycling options. Emphasizing packaging sustainability in both – online and physical stores – would further highlight its importance for the environment, human health, and the future.

OPPORTUNITIES OF USING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN DIGITAL MARKETING COMMUNICATION

Author: *Egita Blaus*¹

Scientific research supervisors: Dr.oec. *Santa Bormane*¹

¹ *Rīga Stradiņš University, Latvia*

Keywords. digital marketing communication, digital marketing, artificial intelligence.

Objectives. The use of artificial intelligence (AI) in digital marketing communication can help companies in their operations, thus allowing the company to save time, labor, and financial resources, because it operates twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. **The goal** of the research is to develop a concept for the use of AI in digital marketing communication. The research examined a company in the food manufacturing industry in Latvia.

Materials and methods. monographic method, secondary data analysis method, content analysis method, the qualitative research method (expert interviews) and the graphic method.

Results. The main results of the research show that any AI tool can be integrated into any digital marketing communication activity, but the most common are: data analysis and processing, text generation and processing, information search and idea generation- in all digital marketing communication activities; image, video and audio generation and processing- in digital advertising, social media marketing and sales promotion (image generation and processing can also be integrated into email marketing) and virtual assistant and automatic response- in social media marketing and personal selling (automatic response can also be integrated into e-mail marketing, while virtual assistant in public relations). The use of AI in digital marketing communication has several advantages, such as easy data calculation and filtering, diversity of languages and no need to go through the Google search engine. However, it also has disadvantages, such as the truth of the data, the need to evaluate the obtained information and compare different tools.

Conclusions. Based on the results of research, a concept for the use of AI in digital marketing communication was created, including 6 proposals in conjunction with: implementation of guidelines, organization of trainings, comparison of results, data evaluation, in-depth information and innovation perception.

THE APPROACH OF COMPANIES AND ORGANIZATIONS TO SUSTAINABILITY IMPLEMENTATION: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF THE EU TAXONOMY REGULATION IN THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS IN LATVIA

Author: *Rita Strojēva*¹

Scientific research supervisors: Asoc.prof. *Romāns Putāns*¹

¹ *Rīga Stradiņš University, Latvia*

Keywords. EU Taxonomy Regulation; sustainability; Latvia; public sector; private sector;

Objectives. This study aims to explore and evaluate the approaches of Latvian companies and organizations to sustainability implementation, focusing on the challenges and opportunities of the European Union's Taxonomy Regulation and the synergies between the public and private sectors.

Materials and methods. The research includes a mixed-methods approach: 2 surveys, one focusing on the public's perspective and perception, and interviews with private and public sector organization representatives. A comprehensive review of applicable regulatory documents, including EU Taxonomy Regulation, ESG reports, and case studies. The mentioned methodology gives a detailed understanding both of regulatory and practical sustainability implementation approaches.

Results. The findings of the research reveal the primary challenges of sustainability implementation in Latvia: high costs of compliance, and complexity of both legal and regulatory frameworks. Nevertheless, many available opportunities like access to "green" financing, corporate reputation growth, synergy, and cooperation opportunities were highlighted and suggested. Additionally, main differences between public and private sector approaches were observed: while the private sector focuses on financial growth and gain, the public sector's main goals are social benefits-focused.

Conclusions. The study shows and highlights the need for public and private sector collaboration in Latvia, to successfully address all the regulatory challenges and opportunities not only on a local level but also globally - aligned practices can significantly impact Latvia's competitiveness within the European Union through economic growth, development, innovations, and sustainability. However, such collaboration and effectiveness require overcoming many challenges as regulatory complexities, priority setting, practice setting, and both financial and mental resource allocation.

BRAND POSITIONING THROUGH STRATEGIC NARRATIVE: A CASE STUDY OF THE SPECIALITY COFFEE MARKET

Author: *Ralfs Cimermanis*¹

Scientific research supervisors: Prof. *Guna Laganovska Kristīne Blumfelde-Rutka*¹

¹ *Rīga Stradiņš University, Latvia*

Keywords. Brand positioning, brand narrative, strategic narrative, speciality coffee market.

Objectives. The speciality coffee industry, known as a “third-wave coffee movement,” has emerged as a key market segment in which brand narratives play a pivotal role. By applying narrative theory and Kalve Coffee Roasters case study, this paper explores the process of developing theoretical and empirical-based brand narratives and identifies strategic storytelling elements and methods to develop a set of recommendations which could enhance consumer engagement while fostering brand loyalty for speciality coffee brands.

Materials and Methods. This study employed a monographic method to review narrative theory and its application in branding, focusing on the speciality coffee market. Secondary data analysis was conducted to evaluate Kalve Coffee Roasters’ narrative structure and brand communication. Additionally, semi-structured interviews with experts provided qualitative insights into the development of strategic narratives for speciality coffee brands.

Results. Kalve Coffee Roasters leverages storytelling to position itself as a leader in the speciality coffee market, combining transparency, community building, and high-quality offerings. However, experts highlight that the brand has not yet implemented critical elements necessary to construct a sound narrative – authenticity and consistency. Consequently, the author developed a set of recommendations for speciality coffee brands to enhance narrative development strategies, built on the alignment between the narrative theory principles and speciality coffee market values.

Conclusions. Speciality coffee and other niche market brands can benefit from constructing authentic, theory-based narratives which align with consumers and market values. The findings emphasise that, while storytelling becomes an essential element of brand positioning, the full potential of a brand narrative is often neglected. Future efforts should focus on exploring and examining theoretical narrative elements and the benefits associated with their strategic implementation as part of brand equity.

ANALYSIS OF BRAND “ZIEDU GURU” DIGITAL MARKETING COMMUNICATION

Author: *Viktorija Koržņevska*¹

Scientific research supervisors: Dr. sc. soc. *Renāte Cāne*¹

¹ *Rīga Stradiņš University, Latvia*

Keywords. Digital marketing; Marketing communication; Social networks; Visual content.

Objectives. Social media platforms, such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok, provide opportunities for businesses to reach global audiences, connect interactively with customers, and adapt to their needs. However, fierce competition in the digital environment necessitates high-quality and engaging content to capture the audience’s attention. This study focuses on the digital marketing communication of the brand “Ziedu Guru,” analyzing its visual content and strategies, and proposing recommendations for improvement based on theoretical and practical research.

Materials and Methods. The research employs a monographic method to conduct a detailed theoretical study of marketing communication and visual content trends. A qualitative analysis evaluates the text and visual content of “Ziedu Guru” social networks and website in terms of semantics, emotional impact, and messaging. Quantitative methods include content analysis to measure engagement metrics, such as reactions, shares, and comments on social media posts, and a questionnaire survey to gather insights into consumer preferences and attitudes. Graphical methods are used to visualize findings through charts and graphs.

Results. “Ziedu Guru’s” most popular content, such as quick and affordable floral arrangements, resonates with its audience but lacks diversity. Current social media strategies show limited emotional connection with followers, while inconsistent information on platforms reduces trust. Competitors effectively leverage unique and seasonal offers, showcasing emotional and dynamic content. Survey data indicates most customers buy flowers for special occasions, emphasizing the need for targeted promotions and loyalty programs.

Conclusions. Marketing communication is a planned process using various tools and channels to engage customers. “Ziedu Guru” demonstrates potential in visual appeal but faces challenges in consistency, emotional engagement, and technical performance. Addressing these gaps will enhance customer trust, brand loyalty, and competitive positioning. Key factors for success include quality, competitive pricing, and adapting content to audience needs.

A HEALTH LITERACY PERSPECTIVE FROM THE USE OF MARKETING TOOLS

Authors: *Ieva Vāvule*¹; *Santa Bormane*¹

Scientific research supervisors: Dr. oec. *Santa Bormane*¹

¹ *Rīga Stradiņš University, Latvia*

Objectives. The relevance of this research lies in the fact that insufficient digital health literacy poses significant challenges to society, particularly in sectors where information is incomplete, potentially misleading, or lacks oversight from regulatory authorities. Sweetened beverages, as a product category, serve as a notable example, often lacking clear information about their negative impact on human health, especially on children's health.

Children and youngsters, whose digital health literacy is generally insufficient, face particular difficulties in critically evaluating the harmful effects of such products. Consequently, public knowledge about health is weakening overall. This situation intensifies the consumption of unhealthy products while diminishing society's collective resilience to resist the adverse consequences of their consumption. Marketing tools play a critical role in shaping consumer behaviour, as they not only influence how society perceives and interprets health-related information but also determine the type of information accessible to consumers. For instance, many marketing materials are designed to engage consumers emotionally and capture their attention, rather than provide comprehensive and critically analyzable information. This approach not only fosters the spread of misconceptions and contributes to the development of unhealthy eating habits.

The goal of this research is to highlight the challenges and opportunities of use of marketing tools within the framework of digital health literacy, particularly in relation to sweetened beverages.

Methods. The methods used in this research will include scientific analysis, secondary data analysis, regulatory documents analysis.

Results. The main results show that the number of diabetes patients in Latvia is rising, along with a growing number of children classified as overweight or obese.

Keywords

Marketing tools, health literacy, digital health literacy, children health, collective resilience.

Conclusions. Public knowledge about health is weakening overall. This situation intensifies the consumption of unhealthy products while diminishing society's collective resilience to resist the adverse consequences of their consumption.

Sponsors & Partnerships

General Sponsors

RSU Student Union

RSU Alumni Association

Veselības centru apvienība (VCA)

Mēness aptieka

Centrālā laboratorija

Bellevue Park Hotel Riga

Ardeline

Egīla Gulbja laboratorija

Vidzemes slimnīca

Baltijas dialīzes serviss

Associations & Societies

Baltic Journal of Clinical Medicine and Research

Latvian Association of Anaesthesiologists and Reanimatologists

Latvian Association of Cardiology

Latvian Association of Doctors and Dentists

Latvian Association of Gynecologists and Obstetrician

Latvian Association of Healthcare Management Specialists

Latvian Association of Human Genetics

Latvian Association of Surgeons

Latvian Beekeepers Association

Latvian Dental Student Association

Latvian Doctors Association of Psychotherapists

Latvian Junior Doctors Association

Latvian Medical Association

Latvian Society of Occupational Physicians

The Latvian Institute of International Affairs

Partnerships

AIMS Meeting 2025 - Annual International (Bio)Medical Students Meeting

BIMCO 2025 - Bukovinian International Medical Congress

Congresso Studentesco MoReMED

ICHAMS 2025 - International Conference for Healthcare and Medical Students

ICOCIMS 2025 - International Student Congress on Clinical Innovation and Medical Sciences

IMSC 2025 - 33rd International Medical Students' Conference

NeuRi 2025 - 14th Student Congress of Neuroscience

OSCON 2025 - Osijek Student Congress

Pasaules latviešu jaunatnes seminārs "2x2"

SCHMS & International Forum - 31st Scientific Congress of Hellenic Medical Students / 19th International Forum for Medical Students and Junior Doctors

SIMC 2025 - International Medical Congress of Silesia

Sponsors

| | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| Atpūta Ludzā | |
| Ausmeņa kebabs | |
| Cēsu darītava | |
| Compendium medicine | |
| Curaprox | |
| Doctus | |
| Folkklubs ALA pagrabs | Ludzas maiznīca |
| Ganzmo | Manilla |
| Gemoss | Medicīnas apgāds |
| GUM | Meduspils |
| Myfitness | Nordic events |
| Jk dent | Nutricia |
| Jump Space | Oral-B |
| Jurista Vārds | Oyakata |
| Kafijas Pasaule | Philips Oral Healthcare |
| Kaizen gym | Pop House |
| Ķīpkalni | Racupkalns |
| Ķīpsalas peldbaseins | Roopert |
| | Sirowa Dental Clinic |
| | Smiltenes piens |
| | Snack Box |
| | Splashing Prezentreklāma |
| | Tiamo food |
| | Tridens |
| | Venden |
| | Ventspils Zinātnes centrs VIZIUM |
| | Zaļā bāze |
| | Zuzeum |
| | žurnāls IR |

General Sponsors & Partnerships



The “**Veselības centru apvienība**” is one of the largest private healthcare companies in Latvia, offering a wide range of outpatient services at branches across the country. With more than 1,500 employees, VCA provides both state-funded and private medical services in 120 specialties and areas of care.

VCA offers modern, world-class diagnostics, a variety of treatment and rehabilitation services, as well as consultations and care from highly qualified specialists, including neurologists, surgeons, ophthalmologists, gynecologists, internal medicine doctors, pulmonologists, gastroenterologists, cardiologists, radiologists, and other professionals.



SIA “**Centrālā laboratorija**” is the most modern laboratory in the Baltic region, with an extensive and efficient logistics network, 13 testing points that also serve regional hospitals, and more than 100 branches across Latvia. The latest automation solutions, from pre-analytics to analytics and archiving, ensure centralized and efficient testing and high sample throughput, allowing up to 5,000 tests per hour and the ability to add additional tests for up to 7 days after the sample has been archived.



SIA Arbor Medical Corporation has been offering world-leading medical equipment, products, IT solutions, and providing equipment service both during and after warranty in Latvia and the Baltics for more than 20 years.

We care about your health!

www.arbormedical.lv

General Sponsors & Partnerships



Many Brands, One Mission

ARDE LINE – LOOK PROFESSIONAL, KEEP COMFORTABLE!

At ARDE LINE we take pride in offering a curated selection of brands that span from accessible quality to premium excellence. Our diverse portfolio of brands meets the medical apparel needs of healthcare professionals with the perfect blend of fabric, design, fit, and functionality, all competitively priced with quality that exceeds industry standards.

From established industry leaders to emerging innovators, each brand in our portfolio is meticulously designed to meet the highest standards of performance, durability, and reliability: CHEROKEE – flagship brand for over a quarter-century, INFINITY, Healing Hands, Medcure, DICKIES, SAFETY JOGGER.

Shop Scrubs & Stylish Medical Uniforms at ARDE LINE

www.ardeline.lv

store in Riga, Rupniecibas str. 27



Vidzemes Hospital is a level four, multi-profile emergency medical care institution that provides round-the-clock medical assistance. It is the largest hospital in Vidzeme, employing more than 800 staff members. The hospital's goal is to create a positive image and effective collaboration with its employees, clients, involved organizations, and society as a whole. In 2021, the hospital received a nomination for the **"Hospital of the Year"**!

General Sponsor & Partnership



Baltijas Dialīzes Serviss SIA is a stable Latvian company, which represents the worldwide manufacturers of the medical and pharmaceutical products in Latvia. It was founded in 2003.

We are proud to be represented in the following healthcare branches: renal and hepatic replacement, haemotransfusion and apheresis, cardiac surgery.

Our major co-operation partners are Fresenius Medical Care, Fresenius Kabi, whose products are known worldwide.



DIVREIZDIVI

Divreizdivi (2x2) Latvian Youth Seminars create an inspiring environment where everyone feels welcome and connected to Latvia's future. Their mission is to foster Latvia's growth and preserve Latvian identity both at home and abroad by uniting Latvians worldwide.

Founded 60 years ago by young Latvian émigrés from exile communities in Canada and the USA, 2x2 offered university students and young professionals opportunities to strengthen their Latvian identity and connect with peers across North America while Latvia remained under Soviet occupation.

Since 2015, 2x2 seminars have been held in Latvia every summer and occasionally in diaspora communities around the world. These week-long camps for Latvians aged 18–30 feature diverse workshops on culture, politics, business, leadership, and soft skills. Afternoons include engaging activities such as folk dancing, outdoor survival, and artistic crafts. Participants learn from experienced professionals—government officials, professors, musicians, artists, and business leaders.

Evenings bring everyone together for panel discussions, trivia contests, folk dancing, and—most importantly—conversations that spark ideas, build connections, and shape the future. These moments inspire innovation, strengthen friendships, and deepen understanding of Latvia and its global community.

2x2 is a nonprofit organization run entirely by volunteers.