

## 2020 Annual Report of the Estonian Foreign Policy Institute (EFPI)

In 2020, the Estonian Foreign Policy Institute of the International Centre for Defence and Security (ICDS) engaged with several new priorities of Estonia's foreign policy. We launched new projects on the Arctic region, reflecting Estonia's aspiration to become an observer state of the Arctic Council; the role of small states in the UN Security Council, where Estonia is an elected member in 2020-2021; and the impact of Covid-19. Furthermore, EFPI was active and visible in analysing the growing influence of China on Estonia, Europe and global affairs.

We continued to follow closely developments in Russia's foreign policy, transatlantic relations, the EU and Nordic-Baltic region. Looking ahead, it is important to find a good balance between strengthening our expertise on new topics, such as the UNSC or Arctic region, while linking these with EFPI's long-term focus areas such as European foreign and security policy and Russia.

Covid-19 forced us to cancel a number of events and activities. However, this did not weaken our research output. EFPI continued close cooperation with many European partners and launched new joint projects with the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung and Finnish and Norwegian Institutes of International Affairs. EFPI team was complemented with a research assistant, Sigrid Nuutre, and a new non-resident fellow, Dr Aimar Ventsel, specialised on the Arctic region and Russia.

Highlights of the year:

- **Growing influence of China.** Coordinated by EFPI fellow Frank Jüris, EFPI/ICDS launched a series of short policy papers, including contributions by external experts, looking at topics such as the dangers and temptations of academic cooperation with China, China's internet governance, its influence activities in Estonia, and impact on Transatlantic security.
- **Covid-19 Crisis and Challenges to Estonia's Foreign Policy.** EFPI conducted a study on the new challenges to Estonia's foreign policy caused by the pandemic and the opportunities to strengthen crisis management and international cooperation. The study analyses the crisis management measures of the Estonian MFA and EU, cooperation among the Nordic-Baltic countries and Poland, as well as global crisis management and the role of China.
- **Nordic-Baltic connectivity with Asia via the Arctic.** EFPI launched a new project in cooperation with the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung and the Finnish Institute of International Affairs to explore the risks and opportunities involved in increased connectivity and interdependence between the Nordic and Baltic countries and Asia via the Arctic region. The project involves experts from the Nordic and Baltic countries and Japan and will be completed in 2021.

## 1. PUBLICATIONS

### 1.1. EFPI/ICDS PUBLICATIONS

#### **Reports, Policy Papers, Analyses, Briefs:**

Janning, Josef and Raik, Kristi, "Estonia's Partners in the EU Coalition Machinery: Maximising Influence in the EU through Coalition-building", Policy Paper, January.

Jüris, Frank, "China's influence activities in Estonia", Brief, September.

Kaska, Kadri and Tolppa, Maria, "China's Sovereignty and Internet Governance", Brief, June.

Kuusik, Piret, "Through the Looking Glass: The Nordic-Baltic Region and the Changing Role of the United States", Analysis, June.

Läänemets, Märt, "Academic Co-operation with the People's Republic of China: Dangers and Temptations", Brief, April.

Michta, Andrew A., "China in Europe and Transatlantic Security", Brief, November.

Raik, Kristi (ed.); Kuusik, Piret; Vilson, Maili and Jüris, Frank, "Koronakriis ja väljakutsed Eesti välispoliitikale", Raport, November.

Raik, Kristi, "Estonia in the UN Security Council: The Importance and Limits of European Cooperation", Analysis, April.

Sherr, James, "Nothing New Under the Sun? Continuity and Change in Russian Policy Towards Ukraine", Report, July.

#### **Blogs:**

Jüris, Frank, "Hong Kong: China's Offensive and the EU's Inaction", 10.06.

Kuusik, Piret, "Where There's a Will, There's a Way"; But What Is the Way? The UK's Post-Brexit Future", 14.12.

- "How to Win Over the Frugal North? Addressing the EU's North-South Divide", 25.04.
- "The Three Seas Virtual Summit: All Icing, No Cake", 29.10.

Rácz, András, "Hungary's 'Coronavirus Law': How Power Becomes Unlimited?", 4.04.

Raik, Kristi, "Entering a New Decade, the EU's Russia Policy Lacks a Common Direction", 8.01.

- "The Closure of Talsinki", 25.03.
- "Estonia's Shiny Event at the UN Exposed Deep Disagreements with Russia", 13.05.
- "The Coronavirus Crisis Has Brought New Realism to Estonian-Finnish Relations", 25.06.
- "The EU Should Be Prepared to Defend the Independence of Belarus", 18.08.
- "17+1 Cooperation Is Turning Sour: Shared Concerns Over China Can Help Repair the Transatlantic Relationship", 15.10.

Sherr, James, "Putin's Latest Surprise", 17.01.

- "The Killing of Qasem Soleimani: The Russian View", 28.01.

- "The End of Zelenskiy's Dream", 26.03.
- "Reinventing Russia and Imagining Peace", 18.05.
- "Security in the Black Sea Region: Realpolitik or a New Unipolarity?", 3.06.
- "Putin's Contracting Matrix", 28.09.
- "Russia and Karabakh: A Diplomatic Triumph and Dubious Victory", 16.11.
- with Hurt, Martin, "Initial Reflections on the Recommendations of the Participants of the Expert Dialogue on NATO-Russia Military Risk Reduction in Europe", 17.12.

Tiido, Anna, "Climate Change and Migration – What Is Poland Afraid of?", 17.01.

#### Articles in *Diplomaatia*:

Jüris, Frank, "Koroonakriis ja Hiina", 17.04.

Kuusik, Piret, "Milleks Eestile Kolme Mere Algatus?", 15.10.

## 1.2. EXTERNAL PUBLICATIONS

Jüris, Frank, "Handing over infrastructure for China's strategic objectives: 'Arctic Connect' and the Digital Silk Road in the Arctic." *Sinopsis*, 7.3.

- "Arctic Connect ja digitaalne Siiditee Arktikas", *Riigikogu Toimetised*, 10.6.
- "Frank Jüris: Arctic Connect ja digitaalne Siiditee Arktikas", *Postimees*, 12.6.
- "Estonian parties in the CCP's grip: The International Liaison Department's influence activities", *Sinopsis*, 25.9.

Kuusik, Piret, "Spitzenkandidaten System: A View from Tallinn", *Der (europäische) Föderalist*, 28.1.

- "Estonia and the Three Seas Initiative: A Change of Heart and Political Winds", *Visegrad Insights*, 15.6.
- *Postimees*
  - o "Piret Kuusik: tere tulemast heldekäelise Boris Johnsoni Suurbritanniasse!", 7.1.
  - o "KOMMENTAAR. «Detailide pärast muretseme homme»-könelused kulgevad vanal kursil", 25.5.
  - o "KOMMENTAAR } Merkeli lõpuspurt Euroopas", 2.7.
  - o "Suurbritannia laveerib kaubandushiiglaste vahel", 17.7.
  - o "KOMMENTAAR } Macron hoiab presidendivalimisi silmapiiri", 20.7.
  - o "KOMMENTAAR } Kolme mere algatus avab Eesti välispoliitikas vana arutelu uue peatüki", 19.10.
  - o "KOMMENTAAR } Kahe presidendi vahel, üks tulevik siiski: Euroopa eneseotsingud jätkuvad", 5.11.

Raik, Kristi, "Russia Action Plan", in *Stronger Together: A Strategy to Revitalize Transatlantic Power*, Harvard Kennedy School and the German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP), December.

- with Maili Vilson, "Estonia", in Bertelsmann Stiftung (ed.) *Europe's Coherence Gap in External Crisis and Conflict Management*, Verlag BertelsmannStiftung, pp. 116-123.
- "For Estonia, the EU is fragile but indispensable", in Sophia Russack (ed.), *EU crisis response in tackling Covid-19: Views from the member states*, European Policy Institutes Network, Report, 20 April.
- "Eesti meeltesegadus suurjõudude võitluse maailmas", *Postimees* 29.12.
- "Kas vaba maailm saab jälle juhi?" *Postimees* 27.10.

- "Saksamaa astus ajaloolise sammu. Kas Eesti astub kaasa?", *ERR* 26.5.
- "Eesti uus tuleproov maailmapoliitikas", *Postimees* 23.4.
- "Piiride tagasitulek", *Postimees* 18.3.
- "Sisepoliitika varjutab Eesti diplomaatia edu", *Postimees* 15.1.
- Monthly column in the Finnish newspaper *Kaleva*.

Sherr, James, Commentary for "New Europe Wonders", New Europe Centre, Kyiv, 20 April.

- "Reinventing Russia and Imagining Peace", *The Insider*, 15.5.
- "Belarus has changed: Will Europe? Will Russia?", *Postimees*, 18.8.
- "Take it From Eastern Europe: Now Is Not the Time to Go Soft on Russia" (co-authored open letter with Slawomir Debski and Jakub Janda), *Politico*, 31.8.
- Commentary in 'Belarus uprising faces Kremlin-backed crackdown', Atlantic Council of the United States, September.
- *Mythbusters: 'Russia's Foreign Policy is No Worse than That of the West'*, Essay for Chatham House Russia/Eurasia Programme *Mythbusters* Project, forthcoming in January 2021.
- "Zelensky's First Year", Essay for annual *IISS Strategic Survey*, London: IISS, December.
- "The Paradox of Russia's Decline", *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review*, December.

## 2. SEMINARS, CONFERENCES

### 2.1. EVENTS ORGANIZED BY EFPI/ICDS

- Presentation of the research project "The Impact and Image of Estonian Foreign Policy in the European Union", 15.1.
- Presentation of the report "The Russian Orthodox Church: Faith, Power and Conquest", 28.1.
- "Tartu Peace 100", international conference organized by the Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in cooperation with EFPI/ICDS, 1.2.
- Launch of the EFPI discussion series "Understanding China's power" with Philippe Le Corre on China's long-term goals for trade and investments in Europe, 6.2.
- "Nothing New Under the Sun? Continuity and Change in Russian Policy Towards Ukraine", Report presentation via Zoom, 9.9.
- "Defending and renewing multilateralism: Estonia and Norway in the UN Security Council", Public webinar via Teams, partner: Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, 5.11.
- "Competition and Cooperation: The Interests of China and Russia in the Arctic Region", Public webinar via Zoom, partners: Konrad Adenauer Stiftung and Finnish Institute of International Affairs, 10.11.
- "Nordic-Baltic Connectivity with Asia via the Arctic", Closed workshop via Zoom, partners: Konrad Adenauer Stiftung and the Finnish Institute of International Affairs, 10.11.
- Stakeholder Forum of the InDivEU project on differentiated integration - closed online workshop with Estonian EU experts, partners: Trans European Policy Studies Association and European University Institute, 25.11.

### 2.2. SELECTED PRESENTATIONS AT EXTERNAL EVENTS

Jüris, Frank, "China's geo-economic interests in the Nordic-Baltic region: the case of the "Talsinki tunnel" project", Finnish Institute of International Affairs, Helsinki, 29.1. [https://www.fiaa.fi/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/programme\\_290120.3..pdf](https://www.fiaa.fi/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/programme_290120.3..pdf)

- "Digitaalne Siiditee Arktikas", *Arutelu Hiina „Vöö ja tee initsiatiivi“ teemadel*, TLÜ Humanitaarteaduste Instituut, 12.3. <https://www.tlu.ee/ht/sundmused/arutelu-hiina-voo-ja-tee-initsiatiivi-teemadel>.

- “Handing over EU’s strategic infrastructure to China: the Talsinki tunnel and Arctic Connect”, at *Russia, China, and intensifying geopolitics in Northern Europe*, organised by KAS & DIIS, 27.5. <https://www.facebook.com/events/249416406400573/>.
- “Hiina tõusu mõju Eesti sise- ja välispoliitikale”, *XXXII orientalistikapäevad*, Eesti Akadeemiline Orientaalselts, Tartu Ülikooli orientalistikakeskus, 18.9. <https://www.eao.ee/xxxii-orientalistikapaevad/>.
- “CCP foreign affairs work and Estonian parties in the ILD’s grip”, at *Mapping China’s footprint in the world III*, Sinopsis, 13.10. [https://sinopsis.cz/en/workshop3/?fbclid=IwAROBPDUB1xIRYSJrwN\\_JDx2iGm7Vcq2wRTS5WXurHYKDic24f1gvm2\\_-Rg](https://sinopsis.cz/en/workshop3/?fbclid=IwAROBPDUB1xIRYSJrwN_JDx2iGm7Vcq2wRTS5WXurHYKDic24f1gvm2_-Rg).
- “Hiina – globaalne tegija”, XLII Kõrgemad Riigikaitsekursused, 16.10.
- Discussion: Challenges between NATO and China, Riga Conference, 11.11. <https://www.rigaconference.lv/future-leaders-forum/>.

Kuusik, Piret, Vabamu panel discussion “Borderlines 2020. United or divided by them”, organized by Vabamu Museum and Embassy of Germany in Tallinn, 01.10.

- Panel discussion “Where does peace and war start?”, organized by Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the Dokfoto Keskus, 21.10.
- 12<sup>th</sup> German-Nordic- Baltic Forum, Commentary to opening speeches by Ministers Roth and Tuppurainen, organized by Institut für Europäische Politik and Finnish Institute of International Affairs, 27.10.

Raik, Kristi, Riigikogu ELi asjade komisjon, ettekanne teemal “Euroopa tuleviku konverents, Euroopa Liidu valitsemise süsteemi reformi ideed”, 27.1.

- Panelist at Vienna Debate on European Integration, “EU Foreign Policy in Times of Populism”, Diplomatic Academy of Vienna, 27.2.
- Presentation at “De-Europeanization and the EU’s International Relations” Workshop organized by COST Action ENTER: EU Foreign Policy Facing New Realities, Vienna, 28.2.
- Panelist at webinar “Europeanisation in the times of corona pandemics”, organised by Charles University and EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy, 30.4.
- Panelist at webinar “Evolving Through Crisis – European leadership in the light of COVID-19”, Atlantic Council, Stockholm/Zoom, 13.5.
- Briefing on the key findings of GLOBSEC Report “Making Multispeed Europe Work European Governance and the Potential of Differentiated Cooperation”, Brussels/Zoom, 16.6.
- Eesti välispoliitika tulevik – Riigikogu väliskomisjoni kuuluvate fraktsioonide esindajate arutelu moderaator, Eesti Vabariigi välisesinduste juhtide konverents, Välisministeerium, 24.8.
- Presentation at “NATO 2030: Adapting NATO to grey zone challenges”, webinar organized by NATO Defence College, 25.9.
- “Estonia as an aspiring Arctic Council observer state: promoting smart solutions”, Moderator at the virtual event organised by the Foreign Ministry of Estonia, 30.11.
- Panelist at webinar “Geopoliittinen EU?”, Finnish Institute of International Affairs, 7.12.

Sherr, James delivered lectures or appeared as a speaker at events organised by the Forum for Security Cooperation of the OSCE; Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office of the UK; UK MOD; Defence Technology & Science Laboratory (DSTL) of UK MOD; US State Department; Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs; College of Europe (Natolin); LSE (London); EU Institute for Security Studies; the Riga Conference; Eastern European Studies Centre (Vilnius); Center for US-Ukrainian Relations; Polish Winter School; Diplomatic Academy of the Russian Federation Ministry of Foreign Affairs; *Fond Grazhdanskoe Soglasie* (Foundation of Civic Accord) in Novosibirsk; and Kaitseliit. Highlights:

- Lecture to the Kaitseliit, 'Russia & the Baltic States: Outlook and Objectives', 23.1.
- Presentation to Centre for Polish-Russian Dialogue & Understanding Winter School, Lipowy Most/Borki, 'The Perils of Western Social Science', 31.1.
- Participation in two-day training course for UK MOD military and civilian specialists (part of exercise 'Playing Red') in Portsmouth, 16-17.2.
- Keynote presentation to the FSC of the OSCE, 'Security in the Black Sea Region: *Realpolitik* or a New Unipolarity?', 27.5.
- Presentations at the Kalinowski Conference on Belarus sponsored by the Lithuanian MFA, 23-24.8: Night owl session, 23.8: 'How to Understand these Events'; Discussant on panel, 'Credible Western Policies towards Belarus', 24.8
- Presentation (in Russian) to university faculty, experts and students in Novosibirsk, 'The European Vector and Russian Policy', 18.11
- Three presentations to the RF Diplomatic Academy: 'COVID-19 and its Impact on European Security', 29.6; 'The Role of the Expert Community in Foreign Policy Decision-Making', 27.11; 'Russia & the West: Is Normalisation Possible?', 15.12

### 3. SELECTED MEDIA APPEARANCES

Jüris, Frank: Interviews to Estonian and international media, for example:

- "В Таллинне обсудили отношения Китая и ЕС: коронавирус повлиял на глобальную экономику", Кофе+, ETV+, 11.2.
- "Noorte toetus kindlustas Taiwani presidendile ametikoha", Välismääraja, Kuku Raadio, 25.5.
- "Frank Jüris. Hongkongis on taas rahutu", Uudis+, Vikerraadio, 25.5.
- "Teadur: Hiina tegevusele Hongkongis rahvusvahelisi jõulisi vastumeetmeid ei tule", ERR, 29.5.
- "China moves to capture global digital supply chains. Its digital BRI is a dilemma for India", The Economic Times (India), 1.6.
- "Sõnajalgade ja hiinlaste ühisfirma võib nad kapo huviorbiiti tuua", Ärileht Delfi, 17.6.
- "Tartu Ülikool eemaldas oma kontolt Hiina-kriitilise artikli", ERR, 9.7.
- "Frank Jüris: EL-i plaanitavad meetmed Hiina vastu on leebed ja hiljaks jäänud", ERR, 17.7.
- Uudis+, "Frank Jüris. Hiina represseerib uiguure", Vikerraadio, 7.8.
- "KUULA | Hiina mõjutustegevus Eestis: kohtumised poliitikutega ning küllakutsed Pekingisse", Delfi, 17.9.
- "Teadur: vastasseis Hiinaga püsib sõltumata sellest, kes on USA president", Terevisioon, ERR, 4.11.

Kuusik, Piret: Interviews to Estonian and international media, including:

- "Piret Kuusik: EL-i ja Suurbritannia kaubanduskõneluste meeolelu on mõru", Välismääraja, ERR, 14.09.
- "Euroopa Liidul on õigus olla pettunud", Välispanoraam, Postimees, 16.09.
- "Euroopa Ülemkogu otsused", Välistund, Vikerraadio, 19.10.

- “Negotiating Brexit: view from Estonia and Lithuania”, podcast by UK in a changing Europe project, 18.12.

Raik, Kristi: Interviews to Estonian, Finnish and international media, including ERR, *Postimees*, KUKU Raadio, *Helsingin Sanomat*, YLE, *Ulkopoliitikka* – for example:

- “Eesti mõjukus maailmapoliitikas”, Välistund, ERR Vikerraadio, 20.1.
- “Maailm pärast koroonat”, Välistund, ERR Vikerraadio, 13.4.
- “ELi taastekava”, Välismääraja, KUKU Raadio, 21.6.
- “Presidendivalimiste mõju USA välispoliitikale”, Uudis+, ERR Vikerraadio, 5.11.
- “Viro katsoo koronani myötä enemmän Baltiaan kuin Suomeen”, YLE Ykkösaamu, 25.6.
- “Ekre-ministereitä syytetään Virossa kansallisen turvallisuuden vaarantamisesta”, *Helsingin Sanomat*, 9.11.
- “EU tähyää kohti geopoliittisia pelipaikkoja”, *Ulkopoliitikka*, 4/2020.

Sherr, James: Interviews and comments to Estonian and international media including *Postimees*, BBC, Voice of America (Russian Service), Lithuanian Television and Radio (LRT), *Brussels Morning*, *Euromaidan Press* (Kyiv), *Hromadske TV* (Kyiv), *Ukraine Life*, *Guildhall Press* (Kyiv) and Andrey Sannikov’s Belarus opposition programme in Brussels.

- “Hüperliberalistliku ajastu väljakutsed”, interview conducted by Erkki Bahovski, *Postimees*, 30.12.

#### 4. OTHER ACTIVITIES

Jüris, Frank:

- “The Talsinki Tunnel. Channeling Chinese Interests into the Baltic Sea” was reviewed in *SIRIUS–Zeitschrift für Strategische Analysen* 4, no. 2 (2020): 222-223.
- The article “Handing over infrastructure for China’s strategic objectives: ‘Arctic Connect’ and the Digital Silk Road in the Arctic” was referenced in Soare, Simona R. “Arctic Stress Test,” European Union Institute for Security Studies, 30.4.2020; and “OVERSEAS COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY”, *THE UNITED STATES AND EUROPE: A Concrete Agenda for Transatlantic Cooperation on China*, The United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations Majority Report, November 2020, pp. 72-93.

Kuusik, Piret:

- Contribution to Institut für Europäische Politik, study/questionnaire for the Greens/EFA Group in the European Parliament, “EU Reform Proposals: Views from the Nordic-Baltic”, September 2020, not yet published.

Raik, Kristi:

- Awarded with an order of merit of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Estonia
- Member of a Transatlantic Strategy Group led by Harvard Kennedy School (HKS) and the German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP). Over the year 2020, the project discussed the crisis in the transatlantic relationship and proposed a strategy to revive and strengthen it.
- Member of the Task Force “EEAS 2.0” managed by the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) and Swedish Institute for European Policy Studies (SIEPS). Report forthcoming.
- Input on the case of Estonia to GLOBSEC report “Making Flexible Europe Work? European Governance and the Potential of Differentiated Cooperation”.
- Peer reviews for academic journals *International Relations*, *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, *Journal of Regional Security*.