TEPSA LITHUANIAN PRE-PRESIDENCY CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

19–20 November 2026

Vilnius, Lithuania

The programme is preliminary and subject to confirmation.

DAY 1 — THURSDAY, 19 NOVEMBER

11:30–12:30 REGISTRATION AND LUNCH

12:30–13:00 WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

Speakers:

Margarita Šešelgytė, Vilnius University Institute of International Relations and Political Science

Lucia Mokrá, Chairperson of the TEPSA Board

Video address by Prime Minister of Lithuania Mindaugas Sinkevičius

15–20 minute overview of Lithuania's current role in the European Union, its European policy priorities, and the main objectives and intentions for the upcoming Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the EU.

Venue: Room 402

13:00–13:40 TEPSA RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE LITHUANIAN PRESIDENCY

Presentation of TEPSA's recommendations for Lithuania's upcoming Presidency of the Council of the EU, followed by comments and discussion.

Speaker:

Kęstutis Budrys (Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania)

Moderator: Ilke Toygur (TEPSA)

Venue: Room 402

13:40–13:55 COFFEE BREAK

13:55–15:15 PRIORITY 1: STRENGTHENING EU AND EURO-ATLANTIC SECURITY AND DEFENCE

Topic: **Europe's Defence Moment: From Strategic Awakening to Deliverable Capabilities**

As Europe responds to a fundamentally changed security environment, the debate is shifting from strategic awakening to the delivery of credible defence capabilities. The discussion will examine how

the EU can turn political commitments and increased defence spending into concrete military capacity, while supporting joint procurement and a stronger, more integrated European defence industrial base. It will also consider what Europe can learn from Ukraine's defence and innovation ecosystem, and how EU defence initiatives can reinforce NATO and transatlantic security without creating unnecessary duplication.

Speakers:

Kęstutis Budrys (Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania)

Margarita Šešelgytė (VU TSPMI)

Ian Bond (TEPSA)

Andrius Kubilius (European Commissioner for Defence and Space)

Moderator: Ramūnas Vilpišauskas (VU TSPMI)

Venue: Room 402

15:15–15:35 COFFEE BREAK

15:35–17:00 TEPSA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Closed session for TEPSA member institute delegates.

Agenda: to be prepared by the TEPSA Secretariat

Venue: Room 302

19:00 CONFERENCE DINNER

DAY 2 — FRIDAY, 20 NOVEMBER

08:30–09:00 REGISTRATION AND MORNING COFFEE

09:00–10:00 PRIORITY 2: EU COMPETITIVENESS, ECONOMIC RESILIENCE AND THE NEXT MFF

Topic: **The Next MFF: Can Europe Fund Security, Competitiveness and Enlargement at Once?**

How should the EU finance its growing ambitions while preserving its long-standing priorities? The discussion will examine how the next Multiannual Financial Framework can balance cohesion and agriculture with increasing demands in defence, competitiveness, support for Ukraine and enlargement. It will consider whether the current EU budget model is fit for a more geopolitical Union, what trade-offs Member States will face, and whether new priorities should be financed through the EU budget, common borrowing or separate instruments. The panel will also address how these choices can be made without deepening divisions between older and newer Member States.

Speakers:

Ramūnas Dilba (Chief Adviser to the President of the Republic of Lithuania, Environment and Infrastructure Group), TBC

Justinas Mickus (Senior Policy Analyst at STRATA), TBC

Linn Selle (TEPSA)

Ingrida Šimonytė (Former Prime Minister of the Republic of Lithuania)

Moderator: Vytautas Kuokštis (VU TSPMI)

Venue: Room 402

10:00–10:15 COFFEE BREAK

10:15 – 11:30 PRIORITY 3: INTERNAL SECURITY, PREPAREDNESS AND DEMOCRATIC RESILIENCE

Topic: **Preparedness as a New European Security Paradigm: Borders, Societies and Critical Infrastructure**

What should preparedness mean for Europe in an era of overlapping military, hybrid, climate and technological risks? The discussion will explore how the EU can strengthen external border management while upholding fundamental rights and solidarity among Member States, and what lessons frontline countries can offer on civil preparedness and whole-of-society resilience. It will also consider whether preparedness should become a permanent, cross-cutting priority across EU policymaking.

Speakers:

Vilmantas Vitkauskas (Head of the National Crisis Management Centre)

Dainius Žalimas (Member of the European Parliament)

Vitalis Nakrošis (VU TSPMI)

Meltem Müftüler-Bac (TEPSA)

Moderator: Ieva Giedraitytė (VU TSPMI)

Venue: Room 302

10:15–11:30 PARALLEL PANEL – PRIORITY IV: SOCIAL SECURITY, DEMOGRAPHIC CHALLENGES AND SOCIETAL RESILIENCE

Topic: **Working Longer in an Ageing Europe? EU Member States should automatically link the statutory retirement age to life expectancy** (Organised in connection with the #LT27EU debate

series.)

Europe is ageing rapidly, placing growing pressure on pension systems, public finances and labour markets. One proposed response is to automatically link the statutory retirement age to life expectancy.

But would such a system be both sustainable and fair? Longer lives do not affect all countries, occupations and social groups equally, and the ability to work longer depends on health, working conditions and labour-market opportunities.

Organised as part of the #LT27EU debate series, this debate will examine whether linking retirement age to life expectancy can strengthen social and economic resilience, or whether it risks placing too much of the burden of demographic change on individuals.

Speakers:

Jean-Loius de Brouwer (TEPSA)

Andrius Romanovskis (President of the Lithuanian Business Confederation)

Daumantas Stumbrys (VU)

Vytenis Juozas Deimantas (LSMC) , TBC

Moderator: Ieva Petronytė – Urbonavičienė (VU TSPMI)

Venue: Room 402

11:30–11:45 COFFEE BREAK

11:45 –13:00 PRIORITY 5: ENLARGEMENT, EUROPEAN VALUES AND THE RULES-BASED INTERNATIONAL ORDER

Topic: **Making Enlargement Credible Again: Ukraine, Moldova, the Western Balkans and the Future Shape of the EU** (Panel linked to the presentation and discussion of the results of the InvigoratEU project)

What would it take to make EU enlargement a credible and sustainable process for both candidate countries and the Union itself? The discussion will examine the European paths of Ukraine, Moldova and the Western Balkans, including how to balance geopolitical urgency with accession criteria, democratic reforms and European values. It will also consider how further enlargement could reshape the EU and what institutional and policy changes may be needed to prepare the Union for new members.

Drawing on the findings of the InvigoratEU project, which examines how EU enlargement and neighbourhood policy can be strengthened in a more contested geopolitical environment, the panel will connect current policy debates with evidence and recommendations emerging from the project's research.

Speakers:

Funda Tekin (TEPSA)

Viktor Zamiatin (Razumkov Centre)

Karolina Štelmokaitė (Vice-Minister of the Ministry of Energy of the Republic of Lithuania)

Danijela Jaćimović (TEPSA)

Frank Schimmelfennig (TEPSA)

Moderator: Lina Strupinskienė (VU TSPMI)

Venue: Room 402

13:00–13:30 CONCLUSIONS AND CLOSING REMARKS

Ramūnas Vilpišauskas, Vilnius University Institute of International Relations and Political Science

Jim Cloos, Secretary-General of the TEPSA

Venue: Room 402

13:30–14:00 FAREWELL LUNCH