

## **Three Seas Initiative**

### **Civil Society Forum**

# *Connecting states, regions and societies: debating, innovating and acting*

**RIGA, May 20–21 2022**

**Venue: Riga Castle (Pils laukums 3, Riga)**

#### **20th May**

**15:00–21:00** Registration in the hotel

**17:00–18:00** Guided tour in the Riga Old Town

**20:00 - 21:30** Welcome networking reception.

Venue: WELLTON CENTRUM HOTEL & SPA 33 Kaleju Street, Riga

#### **21st May**

**Venue: Riga Castle**

**9:00–9:20** Address by H.E. Egils Levits, President of the Republic of Latvia

**9:20–11:00** **Defining the political agenda of the Three Seas Initiative**

Since its inception in 2015, the Three Seas Initiative has set the agenda, emphasising economic growth, investment, energy security, digitalisation, climate change, and geopolitics. Is there a need to revise or prioritise the priorities identified? In which areas is immediate investment needed to strengthen and develop not only the 3SI region but Europe as a whole? Europe's democratic tradition calls for the involvement of civil society in decision making. What is the role of the 3SI in civil society? To what extent can European civil society benefit from the 3SI? The 3SI is already attractive to both the region's neighbours and other partner countries. What will be the role and place of a wider partnership with countries outside the region?

#### **Speakers:**

**Tiit Riisalo**, Ambassador-at-Large for Connectivity and 3SI, Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (confirmed)

**Janusz Pietkiewicz**, member of the European Economic and Social Committee (confirmed)

**Edgars Bondars**, Ambassador-at-large for the 3SI, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia (confirmed)

**Moderator: Wojciech Przybylski**, Political analyst at the Visegrad Insight, Poland (confirmed)

**11:00-11:30 Coffee break**

**11:30–13:00 Parallel Sessions**

### **Connectivity**

Smart Connectivity, as one of the aims of the 3SI, enables expanding smart solutions for infrastructure, transport, energy, and logistics. This, in turn, provides a solid basis for modernisation, new technologies, and business models. The panel will address potential of investments in future-oriented solutions, new, renewable energy resources, and alternative energy networks, automatisisation, and digital solutions. What are the main principles for building such comprehensive systems? What is the role of think tanks and civil society in building this new type of regional network?

**Moderators: Baiba Rubesa**, Co-Founder at Novatore, Latvia (confirmed) and **Albin Sybera**, freelance journalist and consultant, the Czech Republic (confirmed)

### **Security**

The security landscape of the 3SI countries and the region is diverse. The geopolitical environment, energy security, climate change, critical infrastructure, societal resilience, and maritime security—these are a few of the most relevant challenges, which need joint, coordinated, and resolute actions from all regional stakeholders. What is the role of civil society in mitigating potential risks and challenges? What are the most urgent decisions and actions ensuring safety and security in the region? How can civil society become a permanent partner of national and regional security?

**Moderators: Sandis Šrāders**, Fellow of Russian Strategic and Military Studies, Baltic Defence College, Latvia (confirmed) and **Oana Popescu**, Director, GlobalFocus Center, Romania (confirmed)

**13:00–14:00 Lunch**

**14:00–15:30 Parallel Sessions**

### **Digitalization**

Digitalisation is one of the tendencies directly influencing and defining our future. Recent years have fostered the transformation of the ICT industry and societies. The Digital Agenda defined by the EU serves as a framework for regional countries. How can civil society contribute to

digitalisation? How can public–private partnership fosters innovation and education in ICT? Despite the increased digital skills of the population, several digital gaps exist. What are those gaps, and what solutions can be offered? Is the human resource potential sufficient and qualified for the digital economy?

**Moderators: Dagnija Lejiņa**, Founder and CEO at Lejiņa&Partners, Latvia (confirmed) and **Krzysztof Izdebski**, Legal and Policy Expert at Stefan Batory Foundation and Open Spending EU Coalition, Poland (confirmed)

### **Governance**

The 3SI has plans to put forward ambitious projects and initiatives, and the EU has introduced several macro-regional strategies. Is the specific governance model needed for this region ensuring effective and flexible implementation of the initiated projects? What model will be the most appropriate? How can we balance the potential of formal and informal forms of governance? How can we ensure that democratic principles are respected while drafting, deciding, and implementing decisions relevant to the 3SI? What is the role of civil society in the 3SI? How can we include non-regional countries?

**Moderators: Daunis Auers**, Research Director of Certus think-tank and **Mantas Bileišis**

**15:30–16:00** Coffee break

**16:00–16:30** Joint closing session—main conclusions and recommendations for the 3JI summit