



Weekly Briefing

**Latvia external relations briefing:
Latvia's Upcoming Candidacy in the UN Security Council Elections
for 2026-20276**

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Latvia's Upcoming Candidacy in the UN Security Council Elections for 2026-2027

Summary

Latvia announced its candidacy for the 2026-2027 term of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) more than a decade ago, in 2011. The country hopes to achieve its long-term foreign policy goals, including defending the international system based on the rule of law and democratic values, as well as solving global peace and security issues. Latvia's membership would provide the opportunity to highlight issues relevant to the security of Latvia and the Baltic region. It would also strengthen Latvia's recognition at the global level, including in regions where it has not had intensive cooperation so far. Preparing for the UNSC elections and ensuring participation involves careful planning and coordination, including the development of the thematic priorities of the Latvian candidacy public campaign. The main competitor is currently known to be Montenegro, and Latvia will have to be able to outcompete them in the 2025 elections. Latvia showing a firm position regarding Russia's aggression in Ukraine increases Latvia's chances of being elected to the council.

Introduction

For more than 31 years, Latvia has been actively involved in issues on the United Nations (UN) agenda, providing its experience and expertise. Latvia has previously been elected to important UN structures, such as the Human Rights Council (UNHRC) and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Latvia has never been a member of the UN Security Council (UNSC). It is the UN body responsible for international peace and security, in which five permanent members operate - the United Kingdom, the United States, France, Russia, China - and ten members who are elected for a two-year term. UNDP decisions are binding on all UN member states. In 2011, in accordance with the decision of the Cabinet of Ministers, Latvia applied for candidacy in the UNDP elections in 2025 for participation in 2026-2027. Latvia's candidacy for UNDP is one of the long-term foreign policy goals included in the 2019 Government Action Plan and mentioned in the National Development Plan for 2027. Elections are scheduled for June 2025 in New York, and in order for Latvia to be elected, it is necessary

to obtain the support of two-thirds of the UN member states, thus, starting from the middle of this year, 2023, strategic preparation for the election will start.

Goals of Participation in the UNSC

The main goal of Latvia's participation in the UNSC is to protect and strengthen the international environment favourable to Latvia's security, using and at the same time increasing the opportunities provided by multilateral diplomacy or multilateralism. Being in the UNSC, Latvia will be able to defend the international system based on the rule of law and democratic values at a higher level and participate in solving global peace and security issues. Membership in the UNSC will provide an opportunity to highlight issues relevant to the security of Latvia and the Baltic region. Until now, Latvia has actively advocated for maintaining such issues as the territorial integrity of Ukraine, human rights violations in Belarus, cyber security and combating disinformation on the UN agenda.

Candidacy and participation in the UNSC will further strengthen the recognition of Latvia at the global level, including in regions with which Latvia has not had intensive cooperation so far. During the candidacy process, in order to gain the support of other countries for Latvia's candidacy, the foreign affairs service carries out diplomatic work, strengthening diplomatic relations with UN countries in various regions and telling the world that Latvia is a democratic, legal country that respects human rights and strives for sustainable development. Candidacy in the UNSC election symbolizes the country's maturity and ability to take responsibility for global processes. The desire to become a member state of the UNSC is also a clear message to Latvia's strategic partners about our readiness to invest in the defence of the interests of the West and the European Union (EU).

Preparing for the UN Security Council elections and ensuring participation in the UN Security Council involves careful planning and coordination, including the development of the thematic priorities of the Latvian candidacy public campaign. According to the delegation of the Cabinet of Ministers, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs established an inter-institutional working group at the end of 2020, whose task is to agree on the substantive topics of Latvia's candidacy. The working group consists of representatives of all ministries, the Office of the President, the Office of the Prime Minister, the Interdepartmental Coordination Centre and the Investment and Development Agency of Latvia.

Opportunities of Presidency

Latvia's participation in UNSC will serve as a resource for national security interests, which will guarantee the sustainability of Latvia's statehood, and will shape Latvia's international image and recognition, will contribute to the strengthening of bilateral relations and obtaining support from like-minded countries both in the Euro-Atlantic space and from other democratic countries in the world. Also, for Latvia's participation, UNSC will improve the institutional capacity of Latvian diplomacy.

The expansion of diplomatic contacts and experience to non-traditional regions for Latvia, as well as the involvement of Latvian society itself in debates about global problems can be seen as significant positive side effects of Latvia's candidacy. In general, as a result of successful and coordinated actions, Latvia would have the opportunity to strengthen the position of the Euro-Atlantic partners and the importance of the international legal system as a whole.

Latvia is not the only small country that has applied or is currently applying for the status of a non-permanent member of the UNSC, including several Eastern European and Balkan countries planning to do so in the coming years. Latvia's currently known competitor in the 2025 elections is Montenegro. Latvia's ability to justify its advantages, to convince of its achievements, of its plans and common goals with all UN member states will be very important in the competition for elections. Latvia must carefully monitor and learn from the experience of other countries, especially from neighbouring Lithuania, which was a non-permanent member of the UNSC in 2014-2015, and Estonia, which was elected for 2020-2021 annual term.

For Latvia, similar to the reasoning used by Estonia and Lithuania, it is very important to present itself to partners as a responsible, globally minded and reliable partner. Latvia has successfully joined regional and global international organizations, within the framework of which the country has also participated in solving global challenges. Before the war started by Russia in Ukraine, Latvia had not emphasized either its approach or its desire to actively or even pro-actively deal with solving global problems. Also, what has been done within the framework of Latvia's presidency in the Council of the EU can be considered as solving problems of a regional scale, rather than engaging in global challenges.

On April 6 of this year, Latvia submitted a statement to the UN International Court of Justice regarding involvement as a third party in the case "Ukraine v. Russian Federation", expressing readiness to provide an interpretation of several norms of the 1948 UN "Convention

on the Inadmissibility and Punishment of Genocide". This was the first time in Latvia's history that it exercised its rights contained in Article 63 of the Statute of the International Court of Justice. In addition, Latvia submitted its declaration on July 21, 2022, thus being the first country to take such a step. It is Latvia's firm and widely echoed position against Russia's war in Ukraine that can be seen as a potential issue around which Latvia could build its campaign for the term in the UNSC.

Conclusions

In conclusion, Latvia's candidacy for membership in the United Nations Security Council is a significant long-term foreign policy goal for the country, as it will allow Latvia to participate in solving global peace and security issues and to highlight the security concerns of Latvia and the Baltic region. Through careful planning and coordination, Latvia can prepare for the UN Security Council elections, including the development of thematic priorities, and strengthen its institutional capacity of Latvian diplomacy. The opportunities of the presidency will serve as a resource for national security interests, shape Latvia's international image and recognition, and contribute to the strengthening of bilateral relations. Successful candidacy and participation in the UNSC will further strengthen the recognition of Latvia at the global level, and Latvia's ability to take responsibility for global processes. However, to be elected, Latvia will have to convince at least two-thirds of the UN member states, and careful monitoring and learning from the experience of other countries, particularly from neighbouring Lithuania and Estonia, will be essential. Latvia must also utilize its resources, emphasize its advantages and arguments in favour of its experience and professionalism, including the leadership of Latvia's presidency in the EU Council, and its influence as a member state of the European Union in general. Overall, Latvia's candidacy for membership in the UNSC will symbolize the country's maturity and readiness to invest in the defence of the interests of the West and the EU, and contribute to the strengthening of the position of the Euro-Atlantic partners and the importance of the international legal system as a whole.

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