



**Riga talks I: Russian-speaking Europeans: Political participation and civic education in Europe**

**Rigaer Gespräche I: Russischsprachige EuropäerInnen: Politische Teilhabe und Politische Bildung in Europa**

September 19-20, 2018

Rīga, Torņā iela 1

organised by

**Žanis Lipke Memorial (Riga)**

in cooperation with

Bundesverband Russischsprachiger Eltern e.V. (BVRE e.V., Germany)

**Supported by**

**Embassy of Germany in Latvia**

**Goethe - Institut Riga**

For the last decades young Europeans have been enjoying the free space of opportunities in a growing, confident and welcoming Europe. They work, travel and study unimpeded by geographical and social borders, which defined and limited the lives of the earlier generations, especially in Eastern Europe.

And yet paradoxically, the disenchantment with Europe's idea is today the central theme of many discussions across the EU. The professional Eurosceptics, populists, nationalists and various religious groups exploit this crisis and amplify the signal of "the end of Europe". Where does this crisis originate? Is it the stress of rapid globalisation? Have the elites become detached from the reality on the street and are losing their legitimacy as representatives? Or is it a crisis of **participation**, which made European peace and stability possible?

The Russian-speaking European youth of the Baltic region are a particularly interesting part of this picture. Although Russian is not an official EU language, it is difficult to imagine the European idea without its constant reengagement with its Russian-speaking populations, with their fears, hopes and voices. And all the more so in the Baltics, where cultural and societal cross-currents continuously prompt us to question the place of the "Russians" in the wider European vision.

This is the origin and the aim of **Riga Talks**. We seek to re-engage the Russian-speaking youth from the Baltic region by giving them voice and connecting them with the experts, into the larger academic and policy world.

In the first round to take place on September 19-20, 2018 we explore the themes of a changing media landscape, civic education of youth, political art, civic poetry and politics of memory. Academics, journalists, educators, museum staff and artists from Germany, Latvia and Russia as well as young men and women from Riga schools and universities will be looking for answers to the question: **how can civic education help sustain Europe as a democratic and pluralistic space?**

We need a critical inquiry of the alienation of the Russian-speaking Europeans from the European idea. Yet we also want to look for possible solutions in form of civic education and political art, as well as a network of civil society actors working with the Russian-speaking youth.

With English and Russian as working languages, the Riga Talks is a public discussion open to all interested in the topic.

## Conference agenda

### September 19, 2018

11:30-12:00	Registration of participants
12:00-12:15	Welcoming addresses H.E. Rolf Schütte, Ambassador of Germany in Latvia Arne Schneider, Head of Goethe-Institut Riga Lolita Tomsone, Director, Žanis Lipke Memorial Wladimir Weinberg, Director, Bundesverband der russischsprachiger Eltern e.V. (BVRE), Germany
12:15-13:00	<i>"Oh, those Russians..."</i> On the other side of ethnicity. Sociological portrayal of Russian-speaking Europeans: Keynote speech by

Professor Dr. Vladislav Volkov, University of Latvia, Institute for Sociology and Philosophy.

Q & A

### 13:00 – 14:30 Workshop 1: Media, political populism and Russian-speaking audiences in the Baltics and Germany. A critical perspective

13:00 -14:30

*“Russian-speaking media and the image of Europe.”* by Vadim Radionov, vice editor-in-chief of the multimedia Baltkom

"Quality media of Germany and the problem of populism", Andrey Gurkov, Journalist, Deutsche Welle

14:30 – 15:00

Discussants: with participation of: Jürgen Bärsch (Phoenix-Cologne e.V., Cologne), Maxim Ryabkov (BVRE e.V., Cologne)

**Coffee break in the foyer of Goethe – Institut Riga**

### 15:00-16:30 Workshop 2: Russian-speaking Europeans and civic education. Topical issues

15:00 – 16:30

*“What’s in Europe? Developing civic identities of Russian-speaking Europeans in the age of populism”* by Prof. Liesma Ose, Riga.

*“Civic education, tailor-made for a new Germany of migrants: enlightenment through dialog”* by Victor Ostrovsky, BVRE

*“Learning to involve. Latvian interethnic NGOs and politics of integration”* by Marija Vlasenko, JASMA

Discussants: Natalia Roesler (Club Dialog e.V., Berlin), Pavel Ageev (BVRE e.V., Cologne)

16:30- 17:30

**Coffee break** followed by presentation of the BVRE projects for the European youth (in the conference hall), Wladimir Weinberg, Dr. Maxim Ryabkov, BVRE e.V.

### September 20, 2018

### 10:00- 11:30 Workshop 3: Art and civic engagement: Russian-speaking poetry. Presentation of a movie “All together now” (Riga and Cologne students debate on human rights)

10:00- 12:00

Vasily Karasev (Riga) reads his poetry from the (soon to come) bilingual volume “Beyond borders”

12.00-13.00

Presentation of the movie “*All together now for Europe without Discrimination and Chances for All*” (presented by Wladimir Weinberg, Cologne)

Light lunch in the foyer of Goethe-Institut Riga

### 13:00 – 15:00 Workshop 4: Youth and politics of memory in Europe. New approaches.

13:00 -15:00

13:00-14:00

„*Hierarchies of memory and inclusion of Russian-speaking youth*” by Prof. Aleida Assmann, University Konstanz, Germany

**Presentation of the Latvian translation** of Prof. Aleida Assmann's book “*Das neue Unbehagen an der Erinnerungskultur*” (address by the author)

#### **Session continues**

“*Museums that remember. Political education and sites of memory. Experience of Žanis Lipke Memorial*” by Lolita Tomsone, Head of the Žanis Lipke Memorial.

“*Celebrating a girl`s birthday on May 9. How to talk on controversial history to young people? A case of a play “Tanja`s birthday*” Maija Pavlova, Producer of the Gertrudes street theatre

Discussants: Olga Sperling (Ausländerrat Dresden e.V., Dresden), Sergey Aruin (AVP e.V., Düsseldorf)

15:00 – 15:30

When shall we meet again? Planning of the next meeting “Riga talks II” for 2019.

### Conference continues in Kaņepe Cultural centre in the evening

19:00-22:00 Evening event. *Beyond Borders*: Poets from “Orbita” group, young poets from Latvia and Russia perform their poetry, music and visual arts projects and debate with the audience. Presented by poetic group

The evening will offer an artistic part of the “Riga talks I”. This time we begin with poetry. Poets from different cities in Russia and Latvia reflect on topical issues of contemporary European culture, urban environment, Russian and Latvian collective identities, gender roles and other issues. Poets come from Riga, Moscow and St. Petersburg. They are very different in style and poetic forms, they talk and reflect on different issues in different societies, but they all meet in Riga, a cultural crossroad for centuries. What makes them interesting is their versions of Russian and Latvian poetic language, which differ from region to region, but present individual search for creative freedom.

**Volnost`** is a recently (2017) founded poetic group, led by poet Roma Gonza, Saint Petersburg. The group includes more than 40 poets from

“Volnost”, St. Petersburg. Reading takes place at Kanepe Kulturas centrs (Skolas street 15).

all over Russia. This time we present to you Roma Gonza, Anton Volodin, Daniil Berkovsky, Irina Volinskaya (St. Petersburg, Moscow) and Latvian-speaking poets Arvis Viguls and Marija Luīze Meļķe (Riga); musicians Mariya Ljubicheva, (Barto) and group Etoeto will present their musical performances. Different versions, different countries and languages, a flow of poetry and music in Riga. Our special guest this evening is the poetry group **Orbita**, presenting their new multimedia performance.

**Closing of the conference. Departure of participants.**



Auswärtiges Amt

