

themselves to be the absolute masters.

Confronted with the holders of the major global media in a now imminent head-on clash, networking is needed. It is necessary to organize as many events as possible and use every single television, computer or radio channel to spread the news.

Inviting foreign guests to local events must also become a habit capable of disrupting the mantra that only globalization can guarantee freedom, pluralism and democracy.

ENAC, the National Institute for Cultural Activities in Italy, which I am proud to represent, is organizing a conference in Italy with the aim of re-establishing relations between Syria and Italy; economic and cultural

relations that were interrupted for mere political interests and have not been reopened even in the aftermath of the dramatic earthquake that caused thousands of civilian casualties in Türkiye and Syria.

At this conference, in which we would be happy to welcome any of those present today who would like to participate, we intend to send a clear and unequivocal message:

While liberalism talks about peace and democracy causing wars and building walls, we respond with the strength of culture, the only one capable of guaranteeing and respecting individual differences while working on building a bridge made of friendship, solidarity and cooperation among peoples.

Tatjana Zdanoka

## On Demonization of Russian Culture

*This is the prepared text as edited of the presentation of Tatjana Zdanoka to Panel IV, “A Culture To Emancipate and Expand the Creative Capacities of Every Human Being: A Dialogue among Cultures and Civilizations,” of the Schiller Institute’s July 8–9 conference, “On the Verge of a New World War—European Nations Must Cooperate with the Global South!” Ms. Zdanoka is a Member of the European Parliament (MEP) and a member of the Latvian Russian Union, Latvia. A subhead has been added.*



Schiller Institute

Tatjana Zdanoka

We used to say: “Don’t bring me, My God, to live during an era of big changes.” But we are living during an era of big changes now.

The methods of management focused on unifying the population of Europe and the world according to values of “*homo economicus*”—the self-sufficient rational consumer—are undergoing a systemic crisis. “The economic person” is not even an abstraction; it is a reduction, a flat projection of one of a set of measurements of any human being. The reality is that all people—West Europeans, East Europeans, the Chinese, Indians or Russians—cannot be reduced to the sum of their economic requirements and to functioning as consumers of goods and the benefits.

Each person exists only in the interrelations and the relations with other people, and these communications are irreducible to mutually advantageous or mutually acceptable economic exchange. These are social and political communications—belonging to language, culture, national or subnational community or to religious community. Both these communications and interests are unrealizable outside of community, outside of political space.

The following phenomenon is evident: with the growth of integration on the contrary, awareness of the originality increases. There is the known mathematical rule: the process of integration must be accompanied by the process of differentiation. I often quote the words of Yehudi Menuhin: “Either Europe will become the Europe of cultures or Europe will die.”

The title of my intervention is “On Demonization of Russian Culture.”

There is no need to argue that the European Union is infected with Russophobia. Here is just one single example out of thousands.

In **Figure 1** you see the invitation to the discussion “Pushing Pushkin: The Imperialism and Decolonization of Russian Culture” co-hosted by Rasa Juknevičienė, Member of the European Parliament (MEP) from Lithu-

ania, and Raphaël Gluksmann, MEP from France.

The main idea promoted by the organizers and guests of that discussion is that Russia has always used and continues to use any work of culture as a “weapon of colonization.”

The burning hatred in Baltic states, in particular in my country, Latvia, toward everything Russian is irrational and caused by a complex of state inferiority of national elites. At this moment, the Russian minority of Latvia is on the verge of a catastrophe under the blows of the decisions taken by the ruling politicians, who represent exclusively the national majority. Since last spring, the situation has deteriorated significantly. The war in Ukraine has served as a signal for new persecutions of the Russian-speakers in Latvia.

Four years ago, my colleague Inese Vaidere, a member of the European Parliament from Latvia, denounced me to the State Security Service for publicly stating that Russians in Latvia felt like Jews on the eve of World War II (saying that we cannot compare; the situation of Jews in Germany was worse). Now, another colleague, Sandra Kalniete, calmly tweets that “we should take advantage of the ‘window of opportunity’ that has opened to solve issues important to ‘our people,’ first of all, the elimination of education in Russian and the demolition of the monuments to the Liberators of Latvia from the Nazi invaders.”

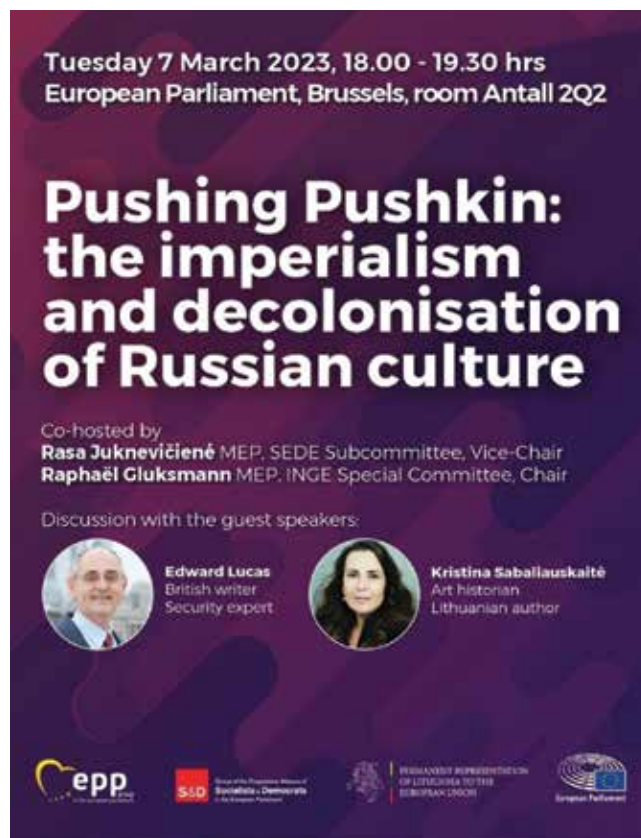
Ethnic Russians make up 25% of the population of Latvia, the Russian-speaking linguistic minority makes up 37% of the country’s population. This part of the country’s population is of mixed origin—some represent the descendants of the citizens of the Republic of Latvia from the period 1918–1940, and some represent the labor migrants of the Soviet era. There are approximately 25% of Russian-speaking citizens among the voters of the country, since 12% of Russian-speaking permanent residents remain in a status close to the status of a stateless person and cannot vote.

When speaking about “window of opportunity,” my Latvian colleague supposed: “We can now achieve our goals without much international attention.”

### Ethnic Cleansing

What are those goals? It is a full-scale campaign by the Latvian authorities to dehumanize, suppress and marginalize the country’s Russian-speaking population. Latvian society is sinking in the wave of hate speech in the mainstream media and social networks. Columnists and commentators openly compare Russian-speaking compatriots with “animals,” a “fifth col-

FIGURE 1



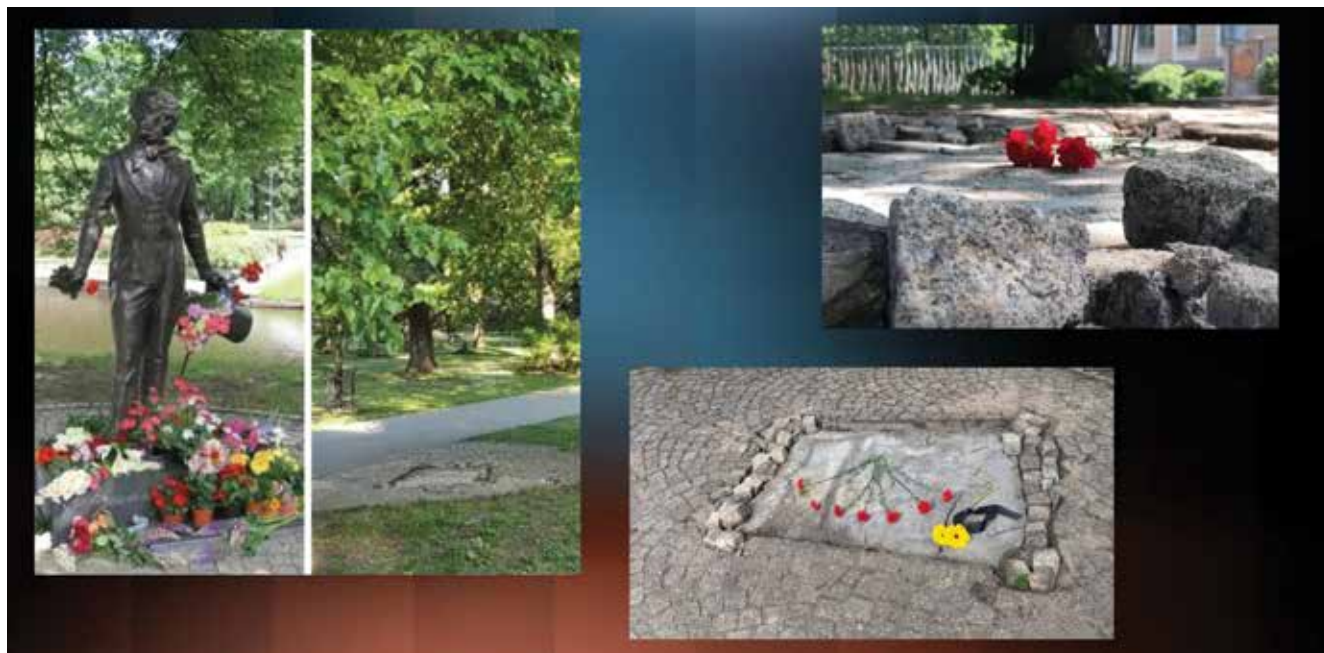
European Parliament

*Invitation to a discussion on March 7, 2023 in the European Parliament, on how Russia has always used any work of its culture as a “weapon of colonization.”*

umn” and “aggressive occupiers.” One of the members of the National Parliament (Saeima) of the ruling coalition party openly called for ethnic cleansing, aimed at increasing the proportion of ethnic Latvians in the country’s population. Signatures are being collected on a petition for the expulsion of “disloyal citizens” from the country and deprivation of their Latvian citizenship, as well as on a petition for a ban on my party, the Latvian Russian Union, which stands for the protection of the rights of the Russian-speaking minority.

The European Union nominally has an instrument to combat this kind of manifestation. This is the Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA of November 28, 2008, on combating certain forms and expressions of racism. This document does not have a direct effect—it obligates the states to criminalize the respective acts in their legislation. The Latvian Criminal Code does have an article punishing incitement to national, ethnic, and racial hatred. The crux of the matter is that this article is only selectively applied in my country.

FIGURE 2



Courtesy of Tatjana Zdanoka

*A sculpture of Alexander Pushkin in one of the parks in Riga, Latvia, before and after it was recently demolished.*

Appeals to the police and state security bodies regarding the use of hate speech and calls for violence against Russian-speaking residents of Latvia are fruitless. Consistent refusals to initiate criminal proceedings are coming in. At the same time, charges of allegedly inciting hatred against the titular population have been brought against several journalists writing in Russian, the most prominent of them being Yuri Alekseev and Vladimir Linderman.

The government has prepared a package of initiatives to destroy memorials dedicated to the soldiers of the Soviet Red Army who liberated Latvia from Nazi occupation during World War II. About 150,000 Soviet soldiers died in battles for the liberation of Latvia. In almost every family of Russian-speaking Latvians and in many Latvian families, the memory of the victims of the war and the ancestors who fought on the side of the anti-Hitler coalition is preserved. Through these new initiatives, people are deprived of the opportunity to preserve the memory of their families.

Thanks to the efforts of our party, complaints were submitted to the UN Human Rights Committee and a temporary settlement was requested, i.e. a ban on the demolition of eight monuments until the complaints were finalized. All these requests were granted. However, the government ignored the UN HRC’s decision, stating that it was only advisory in nature.

During last summer and autumn more than 70 monuments to the liberators of Latvia from German fascist occupiers were dismantled, despite the decisions of the UN Human Rights Committee obliging Latvia to refrain from such demolitions.

I was among those who addressed the Committee. Fate so decreed that the land on which one of the monuments stood belonged to my ancestors, victims of the Holocaust. It is the monument to Alyosha in the city of Rezekne, the capital of Latgale.

In addition to the demolition of the World War II monuments, the authorities have recently taken on other sites. You see in **Figure 2** the sculpture of Alexander Pushkin in one of the parks in Riga before it was recently demolished.

The fight against monuments of the past continues with repressions against people living in Latvia today. Some of the elderly people are under risk to become “illegals.” The new retroactive norm provides *annulation* [French for cancellation—ed.], in the case of bad knowledge of Latvian language, of permanent residence permission for those who have acquired Russian citizenship.

But [the] most grave consequences of the use of “window of opportunity” affect the young generation. The ongoing destruction of minority education started in 1995 (high education), continued in 2004 (second-



ary education) and 2018 (primary education). The latest amendments to the Education Laws in the Republic of Latvia are designed to completely abolish Russian language education. These amendments apply to both public and private schools.

I will conclude my intervention with a fragment of the video clip produced by our team in 2003 when the mass protests of Russian-speakers against the education

reform started. With the kind permission of Roger Waters, fragments of the famous Pink Floyd clip were used.

School education in native languages of traditional ethnic and linguistic minorities is one of the most important values of the European Union. The Russian-speaking community of Latvia is one of such traditional linguistic minorities of the European Union alike many others, and its rights should be respected.

**Liz Augustat**

## **World Peace, Based On Common Ethics and Values**

*This is the prepared text as edited of the presentation of Liz Augustat to Panel IV, “A Culture To Emancipate and Expand the Creative Capacities of Every Human Being: A Dialogue among Cultures and Civilizations,” of the Schiller Institute’s July 8–9 conference, “On the Verge of a New World War—European Nations Must Cooperate with the Global South!” Ms. Augustat is President of the international association Peace through Culture-Europe, Germany. A subhead has been added.*



Schiller Institute

Liz Augustat

Peace through Culture is an organization whose main goal is to build bridges between ethnicities, countries, religions, traditions and different worldviews. Focused on our function as an inspirer and connector we have organized numerous conferences in Kazakhstan and other Eurasian countries. Looking back to our World Congress under the title “Toward Spiritual Concord” in Almaty [Kazakhstan] with more than 1,500 attendees, which was supported greatly by the then-President Nursultan Nazarbayev, I especially remember the late Prof. Dr. h.c. Hans-Peter Dürr (1929–2014), the world-renowned German quantum physicist, Director of the famous Max Planck Institute for Physics, and winner of the Alternative Nobel Prize, who so often enriched us with his participation and insights. Our joint conversations are partially reflected in my contribution.

Nuclear physicists are eagerly following the basic question on what is holding our world together at its core. So Prof. Dürr also asked himself what actually is behind matter. He split matter into smaller and smaller

parts hoping to eventually find the essence. But after 50 years of research, he came to the astonishing conclusion: The essence does not lie in matter, but actually does not even exist in the way we thought. What we think matter is, actually is vibration and energy; it is a structure of relations.

Reality is quite different from what we have imagined it to be so far. Expressed in modern language there is no physical matter/hardware at the beginning, but only idea and

software.

In other words, and with the help of logic, it follows that the so-called “physical or gross matter” and the so-called “subtle matter” are two sides of the same coin, an inseparable unity of matter and spirit. This statement, so far assigned to the area of spirituality, is now getting substantiated scientifically by quantum physics step by step and is likely to radiate into all areas of society in the future.

Our world is the One, and the Whole and cannot be dissected. This fact leads to fantastic consequences, because if we include ourselves in this world, we are distinguishable, but not separate. We are all part of this community, in this connectedness. In Sanskrit, this is called “*Advaita*,” the Oneness, the A-duality.

When people wage wars against each other, they are hurting themselves at the same time, because all living beings are part of the ONE. When anything in the world suffers, we suffer with it, even if we do not know the reason. This is not to be attributed to sentimentality, but a deep ontological feeling that touches our common roots. Despite retaining our individuality, we are part of