

Pauli Heikkilä
University of Helsinki

Baltic Intergroup of the European Parliament, 1988–1991

European Parliament issued a resolution on the sovereignty of the Baltic states in January 1983. This document is considered the beginning of the path of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania to the European Union 21 years later but also an evidence of persistence of the Baltic politicians in exile to fight for the re-independence. The presentation will introduce the Baltic Intergroup in the European Parliament in 1988–1991. German Social democrat Hans-Joachim Seeler was the first chair of the group and Lithuanian-descendant Algis Klimaitis became the secretary; the presentation is based on material in his collection at the Lithuanian Central State Archives in Vilnius.

Although the European Parliamentarians agreed with the Baltic politicians – both in the Soviet Union and in exile – on the unlawfulness of the Soviet occupation, disagreements appeared soon. The former had a wider perspective and Seeler personally envisioned the Baltic states as mediators between the capitalist West and the renewed Soviet Union, while the latter predominantly were looking for an opportunity to break away and join the West. The intergroup visited the Baltic republics in February 1989 and created contacts with the reformation movements, but at least the Lithuanian Sajudis condemned the resolution by the European Parliament in September 1989 as esoteric and anemic. There's very little material in the collection after this event for the last two years. Instead of its achievements or lack of them, the Baltic Intergroup is interesting as a failed alternative at the end of Cold War in Europe.