

EU CHANĒER

EU Academy Baltics

Bursting the EU bubble for public interest organisations in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania

Riga, 7-8 May 2026

An interactive, thought-provoking and practical two-day training designed to help advocates in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania enhance their understanding of EU decision-making processes, strengthen their advocacy skills and build alliances to defend the public interest at the national and EU levels.

The EU Academy takes a strategic approach, builds on concrete examples and draws in insiders working for the EU institutions. It covers the functioning of the main EU institutions, the fundamentals of EU decision-making, core influencing techniques, and practical tools for effective advocacy.

The training aims to strengthen participants' capacity to influence EU policies and legislation, and their implementation at national level, and to play an active role in EU civil society networks. It will also create a space for networking and exchange between organisations from the three Baltic countries and for interaction with insiders from the EU institutions.

EUChanger has organised 15 editions of the [EU Academy](#). This is the second time the EU Academy takes place outside of Brussels. After Dublin in January, the EU Academy is coming to Riga. In the current challenging EU political context, coordinated EU-wide advocacy towards the EU institutions is more important than ever. Baltic civil society organisations have an essential role to play in EU-wide coalitions and at national level, especially during the upcoming presidencies of the Council of the EU of Lithuania in 2027 and Latvia in 2028.

This EU Academy is organised by EUChanger in collaboration with the Estonian Green Movement, Green Liberty (Latvia), the Open Lithuania Foundation and the National Coalition of NGOs in Lithuania with the support of CEE Bankwatch Network and the Civic Alliance–Latvia. [EUChanger](#) supports organisations working for a more inclusive, equal, and sustainable Europe, to re-balance power in EU decision-making in favour of the public interest.

Programme

Day 1 – Thursday 7 May 2026

EU decision-making & influencing essentials

Venue: EU House in Riga
[Aspazijas bulvāris 28, Rīga](#)

9:30 – 9:45 **Welcome & coffee**

9:45 – 10:00 **Introduction**

- Participants and their expectations
- Objectives & programme of the training

10:00 – 11:15 **The political & institutional context**

- The European Parliament after the June 2024 European elections
- The European Council and its strategic agenda for 2024-2029
- The *von der Leyen II* Commission and its priorities

Coffee break - 11:15-11:30

11:30 – 13:00 **The EU ‘golden triangle’**

- The role & functioning of the Commission, Parliament and Council
- Balance of power and interaction between the institutions in key policy areas
- The presidency of the Council of the EU: formal and informal roles and responsibilities
- Strategic implications for public interest organisations in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania

Lunch - 13:00-14:00

14:00 – 15:45 **The EU policy cycle & decision-making ‘tube map’**

- EU policy-making from policy planning & formulation to implementation & evaluation: who sets the EU's priorities and agenda, and how can these be influenced?
- Introduction to the EU decision-making and legislative process: key steps and pressure points, opportunities for influence at EU and national levels

Coffee break - 15:45-16:00

16:00 – 17:20 **EU influencing in the Baltics: political & institutional context**

- Baltic countries & the EU: political and institutional context – introductory presentations by public interest advocates from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.
- Exchange in groups followed by a plenary discussion on EU influencing: strengths & weaknesses and opportunities & threats for Baltic civil society organisations

Drinks followed by a social dinner

Day 2 – Friday 8 May 2026

Influencing the EU in practise

Venue: EU House in Riga
[Aspazijas bulvāris 28, Rīga](#)

9:30 – 9:45 **Welcome & coffee**

9:45 – 10:00 **Recap of the first day and Q&A session**

10:00 – 11:15 **Critical issues in influencing at EU and national levels**

- Dealing with challenges in EU and national influencing: identifying decision-makers, timely access to information, critical mass, coordination and messaging
- Advocacy toolbox & tips on how to engage effectively with decision-makers

Coffee break - 10:15-11:30

11:30 – 13:00 **Engaging effectively with decision-makers: insider session**

Informal exchange with insiders from Baltic countries working in the Commission, the Council and the European Parliament on how to engage effectively with EU decision-makers and their staff

Lunch - 13:00-14:00

14:00 – 17:00 **EU influencing in practice: simulation of a legislative process**

- Introductory presentation: what is at stake?
- Team exercise in four steps: influencing the process to defend the public interest from proposal to adoption [*short coffee breaks included*]
- Plenary presentations & discussion

17:00 – 17:20 **Final Q&A and evaluation**

Trainers & speakers



Marc-Olivier Herman is the lead trainer. He is the founder of [EUChanger](https://www.euchanger.org), providing support to public interest organisations in their EU advocacy through trainings, consultancy and coaching. He is a lawyer with over twenty-five years of experience as an advocate for human rights, the environment and economic justice. From 2011 to 2024, he was a member of Oxfam International's EU advocacy team, leading on the organisation's influencing work in various areas of EU policy and legislation including on financial regulation, climate change, renewable energy, unfair trading practices and sustainable corporate governance.

Public interest advocates from civil society organisations in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania and **insiders from the three main EU institutions** – the European Parliament, the European Commission and the Council of the EU – will participate in the training as speakers. Their names will be added to the programme in the run up to the training.

Application & registration

For information on the conditions for application and registration, please contact one of the following:

- for **Estonia**: Lukas Lepik <lukas@roheline.ee>
- for **Latvia**: Maksis Apinis <maksis@zalabriviba.lv>
- for **Lithuania**: Marta Gadeikiene <marta.gadeikiene@olf.lt>

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