



# E10&UNSC

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## 12 Rules for Campaigning and Membership

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Although an elected seat cannot be comparable with the permanent seat at the United Nations (UN) Security Council in terms of power and influence, countries compete to be elected as non-permanent members of this prominent institution. Latvia also is running for the elected seat at the Security Council in the election in 2025 for the term 2026–2027.

This report focuses on a comparative analysis of six countries from the Baltics (Estonia and Lithuania), Northern Europe (Ireland, Norway and Sweden), and Eastern Europe (Poland) that have been elected to the UN Security Council non-permanent member's seat since 2014 – the year when Russia started its aggression against Ukraine. The selected case studies meet four comparative analysis criteria: geographical container; European Union and/or NATO membership; small or medium state; and UNSC membership from 2014 to 2023. Such a choice underlines shared features and allows for analysing the experience of similar countries from both theoretical and practical perspectives.

This report provides a shared outlook for active, effective, and visible election campaigns and membership at the Security Council. The insights are valuable to Latvia which shares the same features with the analysed countries and has presented its candidature for a seat at the Security Council. If elected, Latvia will serve on the UN Security Council for the very first time.

## Small and medium Baltic, Northern and Eastern European states at the UNSC (2014–2023)

Country	UNSC term	Regional Group	Seats available	Type of election	Competitor	Total election rounds	Round when elected	Number of UNSC terms, in total
Norway	2021–2022	WEOG*	2	Contested	Canada, Ireland	1	1st	5
Ireland	2021–2022	WEOG	2	Contested	Canada, Norway	1	1st	4
Estonia	2020–2021	EEG**	1	Contested	Romania	2	2nd	1
Poland	2018–2019	EEG	1	Clean slate	–	1	1st	6
Sweden	2017–2018	WEOG	2	Contested	Netherlands, Italy	5	1st	4
Lithuania	2014–2015	EEG	1	Clean slate	–	1	1st	1

\* WEOG – Western European and Others Group

\*\* EEG – Eastern European Group

Source: Authors' calculation, based on: United Nations, *Countries Elected Members*, <https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/content/countries-elected-members>



## RULE #1

# A clean slate spares headaches

Diplomats who have been part of a contested UN Security Council election campaign say: “The UN membership – any day! The campaign – never again!” Campaigns are fierce, drain resources, and often make you go against your partners. You must compete, but you shouldn’t be considered the aggressive one. You must be flexible, creative, quick, and sociable, but be careful not to spread the vibe of panic and desperation. Some states are lucky enough to be the only candidates for the available seats. Others try to strike a deal or encourage their competitors to withdraw. The clean slate is a gamechanger.

Estonia’s campaign was tough since Romania, with its historically well-developed and carefully planned embassy network, was a formidable competitor. Comparison: Estonia had about 40 embassies, and its only presence in Africa was in Cairo, while Romania – had more than 100 embassies and special historic relationships with many African countries. It was Estonia’s first time running in elections to the Security Council, whereas Romania had been elected as a member four times. In general, the UN Security Council elections show sympathy for countries that have not yet been elected members. However, that does not mean that the General Assembly bases its vote on turn-taking – it might be a good pitch during the campaign, but it does not determine the outcome.

Estonia's informal attempts to reach an agreement with Romania failed. At that point, the real campaign started, things got serious, and the rest is history.

Canada, Ireland and Norway competed for two Security Council seats. In one of the post-election interviews, Ambassador Geraldine Byrne Nason, the Permanent Representative of Ireland to the UN, noted that in some circles, this competition was called “the Group of Death” as it was one of the toughest races in recent modern history.<sup>1</sup> Notoriously, some of the Council's elections have taken dozens of rounds, the longest one being the race between Cuba and Colombia, with 155 rounds of voting in 1980. Fortunately, this wasn't the case of Ireland – it was elected in the first round with exactly 128 votes which was the minimum required to obtain a seat on the Council.

Of all the 2016 candidates, Sweden, Italy and the Netherlands – the three contestants for the two available Western European and Other States Group seats – had the most extensive prior Security Council experience. Italy was predicted to gain the seat without much trouble, while Sweden was predicted to struggle and compete fiercely over the second seat with the Netherlands.<sup>2</sup> At some moment observers warned that Sweden's campaign was dropping behind and would not be able to gather the necessary support.<sup>3</sup> This was the point when Sweden took a bold move and broke the golden rule that you don't change the horses in midstream. Sweden changed its strategy amidst the campaign and got elected in the first round with 134 votes, while Italy and the Netherlands ended up agreeing to split the two-year term after five rounds of voting where neither met the required two-thirds majority. Nevertheless, experience shows that a split-term is a big exception in general practice, and countries agree

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<sup>1</sup> Geraldine Byrne Nason, “Ireland's Election to the UN Security Council”, moderated by Michael Collins, 10 July, 2020, *Institute of International and European Affairs (IIEA)*, YouTube, 03:29, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eglGntMAK7g&t=1475s>.

<sup>2</sup> Ann-Marie Ekengren, Ulrika Möller, “Campaigning for the Prize: The Quests by Sweden and the Kingdom of the Netherlands for Security Council Membership, 2017–2018”, *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy* 16, 10 November 2020, p. 28.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

to further shorten the already short two-year period only in very unusual cases like this one.

Lithuania's campaign for the Council's seat was significantly strengthened by the lack of serious competition. While Georgia had also put forward its candidacy, it withdrew from the race 5 months before the Council's elections, citing diplomatic and financial reasons.<sup>4</sup> Informally, it was known that Georgians had put forward their candidacy rather for political reasons, primarily to signal their interest in the Council's membership in the future. Lithuanians had also become aware of the potential candidacy of Belarus (supported by Russia) for the Council's membership for the same term, which imposed a substantial challenge on the Lithuanian campaign. As such, Lithuania engaged in diplomatic negotiations with Georgia, ensuring that Georgia would withdraw from the race while maintaining its bid until the very last moment. The mutually beneficial arrangement allowed Lithuania to avoid direct competition with Georgia while preventing Belarus from entering the race.

Poland's experience also shows the competition being avoided by reaching a win-win solution. After announcing its candidacy in 2010, Poland already had a competitor – Bulgaria. If Poland wanted to win the seat against a motivated competitor with a real chance of securing victory, a deal would be made with the Bulgarians. Poland was aware of the Bulgarian desire to have its UN Secretary-General. It is informally known that Poland agreed to support Bulgarian candidate Irina Bokova for this position in the 2016 selection process, while Bulgaria agreed to withdraw from the Council elections. Bulgaria dropped out of the race,<sup>5</sup> and Polish campaigning, with no serious competition, became much easier.

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<sup>4</sup> N. Kirtzkhalia, "Georgia Will Not Nominate its Candidacy for Non-Permanent Members Of UN Security Council by 2014," *Trend news agency*, April 30, 2013, <https://en.trend.az/scaucasus/georgia/2145220.html>.

<sup>5</sup> Georgi Gotev, "Bulgaria Gives Up UNSC Term in Favour of Poland," *Euractiv*, December 13, 2016, <https://www.euractiv.com/section/global-europe/news/bulgaria-gives-up-unsc-term-in-favour-of-poland>.

## RULE #2

# An early bird catches the worm

Usually, the lobbying process and exchange of votes begin years in advance and require significant diplomatic engagement and financial investments, especially in contested elections.<sup>6</sup> At the same time, for various reasons, pledges can be broken. Since the balloting in the General Assembly is secret, there is no way of telling who did not keep their promise. It is considered common knowledge in New York that candidates averagely lose 10–20% of votes they have received as pledges. This is confirmed by the states that have campaigned for the seat.<sup>7</sup>

In other words – an early start is not a guarantee, nevertheless, it gives more chances to better prepare for and conduct a well-thought-out and resourced campaign, as well as block the first bunch of votes and therefore get closer to a two-thirds majority of the General Assembly members present and voting.

A vivid example comes from Norway’s and Ireland’s runs for the seat. Canada, their opponent, made a series of mistakes that allowed other candidates to advance. Most importantly, although Canada benefits from its membership in powerful international groups like the G7 and G20, allowing it to use a broad network and

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<sup>6</sup> Security Council Report, *The UN Security Council Handbook: A User’s Guide to Practice and Procedure*, (New York, 2019), p. 77.

<sup>7</sup> “Estonia as the Elected Member of the United Nations Security Council 2020–2021”, *Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, March 2023, p. 23, <https://www.vm.ee/en/media/5265/download>.



Crown Prince of Norway Haakon and the Minister of Foreign Affairs Ine Eriksen Søreide held a press conference in the UN Rose Garden. (Photo: Pontus Hook / NTB scanpix / The Royal House of Norway)

substantial diplomatic influence,<sup>8</sup> it started too late and did not campaign actively. It is common practice to announce the candidacy at least 10 years ahead of the election, if not even earlier. In the case of Canada, the candidacy was announced 4 years before the election, but the active campaign was launched just a couple of months before the vote in the UN General Assembly.<sup>9</sup> The late bid also meant that overwhelmingly many countries had already committed their votes to Ireland or Norway.

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<sup>8</sup> Geraldine Byrne Nason, “Ireland’s Election to the UN Security Council”, moderated by Michael Collins, 10 July, 2020, *Institute of International and European Affairs (IIEA)*, YouTube, 03:29, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eglGntMAK7g&t=1475s>.

<sup>9</sup> Matthew Fisher, “Canada badly wants a seat on the UN Security Council. Are other countries listening?”, *Global News*, posted 10 June 2020, updated 19 April 2021, <https://globalnews.ca/news/7038514/canada-un-security-council-bid/>.

## RULE #3

# A country's UN profile sets the tone

It is much easier to campaign for the UNSC seat if the country's UN records display a long-term and continuous commitment to peace and security, and the campaign priorities are not only relevant and broadly supported, but the country can demonstrate its contribution and long-term expertise in them. Norway's and Ireland's cases are proof of this.

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Although Norway belongs to the group of small states, it was a rather strong candidate with the “ability to punch above its weight and make a difference on the global scene”.<sup>10</sup> First, Norway is a UN founding nation. Second, Norway has a solid track record, having been a frequent Security Council member. Third, Norway's past achievements include being a part

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<sup>10</sup> Kristin Haugevik, Piret Kuusik, Kristi Raik and Niels Nagelhus Schia, “Small States, Different Approaches: Estonia and Norway on the UN Security Council”, *International Centre for Defence and Security Estonian Foreign Policy Institute*, November 2021, p. 9, [https://icds.ee/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/ICDS\\_EFPI\\_Report\\_Small\\_States\\_Different\\_Approaches\\_Haugevik\\_Kuusik\\_Raik\\_Schia\\_November\\_2021.pdf](https://icds.ee/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/ICDS_EFPI_Report_Small_States_Different_Approaches_Haugevik_Kuusik_Raik_Schia_November_2021.pdf).

of the global coalition against ISIL and stabilisation processes in Syria and Iraq, having a stable position in the domain of global education for girls, being engaged in Afghanistan, providing humanitarian aid to the Rohingya minority in Myanmar and playing a leadership role in humanitarian crises in Syria. Fourth, Norway's profile within the UN stands out with a prominent fact that the Norwegian lawyer and politician Trygve Lie served as the UN's first Secretary-General. Fifth, and it is symbolic, the UN Security Council's Chamber was designed by the Norwegian architect Arnstein Arneberg.

Ireland, too, under no circumstances could be considered a new kid on the UN block. When you open the web page of the Department of Foreign Affairs of Ireland, as one of the first items you find the statement that the "Membership of the United Nations is central to Ireland's foreign policy".<sup>11</sup> Ireland joined the UN in 1955, and it takes great pride in the fact that its foreign policy and engagement within international organisations strongly reflects the principles enshrined in the UN Charter. And, if you are not entirely new to the world of the United Nations, you definitely have heard of the significant contributions by Ireland to UN peacekeeping missions.

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A competitive UN profile and long-term investment in peace and security are not a prerequisite for winning UNSC elections, but they help demonstrate authenticity and credibility much more easily and effectively. This brings us to the next rule.

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<sup>11</sup> "Ireland at the United Nations", *Department of Foreign Affairs of Ireland (DFA)*, <https://www.ireland.ie/en/un/>.

<sup>12</sup> "Peacekeeping", *Department of Foreign Affairs of Ireland (DFA)*, <https://www.ireland.ie/en/dfa/role-policies/international-priorities/peace-and-security/peacekeeping/>.



## RULE #4

# Be yourself

Past records show that most successful campaigns are those possessing priorities that are not created for current events and topicalities but correspond to the long-term profile of the country. In other words, it is worth being authentic and credible and to shape the campaign following the principle of “What you see is what you get”.

When it comes to authenticity and achievements at the Security Council, many states are united in praising Estonia as a “golden child”. E-stonia didn’t happen overnight and wasn’t created specifically for the Security Council campaign purposes. With pioneering and efficient use of information and communication technologies for such areas as state administration, citizens’ digital identity, voting, and online access to public services at home,<sup>13</sup> Estonia offered to share them as its main pitch.<sup>14</sup> Additionally, before the Estonian membership, cyber security was hardly discussed at the Council. Estonian efforts culminated during its second Presidency when a high-level open debate on cybersecurity was held.<sup>15</sup> This inaugural session marked a significant milestone in the realm of Estonian cyber diplomacy, signifying a historic moment and arguably the biggest achievement of Estonian membership.

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<sup>13</sup> “E-Governance Fact Sheet,” *Brand Estonia*, <https://brandestonia1.brandkit.io/assets/42423>.

<sup>14</sup> “Estonia as the Elected Member of the United Nations Security Council 2020–2021”, *Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, March 2023, pp. 47, 49, <https://www.vm.ee/en/media/5265/download>.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*, p. 118.



As part of its presidency of the UN Security Council, Estonia organised a virtual meeting focused on stability in cyberspace, cyber norms and international law. Afterwards, Estonia organised the first-ever formal meeting on cybersecurity in the history of the UN Security Council. (Photo: Jüri Kartul / Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

Additionally, it was complemented by Estonia's virtual diplomacy during the term. With its membership taking place during the COVID-19 pandemic, Estonia quickly adapted to the crisis by setting a new standard for organising virtual sessions, and it organised the first virtual Arria-formula meeting commemorating the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II.<sup>16</sup> Notably, the Estonian government's collaboration with the Estonian company "Global Virtual Solutions" as a technical partner for virtual sessions also contributed to the company's success in securing a UN tender and establishing partnerships with multiple UN country representations.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> "High-Level Meeting on the 75th Anniversary of the End of World War II in Europe," *Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, <https://www.vm.ee/en/high-level-meeting-75th-anniversary-end-world-war-ii-europe>.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

## RULE #5

Do what you can,  
with what you've got,  
where you are

Although power and influence are distributed disproportionately between permanent and elected members of the UN Security Council, the latter can under no circumstances be considered weak, powerless or superfluous. At the Security Council, elected members have some avenues to shape their agenda and influence the Council's outputs. There are four tools in their hands – the Presidency, chairing of subsidiary bodies, the penholdership system, and the Arria formula.

### The UN Security Council Presidency

One of the highlights and the most intense times of the elected member's term at the Council is the Presidency. It is held by each of the ten elected members in turn for one month, following the alphabetical order in English of the member states' names. It means that some will hold the Presidency only once while others will get to do this unique task twice during their term. Holding a Presidency allows members to highlight their priorities, steer discussions as well as formally conduct diplomacy on the Council's behalf. It can also allow for introducing new angles on some of the thematic issues.



President of the Republic of Poland Andrzej Duda chairs a UN Security Council meeting on international peace and security. (Photo: Justin Lane / EPA / EFE / Euractiv)

Every elected member has its own accomplishments. For instance, during its second Presidency, Poland organised a briefing on international humanitarian law to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the adoption of the Geneva Conventions.<sup>18</sup> Based on its concept note, the briefing aimed to emphasise that despite the establishment of the comprehensive legal framework, the implementation of international humanitarian law is inadequate, resulting in severe hardship for civilians, especially vulnerable groups such as women, children, and individuals with disabilities.<sup>19</sup> Notably, this briefing led to the Presidential statement drafted by Poland, reaffirming “the fundamental importance of four 1949 Geneva Conventions for the protection of those affected by armed conflict.”<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> “Briefing on International Humanitarian Law,” *Security Council Report*, <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/whatsinblue/2019/08/briefing-on-international-humanitarian-law.php>.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> “Statement by the President of the Security Council”, S/PRST/2019/8, *UN Security Council*, <https://undocs.org/S/PRST/2019/8>.



Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations Olof Skoog addresses the UN Security Council (Photo: Permanent Mission of Sweden to the UN)

## The penholdership system

When it comes to generating more substantive outputs, elected members might want to become “penholders” of a particular Council item, which implies that a Council member leads the negotiation and drafting process of documents, including resolutions, presidential statements and press statements on a specific agenda item.<sup>21</sup>

During its term on the Council, in collaboration with Kuwait, Sweden served as a penholder on the Syria file, focusing on humanitarian issues.<sup>22</sup> As penholders, they were responsible for drafting resolutions and convening meetings to address the dire

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<sup>21</sup> Security Council Report, *The UN Security Council Handbook: A User's Guide to Practice and Procedure*, (New York, 2019), p. 16.

<sup>22</sup> “10 points on Sweden’s membership of the UN Security Council 2017–2018”, *Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden*, 30 December 2018, <https://www.government.se/government-of-sweden/ministry-for-foreign-affairs/sweden-in-the-un-security-council/10-points-on-swedens-membership-of-the-un-security-council-20172018/>.

situation in Syria. During this period, a key priority for the Syria humanitarian file was ensuring compliance with humanitarian law and principles, particularly concerning access to and protection of humanitarian relief efforts. Sweden's active involvement as a penholder was instrumental in securing cross-border aid deliveries and in advocacy for the protection of civilians caught in the conflict.

## Chairing of UNSC subsidiary bodies

One of the early decisions elected members must make is about chairing subsidiary bodies that include sanctions committees, counterterrorism committees and working groups. In practice, chairmanship can be a demanding, resource-consuming assignment for the elected member. Sometimes it can also be a politically risky endeavour when it comes to navigating more controversial issues, hence states should be quite prudent and thoughtful when picking and negotiating their chairmanships.<sup>23</sup>

In order to illustrate the work of chairmanship and dispel myths about elected members' focus exclusively on the region, the case of Poland is a prime example. Poland chaired sanctions committees on Iraq, Sudan and South Sudan,<sup>24</sup> contributing to the oversight and enforcement of international sanctions regimes. With regards to the sanctions committee on Iraq, Poland reinvigorated the institution during its 2019 chairmanship by holding its first committee meeting since 2005.<sup>25</sup> With respect to the sanctions committees on Sudan and South Sudan, under its chairmanship, Poland was focused on

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<sup>23</sup> Loraine Sievers, Sam Daws, *The Procedure of the Security Council*, 4th edition, (Oxford, 2014), p. 129.

<sup>24</sup> "Polish Membership in the UN Security Council 2018–2019," *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland*, last modified January 28, 2020, p. 2, [https://issuu.com/msz.gov.pl/docs/polish\\_membership\\_in\\_the\\_un\\_security\\_council\\_2018-](https://issuu.com/msz.gov.pl/docs/polish_membership_in_the_un_security_council_2018-).

<sup>25</sup> "Briefing by the Outgoing Chairs of the Security Council Subsidiary Bodies," *Security Council Report*, <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2019-12/briefing-by-the-outgoing-chairs-of-the-security-council-subsiary-bodies-2.php>.



facilitating collaborative exchanges between the two committees and the Council's other subsidiary bodies on regional security issues.<sup>26</sup> Notably, Polish permanent representative to the UN, Joanna Wronecka, also visited Sudan and South Sudan as well as Uganda and Kenya to assess the impact of the sanctions on regional stability.<sup>27</sup>

## The Arria formula

In addition to formal Council meetings and consultations scheduled in its monthly programme of work, elected members have also effectively used informal Arria-Formula meetings to promote their Council priorities and introduce new topics. These meetings can be called by any Council member, and they allow for greater flexibility regarding format, speakers, and topics. They can also be used to raise

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The mechanism is neutral in nature, neither favouring democratic nor non-democratic states, and is available to all countries

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new or less traditional issues such as climate change, cybersecurity, and human rights on the Council's agenda. Often these meetings can help to build momentum for further Council work. At the same time, it should be noted that the mechanism is neutral in nature, neither favouring democratic nor non-democratic states, and is available to all countries.

Throughout 2014, the Council convened 21 public meetings to discuss the situation in Ukraine, in addition to many closed consultations and Arria-formula meetings. Lithuania, together with the United Kingdom and the United States,

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<sup>26</sup> "Briefing by the Outgoing Chairs of the Security Council Subsidiary Bodies," *Security Council Report*, <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2019-12/briefing-by-the-outgoing-chairs-of-the-security-council-subsidiary-bodies-2.php>.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.



were among the main organisers of these meetings, with the aim of gathering international support against Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and bringing attention to the conflict instigated by Russia-backed militant groups in eastern Ukraine.<sup>28</sup> Lithuania organised Arria-formula conferences to draw attention to the human rights situation in Crimea, including such prominent participants as the leader of the Crimean Tatars, Mustafa Dzhemilev, and a journalist from Simferopol, Valentina Samar.<sup>29</sup>

With respect to addressing people with disabilities in armed conflict, the advancement of this priority sub-theme is regarded as the biggest achievement of Poland's membership.<sup>30</sup> In December 2018, Poland, together with Côte d'Ivoire, Germany, Kuwait, and Peru, organised an Arria-Formula meeting "to focus the attention of Council members on the disproportionate impact of armed conflict on persons with disabilities."<sup>31</sup> Notably, as acknowledged by Jonathan Guy Allen, British ambassador to the UN, this Polish-organised Arria-Formula meeting, attended by NGO representatives and external experts, played a decisive role a year later when the related resolution was adopted.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania, *Lithuania at the United Nations Security Council 2014–2015* (Vilnius: Eugrimas, 2016), p. 11.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>30</sup> See Vahid Nick Pay, Przemysław Postolski, "Power and Diplomacy in the United Nations Security Council: the Influence of Elected Members," *The International Spectator* 57, no. 2 (2022), p.7.

<sup>31</sup> "Situation of Persons with Disabilities in Armed Conflict Arria-Formula Meeting," *Security Council Report*, <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/whatsinblue/2018/11/situation-of-persons-with-disabilities-in-armed-conflict-arria-formula-meeting.php>.

<sup>32</sup> "Security Council Unanimously Adopts Resolution 2475 (2019), Ground-Breaking Text on Protection of Persons with Disabilities in Conflict," Meetings Coverage and Press Releases, *United Nations*, <https://press.un.org/en/2019/sc13851.doc.htm>.

## RULE #6

# Birds of a feather stick together

During both the campaign and membership, it is important to build partnerships and networks with similar countries. Nevertheless, the criteria for similarity can range from regional indicators, the size of a country, shared problems and challenges, and even the UN Security Council elected members' status as a unifying factor of interests.

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This method allows for predictability, effective planning, and strategic campaigning for Nordic candidacies

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The Nordic countries have established a coordinated turn-taking strategy for presenting their Security Council candidacies. As members of the Western Europe and Others Group, Nordic countries submit their candidacies at every alternate opportunity, ensuring no internal

competition and mutual support from other Nordic countries.<sup>33</sup> This method allows for predictability, effective planning, and strategic campaigning for these candidacies. However, it's important to note that this advantage is not always decisive, as seen in the unsuccessful bids of Iceland and Finland in 2008 and 2012 respectively.

During its campaign, Sweden was the only candidate from its regional group that narrowed its focus and spoke about climate

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<sup>33</sup> Ann-Marie Ekengren, Ulrika Möller, "Domestic Debate and International Office: Sweden in the UN Security Council 2017–18", *Foreign Policy Analysis*, Volume 20, Issue 1, January 2024, p. 8.

change, while the Netherlands and Italy spoke about it in much broader terms via the sustainable development dimension.<sup>34</sup> It is a major concern for SIDS – the Small Island Developing States – as they are particularly vulnerable to the devastating impacts of climate change. This strategic focus not only underscored Sweden’s commitment to global climate issues but also strengthened its image as a reliable partner and its appeal among countries that are most at risk from climate-related challenges.

During its term, Lithuania established an informal group of friends of Ukraine to coordinate supportive efforts among like-minded countries. Overall, Lithuania used coalition-building not only to advance matters relevant to the situation in Ukraine but also to adopt its drafted resolutions on the protection of journalists in conflict zones, as well as on small arms and light weapons. When advancing its initiatives, Lithuania worked closely with its strategic partners, namely, the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and Luxembourg, as well as other Council members, particularly Australia, Chile, Jordan, Malaysia, New Zealand, and South Korea.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Nico Schrijver, Niels Blokker, *Elected Members of the Security Council: Lame Ducks or Key Players?*, (Brill/Nijhoff, 2020), p. 69.

<sup>35</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania, *Lithuania at the United Nations Security Council 2014–2015*, (Vilnius: Eugrimas, 2016), p. 9.

## RULE #7

### Be smart with your resources

The limited set of human and material resources available to small and medium states commonly imposes limits on their foreign policy activities. The good news is that a campaign for Security Council membership is not about the size of the nation or the thickness of the wallet; it's about competence and a clever approach.

The Irish campaign team was designed in the following way. There were 11 persons in the Security Council Task team, and additional staff were assigned to some units in the Development Cooperation and Africa Division of the Ministry of Foreign

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This can be considered a compact and thoughtful approach to the use of human resources, which is characteristic of small, democratic countries

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Affairs, at Irish embassies in some of the Security Council permanent members' countries, as well as in some Middle East and African countries. At the Permanent missions at the UN, 8 additional diplomatic officers were assigned, and 13 locally hired Security Council advisers were recruited for the duration of the term. There was also a new Deputy Military Adviser and one

colleague from the EEAS on secondment. This can be considered a compact and thoughtful approach to the use of human resources, which is characteristic of small, democratic countries, regardless of their geographical location.

It is also worth noting that Sweden achieved its success with an estimated campaign budget that was less than half of what both the Netherlands and Italy reportedly spent.<sup>36</sup> This is a significant point, as it challenges the notion that securing a non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council is primarily a matter of financial resources. That is good news for smaller but committed states that aspire to obtain a non-permanent seat on the Security Council.

The human resources for Norwegian campaign encompassed an eight-person coordination team, the Norwegian UN Mission in New York, as well as human resources of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs' and other ministries. Concerning the campaign's financial resources, it must be noted that the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, by emphasizing transparency as the leading motif of the campaign, has provided a very explicit and clear public overview of the costs related to the campaign for a seat on the UNSC.<sup>37</sup> The costs of the campaign in the active period were estimated over NOK 29 million (USD 3,1 million), 29 which includes both representative costs (campaign materials, promotional activities, representation) and human resources costs (salaries for employees and special representatives, competence-building activities and courses, travel costs). In comparison to the other contestants – Ireland and Canada – Norway's allocated campaign budget is the highest, since Canada has declared its UNSC campaign budget around USD 1,74 million, but Ireland – USD 0,8 million.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania, *Lithuania at the United Nations Security Council 2014–2015*, (Vilnius: Eugrimas, 2016), p. 59

<sup>37</sup> "Costs related to the campaign for a seat on the UN Security Council," *Norwegian Government Security and Service Organisation*, 13 February 2020, <https://www.regjeringen.no/en/historical-archive/solbergs-government/Ministries/ud/news/2019/costscampaign-un-security-council/id2638778/>.

<sup>38</sup> "Canada loses out to Ireland and Norway in Security Council vote", *BBC*, 18 June 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-53087650>.

## RULE #8

# Manage your expectations

Sometimes you hear unrealistic expectations related to the UN Security Council membership, involving exploding business opportunities, embracing new markets, pursuing national security interests, and dictating the Security Council agenda. It won't be so. Undoubtedly, there are concrete benefits of the membership, but they must be viewed from a different perspective – if you're not at the table, you risk being on the menu.

Small and medium countries usually look at the Security Council membership as an opportunity to be part of the parade, growing engagement in global issues, international visibility, international prestige, influence and status. Above all, the Security Council membership serves as a chance to strengthen the international rules-based order and ensure that smaller nations have a voice in setting the global agenda and affect its decision-making.<sup>39</sup> In addition, necessity to be at the Security Council can be more diverse and tailored.

Estonia's membership in the UN Security Council highlights how small states can take on active roles and reap significant benefits from their participation. With respect to the Afghanistan crisis in 2021, Estonia applied for the penholder's role in Afghanistan as a broader topic during its second year of membership. From the Estonian

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<sup>39</sup> “What Can Ireland Achieve During its Membership of the UN Security Council for 2021–2022?”, *The Institute of International and European Affairs (IIEA)*, February 2021, p. 5, <https://www.iiea.com/images/uploads/resources/UN-Security-Council-Explainer.pdf>.

perspective, such a role provided an opportunity for a small state to acquire invaluable experience in refining the negotiation skills of Estonian diplomats, expanding the network, and making the work of the Council more democratic and transparent.<sup>40</sup> After extensive negotiations for more than half a year, Estonia became a penholder on matters of Afghanistan in early 2021, also persuading Norway to be the co-penholder. For being entrusted the role of penholder, Estonian diplomats credited the successful work of Estonia during its first year of membership, as well as Estonia's lack of strong national interest in the topic, making it a suitable mediator on the matter.<sup>41</sup>

Obtaining a non-permanent seat on the Council gives states, especially smaller states, an opportunity to add new, specific issues to the Council's agenda. During Ireland's presidency of the Security Council in September 2021, there was a high-level open debate on Climate and Security. Working in partnership with Niger, Ireland chaired the Council's expert group on Climate and Security and led work on a draft resolution.<sup>42</sup> While this particular resolution was ultimately vetoed by Russia, it was a historic initiative, garnering widespread support from a significant number of UN member states. It marked a notable step forward in integrating climate considerations into the global security agenda as well as in priority-setting by new incoming Security Council members.

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<sup>40</sup> "Estonia as the Elected Member of the United Nations Security Council 2020–2021", *Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, March 2023, p. 93, <https://www.vm.ee/en/media/5265/download>.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Micheál Martin, "Ireland on Security Council: Multilateralism central to Irish foreign policy", interview by the *United Nations Regional Information Centre (UNRIC)*, 2 May 2023, <https://unric.org/en/ireland-on-security-council-multilateralism-central-to-irish-foreign-policy/>.



## RULE #9

# Stand out

And now imagine – every year the UN Security Council elections take place, and hundreds of diplomats and political leaders are seeking for votes, trying to arrange mutual support and secure the win at the upcoming election. In this perpetual process, countries with all their might try to remain in vivid memory, to form a clear picture of both themselves and their priorities, and to stand out.

Norway was considered special from the very beginning of the campaign. Diplomats viewed Norway as being favoured for a seat on the Security Council, given its longstanding commitment to diplomatic engagement and multilateralism.<sup>43</sup> Norway was the largest contributor per capita to the UN budget of the three candidates and the most generous donor of foreign assistance in the world, donating more than 1% of its GDP for international development.<sup>44</sup> Norway's history of diplomatic engagement in mediating conflicts in Latin America and the Middle East, including the Oslo Accords, also strengthened its candidacy.<sup>45</sup> Additionally, Norway, in a sense, is not

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<sup>43</sup> Matthew Fisher, “Canada badly wants a seat on the UN Security Council. Are other countries listening?”, *Global News*, 10 June 2020, <https://globalnews.ca/news/7038514/canada-un-security-council-bid/>.

<sup>44</sup> “Norwegian aid to developing countries hits record high”, *Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York*, <https://www.norway.no/en/missions/un/news/123/news-on-development-and-humanitarian-efforts/norwegian-aid-to-developing-countries-hits-record-high/>.

<sup>45</sup> “COVID-19 Reshapes UN Security Council Election”, *VOA News*, 16 June 2020, [https://www.voanews.com/a/usa\\_covid-19-reshapes-un-security-council-election/6191226.html](https://www.voanews.com/a/usa_covid-19-reshapes-un-security-council-election/6191226.html).



Dag Hammarskjöld – a compromise Swedish candidate – was selected as the Secretary-General of the UN in 1953. He served till his death in 1961. Dag Hammarskjöld was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize posthumously. (Photo: UN / Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation)

at all known as the “small among the great” or “weaker among the stronger”.

Sweden is a small country but highly integrated into the multilateral community thanks to its active diplomacy and a significant international footprint. Sweden particularly stands out because, in 1953, Swedish diplomat Dag Hammarskjöld became the second Secretary-General of the UN who tragically died in a plane crash while on the peace mission in Congo in 1961.<sup>46</sup> However, his

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<sup>46</sup> “Dag Hjalmar Agne Carl Hammarskjöld”, *United Nations*, <https://www.un.org/sg/en/formersg/dag-hammarskj%C3%B6ld>.



U2's Bono supports Ireland's UN Security Council bid. More than 150 UN diplomats watched campaign's concert at Madison Square Garden. (Photo: Government of Ireland)

legacy has been visible and felt throughout the UN to this day. He is probably one of the best-known UN Secretary-Generals to this day.

Ireland effectively deployed its own charm offensive, inviting UN ambassadors from every member state to the U2 concert at Madison Square Garden in New York.<sup>47</sup> Lead singer of U2, Bono, even added his voice to Ireland's bid to secure the non-permanent seat on the Security Council: "The word is compromise because that's how you achieve peace and compromise is a word that the Irish people understand very, very well," he said.<sup>48</sup> Ambassador Nason described him many times not just as a musician but as a humanitarian who had a great interest in the UN Security Council project.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> "Dag Hjalmar Agne Carl Hammarskjöld", *United Nations*, <https://www.un.org/sg/en/formers/dag-hammarskj%C3%B6ld>.

<sup>48</sup> "U2's Bono adds voice to Irish UN Security Council bid", *BBC*, 3 July 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-44697528>.

<sup>49</sup> Geraldine Byrne Nason, "Ireland's Election to the UN Security Council", moderated by Michael Collins, 10 July, 2020, *Institute of International and European Affairs (IIEA)*, YouTube, 03:29, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eglGntMAK7g&ct=1475s>.

## RULE #10

# Embody the spirit of multilateralism

To become an elected member of the Security Council, a candidate country must receive at least two-thirds of the votes of the UN General Assembly. Nevertheless, the importance of multilateralism certainly goes far beyond the search for votes in elections. A strong candidate is also one who, through the foreign and security policy, is able to demonstrate a global, engaged, and broad-based approach and ability to work with a wide range of partners on a wide range of UN policies through a wide range of crises and on a wide range of issues. In other words – it must be able not only to understand the principles of multilateralism but also embody the spirit of it.

Norway has been actively involved in global peace issues since the creation of the UN, has focused on the UNSC’s core mission, as well as worked and cooperated with the global community, thus setting itself far away from such categories as “one issue country” or “one region country”. It is a rule that Norway, as a connoisseur of the UN, emphasised explicitly: “We won’t choose among countries. We will try to find good solutions for everyone.”<sup>50</sup> From a foreign policy perspective, Norway’s campaign profile fully reflected a multilateral approach. That is why Norway’s candidacy can really be considered a strong bid.

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<sup>50</sup> “Norway wins seat on Security Council”, *NEWSinENGLISH*, 18 June 2020, <https://www.newsinenglish.no/2020/06/18/norway-wins-seat-on-security-council/>.



Crown Prince of Norway Haakon and Minister of Foreign Affairs Anniken Huitfeldt in the UN Security Council Chamber. It was donated and designed by Norway in 1952. (Photo: Pontus Höök / Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

In 2019, during the campaign, Ireland launched Strategy for Africa and Strategy for Partnership with SIDS but in 2020 – a similar strategy aimed at the Asia Pacific region.<sup>51</sup> Recognising that the most effective way to maintain global peace and security is to prevent conflicts before they escalate, Ireland adopted a comprehensive approach that included support for preventive diplomacy, mediation, non-proliferation, disarmament, and addressing the structural drivers of conflict.<sup>52</sup> Under this principle, already serving at the UNSC, Ireland and Niger put forward the historic resolution on Climate and Security, which has given incentive to other incoming UN Security Council members to push this topic further despite the resistance from some of the permanent members.

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<sup>51</sup> “Evaluation of Ireland’s term on the United Nations Security Council 2021-2022”, *Department of Foreign Affairs of Ireland (DFA)*, <https://www.ireland.ie/en/un/>.

<sup>52</sup> “What Can Ireland Achieve During its Membership of the UN Security Council for 2021–2022?”, *The Institute of International and European Affairs (IIEA)*, February 2021, p. 6, <https://www.iiea.com/images/uploads/resources/UN-Security-Council-Explainer.pdf>.

## RULE #11

# Man plans and God laughs

Regardless of the quality or quantity of good campaign plans, there are no guarantees that they will work out. First, external cataclysms occur. Second, conflicts and crises break out unexpectedly, therefore refocusing the UNSC work swiftly and dramatically. This can be both a helpful hand and a scourge for UNSC elected members' national and regional interests.

The 2020 UN Security Council campaign and voting in the UN General Assembly took place during unprecedented times of the COVID-19 global pandemic. Campaign plans were cancelled and replaced with “lobbying via

phone and Zoom”.<sup>53</sup> The Council held its public meetings online, and the UN “had to navigate an evolving reality, which included the cancellation of events promoting candidacies”.<sup>54</sup> Even the election itself on 17 June 2020 had to be held in a manner that was safe and would not facilitate the spread of the virus – the General Assembly decided to apply an altered procedure for holding

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<sup>53</sup> Margaret Besheer, “COVID-19 Reshapes UN Security Council Election”, *VOA News*, June 16, 2020, [https://www.voanews.com/a/usa\\_covid-19-reshapes-un-security-council-election/6191226.html](https://www.voanews.com/a/usa_covid-19-reshapes-un-security-council-election/6191226.html).

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*





Estonia-convened virtual high-level Arria-formula meeting “75 Years since the end of the Second World War in Europe: lessons for the prevention of international crimes in the future, the responsibility of the Security Council”, using Hybridity, an Estonian-developed secure virtual event platform. (Photo: Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

elections by secret ballot without a plenary meeting during the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>55</sup>

But sometimes cards lay out well. One must recognise the favourable composition of the Security Council for the advancement of the Polish regional priority theme of peace and security in Eastern Europe, which included two sub-priorities related to Georgia and Ukraine. At that moment, the Council was composed of up to one-third of the EU countries.<sup>56</sup> This led to strengthened

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<sup>55</sup> “Procedure for holding elections by secret ballot without a plenary meeting during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic”, *United Nations*, A/74/L.67, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3863310>.

<sup>56</sup> “Polish Membership in the UN Security Council 2018–2019,” *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland*, last modified January 28, 2020, p. 6, [https://issuu.com/msz.gov.pl/docs/polish\\_membership\\_in\\_the\\_un\\_security\\_council\\_2018-](https://issuu.com/msz.gov.pl/docs/polish_membership_in_the_un_security_council_2018-)



European cooperation on the Council's agenda, with EU member states coordinating their positions on key issues, making joint media statements and appearances, as well as facilitating valuable information exchanges between capitals.<sup>57</sup>

And sometimes you find yourself in the right place at the right time. While the Lithuanian membership priorities were defined during its term, the illegal annexation of Crimea by Russia in February 2014 significantly shaped its focus. Despite the fierce Russian resistance, Lithuania, together with like-minded partners, successfully performed its "primary task and duty on the Security Council"<sup>58</sup> – to stand against the Russian aggression

against Ukraine and the illegal annexation of Crimea. By calling an urgent meeting on the matter during its presidency of the Council, providing significant contributions to relevant resolutions, as well as organising public and Arria-formula Council meetings, Lithuania could be seen as ensuring that the situation in Ukraine remained relevant on the Council's agenda throughout its term, also elevating the visibility of Lithuanian membership at the Council.

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania, *Lithuania at the United Nations Security Council 2014–2015* (Vilnius: Eugrimas, 2016), p. 7.

## RULE #12

# Personalities matter

In the campaign race to influence people and win friends, it's always worth remembering that personalities matter. Persuasive heads of state, ambassadors, and campaign team members with excellent language skills and the ability to find common interests with representatives of any region of the world are a big campaign asset.

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The newly elected Estonian President Kersti Kaljulaid took on the role of patron for the campaign, prominently featuring both her image and the presidential office at its forefront.<sup>59</sup> To promote the Estonian bid, she used formal events as well as her personal interests by, for instance, engaging in morning runs in Central Park with UN ambassadors.<sup>60</sup> Her

proficiency in French, then a limited skill even in Estonian foreign service, effectively offset Romania's greatest advantage in receiving

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<sup>59</sup> Kristin Haugevik, Piret Kuusik, Kristi Raik and Niels Nagelhus Schia, "Small States, Different Approaches: Estonia and Norway on the UN Security Council", *International Centre for Defence and Security Estonian Foreign Policy Institute*, November 2021, p. 7, [https://icds.ee/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/ICDS\\_EFPI\\_Report\\_Small\\_States\\_Different\\_Approaches\\_Haugevik\\_Kuusik\\_Raik\\_Schia\\_November\\_2021.pdf](https://icds.ee/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/ICDS_EFPI_Report_Small_States_Different_Approaches_Haugevik_Kuusik_Raik_Schia_November_2021.pdf).

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.



Permanent Representative of Lithuania to the UN Raimonda Murmokaitė delivers Lithuania's statement at the UN Security Council briefing on Libya ICC (Photo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania)

votes from francophone nations.<sup>61</sup> President Kaljulaid also actively sought out international leaders who could promote Estonian bids outside the major events or in places with a limited Estonian presence. For instance, in the high-level week of the UN General Assembly, President Kaljulaid received an invitation to visit Rwanda from the state's President, Paul Kagame.<sup>62</sup> After the state visit, Paul Kagame became committed to attracting support from African countries for the Estonian Security Council's bid, emphasising Estonian interest in digital cooperation with the region.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Estonia as the Elected Member of the United Nations Security Council 2020–2021*, March 2023, p. 20, <https://www.vm.ee/en/media/5265/download>.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

Lithuania's charismatic ambassador also proved to be a strong asset for the campaign. Permanent Representative to the UN, Raimonda Murmokaitė, with proficiency in French, English, Spanish, and some Arabic, as well as a charismatic and outgoing personality, opened many doors for Lithuania and significantly contributed to securing the necessary votes in the Council elections.

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This left a strong impression of Norway's longstanding interest in UN-related multilateralism, engagement and leadership in global issues

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Norway positioned its leaders as one of the highlights of the bid. For instance, during the launch of the campaign, the Crown Prince remembered himself working in the UNGA Third Committee 20 years ago thereby illustrating both Norway's long experience and commitment and his personal engagement in multilateral diplomacy. He also pointed to historic UN figures of Norwegian origin – Frieda Dalen,

the first woman ever to address the UNGA; Gro Harlem Brundtland, Norway's first female Prime Minister and leader of the World Commission on Environment and Development; and Trygve Lie, the UN's first Secretary-General. He mentioned the Prime Minister that "has picked up the baton" and now is co-chair of the Sustainable Development Goals Advocates, his own service as UNDP goodwill ambassador. This left a strong impression of Norway's longstanding interest in UN-related multilateralism, engagement and leadership in global issues, as well as its orientation towards a global instead of a regional agenda, as well as readiness and experience in working with all UN members.

# Latvia on its path to the Security Council

Latvia aspires to serve as an elected member of the UN Security Council for the first time in 2026. From the perspective of 2024, several conclusions can already be drawn.

First, Latvia is an early bird and plays by the best rules. It officially announced its future intention to become a Council's elected member for the first time in 2011. Nevertheless, Latvia's competitor Montenegro is an early bird too, by having announced its intention to run for the same Eastern European seat in the 2025 election in 2013.

This leads to the second conclusion – Latvia does not have a clean slate situation at the moment and most likely will participate in a contested election. Both competitors started early, Montenegro intensified its efforts in 2024, the campaign will be tough, and Latvia must plan its financial, human and time resources very wisely.

Thirdly, in the campaign, Latvia emphasizes several priorities, which are not created specifically for the 2025 elections, but naturally stem from its foreign policy and are supported by real achievements and experience in the UN. More precisely, Latvia's campaign is characterised by the motto "Together for peace and resilience," which involves three main directions: the rule of law and democracy, the promotion of women's rights, and solutions for security, sustainability, and development.<sup>64</sup> These policy directions

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<sup>64</sup> See "Latvia's candidacy to the United Nations Security Council (2026–2027)", *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia*, 11.09.2023, <https://www.mfa.gov.lv/en/latvias-candidacy-to-the-united-nations-security-council-2026-2027>.



Latvia officially launched its campaign for the elected seat at the UN Security Council in November 2023. (Photo: Dāvis Doršs, Chancery of the President of Latvia)

are high on the international agenda everywhere, especially in Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean and the Pacific. This choice of priority directions not only highlights Latvia's multilateral approach but also allows for building partnerships and ties with countries from different regions, thus escaping the risk of being perceived as a one-issue or one-region country.

Since 1991, when Latvia became a UN member, it has not been a passive observer. Latvian diplomats and experts have assumed responsible roles in key UN bodies, including the Human Rights Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Executive Board of UN Women, as well as the UN Commission on the Status of Women, the International Law Commission, the Peacebuilding Commission, and the International Panel on Climate Change. It is worth remembering that the former President of Latvia, Mrs. Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga, has been one of the first female leaders to run for the

post of UN Secretary-General in the UN history. Namely, in 2006, the three Baltic States jointly nominated the President of Latvia as their official candidate for this high office.

The UN Charter provides three criteria, although very general, that UN members should consider when electing the Security Council members, and one of them is the contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security. This criterion generally refers to the participation in UN missions, as well as human resources (personnel) and financial contributions for processes supporting peace. In election campaigns, many countries devote lots of resources and campaign elements to this aim,<sup>65</sup> which, under the UN Charter, is the main purpose of the whole organisation and the primary task of the Security Council.<sup>66</sup> Looking ahead to the upcoming elections, Latvia contributes to military and civilian operations around the world, including UN efforts in Mali, Lebanon, and the Truce Supervision Organization. In recent years, Latvia has been increasingly engaged in UN peacebuilding efforts and strengthening of non-proliferation, arms control and export control regimes.

Speaking about the management of expectations, Latvia has been down to earth and realistic so far by emphasising the importance to strengthen the rule of law while being at the Council, build muscles of the Latvian diplomatic corps, highlight cybersecurity and disinformation threats or artificial intelligence risks, and to be able to keep Ukraine's fight against Russia's aggression high on the Security Council's agenda. President of the Republic of Latvia, Edgars Rinkēvičs, emphasised this important role to play at the UN General Assembly in 2023: "Latvia remains a responsible and reliable partner. We will continue to be involved in peacekeeping and

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<sup>65</sup> See "Security Council Elections 2019"; "Security Council Elections 2018"; "Security Council Elections 2017"; "Security Council Elections 2016", Research Reports, *Security Council Report*, <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/elections-to-the-security-council/>.

<sup>66</sup> Gunda Reire, "Development aid as an economic factor in the United Nations Security Council election: Lessons for Latvia", *LZA Vēstis, A daļa*, 2021, 3, pp. 13–28.





President of Latvia Edgars Rinkēvičs addresses the UN Security Council at the High-Level Open Debate on 20 September, 2023. (Photo: Ilmārs Znotiņš, Chancery of the President of Latvia)

peacebuilding efforts. Determination to protect the fundamental values of the United Nations Charter guides Latvia’s candidacy for the Security Council elections in 2025. This organization will be as effective as the collective will of its member states. It is in our hands to safeguard and to improve it.”<sup>67</sup>

Latvia can certainly be inspired by the success stories of many small countries. Among them, the most recent ones are those of Estonia, Malta, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. These UN members prove that small countries can be very effective and powerful players in the Security Council. Size does not matter. Everything is determined by purposefulness, competence, and the power of persuasion.

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<sup>67</sup> “Statement by Edgars Rinkēvičs, President of the Republic of Latvia, at the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly”, *President of the Republic of Latvia*, 20.09.2023, <https://www.president.lv/en/article/statement-edgars-rinkevics-president-republic-latvia-78th-session-united-nations-general-assembly>.



# TOGETHER FOR PEACE AND RESILIENCE



Candidate for the  
UN Security Council  
2026-2027

[LatviaUNSC.mfa.gov.lv](https://latviaunsc.mfa.gov.lv)  
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CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDIES (CIS) is a think tank that carries out research on Latvia's opportunities as a member of the European Union, NATO, and the United Nations, along with Latvia's place in global development processes. The CIS is also stimulating high-quality dialogue with the country's legislative and executive powers, as well as the general public, on matters that concern Latvia's development and the consolidation of democracy. Through interdisciplinary and future-oriented studies, the main goal of the CIS is to generate a long-term vision for the further development of Latvia.