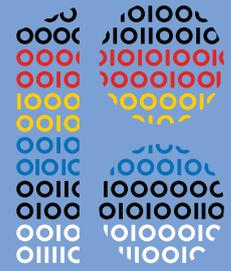




BOTSCHAFT VON ESTLAND
IN BERLIN

A CENTURY OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS IN A CULTURAL HISTORY PERSPECTIVE

Lecture series



100 JAHRE
DIPLOMATISCHE BEZIEHUNGEN
ESTLAND-DEUTSCHLAND

Estonian Embassy in Berlin has the honour
to invite You to a

Discussion on the origins of the
reestablishing of Estonian-German relations -
What actually happened in the 90s?

on Friday the 10th of June 2022 at 12 pm (CET) in the Estonian
Embassy (Hildebrandstraße 5)



The Discussion will be held by
Henning von Wistinghausen and **Indrek Tarand**,
moderated by **Kaarel Piirimäe**

Welcoming words by **Alar Streimann**, the Ambassador of Estonia to Germany

The lecture can be followed also via Zoom App or Web browser. To receive a Zoom link or to confirm
Your attendance at the Embassy, please register by sending an e-mail to Embassy.Berlin@mfa.ee by
9th of June latest. The lecture will be recorded and held in English.



What actually happened in the 90s? – a discussion on the origins of the reestablishing of Estonian-German relations

After more than 50 years, 1991 marked the new beginning in Estonian-German relations. Soviet Union collapsed and Estonia restored its independence. The Iron Curtain fell, leading to the Reunification of the East and West Germanies. Building on their deep common history, Estonia and Germany started to build a common future. Soon it became clear that Estonia and other Baltic states saw their future in the Euroatlantic space. United Germany as the largest and economically strongest member in the EU played central part in pushing the integration process of the Baltic States forward. At the same time a new web of relations with the Russian Federation had to be set up. Shaky and uncertain societal conditions in Russia combined with the apparent success of Willy Brandt's Ostpolitik and the perception that democracy might have its complete heyday were some of the considerations that underlined German policies toward the new Russia. But there was no „direct Autobahn from Bonn through Berlin to Moscow“, as the Estonian president Lennart Meri warned. While building relations with Russia, for Baltic States the central question was to make sure that their interests were properly addressed in Bonn and other European capitals.

As the new Euroatlantic architecture was emerging, Estonia and Germany started also to intensively build up their bilateral cooperation. Germany's support to Estonia in various fields played major part in the creation of a post-Soviet modern society, be it economy, law making or education. German institutions starting from political Stiftungs and ending with student organisations had all their prominent part, not to mention the fact that Estonia tied its currency – Estonian kroon (crown) – to Deutschmark. People-to-people relations that were cut off for 50 years could be restored. Those who were forced to flee the war and occupations had the chance to return to their homeland.

Two important architects in reestablishing the Estonian-German relations 30 years ago – Henning von Wistinghausen and Indrek Tarand – will be having a unique discussion about the events 30 years ago. What were the main determinants on the International arena and between the two countries that defined the relations back then and during the years that followed? How was it possible that for some time the Estonian

Foreign Ministry and the German Embassy in Tallinn were operating in the very same building? And who actually got the first key to the Foreign Ministry building, the so called White House (former headquarters of the Central Committee of Communist Party of Estonian)?

Henning von Wistinghausen is a German diplomat. He was the first German ambassador to Estonia (1991-1995) after the Fall of Soviet Union. Before that he held the position of German Consul-General in Leningrad. After the tenure in Estonia Henning von Wistinghausen served as an ambassador in Kasachstan (1995-1999) and later also in Finland (1999-2001). His family has roots in Old Livonia and is closely connected to Tallinn. Henning von Wistinghausen is the member of the Baltische Historische Kommission and has written many books and articles about history connected to the land and people of nowadays Estonia. His memoirs about the ambassadorial time in Tallinn, „Im freien Estland. Erinnerungen des ersten deutschen Botschafters 1991-1995“, has become a classic.

Indrek Tarand is an Estonian diplomat and politician; historian by education. He has served as adviser to the Prime Minister of Estonia (1993-1994) and as the Secretary General of the Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1994-2002). Before his time as the Member of the European Parliament (2009-2019), he was heading the Estonian War Museum (2005-2009). Indrek Tarand is now back in the Foreign Ministry working mostly with e-Residency programme.

Kaarel Piirimäe is Associate Professor of Contemporary History at the University of Tartu and Research Fellow at the University of Helsinki. He received his Ph.D. in 2009 from the University of Cambridge with a thesis on the Big Three Allies and the Baltic states in World War Two (published in 2014). Piirimäe has edited several volumes and special journal issues on the history of the Baltic states in the twentieth century. His recent writings include an article on Liberalism and the small states, on Gorbachev's new thinking and the Soviet republics, and about concepts of time in Estonia's transition from the Soviet Union to the EU. He is now finishing a collective monograph on the history of the relations between the United States and Estonia in the past hundred years.