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Press Release

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Three Baltic Leaders Awarded the Henry A. Kissinger Prize

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(Photos available after 10pm)

BERLIN—March 28, 2025—The American Academy in Berlin has awarded the Henry A. Kissinger Prize to **Kaja Kallas**, High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission; former Prime Minister, Republic of Estonia; **Evika Siliņa**, Prime Minister, Republic of Latvia; and **Ingrīda Šimonytė**, former Prime Minister, Republic of Lithuania.

The ceremony was held at the Axica Convention Center in Berlin on the evening of Friday, March 28, 2025. The laudation was delivered by **Wolfgang Ischinger**, President of the Munich Security Conference Foundation Council and Trustee of the American Academy in Berlin.

The event marked the first time the prize was given to not one but three recipients, in recognition of their outstanding contributions to the transatlantic relationship. It took place on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of their countries' membership to the European Union and NATO, institutions whose developments they have influenced in remarkable ways. This is also the first Kissinger Prize following the passing of its namesake, one of the visionary founders of our institution.

Daniel Benjamin, President of the American Academy in Berlin, said: "In a time when the foundational values of the transatlantic alliance—democracy, sovereignty, and the rule of law—are under grave threat, Kaja Kallas, Evika Siliņa, and Ingrida Šimonytė have demonstrated tremendous leadership and extraordinary moral courage. Through their unwavering support for Ukraine and commitment to European unity and security, they have pointed the way for the North Atlantic community and moved their own nations to undertake enormous sacrifices. Sitting, as their nations do, on the edge of the volcano, they have been crystal clear in calling out aggression and barbarity for what it is. No one today more dramatically exemplifies the historic shared values of the transatlantic community. With admiration and gratitude, the American Academy in Berlin recognizes their heroic work to achieve a secure, democratic, and peaceful future."

Sandra Peterson, Chairman of the American Academy in Berlin, said: "As heads of government for each of the three Baltic states, these three leaders demonstrated exceptional foresight and determination in strengthening Baltic participation within NATO, the European Union, and the broader transatlantic community. Their leadership not only fortified their nations' integration into the European and Euro-Atlantic security framework but also ensured robust support for Ukraine at a critical juncture. In honoring them, the American Academy in Berlin recognizes the profound impact they have had on advancing collective defense, support of a free, vibrant and democratic European future, and transatlantic solidarity."

Wolfgang Ischinger, President of the Munich Security Conference Foundation Council and Academy Trustee, said: "Honoring three outstanding female Baltic leaders with the Henry Kissinger Prize reflects both the legacy of Henry Kissinger and Richard Holbrooke, and their vision for the American Academy in Berlin. Thirty years ago, in an issue of *Foreign Affairs*, Ambassador Holbrooke published an essay titled 'America, a European Power,' where he wrote: 'In the 21st century, Europe will still need the active American involvement that has been a necessary component of the continental balance for half a century.' In that spirit, there must be no question mark after 'America, a European Power'—a statement made all the more meaningful by the remarkable progress of the Baltic states. Their freedom, sovereignty, and territorial integrity represent one of the most impressive achievements of transatlantic cooperation in recent decades, and a testament to the enduring importance of American engagement in Europe."



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Kaja Kallas, High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission; former Prime Minister, Republic of Estonia, said: “We have entered a new era, with uncertainties over the principles we have held dear over the past decades. Yet, in the face of these challenges, Europe can find strength in its core identity. Our values—freedom, dignity, equality, and prosperity—remain unchanged. These values are not only the foundation of who we are, but also the source of our greatest influence and global appeal.”

Evika Siliņa, Prime Minister, Republic of Latvia, said: “It’s a true honor to receive this award alongside my Baltic sisters—the former Prime Ministers of Estonia and Lithuania. We share a deep commitment to European values and a strong transatlantic bond. This prize belongs to the Baltic people, who understand that resilience comes through unity. This year’s Henry Kissinger Prize also recognizes our firm support for Ukraine, proving that together, we are stronger.”

Ingrida Šimonytė, former Prime Minister, Republic of Lithuania, said in her speech: “Three decades ago, Kissinger warned that ‘NATO has come to be taken for granted as part of a landscape that needs no further tending.’ Having ignored the hint, Europe must finally take resolute action. We must contribute our long-overdue fair share to building NATO deterrence and defense capabilities in Europe and substantially increase our military aid to Ukraine to achieve a secure and lasting peace. Our best chance at succeeding in these two monumental efforts is to merge the tasks and accept Ukraine as our thirty-third ally. Article 5 is the only security guarantee with seventy-five years of proven working experience. And take it from Lithuania, any NATO member that has joined since 1997, or from Kissinger’s own example: taboos get broken, beliefs change, and what once seemed incomprehensible becomes reality. All it takes is a refusal to give up on fighting for what is right.”

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The Henry A. Kissinger Prize was established to honor the founding Chairman of the American Academy in Berlin. Previous recipients are Helmut Schmidt, George H.W. Bush, Richard von Weizsäcker, Michael R. Bloomberg, Helmut Kohl, George P. Shultz, Ewald-Heinrich von Kleist (posthumous), James A. Baker III, Giorgio Napolitano, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, Samantha Power, Wolfgang Schäuble, John McCain, Angela Merkel, James N. Mattis, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, and Jens Stoltenberg.

The American Academy in Berlin is a private, nonpartisan, nonprofit institution of advanced scholarship dedicated to upholding the cultural, academic, and political ties between the United States and Germany.

Contact:

Kristen Allen
Press Manager
+49 (0)30 80483 252
kra@americanacademy.de