

Vīķe-Freiberga, Vaira (Latvia)

[Original: English]

Statement of qualifications

Dr. Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga is a professor and interdisciplinary scholar having published eleven books and numerous articles, essays and book chapters, in addition to her extensive speaking engagements.

As President of the Republic of Latvia 1999-2007, she was instrumental in achieving membership in the European Union and NATO for her country. She is active in international politics, was named Special Envoy to the Secretary-General on United Nations reform and was an official candidate for United Nations Secretary-General in 2006.

She remains active in the international arena and continues to speak up in defence of liberty, equality and social justice, and for the need of Europe to acknowledge the whole of its history. In December 2007, she was named vice-chair of the reflection group on the long-term future of the European Union.

She is also known for her work in psycholinguistics, semiotics and analysis of the oral literature of her native country.

Childhood and education (1937-1965)

Vaira Vīķe was born on 1 December 1937 in Riga, Latvia. To escape the Soviet occupation, her family fled the country on 1 January 1945 and became refugees. Vaira began her schooling in refugee camps in Germany and continued in French Morocco, first at the elementary school in Daourat and then at the Girls' College Mers-Sultan in Casablanca.

After arriving in Canada in 1954, she had to work for a year in a bank, and then entered the University of Toronto, obtaining a B.A. (1958) and an M.A. (1960) in Psychology. While studying, she worked as a part-time teacher in a private girls' school and Spanish translator, and afterwards as a full-time clinical psychologist at the Toronto Psychiatric Hospital (1960-1961). Resuming her education at McGill University in Montreal, she earned a doctorate (Ph.D.) in experimental psychology in 1965. She speaks Latvian, English, French, German and Spanish and understands Italian and Portuguese.

Professional career (1965-1999)

From 1965 to 1998, Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga pursued a professorial career at the Department of Psychology of the French-speaking University of Montreal, where she taught psychopharmacology, psycholinguistics, scientific theories, experimental methods, language and cognitive processes. Her experimental research focused on memory processes and language, and the influence of drugs on cognitive processes. At the same time, she did scholarly research on semiotics, poetics and the structural analysis of computer-accessible texts from an oral tradition - the Latvian folksongs (*Dainas*). Between 1965 and 1999, she authored seven books and about 160 articles, essays or book chapters and has given over 250 speeches, allocutions and scientific communications in English, French or Latvian, as well as numerous radio, TV and press interviews in various languages.

Since 1957, she has been actively engaged in community service, focusing on questions of Latvian identity and culture, and the political future of the Baltic States.

Dr. Vīķe-Freiberga has held leading positions in national and international scientific and scholarly organizations, as well as in a number of Canadian governmental, institutional, academic and interdisciplinary committees, where she acquired extensive administrative experience. Recipient of many medals, prizes and honours for distinguished work in the humanities and social sciences (see appendix).

In June 1998, she was elected Professor *emerita* at the University of Montreal and returned to her native land, Latvia, where, on 19 October, the Prime Minister named her Director of the newly founded Latvian Institute.

Presidency of the Republic of Latvia (1999-2007)

On 17 June 1999, Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga was elected President of the Republic of Latvia by the Parliament (*Saeima*). In 2003, she was re-elected for a second term of four years with 88 votes out of 96.

She has actively exercised the powers conferred on the President by the Constitution of the Republic of Latvia and has played a leading role in achieving Latvia's membership in NATO and the European Union. Invited speaker at numerous international events. Outspoken pundit on social issues, moral values, European historical dialogue, and democracy.

She has been a member of the Council of Women World Leaders since 1999, a regularly invited participant to the World Economic Forum (Davos) and to the annual meetings of the American Academy of Achievement since 2000.

During her presidency, she authored and published an additional three scholarly books, plus one book containing her numerous speeches and invited addresses between 1999 and 2007.

Post-presidency (since July 2007)

Since the end of her presidency in July 2007, Dr. Vīķe-Freiberga has been actively participating as an invited speaker at a wide variety of international events. A founding member of the Club of Madrid, she is a member of the European Council on Foreign Relations, and honorary patron of several foundations. She was a member of the Support Committee of the 2007 European Book Prize and an honorary patron of the Paris Colloquium on the Teaching of European literatures. During the spring semester 2008, she was an invited Senior Fellow at the Institute of Politics, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University.

She was chair of the European Research Area Board Identification Committee (2008), chair of the Review panel of the European Research Council (2009), and since December 2007, vice-chair of the reflection group on the long-term future of the European Union.

Dr. Vīķe-Freiberga and Dr. I. Freibergs have founded a company "VVF Consulting" that offers consulting services to public and private organizations.

Dr. Vīķe-Freiberga has received many medals and awards, including the 2005 Hannah Arendt Prize for political thought, the 2007 Emperor Otto Prize for contributions in defining European identity and future, and the 2009 Hayek Medal for promotion of freedom and free trade. She has been awarded 37 orders of merit and 16 honorary doctorates (see appendix). Four biographies about President Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga have been published (in Latvian, English, French, Finnish, Italian, Russian and Spanish), and a full length documentary film "The Threefold Sun" in 2008.

Administrative experience (until 1999)

- Member of Council (1994-1998) and President of Academy I of the Royal Society of Canada (1998-1999).
- Member of the Killam Research Fellowships and Prizes Selection Committee (1995-1998), appointed by the Canada Council.
- Member of the Science Council of Canada (1980-1983) and Vice-president (1984-1989), appointed by the Governor General of Canada; invited Consultant by the Commission of constitutional reform of the Brazilian Parliament (1989); member of a Canadian governmental consultative committee on the disposal of nuclear waste (1990-1991, 1995-1996).
- Member of the Board of Directors (1982-1988) and President (1984-1986) of the Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies – AABS.
- Member of the Consultative Committee on Mental Health Research, Health and Welfare Canada (1983-1986).
- Member and president of organizing committees of various national and international symposia and conferences (1982-1986).
- Member of the Board and Executive Committee of the Canadian Federation for the Humanities (1980-1982).
- Appointed Canadian member and Chair of the Special Panel on Human Factors of the NATO Scientific Programme in Brussels (1978-1981).
- Member of the Board of Directors (1976-1982) and President (1980-1981) of the Canadian Psychological Association.
- Member of the Board of Directors (1977-1982) and President (1980-1981) of the Social Science Federation of Canada.
- Member of the Post-doctoral Fellowship Selection Committee of the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (1975-1978).
- Member of various committees at the University of Montreal (1965-1998).

Prizes and honours (until 1999)

- Elected full member, Academy of Sciences of Latvia, 1999.
- Grand Medal of the Latvian Academy of Sciences for distinguished work on oral literature and Latvian folksongs, 1997.
- Pierre Chauveau Medal for distinguished work in the humanities, Royal Society of Canada, 1995.
- Officer of the Order of the Three Stars, Republic of Latvia, 1995.
- Killam Research Fellowship (Canada Council), 1993-1995.
- Marcel-Vincent prize for distinguished achievement in the social sciences, ACFAS (Association canadienne-française pour l'avancement des sciences), 1992.
- Dr. habil. philol., Latvian Academy of Sciences, 1992.
- Elected Fellow of Academy I of the Royal Society of Canada, 1990.
- Elected Foreign Member, Academy of Sciences of Latvia, 1990.
- Prize in the social sciences of the World Association of Free Latvians (PBLA, Washington, D.C.) for distinguished work on the Latvian Dainas, 1989.
- Elected Fellow, Canadian Psychological Association, 1979.

- Prof. Anna Abele memorial prize (United States of America) for distinguished work in Latvian philology, jointly with Imants Freibergs, 1979.
- Leave fellowship, Canada Council, 1974-1975.

Medals and awards (since 2000)

- Hayek Medal for promotion of freedom and free trade, Jena, Germany, 2009.
- Associated member of the Royal Academy of Science, Humanities and Fine Arts of Belgium, 2008.
- Global Women's Leadership Award, Berlin, 2007.
- Science pavilion at the Lycée Al Khansa in Casablanca, Morocco, named in honour of President Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga, 2007.
- Emperor Otto Prize for contribution in defining European identity and future, Magdeburg, Germany, 2007.
- American Jewish Committee (AJC) Madeline and Bruce Ramer Award for diplomatic excellence, Washington, USA, 2007.
- Cross of Honour of the Latvian Red Cross, Riga, 2007.
- Order, 1st class, of the Saint Martyr Jānis, archbishop of Riga and Latvia, 2007.
- United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) Ceres Medal 2007 for her contribution to social justice, moral values and democracy, Rome, Italy, 2007.
- J.W. Goethe University Medal and Walter Hallstein Prize, Frankfurt, Germany, 2006.
- Europa Prize 2006 of the Coudenhove-Kalergi Foundation, Pan-Europa Union, 2006.
- "Small Countries Prize" of the Batliner European Institute, Salzburg, Austria, 2006.
- Baltic Statesmanship Award of the U.S.-Baltic Foundation, Washington, D.C., 2006.
- Hannah Arendt Prize for Political Thought, Bremen, Germany, 2005.
- Medal of the American Jewish Committee dedicated to 'a passionate friend of humanity's abiding values', New York, 2005.
- Medal of Freedom of the Baltic American Freedom League, Washington, D.C., 2005.
- Forbes Executive Women's Forum Trailblazer Award, New York, 2005.
- Award of Distinction of the Canadian Psychological Association, section on Women and Psychology, St.John's, Newfoundland, 2004.
- Medal of the Foundation Edouard-Montpetit of the University of Montreal, 2004.
- Gold Medal of the Free University of Berlin, Germany, 2003.
- Grand Prize of Folklore, Ministry of Culture, Republic of Latvia, 2003.
- Gold Medal of Georgetown University, Washington, United States of America, 2002.
- Medal, Prize and Title of 'Honorary Senator and Protector' of the European Academy of Sciences and Arts, Salzburg, Austria, 2001.
- American Academy of Achievement Gold Plate Award, London, 2000.

Honorary doctorates

- Dr.h.c. of York University, Toronto, Canada, June 2008.
- Dr.h.c. of the University of Toronto, Canada, June 2008.
- Dr.h.c. of Trinity College, University of Dublin, Ireland, 2007.

- Dr.h.c. of Dalhousie University, Halifax, Canada, 2007.
- Dr.h.c. of the University of Southern Denmark, Odense, 2007.
- Dr.h.c. of the University of Liège, Belgium, 2006.
- Dr.h.c. of the University of Ottawa, Canada, 2006.
- Dr.h.c. of the State University in Yerevan, Armenia, 2005.
- Dr.h.c. of the State University in Tbilisi, Georgia, 2005.
- Dr.h.c. of the State University in Baku, Azerbaijan, 2005.
- Dr.h.c. of the Eurasian National University in Astana, Kazakhstan, 2004.
- Dr.sci.h.c. of McGill University in Montreal, Canada, 2002.
- Dr.h.c. of Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas, Lithuania, 2002.
- Dr.h.c. of the University of Latvia in Riga, 2000.
- Dr.h.c. of Sacred Letters, Victoria University in the University of Toronto, Canada, 2000.
- Doctor of Laws, honoris causa (LL.D.), Queen's University, Kingston, Canada, 1991.

Orders of Merit, 1st class

- Grand Cross of the Cross of Recognition, Republic of Latvia, 2007.
- Grand Cross of the Order of Viesturs (Vesthardus Rex), Republic of Latvia, 2007.
- Grand Collar of the Order of Makarios III, Republic of Cyprus, 2007.
- Grand Cordon of the Supreme Order of the Chrysanthemum, Empire of Japan, 2007.
- Order of Wissam al-Mohammadi, Exceptional Class with Grand Collar, Kingdom of Morocco, 2007.
- Grand Cordon of the Order of Leopold, Kingdom of Belgium, 2007.
- Grand Cross of the Civil and Military Order of Merit of Adolphe de Nassau, Grand-Duchy of Luxemburg, 2006.
- Dame Grand Cross of the Order of the Bath (GCB), United Kingdom, 2006.
- Officer of the National Order of Québec, Canada, 2006.
- Order "Xirka Gieh ir-Repubblika", Republic of Malta, 2006.
- Order of the Princess St. Olga Equal-to-the-Apostles, 1st class, Patriarchy of Moscow and All Russia, 2006.
- Order of the Netherlands Lion, Grand Cross with Collar, Kingdom of Netherlands, 2006.
- Order of the Grand Prince Yaroslav-the-Wise, 1st class, Republic of Ukraine, 2006.
- Order of the White Star with Collar, Republic of Estonia, 2005.
- Commander of the Cross of Merit with Star, Republic of Poland, 2005.
- Royal Order of Seraphim with Collar, Kingdom of Sweden, 2005.
- Order of the White Double Cross, Republic of Slovakia, 2005.
- Collar of the Order of Isabel la Católica, Kingdom of Spain, 2004.
- Grand Cross with Collar of the Order of Merit, Republic of Italy, 2004.
- National Order of Merit with Collar, Republic of Malta, 2004.
- Order of Stara Planina, Republic of Bulgaria, 2003.

- Grand Cross of the Order of Infante Dom Henrique with Grand Collar, Republic of Portugal, 2003.
- Grand Cross of Merit, Special Class, Federal Republic of Germany, 2003.
- Order of Merit of the White Eagle, Republic of Poland, 2003.
- Gold Medal of Freedom, Republic of Slovenia, 2002.
- Grand Cross of Merit with Collar, Republic of Romania, 2001.
- Commander of the Legion of Honour, 1st Class, Republic of France, 2001.
- Cross of the Order of Merit with Collar, Republic of Hungary, 2001.
- Grand Cross of the Order of White Rose with Collar, Republic of Finland, 2001.
- Order of Merit Vytautas Dizas, 1st Class with Collar, Republic of Lithuania, 2001.
- Grand Cross of the Order of the Redeemer, Republic of Greece, 2000.
- Grand Cross of the Order of St. Olav, Kingdom of Norway, 2000.
- Order of Merit Terra Mariana, 1st Class with Collar, Republic of Estonia, 2000.
- Commander with Grand-Cross and Collar of the Three-Star Order, Republic of Latvia, 1999.

Books authored

- *V.V.-F. Aplus4*. Runas 1999-2007 [Speeches 1999-2007] (ISBN 978-9984-33-210-9), 646 p., Rīga: Pētergailis, 2007.
- *Logique de la poésie: Structure et poétique des daines lettonnes*. (ISBN 978-2-84103-161-0), 299 p., Bordeaux: William Blake and Co. ed., 2007.
- Saules balsi [Latvian Sun Song Melodies. Selected and commented by Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga (in Latvian and English)] (ISBN 9984-505-82-0), 151 p., Rīga: Karogs, 2005.
- Trejādās saules: III. Meteoroloģiskā saule. Siltā saule [The Threefold Sun, Vol. III: The Meteorological Sun. The Warm Sun] (ISBN 9984-505-71-5), 176 p., Rīga: Karogs, 2002.
- Trejādās saules: II. Hronoloģiskā saule [The Threefold Sun, Vol. II: The Chronological Sun] (ISBN 9984-505-52-9), 296 p., Rīga: Karogs, 1999.
- Trejādās saules: I. Kosmoloģiskā saule [The Threefold Sun, Vol. I: The Cosmological Sun]. (An analysis of the themes of content in Latvian folksongs about the sun.) (ISBN 9984-505-40-5), 240 p., Rīga: Karogs, 1997.
- Pret straumi [Against the current. Essays on Latvian identity 1968-1991] (ISBN 0-9693501-6-3), 256 p., Helios: Montreal, 1993. 2nd edition (ISBN 9984-505-25-1), Rīga: Karogs, 1995.
- Dzintara kalnā [On the Amber Mountain. Essays on Latvian folk songs] (ISBN 0-9693501-2-0), 193 p., Montreal: Helios, 1989. Revised 2nd edition (ISBN 5-405-00949-0). 179 p., Rīga: Zvaigzne, 1993.
- Linguistics and Poetics of Latvian Folk Songs. Vaira Vīķis-Freibergs (ed.) (ISBN 0-7735-0661-6), 371 p., Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989.
- Saules dainas. [Latvian Sun Songs], with Imants Freibergs (ISBN 0-9693501-0-4), 266 p., Montreal: Helios, 1988. Revised 2nd edition (ISBN 5-85800-001-0), Rīga: Grāmata, 1991.
- La fréquence lexicale au Québec. Vaira Vikis-Freibergs, Montréal: Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1974.

Biographies about Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga

- Ausma Cimdiņa. Brīvības vārdā (ISBN 9984-05-375-X), 245 p., Rīga: Jumava, 2001. Russian translation, 2002. English translation [In the Name of Freedom], 2003. Spanish translation [En Nombre de la Libertad], 2006.
- Māris Čaklais. Izaicinājums [A Challenge: First woman president of Latvia Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga] (ISBN 9984-33-062-1), 370 p., Rīga: Pētergailis, 2003.
- Nadine Vitols-Dixon. Le Parcours d'une Vie: Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga, Présidente de Lettonie [in French] (ISBN 9984-33-141-5), 191 p., Rīga: Pētergailis, 2005. Finnish translation [Meripihkahelmi povella Latvian presidentti Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga], 215 p., 2006. English translation [A Life's Journey: Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga] (ISBN 9984-33-174-1), 227 p., 2006. Italian translation [Il percorso di una vita: Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga] (ISBN 978-88-89999-19-6), 223 lpp., Firenze: Emmebi Editioni Firenze, 2007.
- Kalpiņa Rudīte (ed.) *Prezidente* [The President – The presidency of Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga in photographs 1999-2007]. In Latvian and English. (ISBN 9984-78-969-1), Rīga: Dienas Grāmata, 2007.

Documentary film about Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga

- *Trejādās Saules* [The Threefold Sun], Jānis Ozoliņš – Ozols, director, Vilnis Kalnaellis, producer, 52 min., Film Studio RIJA 2008, Riga.
