

5 questions with... Laima Andrikiienė

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Opinion

Laima Andrikiienė (EPP, LT) is a Vice-Chair of Parliament's delegation to the EU-Kazakhstan, EU-Kyrgyzstan, EU-Uzbekistan and EU-Tajikistan parliamentary cooperation committees and for relations with Turkmenistan and Mongolia.



Laima Andrikiienė | *Photo credit: European Parliament audiovisual*

1. Is there anything you have personally achieved or done that would surprise people?

People would be surprised by how much I enjoy driving. For me it is one of the best ways to relax and to recharge my batteries.

2. How would you describe your political/leadership style in three words?

Love, dedication and trust. Politics is not only my job, it is my love, my hobby and my lifestyle. I enjoy

working with people and for people. Almost 30 years ago, I started out in politics by voting on the restoration of Lithuania's independence. That historic vote not only changed my life dramatically, but also the lives of my 3.7 million compatriots. It caused a geopolitical shift, as it marked the beginning of the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

3. What was the most inspirational and influential book you have read and why?

I have read so many books in my life that it is very difficult - close to impossible, even - to identify just one. Among the many excellent books I have read, there are a few that deeply inspired and which I should mention: 'Barbora Radvilaitė' by Juozas Grušas and 'Mindaugas' and 'Katedra' by Justinas Marcinkevičius. Both are Lithuanian authors. Also 'Lietuvos istorija' (History of Lithuania) by Adolfas Šapoka, which was banned during the Soviet occupation of Lithuania.

4. What do you do in your free time to relax and unwind?

I go to the sea - the Baltic Sea. For me, our cold sea, which is beautiful in all seasons and is a source of great inspiration. Perhaps this comes from my childhood, when I would stand by the sea with my father, a former Soviet political prisoner. He would tell me, "Watch the horizon carefully, Laimute, as on the other side of this sea there is Sweden, the free world". 'Freedom' is a magic word for those of us who were born and lived in occupied Lithuania. Most likely, the sea still represents freedom for me.

5. Which person you have worked with has most inspired you in your career, and how?

The de facto leader of Lithuania, Vytautas Landsbergis, President of the Lithuanian Parliament, to which I was elected for the first time in 1990 and where I worked with him until 2000, and later in the European Parliament from 2004 until 2014. We were members of the same party back home and of the same group and delegation in the European Parliament. You could say working with him was my destiny. I learned from him even when we disagreed. He was my political mentor.

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