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**Expanding and Evolving Baltic Studies in Japan: Content
Analysis of Bibliographical Databases**

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Expanding and Evolving Baltic Studies in Japan: Content Analysis of Bibliographical Databases⁽¹⁾

Ryo NAKAI*

1. Introduction

This work investigates the development of Baltic studies in Japan and its changes and evolutions, focusing on quantitative data from bibliographic databases, including some anecdotal episodes.

When the Baltic countries joined the European Union (EU) and the NATO, the information available on Baltic studies in the Japanese language was rather scarce. The status of Baltic studies in Japan at those times is well-reviewed by Onaka (2008). Since then, the field of Baltic studies in Japan has expanded greatly. At present, it is easier for young Japanese students who want to start Baltic studies in Japan to get information in Japanese. For example, there is a series of books called “Chapters to understand countries” published by Akashi Shoten, a leading publisher of area studies in Japan (Komori 2012,

* Associate Professor, Faculty of Law, The University of Kitakyushu.

(1) The original work of this paper was presented as a keynote speech at the conference "A Century of Connections: Historical Ties between the Baltic and East Asia regions." Vytautas Magnus University, Center for Asian Studies (Kaunas, Lithuania), March 4th, 2022.

Shima 2016, Sakurai 2020). There are also some good translations such as the book by Kasekamp (2010) translated in 2014 by Dr. Komori and Dr. Shigematsu.

There is a growing interest in Baltic studies pertaining to not just academia but also to culture and fashion (e.g. Mizoguchi 2016, Sanna 2016, Shibuya 2018). There have been stores opened, featuring Baltic products. Recently, a platform *Baltnomori* was launched to promote cultural exchange online and is attracting a fair number of customers and audiences. In terms of official exchange, the Japan-Baltic Seminar has been held in Japan since 2008 with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, and various researchers, politicians, and practitioners have been visiting Japan (the impact of this will be mentioned later).

The following section introduces the material and methods used in the analysis, demonstrates the analysis results, and provides a discussion on the change in the relationship with social development.

2. Method.

To observe these changes from a quantitative perspective, the present work uses the bibliographical database called CiNii article (now renamed as CiNii research) and the National Diet Library recording books that have been published in Japan.

Using these databases, all articles and books that included the words Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Baltic States in their titles, were extracted (as of 2022 January). Since there are some inconsistencies in the Japanese notation of Latvia (cf. ラトビア、ラトヴィア) and Baltic States (バルト諸国, バルト三国, バルト3国), all the

variants were checked⁽²⁾.

The National Diet Library (NDL) database also contains data about the book genre categorization based on the Nippon Decimal Classification (NDC). Hence, analysis of this data gives us an understanding regarding what the major categories of publication in Japanese Baltic studies are.

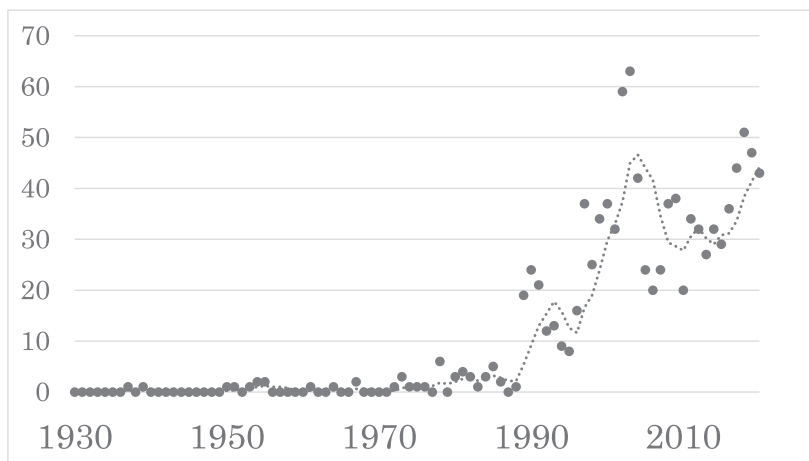
3. Result

3.1 Articles trend

Our analysis indicates that the number of articles has increased (Figure 1). Though there were some documented studies in the interwar period and after the Second World War, there have been very few studies since then. Several articles have been published since 1980. The first peak was observed around 2004 when the Baltic countries joined the EU and NATO. Since then, about 30 to 50 articles have been published every year. In simple terms, we can say that there has been approximately one Baltic article per week published in Japan.

(2) In some publications, the names of more than two countries are included, but the fact that more than one country is included indicates the impact and strength of the interest, hence, these duplications were not excluded.

Figure 1. Number of articles on Baltic Studies in Japan

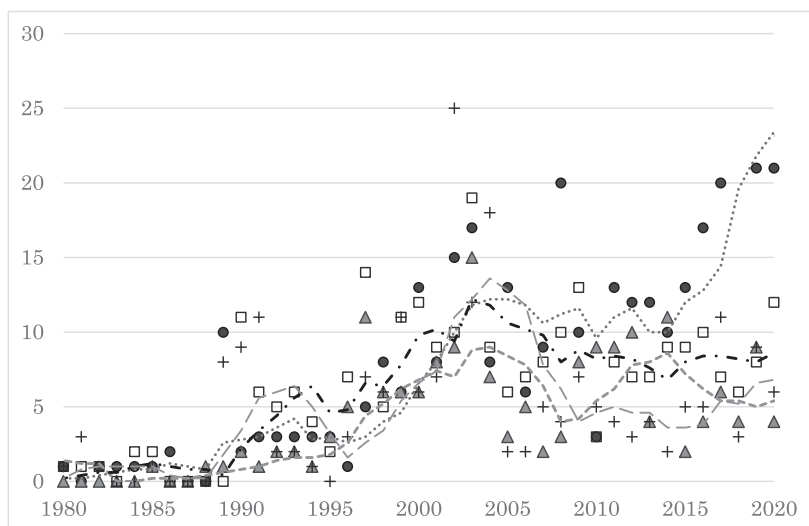


Source: CiNii

An in-depth focus on the data from the 1980s demonstrates specific trends (Figure 2). There has been a substantial increase in the number of articles dealing with Estonia, especially in recent years. This reflects the growing interest in the field of ICT and e-government in Japan (e. g. Sunada 2014, Nakai 2016, Maeda 2018)

It is interesting to note how the keyword “Baltic States” is treated. Until around 2004, there were many articles with the keyword “The Baltic States” in the titles. However, recently, the number of articles with this term in the title has reduced. This might reflect the fact that the level of analysis is becoming more country-specific, precise, and deeper since academic resources have burgeoned. As Japanese understanding of the Baltic countries has deepened, the total number of references to them has decreased. Instead, the interest is specific to particular countries and phenomena.

Figure 2: Number of articles on Baltic studies by country



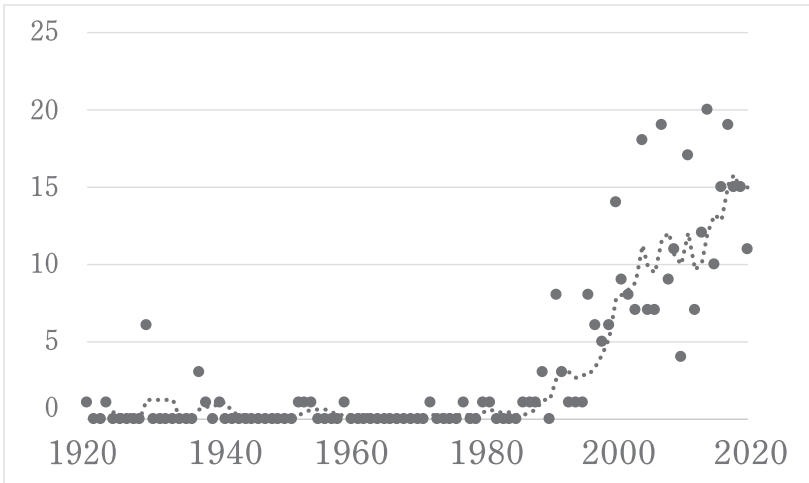
...●... Estonia --▲-- Latvia -.-■.- Lithuania -+-+ the Baltic States

Source: CiNii

3.2 Books and their categories.

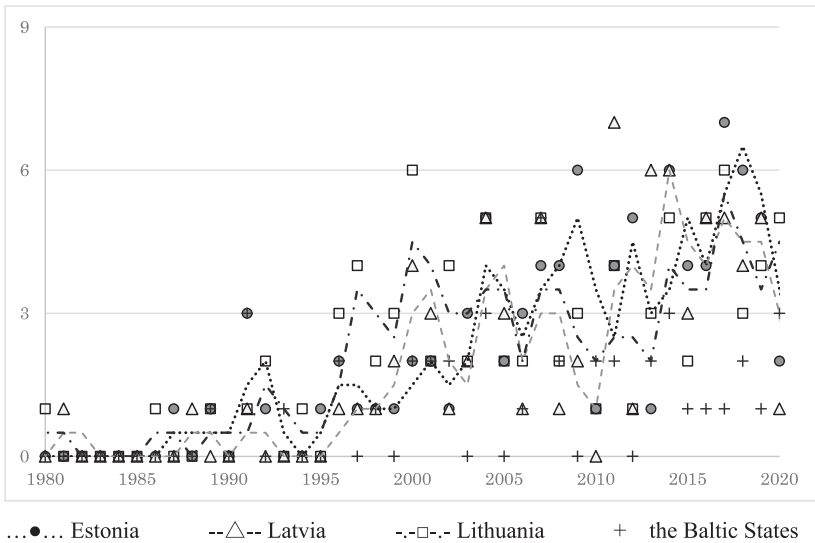
Quantitatively speaking, book publication has also shown a similar numerical trend as the article data; the number of publications has increased (Figure 3). However, the difference between countries is not as straightforward or clear as it is in the articles (Figure 4). Approximately the same number of books are published in every Baltic country. This may reflect that books published in Japan tend to include several Baltic countries in their content.

Figure 3. Number of books on Baltic Studies



Source: National Diet Library

Figure 4: Number of books on Baltic Studies by country



...●... Estonia --△-- Latvia -.-□-.- Lithuania + the Baltic States

Source: National Diet Library

Qualitative analysis was conducted with the categorification data. As mentioned in the methods section, every book published in Japanese is classified by the NDC - the classification of books by category. The general trend of this categorification for all book publications is shown in Table 1. The NDL has ten major categories, further divided into ten subcategories. In the NDC category, the most common categories are history (category 2) and social science, (category 3) which indicates increased interest in these areas. The other categories are arts, literature, technology, and language⁽³⁾.

Table 1. Genre categorization of Baltic study books in Japan

Category		Subcategory 2: History		Subcategory 3: Social Science	
0. General	0.0%	20. General his.	1.9%	30. Soc. Sci.	9.3%
1. Philosophy	1.1%	21. Japan his.	0.0%	31. Politics	32.0%
2. History	39.1%	22. Asia his.	0.0%	32. Law	2.7%
3. Social Science	27.4%	23. Europe his.	29.0%	33. Economics	29.3%
4. Natural Science	0.4%	24. Africa his.	0.0%	34. Fiance	4.0%
5. Technology	6.6%	25. N. America his.	0.0%	35. Statistics	0.0%
6. Industry	2.9%	26. S. America his.	0.0%	36. Society	10.7%
7. Arts	9.9%	27. Oceania his.	0.0%	37. Education	4.0%
8. Language	6.2%	28. Biography	3.7%	38. Ethnology	6.7%
9. Literature	6.6%	29. Geography/Travel	65.4%	39. Defence	1.3%

Note: his. for history.

Since there are so many book publications in the history and social science categories, we must take a look at their subcategories as well. The subcategories of history are primarily concentrated in category 23: History of Europe and the West and category 29: geography, topography, and travel. This includes some of the travel book guides.

(3) As for languages, there has been a recent increase in the number of textbooks in Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian, even in Japanese.

Regarding the subcategories of category 3: social science, the most common subcategories are 31: politics and 33: economics.

Table 2. Genre clarification of Baltic study books in Japan by country

	Estonia	Latvia	Lithuania	Baltic States
0. General	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
1. Philosophy	0.0%	0.0%	3.8%	0.0%
2. History	33.3%	31.0%	45.6%	51.2%
3. Social Science	30.9%	28.2%	22.8%	27.9%
4. Natural Science	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.3%
5. Technology	8.6%	11.3%	1.3%	4.7%
6. Industry	3.7%	2.8%	2.5%	2.3%
7. Arts	9.9%	9.9%	10.1%	9.3%
8. Language	7.4%	5.6%	7.6%	2.3%
9. Literature	6.2%	11.3%	6.3%	0.0%

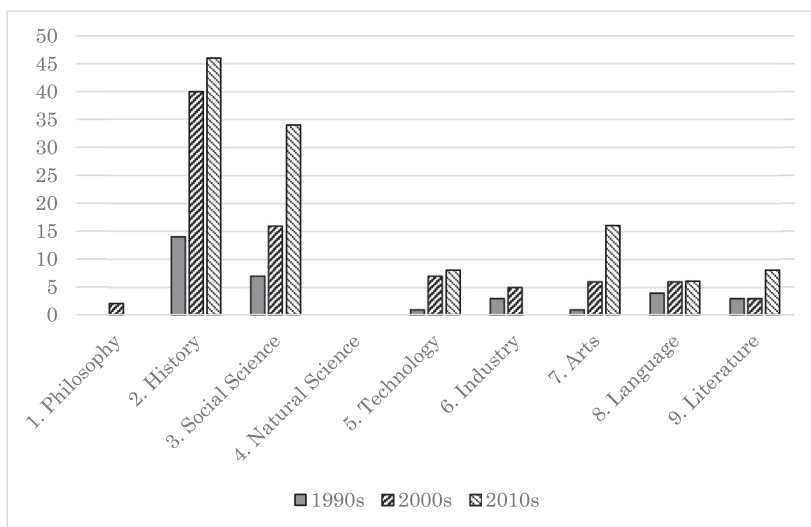
These category trends show variance by country (Table 2). Although the difference is not large, as compared to Estonia and Latvia, books on Lithuania seem to be dominated by books on history. The breakdown of the data does not suggest that this is due to the number of tourist guides, etc., but the fact that there are many purely Lithuanian history research books. This is probably due to the unique history of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (e.g. Eidintas et al. 1999, Hayasaka 2017). There is not much difference in the category proportion between Estonia and Latvia, and not many books are about technology in Estonia.

Figure 5 reviews the inter-temporal change in the publications

(4) Please note that some books are counted more than once if there were multiple country names in the book title.

category in the 1990s, 2000s, and 2010s⁽⁴⁾. While there are many books in the history category, the number of books published in this category increased rapidly from the 1990s to the 2000s. With the restoration of diplomatic relations with the Baltic States and the increase in their international presence, interest in their history and geography has increased; this includes, as mentioned earlier, some travel guide books as travelogues. However, the rate of increase in the last decade, from the 2000s to the 2010s, has been slow. I think that such interest may have already been sufficiently satisfied by this increase in publications since the 1990s.

Figure 5. Book genre categorification of Baltic books in Japan in 1990s, 2000s, and 2010s.



Source: National Diet Library.

Contrarily, the number of books in the social sciences has been growing from the 2000s to the 2010s. The main component of these books is politics and economics. The recent books dealing with

European politics and economics tend to include the Baltic countries as European countries (e.g. Amiya et al. 2014, Matsuo et al. 2019). Interest in European politics and economics has always been high in Japan, and Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia are now treated as one of the European countries in Japanese intellectual communities.

Interest in the field of art is also growing, although the absolute number of cases is not as large as in the social sciences. This includes many fashionable culture and art books focusing on each cultural difference more carefully. As an anecdotal episode, in 2013-14, *Figaro Japon*, the Japanese edition of the fashion magazine *Figaro*, published a special issue on the Baltic countries. This might have been the first opportunity for Japanese mainstream printed fashion journals to introduce the Baltic culture as very fashionable and cute.

3.3 Interaction with public institutions

These changes in interest partly reflect the activities in the intellectual community and public institutions. The increase in interest in culture and art may be partly due to the cultural diplomacy efforts of embassies. The embassies in Japan, especially Latvian and Lithuanian embassies, seem to be extremely active in this kind of cultural diplomacy and often host events to introduce cultural content. They sometimes tried to label the Baltic countries as Nordic countries. In some cases, people became interested in a country based on such events and opportunities, opened a store, and eventually published a book, sometimes, with official support from embassies (e.g., Tabaka 2012).

As for the social sciences, it is necessary to highlight the research exchange programs of the last ten years in Japan. As mentioned earlier, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan had been trying to

expand exchanges with the Baltic countries for the past ten years. This partly reflected the past Japanese diplomatic strategy, the so-called “arc of the freedom and prosperity,” connecting Japan, South Asia, the middle east, and central and eastern Europe comprising Russia and China.

Most of these seminars’ topics primarily focus on politics, diplomacy, and economies. Such events at times invited academic researchers and practitioners.⁽⁵⁾ Many politicians, business people, bureaucrats, diplomats, and think-tanks were invited (appendix 1). For example, the Lithuanian president Dr. Nauseda was invited when he was the chief analyst. The deputy mayor of the Kaunas Kairys was also invited.

In other words, most of the interests were in the field of social sciences, though the cause and effect are not known. It is hard to say which came first and which came later, whether such members were invited because there was a growing interest in the political and economic fields in Japan, or whether interest in the political economy grew because such members were invited to enhance human intellectual exchange. Nevertheless, there is a certain influence that can be seen.

This exchange program ended after ten years (2008-2017). According to the interviews of the people involved, it gradually became difficult to find new topics on which to invite speakers and attract new audiences (Nakamura 2022). At that time, the plan was to expand the seminar to the Nordic-Baltic Seminar (2017), and the co-host Waseda

(5) The event hosts were different in the beginning, but in the latter half of each event, Waseda University in Japan was the host. It was also related to the fact that Waseda University had the EU Institute in Japan (EUIJ) at that time.

University hoped it would be successful; however, it ended after one session. According to the explanation from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs⁽⁶⁾, it was because then Prime Minister Abe visited the Baltic countries in 2018 and launched the Japan-Baltic Cooperation Dialogue at a high-political level (2018)⁽⁷⁾.

4. Conclusion

The presented work reviewed the developments of Baltic studies in Japan. As expected, the amount of research was found to have dramatically increased, particularly since the 1980s, with its first peak around 2004, and is still expanding. In terms of articles, there are more Estonian articles compared to Latvian and Lithuanian ones. Recent articles tend to treat each country individually, rather than all Baltic states together. The number of books has also been increasing; for Lithuania, the focus is more on its history.

From the 1990s to the 2000s, Baltic studies in Japan primarily focused on history. However, from the 2000s till recently, the limelight has been more on research in the social sciences such as politics and economics. In addition, we can see a growing interest in the art and literature of each Baltic country. These changes could be associated with the diplomatic effort of the embassies and ministries.

It is difficult to predict in which direction Baltic studies in Japan will expand in the future; however, it is sure to become increasingly diversified.

(6) Phone interview, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Japan Western Europe Division, January 2022.

(7) Third Dialogue was scheduled to be held in Tallinn in 2020 but was suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Expanding and Evolving Baltic Studies in Japan (NAKAI)

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Title: Panelist of the Japan-Baltic Seminars

Seminar	Panelists	Position
10: Japan-Nordic-Baltic Seminar "Security Environment Surrounding the Nordic and Baltic Countries"	Kristian Soby Kristensen Sven Sakkov Charly Salomonius-Pasternak Ólaf Hrefna Krişjánssdóttir Jo Inge Bekkevold Julius Lifstrosöm	Deputy head of centre, Centre for Military Studies, Copenhagen University Director, International Centre for Defence and Security (Estonia) Senior Research Fellow, Finnish Institute of International Affairs Counsellor/ Directorate for International and Security Affairs, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Iceland Head of Centre for Asian Security Studies, Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies Head of Department, Department for European Security Policy, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden
9: The 9th Japan-Baltic Seminar "Politics, Economics and People-to-People Exchange: Perspectives on the Future Development of Japan-Baltic Relations"	Ms. Aino Lepik von Wiren Mr. Juhan Mellik Mr. Kaspars Ozolins Mr. Karlis Bukovskis Mr. Simonas Kairys Dr. Renaldas Ciuzas	Acting Undersecretary for European Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Estonia Foreign Desk Editor, Postimees State Secretary, Ministry of Transport of Latvia Deputy Director, Latvian Institute of International Affairs: LIIA Deputy Mayor of Kaunas City Head of Tourism Policy Division of the Ministry of Economy and the Baltic States -Response to the issues Europe is facing"
8: The 8th Japan-Baltic Seminar "Foreign Policies of Japan and the Baltic States -Response to the issues Europe is facing"	Mr. Juhan Parts Mr. Andres Kasekamp Mr. Rets Plesums Mr. Andis Kudors Mr. Roberts Sapronas Mr. Tomas Janelunas	Member of Parliament (former Prime Minister) Professor of Baltic Politics in the Institute of Government and Politics, University of Tartu Ambassador, Director of 2nd Bilateral Relations Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Estonia Executive Director, Centre for East European Policy Studies Director, International Relations and Operations Department, Ministry of Defense of Lithuania Institute of International Relations and Political Science, Vilnius University
7: The 7th Japan-Baltic Seminar "Future economic relations with the Baltic countries Prospects for investment and trade"	Kristi Talving Ruta Arunāe Normunds Stanevics Artis Grinbergs Žygmantas Mauricas Gina Jaugielaviciene Hidetoshi Nakamura Toshihiro Kitamura	Director, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications for Estonia Advisor to Prime Minister of Estonia Chairman Rīgas piemas kombinats Advisor to Prime Minister of Latvia Chief economist Lithuania Nordea bank Director of Investment and Export Department of the Ministry of Economy of Lithuania Professor, Waseda University, Deputy Director of EUJJ Waseda Director of the Western Europe Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Expanding and Evolving Baltic Studies in Japan (NAKAI)

- 6: The 6th Japan-Baltic Seminar "Energy Security Challenges for the Baltic States and Japan"
- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>Veskimägi, Taavi
President, Elering</p> <p>Spuka, Rota
Director of Energy section of Ministry of Economy of Latvia</p> <p>Udrėnas, Nerijus
Chief Advisor to Lithuania's President Dalia Grybauskaitė on economic and social policy issues</p> <p>Hasumi, Yu
Professor, Ritssho University</p> <p>Soobar, Imre
Member of Parliament of Estonia</p> <p>Loemelis, Kristaps
Head of Regulatory Affairs, Latvenergo</p> <p>Mistūnas, Dalius
Lithuanian Energy CEO</p> <p>Gemma, Masahiko
Professor of Waseda University</p> <p>Hidetoshi Nakamura
Professor, Waseda University, Deputy Director of EUJJ Waseda</p> <p>Koichi Hasegawa
Deputy Director-General, Europe Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs</p> <p>Jonatan Vsevirov
Adviser of the Ministry of Defense</p> <p>Rina Kaljurand
Research Fellow of the International Centre for Defence Studies</p> <p>Karina Pētersone
Director, the Latvian Institute</p> <p>Baiba Braže
Director General Security Policy and International Organizations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Latvia</p> <p>Petras Auštrevičius
Deputy Speaker of the Board of the Seimas</p> <p>Gediminas Varvuolis
Director of the Transatlantic Cooperation and Security Policy Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Lithuania</p> <p>Hidetoshi Nakamura
Deputy Director-General, Europe Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs</p> <p>Jun Yamada
Deputy Director-General, Europe Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs</p> <p>Ryo Sataishi
Associate Professor, Kanagawa University</p> | <p>Mr. Raimo Poom
Political Editor, Eesti Päevaleht Newspaper</p> <p>Mr. Indrek Treufeldt
Journalist, Estonian Public Broadcasting</p> <p>Mr. Sandijs Semjonovs,
Journalist, TV3 (investigative TV program "Nothing Personal")</p> <p>Mr. Didijs Melkis,
International News Editor, Dienas bizness</p> <p>Mr. Gintaras Sarafinas
Chief Editor, Veidas</p> <p>Ms. Monika Garbaciauskaite-Budriene,
Editor in Chief, DELFI</p> <p>Mr. Tomohiko Taniguchi
Professor by Special Invitation, Keio University Graduate School of System Design and Management</p> <p>Tea Danilov
Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications</p> <p>Gert Jervan
Professor, Tallinn University of Technology.</p> <p>Mareks Gruskevics
State secretary of Ministry of Education and Science of Latvia.</p> <p>Janis Stabulnieks
Managing Director of the Latvian Technological Center</p> <p>Nerija Putinaite
Vice-minister of the Ministry of Science and Education of Lithuania</p> |
|---|--|
- 5: The 5th Japan-Baltic Seminar "Security Environment of the Baltic States and Japan"
- 4: The 4th Japan-Baltic Seminar "The Baltic States and Japan through media"
- 3: The 3rd Japan-Baltic Seminar "Borderless Science and Technology"

Eugenijus Burkus	Chairperson, Lithuanian Academy of Sciences
Seizo Miyata	Professor, Tokyo Institute of Technology
2: The 2nd Japan-Baltic Seminar "Economic Overview of the Baltic States: Response to the Financial Crisis and the Direction of the Industrial Economy"	
Ulo Kaasik	Bank of Estonia
Raul Allikivi	Head of Economic Policy Division Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications Estonia
Juris Štālmeisters	Ministry of Foreign Affairs Latvia
Gitanas Nausėda	Chief analysis, SEB bank Lithuania
Aivars Taurins	Managing director, DB Schenker Latvia
Žygmantas Valčiūnas	Head of Division for Strategic Planning and EU Affairs, Ministry of Energy of Lithuania
Soko Tanaka	Professor, Chuo University
Masatsugu Yukawa	Counselor, Ministry of Finance
Kazuto Uchida	Director, Mitsubishi Tokyo UFJ Bank
Yoji Oyama	Professor emeritus, Niigata University
Susumu Tanaka	Director, JETRO European division.
1: The Baltic Seminar "Diplomatic Strategies of Baltic Countries ~ Russia, EU and NATO, Review and Foresight"	
Kadri Simson	Member of Parliament of Estonia
Margus Tsahkna	Member of Parliament of Estonia
Aigars Štokenbergs	Member of Parliament of Latvia
Ivans Klementjevs	Member of Parliament of Latvia
Agne Blotaitė	Member of Parliament of Lithuania
Mantas Varaska	Member of Parliament of Lithuania
Source: JIIA 2009, Mofa Japan 2009, 2011a, 2011b, 2014, 2015, 2016a, 2016b, 2018	

