



Mari-Anna Suurmunne, May 5, 2023 – SpringForum 2023

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# CONFLICTS / GEOPOLITICAL TENSIONS -- challenges for global engagement of higher education institutions



LAPIN YLIOPISTO  
UNIVERSITY OF LAPLAND  
For the North – For the World

## What do we talk about when we talk about *conflicts and geopolitical tensions?*

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- CONFLICT
  - GEOPOLITICAL CONFLICT
  - GEOPOLITICAL TENSION
- REALPOLITIK
  - POWER POLITICS
- ETHICS

⇒ WHEN DOES A GEOPOLITICAL CONFLICT  
INVOLVE US?



Kuva: Anna Muotka

# How these big themes affect or should affect academic collaboration and internationalization strategies?

- LAWS, RULES, POLICIES
- AUTONOMOUS INSTITUTIONS
- DISRUPTIONS AND URGENCY
  - CLIMATE CHANGE
  - COVID
  - CHINA
  - RUSSIA



Kuva: Marko Junttila

# What consequences do they have for our daily work as champions of internationalization?

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Kuva: Marko Junttila

- PROFESSIONALIZATION VS. A DIFFERENT PROFESSION
- HAPPY DAYS OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION VS. REALPOLITIK OF HEIR
- KNOWLEDGE IS POWER
- STILL CHAMPIONS

⇒ DOES YOUR IR WORLD LOOK BLACK AND WHITE?  
⇒ DO WE KNOW WHAT TO ASK, FROM WHERE  
AND HOW?



# What have we learned from the recent events and how should we prepare for the future?

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- BEYOND THE OBVIOUS
- US AND THEM ?
- SCIENCE DIPLOMACY

*“...with NATO membership, another striking feature Finland once exhibited to the world will recede. The very possibility of any state going its own way in Europe, now seems slightly more distant.”*

– Martti Koskenniemi, professor emeritus of international law, HS, 3.4.2023



Kuva: Ilona Mettinen



# How to concentrate on the positive aspects of internationalization without losing awareness of risks?



Kuva: Ilona Mettiainen



## What kinds of tools and good practices exist already to tackle these challenges?

- AWARENESS, SHARING, RE-CREATION
- POTENTIAL

*Diplomacy in general, and knowledge diplomacy in particular, is about finding common ground, collaboration and negotiating conflicts, ensuring mutual but different benefits for partners, while still aiming to meet national self-interests.”*

- Jane Knight, University World News,  
29,4,2023



## Case: Arctic cooperation

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- GEOPOLITICS
- NATO
- RUSSIA
- CLIMATE CHANGE
- THE ARCTIC SEA ROUTES
- (CHINA)
- SCIENCE/KNOWLEDGE  
DIPLOMACY
- SAR
- THE ROLE FOR THE HEIs /  
UNIVERSITY OF THE ARCTIC



Changing perceptions: "You don't need to be afraid anymore..."

