

# Nordic-Latvian cooperation in 2018



Nordic Council of Ministers'  
Office in Latvia



Ziemeļvalstu Ministru padomes  
birojs Latvijā

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Photo: Mārtiņš Purviņš, delfi.lv



## Foreword

This publication aims to highlight some of the projects and events that were supported by the Nordic Council of Ministers' Office in Latvia in 2018. Instead of a full account of all activities conducted, we hope to provide you with some colourful glimpses reflecting the wide spectrum of cooperation taking place between Latvia and the Nordic countries. The main areas of work continue to be independent media, democracy and good governance, sustainable development, social welfare and health, and culture. Besides these activities, plenty of Nordic-Latvian initiatives and projects are running on their own merits, while others are being supported by Nordic embassies in Riga or other Nordic organisations.

Last year was a special year for Latvia, full of events and activities to celebrate its 100th anniversary. One such event was the joint decision of the three Baltic governments to establish the Baltic Cultural Fund, which will promote joint Baltic cultural manifestations abroad. I am very glad that the Nordic Council of Ministers' in the end of 2018 was able to support the newly-created Fund with 100.000 euros, that will be used for Baltic cultural initiatives in the Nordic countries.

The Nordic Council of Ministers' Office in Latvia would like to express gratitude to all our partners for fruitful cooperation during 2018. In the coming years, we are ready to expand our networks and explore new ideas of common interest that will bring Latvia and the Nordic countries closer together. In 2019, particular priority will be given to cooperation within the social welfare and health sector, digitalisation, as well as activities involving children and youth.

Stefan Eriksson  
*Director*  
*Nordic Council of Ministers' Office in Latvia*



# #INDEPENDENT MEDIA

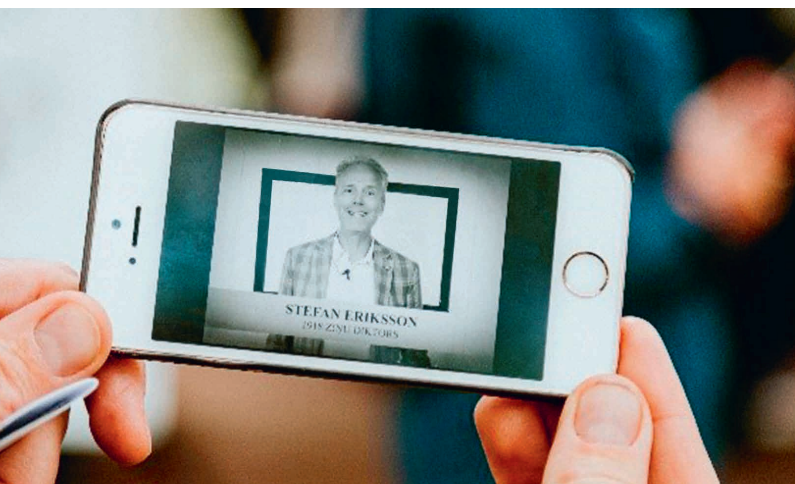


Photo: Ansis Vegners/Norden.lv



## Nordic Media Grants

In 2018 a second phase of the NCM grant programme was launched, with a total of nine media projects from Latvia supported: Rīgas Laiks, Ezerzeme, Kurzemes vārds, Delfi, LETA, Elvita Ruka, Smartlatvia.lv, TVNET, Latgales laiks.

"Minority language media play a key role in ensuring democracy and inclusion in the Baltic countries. Although this grant scheme does not solve all the problems that media are facing due to the fundamental transformations caused by technology and changes in media consumption, we still hope that it will contribute to **sustainable and independent media** in minority languages", says Stefan Eriksson, Director of the Nordic Council of Ministers' (NCM) Office in Latvia.

[www.nordicmediagrants.org](http://www.nordicmediagrants.org)

## Media literacy

The Nordic Council of Ministers' Office in Latvia continued to work in the field of media literacy during 2018. At the LAMPA Conversation Festival in Cēsis in June, the NCM Office hosted a tent with a TV studio where anyone could learn about the basic principles of news creation and how to recognise manipulation techniques that might be employed.

The NCM Office also took part in several public festivals arranged in various Latvian cities and towns, teaching the skills of **media literacy**, raising awareness about the risks of fake visual information and the importance of recognising it. In total, more than 2000 people over the year took part in media literacy activities in Madona, Jūrmala, Gulbene and Kuldīga.

*Cooperation partners: Ministry of Culture, NGO "Safer Internet Center"*



Photo: Ansis Vegners/Norden.lv



## "Hello Ruby" – coding for kids

Computers surround us in our daily lives, but the most **powerful ideas of computing** go beyond the sleek silver containers and glowing boxes. What are these ideas? And how do we prepare our kids for a world where more and more of the problems around us look like computers? The book "Hello Ruby" by a Finnish author, illustrator and programmer Linda Liukas provides tools for kids, parents and educators in learning to understand programming in a fun and creative way. The book is published in over 22 languages, also in Latvian.

*Cooperation partners: Embassy of Finland,  
NGO "Safer Internet Center", publishing house "Koši un droši"*



Photo: BCMIE



## "Empowering Quality Russian-Language Journalism in the Baltics"

A needs-assessment forum — "Empowering Quality Russian-Language Journalism in the Baltics" — was arranged in Riga by the Baltic Centre for Media Excellence (BCME). The forum was first of its kind, gathering 40 leading representatives of **minority language media outlets** from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, and media academics from top journalism schools in the region. As the Russian-speaking independent media community is one of the key target-groups of the BCME training programme, the forum aimed to identify gaps in the skillset and business models that expert trainers could later fill in.

*Cooperation partners: Baltic Centre for Media Excellence, Embassy of Denmark, Embassy of Sweden, Danish Cultural Institute*

## Inclusive journalism in the Baltics

Following the recommendations of the forum "Empowering Quality Russian-language Journalism in the Baltics", a **training and mentoring** project "Strengthening Inclusive Baltic Journalism in the Baltics" was launched in the autumn of 2018 in collaboration with the Nordic Journalism Centre in Denmark.

*Cooperation partners: Cooperation partners: Baltic Centre for Media Excellence, Embassy of Denmark, Embassy of Sweden, Danish Cultural Institute*



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## What's Known and Unknown about the Nordic Countries: Svalbard

In the framework of the NCM-supported project "What's Known and Unknown about the Nordic Countries" on Latvian and Russian-speaking public broadcaster Latvian Radio, radio programmes with **unknown facts about the Nordic** countries continued to be aired. A crew from the Latvian Radio visited Svalbard Global Seed Vault on its 10th anniversary, which resulted in a series of broadcasts about the global significance of the Svalbard Islands in the context of climate change.

The project was finalised with a seminar-discussion "Polar Research and Climate Change" at NCM Office, where Alexander Prokop, associate professor at the University of Svalbard, and Janis Karus and Kristaps Lamsters, polar researchers from the University of Latvia, shared their experiences and thoughts on climate change and polar research.



Photo: Ansis Vegners/Norden.lv

## Photo exhibition "Svalbard"

Photo exhibition **"Svalbard"** was the result of cooperation with the TV team consisting of journalist Sandra Kropa and operator Māris Maskalāns from the TV program "Cognitive Impulse". In February 2018 they went on a Northern expedition where they got inspiration for a photo story and several TV programmes. During 2018 the exhibition was showcased at the premises of the Nordic Council of Ministers' Office in Latvia and at the Valmiera Integrated Library.



# **#DEMOCRACY AND GOOD GOVERNANCE**



Photo: Inga Purīņa/Norden.lv

## Nordic Days in Valmiera

Nordic Days is a well-received **regional outreach** initiative, carried out jointly by the Nordic Council of Ministers' Office in Latvia and Nordic embassies. The goal is to strengthen regional cooperation, initiate a regular and coordinated dialogue with Latvian regions and share Nordic know-how in various fields.

In 2018 the host city was Valmiera, where a number of events were organised in order to promote Nordic culture and Nordic values. The program featured an official visit of the Nordic delegation to Valmiera City Council, discussions with students on the current social and political topics in terms of Nordic-Baltic cooperation, an information seminar on the Nordic-Baltic support programmes for mobility and NGO activities, a seminar on circular economy, screenings of Nordic films, and a photo exhibition of Nordic contemporary architecture "Nordic Block". The main highlight of the Nordic Days in 2018 was concert "Under My Influence" (Manā varā), created by composer Jānis Lūsēns and singer Ineta Rudzīte.

*Cooperation partners: Embassy of Denmark, Embassy of Sweden, Embassy of Norway, Embassy of Finland, Danish Cultural Institute, Valmiera City Council, Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences, Valmiera Drama Theatre, Valmiera Integral Library, Nature and Technology park "Urda", Valmiera Development Agency*



## Visit to Rēzekne

In March 2018, the Nordic Council of Ministers' Office visited the city of Rēzekne in eastern Latvia. Meetings were arranged with Rēzekne municipality, local NGOs and cultural institutions in Rēzekne and Lūznava. The NCM Office presented its planned and ongoing activities, informed about the available mobility programs and gave a lecture on circular economy at the local business incubator.



Photo: Ansis Vegners/Norden.lv



## Conversation festival LAMPA

NCM Office was present at conversation festival LAMPA with a **panel discussion on social trust: "Trust – the Nordic Gold"**. The interactive discussion went back to the roots of social trust in the Nordic countries and its impact on society and economy, while exploring the possibilities for raising the levels of trust in Latvia.

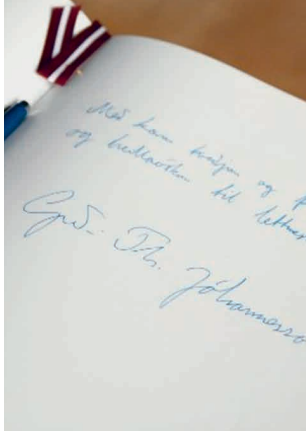
The event was jointly developed by the social anthropologist PhD Agnese Cimdiņa (Latvia), Professor of Political Science Peter Thisted Dinesen (Denmark), Vice President in Sales and Business Development at Neste Jacobs in the United Arab Emirates Oskar Rautiainen (Finland), Head of International Projects' Unit at the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities Elita Cakule (Norway) and a Lutheran pastor and teacher of Christian mediation and mindfulness Indulis Paičs (Latvia).



Photo: Inga Puriņa / Norden.lv

## Presentation of the study "Trust – the Nordic Gold"

In December 2018, Ulf Andreasson from the NCM Policy Analysis and Statistics Department, who wrote **the report "Trust – the Nordic Gold"**, visited Latvia and took part in several presentations and discussions on the topic at Stockholm School of Economics in Riga and at Daugavpils University. He also gave a TV interview on the subject of trust for the Latvian Television.



## President of Iceland: "Can small states make a difference?"

To celebrate the centenary of the Republic of Latvia, **President of the Republic of Iceland** H.E. Mr Guðni Th. Jóhannesson visited Latvia and delivered a lecture "Can small states make a difference? Iceland's support for Baltic Independence, 1990-1991."

"I remember as a child I was fascinated by flags and atlases... and I had all these three flags, but they had no states. The flags of Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania. And I was curious in my mind, how could it be – there were states, but they are no longer there."

Before taking office as President, Guðni Th. Jóhannesson was professor of history at the University of Iceland. He has written numerous books on modern Icelandic history and his master thesis in history deals with the Icelandic support for Baltic independence 1990-1991.

*Cooperation partner: University of Latvia*



Photo: Ansis Vegners/Norden.lv

## Cooperation with Nordic countries much appreciated

A survey commissioned by the Nordic Council of Ministers ahead of the 100th anniversary of the Baltic countries in 2018 showed that an overwhelming majority of the Baltic population, almost 90%, believe that cooperation with the **Nordic countries is important** and should be even closer. The highest interest in the Nordic region appeared to be in Estonia (91%), with Lithuania (89%) and Latvia (84%) closely following the lead.

"The results of the survey are in many ways encouraging. Most importantly, they indicate that there is a genuine interest among most Baltic citizens to continue and even intensify cooperation with the Nordic countries. This may not have come as a great surprise for us, but it is still important to check our own perceptions with reality", says Stefan Eriksson, Director of the Nordic Council of Ministers' Office in Latvia.

The opinion poll was carried out by Latvijas fakti in February 2018 and involved 602 Latvian residents. This is the first such poll ever conducted in the Baltic States by the Nordic Council of Ministers. The presentation of the survey is available here: <https://ej.uz/4umx>.

*Cooperation partners: The Nordic Council of Ministers' Offices in Estonia and Lithuania, the Market and Social Research Centre "Latvijas fakti"*

# #SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT





## Conference "Wooden Architecture: History and Future in the Nordic-Baltic Region"

A Nordic-Baltic conference "Wooden Architecture: History and Future" was organised to highlight the latest trends in wooden architecture and the construction sector in general.

The main focus of the conference lied on **upcycling, energy efficiency and health issues**, particularly in relation to contemporary architecture and possible developments in the future. Professor Laura Kolbe from the University of Helsinki took a historical perspective on wooden architecture in urban settings, illustrating the contribution of cities to people's wellbeing over the course of history. Susanne Rudenstam from the Swedish Wood Building Council, Jonas Olsson from ArkDes/SUSTAINORDIC network, Mads Randbøll Wolff, expert on wood in construction, and Anders Vestergaard Jensen, Climate-KIC project manager, participated in the discussion panel "Nordic Take on Wooden Architecture: Future of Social Sustainability and Climate Change".

*Cooperation partners: Embassy of Sweden, Embassy of Finland*



Photo: Sandija Veikša

## NORDTEK Conference "Changes in Globalisation: Challenges and Opportunities for Nordic-Baltic Higher Education and Research Policy"

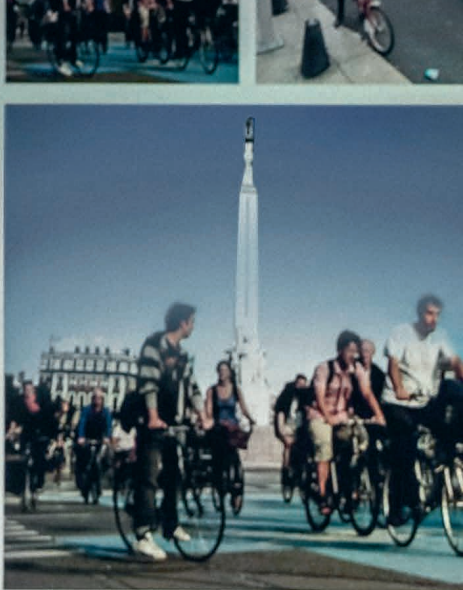
In the field of education and research, another milestone was reached at a conference in Riga in June, where the two existing **networks of technical universities** – NORDTECH and BALTECH – took a decision to join forces and operate as a single network. The conference highlighted Nordic-Baltic integrity in terms of STEM higher education, focusing on the digitalisation of university processes and infrastructure.

*Cooperation partners: Riga Technical University*

## X-industry hackathon II

The second X-industry hackathon in Latvia was attended by companies from various industries: Latvian power grid operator "Sadales tīkls", gas station "Geskāns", Children's Clinical University Hospital, module-building factory "Forta PRO", "Inducont" Ltd., "Stats Serviss" Ltd., and association "Lanīda". They took up new challenges, experimented, and found digital solutions to their business problems, admitting that **going digital** was the keystone of development in any industry. During the hackathon the brainstormers were supported and advised by several mentors.

*Cooperation partners: Latvian IT Cluster*



# Riga

mikael c. vilhje-andersen

• urban designer •

@copenhagenize

Photo: DDF

## TechChill 2018

TechChill is the leading start-up community event in the Baltics, a meeting place for passionate entrepreneurs, challengers and curious minds from the Baltic and Nordic countries and Central and Eastern Europe. TechChill 2018 agenda focused on start-up superheroes, including Nordic digitalisation experts talking about the importance of **trust in entrepreneurship and innovation**.

The Nordic panel of speakers at TechChill, titled "Building a Culture of Innovation: The Nordic Way, Powered by Norden", featured Peter Vesterbacka (FI), co-founder at Lightneer, Juha Ruohonen (FI), partner at Superhero Capital, Inka Mero (FI), founder & chairwoman at Pivot5, and Neil S W Murray (DK), founder of the tech online publication "The Nordic Web".

*Cooperation partners: TechChill*

## Digital Freedom Festival

The Digital Freedom Festival is a multi-event platform where the geeks of the **digital era** meet with policymakers to solve problems caused by the clashes between the digital and analogue worlds.

NCM Office co-financed the participation of Mikael Colville-Andersen (DK) – one of the leading global voices in urbanism and founder of the Copenhagenize Design Company. He believes that cities should be designed, not engineered and he inspires people all around the world to make their cities better.

*Cooperation partners: Digital Freedom Festival*



Photo: Ansis Vegners/Norden.lv

## Nordic Green to Scale 2 in Riga

Green to Scale is a series of analysis projects that have highlighted the potential of scaling up existing **climate solutions**. Nordic Green to Scale zooms in on selected countries, analysing the potential of scaling up existing climate solutions in two regions: in Europe it's the Baltic countries, Poland and Ukraine; in East Africa – Kenya and Ethiopia. For both groups, ten different solutions particularly promising for the region have been selected.

The results of the analysis for Latvia were presented on 30 May. The event focused on reflecting the key findings of the analysis onto local conditions in Latvia, discussing the analysis-based policy recommendations and looking at potential investment and business opportunities that might arise from scaling up effective low-carbon solutions in Latvia.

*Cooperation partners: Cooperation partners: Finnish Innovation Fund Sitra, Nordic Investment Bank, Latvian Institute of Physical Energetics, Embassy of Finland, Ministry of Economics*





## Mad City – conference & hackathon on urban planning

A two-day international happening (a 'non-conference') dedicated to **unusual ideas for the future development of cities** took place in Riga. It offered presentations, panel discussions, technology workshops, networking events, and special 'mad city' awards. This year Jan Gehl, a Danish architect and urban design consultant, was one of the key speakers with his lecture "Money and the City".

*Cooperation partners: MadCity*



Photo: 5G Techritory



## BSR Ecosystem Forum "5G TECHRITORY"

5G Techritory forum was initiated by Latvian authorities as the Baltic Sea Region's response to global digital developments, aiming to create a platform for the development of a healthy 5G ecosystem that would serve as a role model for building a European Gigabit Society. The forum's ultimate goal was to establish a **sustainable 5G technology ecosystem** in the whole Baltic Sea Region.

The BSR 5G Ecosystem Forum featured high-level business and political discussions on the deployment of 5G globally, on the transformation of high-minded visions into compelling and sound business models as well as on the latest progress of 5G technologies in Europe. Particular attention was put on smart cities, smart mobility, smart healthcare and Industry 4.0.

Adjacent to the Forum, the first meeting of the High-Level Group on Digital Cooperation (HNG-DIGITAL) outside the Nordic countries took place. Points of discussion: the Digital North action plan, the Nordic-Baltic action plan on 5G and Nordic action plan on mobility.

*Cooperation partners: Latvian State Electronic Communications Office*





Photo: Ansis Vegners/Norden.lv

## Conference "Nordic-Baltic Energy and Climate Challenge"

An international conference "Nordic-Baltic Energy and Climate Challenge" was organised to highlight the joint Nordic-Baltic potential of handling **climate change and energy challenges**. Nordic and Baltic cities are comparatively modest in size, but they seem to be offering exactly the kind of balance between nature and urbanity that the interconnected modern world needs.

The event was addressing policy makers, municipality leaders and business representatives and was held in connection to the annual exhibition "Environment and Energy".

*Cooperation partners: The trade fair "Environment and Energy", Smart City Cluster, Embassy of Norway, Embassy of Sweden, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Cleantech Latvia and EEA programme (Iceland, Lichtenstein, Norway)*

## "What's up?" with the environment

Society and business communities are increasingly focusing on **environmental concerns**. In cooperation with the World Wide Fund for Nature, a discussion series "What's up?" was organised at the NCM Office, once a month gathering representatives from different sectors to discuss the interconnection between various relevant topics and environment: environment and economy, environment and city planning, environment and wine production. The discussions are set to continue in 2019.

*Cooperation partners: WWF Latvia*

# #CULTURE





## Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania x 100

Culture festival "Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania x 100" took place in Helsinki in August 2018, celebrating the **100th anniversary** of all the three Baltic States and bringing a large number of Baltic artists, scientists and cultural personalities to the Finnish capital. The festival programme included poetry, films for children and adults, theatrical performances and seminars. The festivities ended with the *Nordic Passion* jazz concert at the famous Helsinki Rock Church.

*Cooperation partners: Nordic Council of Ministers' Offices in Estonia and Lithuania, the Nordic Culture Point*



 RIGA INTERNATIONAL  
FILM FESTIVAL

**NORDIC HIGHLIGHTS / OPENING FILM**  
**A HORRIBLE WOMAN**

Christian Tafdrup

Photo: RIGA IFF



## NORDIC HIGHLIGHTS at Riga International Film Festival

The fifth annual Riga International Film Festival (RIGA IFF) showcased over 180 films that included feature films, documentaries, short films along with animations, music videos and an extensive programme for industry professionals.

13 of the latest **Nordic films** and co-productions were included in RIGA IFF film programme *Nordic Highlights*. An exhibition dedicated to the outstanding cinematic heritage of the Swedish film director Ingmar Bergman was presented as well as a retrospective of Bergman's films, which was opened with a lecture by a well-known Swedish writer and film critic Stig Bjorkman.

The festival saw a significant rise in audience numbers, attracting over 20 000 people and thus boosting attendance figures by 30%. The festival also managed to increase the number of international guests, hosting over 300 industry professionals from all over the world.

*Cooperation partners: Riga IFF, Embassy of Finland, Embassy of Norway, Embassy of Sweden, Embassy of Denmark, Danish Cultural Institute*



## Nordic Literature Week: "Heroes in the Nordics"

Latvia is a nation of readers, being the 9th most literate nation in the world. The statistics speak for themselves: we have 1,671 libraries in the country and 39% of Latvians have reading as their hobby. So it's not surprising that over 400 libraries from all over Latvia are involved in the project called **Nordic Literature Week** (formerly known as the *Nordic Library Week*).

Nordic Literature Week is a cultural project with a long tradition of over 20 years, aimed at spreading the joy of reading, literature, and the Nordic tradition of storytelling across borders. The Nordic Literature Week takes place in mid-November and the subtitle of the week in 2018 was "Heroes in the Nordics". Heroes are returning characters in Nordic literature, and their roles have changed alongside the developments in society.



Photo: Ansis Vegners/Norden.lv, Ieva Hermansone



## Nordic Authors Crossing Borders

In the framework of the Nordic Authors Crossing Borders programme, supported by the Norden Association and coordinated by the NCM offices in the Baltics, seven **Nordic authors** visited Latvia and took part in 25 different events during 2018:

- author, illustrator and art director **Rui Tenreiro** from Sweden, who creates narrative experiences through storytelling. His works have been published in seven different languages.

- Danish author **Kristian Bang Foss**, who took part in the Latvian Book Fair in Riga and talked about the European Union Prize for Literature. He also presented the Latvian translation of his award-winning book "Døden kører Audi."

- Finno-Swedish writer **Henrika Andersson**, who visited the western part of Latvia and had several meetings with school children in Pāvilosta, Skrunda, Saldus, Druva and Kuldīga.

- Faroese writer **Rakel Helmsdal** visited Liepāja and Riga, while the children books' author and artist from Iceland, **Áslaug Jónsdóttir**, went to Riga, Sigulda and Jūrmala.

- Finnish writer **Juuli Niemi** visited a number of schools in Riga and met with young readers, while **Meg Nömgård**, Director of the Land of Legends from Sweden, took part in a storytelling event

*Cooperation partners: Nordic Writers Crossing Borders, FNF, the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS), UNESCO Latvian National Commission, kuš! komikss, publishing house "Mansards", Latvia Publishers' Association, publishing house "Liels un Mazs", Latvian Storytelling Association, Ventspils Writers and Translators house, local municipalities, Embassy of Sweden, Embassy of Finland*

# Book Exhibitions and Their Audiences

10-11 May 2018  
Rīga, Latvia



Photo: Kristians Luhaers



## Conference

### "Book Museums and their Audiences"

International conference gathered librarians and museum practitioners, museology theoreticians and designers to share and discuss their experiences in creating and managing **visitor-centered book exhibitions**. Three Nordic speakers participated in the conference: photographer and print maker Flemming Ove Bech, photographer Johan Rosenmunthe from Denmark and Sanna Asikainen from Finland.



Photo: dki.lv

## European Poster Exhibition "The Future Heritage of Today"

What will today look like in 100 years? What would we remember from the year 2018 if we could fast forward to 2118 and look back? What will be the cultural heritage preserved by future generations? In the poster exhibition **"The Future Heritage of Today"**, ten European artists Rudens Stencil (Latvia), Peter Fuchs (Austria), Mormor (Denmark), Anna Haifisch (Germany), Iona Sjöfn (Iceland), Evelina Germanovic, Dovile Kacerauskaite, Toma Kanyte & Simas Kisielius (Lithuania), Dawid Ryski (Poland), Juraj Blaško & Peter Nosál (Slovakia), Molly Fairhurst (United Kingdom) and César Henry (France) presented creative reflections on these questions.

*Cooperation partners: EUNIC Latvia – a network of European Union National Institutes for Culture*



## Contemporary art exhibition "Portable Landscapes"

*Portable Landscapes* was a research based large scale contemporary art exhibition project exploring **Baltic migration and exile** from the 20th century up to nowadays. Latvian migrant stories in the Nordic region were looked through the art pieces of Latvian-born Swedish painter Laris Strunke and Estonian-born Swedish painter Enno Hallek and their experiences as refugees during WWII. They served as inspiration points for the contemporary artists of younger generation, who were invited to create new works reflecting on the historical events but also weaving in their own experience as migrating artists.

The project took place in Riga at the Latvian National Museum of Art, artspace Körbärgsgården Konsthall and Gotland Museum in Visby with the participation of institutions, artists and researchers from Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Sweden and Finland.

*Cooperation partners: Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art,  
Embassy of Sweden, Latvian National Museum of Art*



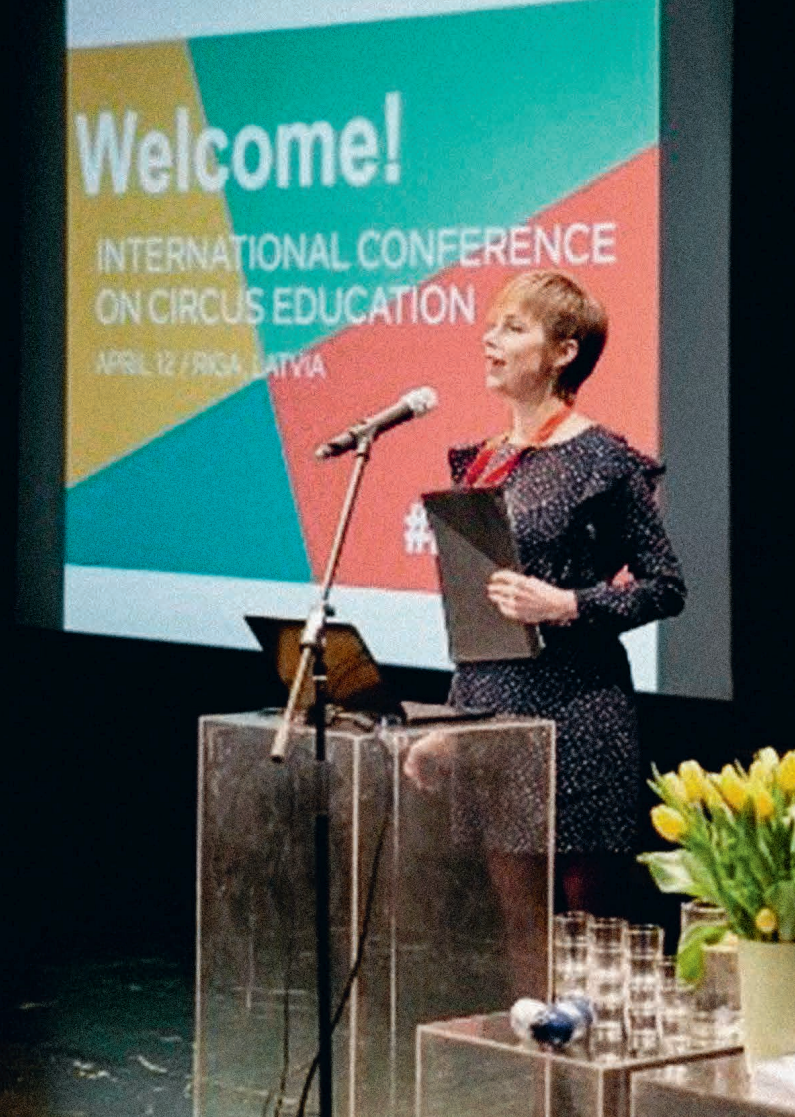


Photo: Inese Kalniņa



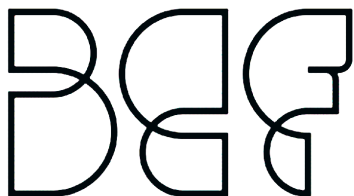


## Baltic-Nordic Circus Network & International Conference on Circus Education

Both events provided great networking opportunities for local and international circus actors, as well as exchange of experiences on the recent developments in the **circus** field in the Nordic-Baltic region.

The conference was an important meeting point for circus pedagogues, academics, artists and policy makers from the whole Europe. It was focusing on the topics related to the models of circus teaching, curricula and academic research. After the conference a roundtable with higher educational institutions was organized, including Latvian Academy of Culture, University of Dance and Circus in Stockholm, Helsinki Theatre Academy, Academy of Modern Circus in Copenhagen and Latvian Academy of Sports Pedagogy.

*Cooperation partners: Baltic Nordic Circus Network, Riga Circus, Manegen and Latvian Academy of Culture*



**BALTIC CULTURE FUND**

## Baltic Culture Fund

In July 2018, the Baltic Culture Fund was established in order to promote and support cultural cooperation between the Baltic countries. During the establishing process, Nordic experiences in managing inter-Nordic cultural cooperation were taken into account.

The Baltic Culture Fund will support professional events and projects in architecture, visual art, design, literature, sound art, performing arts, libraries, museums, archives and interdisciplinary projects. Each Baltic country will contribute 100 000 euros to the Fund annually. The Nordic Council of Ministers contributed to the Baltic Culture Fund with a one-off sum of EUR 100,000, to mark 100 years of independence of the Baltic countries.

Grants for the Baltic Culture Fund will be awarded annually, and the deadline for applications is 20 May 2019.

<https://www.kulka.ee/programmes/baltic-culture-fund>

## Creative Business Cup

Creative Business Cup is an international competition for entrepreneurs in creative industries that helps to grow business ideas, connects the entrepreneurs with investors and global markets, and strengthens the **capacity for innovation**. The initiative promotes and helps strengthen Baltic Sea Region start-ups in preparation for the international finals.

At the Creative Business Cup 2018 in Copenhagen, Latvian company Gamechanger Audio won the second prize!

*Cooperation partners: LIAA Creative Industries Incubator, the Ministry of Culture, NDPC, Danish Culture Institute (DKI), British Council in Latvia, UNESCO Latvian National Commission*



Photo: MAD

## MAD International Summer School of Design in Sigulda

The main theme of the MAD Summer School was BIOMIMICRY.

During ten days, through nature studies and practical hands-on experience at five different workshops, students together with their tutors sought for biomimetic solutions to human health and nutrition problems.

Three Nordic tutors participated in the MAD Summer School – Norwegian artist and researcher Sissel Tolaas and designers Amanda Karsberg and Gabriel Kanulf from Sweden.

An exhibition showcasing the outcomes of the MAD Summer School was displayed in September.

# #SOCIAL WELFARE AND HEALTH





## Social Entrepreneurship Forum

The topic of the annual Social Entrepreneurship Forum this time was *Investment Readiness*. NCM Office supported participation of Claus Bjørn Billehøj, CEO of the private social impact investment fund Danish Social Capital Fund. He shared the story of an investment eco-system with a social impact that has recently developed in Denmark and Scandinavia and opined on the possibilities of Baltic involvement in the future.

On the whole, 162 participants attended the forum: invited guests from different enterprises and state and municipality institutions, as well as social entrepreneurs and community leaders from Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania and Belarus.

*Cooperation partners: Social Entrepreneurship Association*



Photo: Vida Gintautaitė

## Nordic-Baltic co-operation on social & health issues

A Nordic-Baltic senior officials' meeting was held on 25 October 2018 in Riga in order to initiate a dialogue and identify opportunities and interests for closer cooperation between the Nordic and Baltic countries in the social and health sectors.

The meeting was initiated by the Swedish Chairmanship of the Nordic Council of Ministers. Representatives from the ministries responsible for health and social issues in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania took part as well as members of the NCM Senior Officials' Committee for Social and Health Affairs, representatives from the NCM Secretariat, NCM Swedish Chairmanship and the Nordic Welfare Centre.

The overall goals of the initiative: to maintain, nourish and deepen the dialogue between the Nordic and Baltic governmental ministries of social affairs and health, and to support Nordic-Baltic exchange of knowledge and experience via arranging network meetings and conducting specific activities, such as expert meetings, policy maker workshops, professional field visits and thematic conferences.

A pilot project for 2019-2020 will be elaborated by the Nordic Council of Ministers' Office in Latvia in close cooperation with the Nordic Council of Ministers' Secretariat, the Nordic Council of Ministers' Offices in Estonia and Lithuania and the involved Baltic authorities.

*Cooperation partners: The Nordic Council of Ministers' Offices in Estonia and Lithuania, the Nordic-Baltic senior officials' network, the Nordic Council of Ministers' secretariat and the Nordic Welfare centre*

## Conference "Inclusive Design 2018: Think, Plan and Make for Everyone"

The aim of the conference "Inclusive Design 2018" was to focus on future opportunities for inclusive design, the research and policies for promoting inclusion, independence and increased participation. The conference highlighted inclusive design as a strategy value and showed good examples from Latvia and the Nordic countries. Many questions about **accessibility** in Latvia was touched upon, such as: what should be done further, how to turn design ideas into reality and how to break the stereotypes?

The conference brought together policy makers, public service providers, researchers, designers, architects, planners, developers, users and practitioners from Baltic and Nordic countries – around 150 participants in total. An overall view of the political decisions, policy making processes and good practices in municipalities implementing universal design solutions were presented.

NCM Office supported participation of **four speakers from Sweden and Norway** – from the Norwegian Mapping Authority, Oslo Metropolitan University, Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS); Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs; Sandnes Municipality and Borås City (Sweden).

*Cooperation partners: The Ministry of Welfare,  
the Norwegian Mapping Authority "Kartverket"*



## Mental health, depression and contemporary dance

A seminar about youth and mental ill health was arranged in connection with the Latvian contemporary dance performance BEDRE. Lydia Kolouh-Söderlund, Nordic Welfare Centre project manager, shared experiences about the **mental health of young people** in the Nordic countries and the success factors from projects and other measures aiming to improve life conditions among youth. The dance and movement therapist, psychologist, lecturer at Riga Stradins University Indra Majore-Dūšele talked about ways to approach a friend or a colleague who might be struggling with mental health issues, what further steps to take, also providing details on where to seek help. Sintija Silina, the author of the contemporary dance performance, talked about depression and art in general.

*Cooperation partners: Horeographers' Association,  
Nordic Welfare centre*



Photo: Centrs "Marta"





## Conference "Support net for women – victims of violence. Cross-institutional Cooperation Model in Latvia"

Awareness raising conference about the gendered nature of domestic violence was held in Riga, where also **Nordic experiences** were presented. The conference addressed pros and cons of applying a cross-institutional cooperation model in cases of domestic violence.

Participants represented social services, health care institutions, police and other involved parties. Nordic expertise was shared by Martta October, Development Manager at the Institute for Health and Welfare in Helsinki, Finland. Additional workshops on case analysis and prevention were held by the Swedish expert Klas Hyllander.

*Cooperation partners: Ministry of Welfare,  
NGO Resource Centre Marta, Latvian State Police,  
Embassy of Finland, Embassy of Sweden*

## Regional seminars

### **"Step Closer: Community Coordinated Response in Cases of Domestic Violence"**

Seminars were arranged in order to strengthen cross-institutional cooperation in local municipalities in Latvia when helping women suffering from domestic violence. The seminars took place in Saldus, Balvi, Liepāja and Cēsis.

*Cooperation partners: Ministry of Welfare,  
NGO Resource Centre Marta, local municipalities*

## Autism care and safety standards for professionals

At the annual conference “Good Practices in Autism Care”, Nordic experts led a workshop under the tile “Good Start peer support: support to families with a recently diagnosed ASD relative”. The conference was attended by 400 participants – educational and social care professionals as well as family members of persons with autism spectrum disorders.

Finnish experts also held **training sessions on problematic behaviour** for health care professionals, presenting AVEKKI Model for working with aggressive behaviour and HAASTE Model aimed at challenging behaviour at all ages. Separate training sessions were arranged for the family members of ASD diagnosed persons.

*Cooperation partners: University of Latvia and Educational Centre “Atbalsts”, National Library of Latvia, UNESCO National Committee, Latvian Autism Association, Autism Association Finland, Embassy of Finland*

# #UPCOMING ACTIVITIES IN 2019

**Below you will find some of the projects planned for 2019. To receive the latest updates, check [www.norden.lv](http://www.norden.lv) and follow us on [www.facebook.com/norden.lv](https://www.facebook.com/norden.lv)**

## **7 February – 31 March**

### **Exhibition "The Weather Diaries"**

at the Museum of Decorative Arts and Design in Riga will showcase fashion artworks designed by artists from Iceland, Greenland and Faroe Islands, who have been inspired by the unique Nordic landscapes and harsh weather conditions.

## **27 February – 1 March**

### **Baltic Diets Workshop**

will be focusing on food culture and healthy diets. Among the topics discussed: data needs, available policy options and opportunities for different sectors during the transition towards healthy and sustainable food systems in the Baltic region.

## **2 March**

### **Day of Open Data.**

Open data is the driving force for data analytics in the Nordic countries. Integrity with the Baltics should be improved, along with the society's general skills in terms of data literacy, data visualization and use of open data.

## **28 April – 4 May**

### **Wood Days 2019 in Cēsis**

will demonstrate examples of modern wood architecture, whereas specialists will share their practical and theoretical knowledge for the promotion of high-quality craftsmanship.

## 9-12 May

**Youth Summer School for Wood in Construction** will demonstrate the experiences of living in historical towns while preserving their characteristic environment and liveability.

## 21-23 May

**Precision Medicine Conference** will attempt to increase the integration of Latvian researchers and companies into Europe's leading innovation platforms. The ultimate goal is to foster personalized health care, encourage more effective illness prevention and support research excellence.

## 4 June

**Conference "Competitiveness of Small and Medium Cities"** will explore the potential of cities and towns in raising the competitiveness of the Baltic Sea Region and Europe as a whole.

## 28-29 June

**Conversation Festival LAMPA** will host a number of Nordic speakers participating in public discussions, workshops, panels and other activities on various topics – artificial intelligence, school elections, sustainability etc.

## June

**Nordic-Baltic Forum on Anti-Trafficking & Corporate Social Responsibility**, arranged in close co-operation with the Ministry of Interior of Latvia, will be addressing judicial and labour security professionals, social services and employers.

## 25-31 August

**Baltic Sea Festival** will aim to combine the appreciation of classical music with care for the Baltic Sea Region environment.

## 9-10 September

**Textile Waste Project in Riga.** Nordic-Baltic project on textile waste aims to establish a more sustainable model of waste handling processes in the region.

## 27-28 September

**Open Data Hackathon** will cover a wide range of topics: from security and cybersecurity to logistics, bioeconomy, education etc. EU-level open data sources will be used.



## 17-27 October

**"Nordic Highlights" at Riga International Film Festival 2019.** Screenings of the most recent Nordic films will be complemented by various industry events featuring invited film professionals.

## 3 October

### **Nordic Day in Jelgava.**

The well-received regional outreach, organised jointly with Nordic embassies in Latvia, will be continued – this time in Jelgava.

## October

**A seminar on deaf-blindness** will touch upon the identification of persons with dual sensory loss and the specifics of their daily life and social participation. The correct means of communication and support methodologies will be discussed as well.

**Nordic-Baltic conference on senior-friendly cities** will try to address demographic challenges by promoting inclusive services and milieus.

## 6-8 November

Conference "The Architecture of Migration" will be focusing on migration as a longstanding phenomenon. It will bring together experts, professionals, researchers and high-level officials for the exchange of thoughts and experiences and examination of the topic of migration on a larger scale.

## 27-29 November

Baltic Sea Region Forum "5G Techritory". The forum will continue to define coordinated steps for the establishment of a Baltic Sea Region platform where a healthy 5G ecosystem could be built, taking into account the needs of businesses, consumers and community as a whole. Nordic-Baltic Stakeholder Meeting for 5G. Smart mobility, smart city, e-health and other related topics will be on the agenda of the Nordic-Baltic 5G expert group meeting in Riga.

# #FUNDING SCHEMES

The Nordic Council of Ministers' Office in Latvia serves as the administrative body and local contact point for several Nordic-Baltic grant programmes. Here you will find information about different funding schemes offered by the Nordic Council of Ministers that are relevant for Latvia.

## **Nordic-Baltic Mobility Programme for Public Administration**

is designed for civil servants of all administrative levels, encouraging the exchange of ideas and expertise, providing opportunities for networking and promoting the harmonisation of working standards, thereby raising the competitiveness of the Baltic Sea Region in the increasingly globalized world. The programme comprises study visits, internships, and network activities, where partners from three or more Nordic and Baltic countries are involved. In 2018, an additional application round was introduced for the Nordic-Baltic Mobility Programme "Public Administration" on the occasion of the programme's 10th anniversary. Among the grant recipients from Latvia were the Ombudsman's Office, the Ministry of Environment and Regional Development, the State Forest Service, the Information Centre of the Ministry of Interior, the State Police, two district courts and the National Court Administration, a regional concert hall, a prison administration, the Association of Local Governments and eight local municipalities.

[www.nb8grants.org](http://www.nb8grants.org)

## **Nordic-Baltic Mobility Programme for Culture**

aims to enhance cultural and artistic collaboration in the Nordic and Baltic countries by supporting travelling, networking and residential activities. It provides artists and cultural practitioners with an opportunity to gain new contacts, exchange resources and skills, present artistic and cultural productions, raise public interest in the Nordic and Baltic arts and share sources of inspiration. The programme is becoming increasingly popular. In 2018, Latvian applicants submitted 96 applications, of which 26 were granted support. The total amount of support to Latvian projects amounted to more than 150 000 EUR.

[www.nordiskkulturkontakt.org](http://www.nordiskkulturkontakt.org)

## **Nordic-Baltic Grant Programme for NGOs is intended for NGOs**

from the Baltic States and its aim is to support the development of a strong and dynamic civil society in the Baltic Sea Region. Eligible projects must include at least three partners from the Nordic and Baltic countries. Four projects were supported in 2018:

- "Delna"/ Transparency International Latvia together with their Nordic partner organisations conducted

research "Open Data Against Corruption",  
– Latvian Platform for Development Cooperation LAPAS implemented project "Baltics We Want by 2050: 51 Steps Further",  
– Centre for Public Policy PROVIDUS conducted training in "Masterclasses on New Forms of Citizen Engagement", and  
– Latvian Debate Association organised the Debate Leader School 2018/2019.

**Nordic Organisations' and Institutions' Mobility Programme (NOIM)** is a programme designed for the promotion and strengthening of collaboration between the Latvian public sector, NGOs and the Nordic Council of Ministers' institutions and cooperation bodies. Funding is allocated for visits, networking, and participation in conferences. In 2018, eight professional capacity building visits were organized. Experts, civil servants, NGO and academia representatives – 26 persons in total – visited Nordic organisations and institutions in Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Finland, participating in various networking activities. Among the host institutions were NordForsk,

Nordic Innovation, Nordic Energy Research, Nordic Culture Point, Nordic Institute on Åland, Nordic Welfare Centre, Nordregio and the Nordic Council of Ministers' headquarter in Copenhagen.

[www.norden.lv](http://www.norden.lv)

**Education Programme NORDPLUS** promotes lifelong learning and aims to strengthen cooperation between the Nordic and Baltic countries on all levels of education. The programme supports Nordic and Baltic cross-border mobility between students and teachers as well as joint projects and networks between Nordic and Baltic institutions and organizations. Nordplus consist of five sub-programmes covering the entire educational sector. In Latvia the programme is administered by the State Education Development Agency. During the year 2018, 66 applications from Latvia were submitted and 31 were approved. The highest number of project applications was submitted for the Nordplus Junior subprogramme – 28 applications in total!

[www.viaa.gov.lv](http://www.viaa.gov.lv)

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Photo: Ansis Vegners/norden.lv, Ieva Epnere



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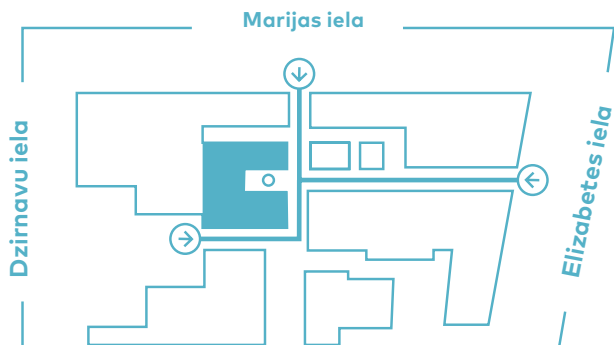
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