



# ARTeries

JŪRMALA — EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE 2027

JŪRMALA: FACTS AND FIGURES



**14**  
railway stations,  
none of which are  
called “Jūrmala”



**24 km**  
of sandy  
beaches



**320 m**  
width of the city  
at its narrowest point



**100 km²**  
the largest resort  
town in the Baltic  
States



**64 %**  
natural areas  
(including 4 special pro-  
tection areas, forests, flood  
meadows, inland waters)



**390**  
architectural  
monuments



**> 4,5 millions**  
same-day visitors  
to the city



**2005**  
granted the WHO  
“**Healthy City**”  
status



**> 800**  
cultural events  
per year



**> 400 000**  
visitors to events



**30**  
cultural venues  
in the city



**150 000**  
visitors to the  
Dzintari Concert Hall  
in a year



**6**  
libraries



**> 550 000**  
book loans yearly



**14**  
schools



**22 %**  
of pupils in Jūrmala  
attend art and music  
schools



**57 000**  
inhabitants  
in the city



**49 %**  
Latvians



**35 %**  
Russians



**Art Station Dubulti** –  
the only exhibition hall  
in Europe located inside  
a working railway station



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## Q1

### Why does your city wish to take part in the competition for the title of European Capital of Culture?

For over a year now, the *Covid-19* pandemic has had a dramatic impact on people all over the world. Even before the pandemic, the World Health Organisation (WHO) had acknowledged that mental health was this decade's most serious health problem. The emotional fallout from isolation and the numerous restrictions that people have lived under has intensified the urgency of this crisis. While vaccination offers a hope that normal everyday life will have resumed by 2027, we have to work hard to promote mental health and introduce prevention strategies to sustain good mental health in the long run. This will require us to rethink our approach and advocate for health literacy.

The abundance of unspoiled natural resources that can be found in Jūrmala can be used to revive and reinvigorate both mind and body. Culture is another, maybe less tangible, but equally powerful tool to heal our spirits. **By becoming the European Capital of Culture (ECoC), we want to release the power that culture holds and demonstrate that culture is an artery of health and of life and keeps the circulation between society and nature flowing.**

We are confident in our resources and our abilities. Our self-sufficiency is our comfort zone. We do, however, realise that we will have to shed this mentality in order to be able to deliver a meaningful and sustainable ECoC programme. We look forward to the challenge of replacing our self-sufficiency and isolation with new structures for co-creation and co-operation. We will set out to prove that **co-operation is healing, that cooperation can foster a rich culture and that cooperation can heal the environment.**

#### Health as a challenge

Is our self-assured focus on health justified? We definitely think it is! The pursuit of wellness weaves through the history of Jūrmala. A health resort developed here,

close to the Latvian capital Rīga, at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in keeping with the flourishing culture of air, sun and water treatments in Europe. Since then, people have continued to come to Jūrmala, even during the Soviet era. People know us for the sea and the sun, but our wealth also lies in the 740 ha large deposit of therapeutic mud in our swamps and in our 33 mineral water wells. In recognition of these natural resources, Jūrmala was assigned the Healthy City status by the WHO in 2005.

Still today, Jūrmala is a calm oasis where people come to restore their health, get inspiration, and to relax. During the *Covid-19* pandemic, Jūrmala's wide open spaces have attracted people who have come to enjoy the fresh air while still being able to keep a safe distance from others. We are happy to share our natural and health resources. In order to be able to do this wholeheartedly, we must first be healthy ourselves. We want to set a good example for how to find balance in both physical and mental health in order for people to be able to learn from us. We want to set a good example for how to live in harmony with nature.

#### Cooperation as a challenge

We have already mentioned that we see ourselves as an inherently confident and self-sufficient city, but also that we are willing to change. To be frank, we have become used to people knowing who we are. We have, however, realised that we want to re-identify ourselves and put Jūrmala firmly on the map as a cultural destination, and not just be known as a European health destination.

As Jūrmala has long been an independent and self-sufficient city, we have grown accustomed to solving our own problems by using our own resources and advice. While this has long been a source of strength for us, it is also our weakness. Although Jūrmala has 20 twinning cities in different

countries around the world, we are involved in few networks and cannot take pride in substantial international cooperation. This is partly due to the fact that Jūrmala is its own city, with a pace that differs from other Latvian cities. We are a mosaic made up of 26 different neighbourhoods each with its own distinct character and way of life (see Jūrmala city map at page 58). However, if the European Union (EU) can become a whole and unite countries with different cultures, languages, and historical backgrounds, then so can we! It will be a challenge to make every part of the city and every person living here feel a sense of belonging, but we believe that culture can be the unifying platform that ties us all together.

We encounter our **FIRST CHALLENGE** when thinking about ways in which Jūrmala can continue to be a sanctuary for health and harmony. We are motivated to set an example by redefining what it means to be a healthy city.

Culture and economic growth present our **SECOND CHALLENGE**, but this will inspire us to prove that culture can be the unifying platform on which a united society can be built. This challenge will motivate us to prove to ourselves and to other cities that cooperation is instrumental in achieving cultural and economic goals.

Our **THIRD CHALLENGE** is related to sustainable development, which includes creating a targeted action plan for the ECoC year to help draw attention to climate change and the ways in which it affects us directly.



We are ready to put in the work to extend and improve municipal funding for citizens' initiatives that would help the residents in our neighbourhoods to unite and come together in formal or informal groups. We are ready to put in the work to create new and effective ways to cooperate with local communities, different interest groups and partners in both Latvia and abroad. One of our approaches will be to make use of our advantage of being well-recognised in the former Soviet republics, which are now EU Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries, as well as in Russia. Here, we see an opportunity for Europe to build bridges of cooperation with countries in the east.

We understand that if we don't cooperate closely on different levels, the municipality will not be able to create a cohesive cultural experience that can appeal to Jūrmala's diverse residents and simultaneously attract visitors and professionals to the city. We will strive to be open to closer and more strategic cooperation in all areas of the city's life – culture, arts and the economy.

#### Sustainable development as a challenge

We are quite literally a city in a forest. We don't think that there are many other cities in Europe that can boast of having four protected natural areas on their territory. Incorporating them into the city's cultural life could prove to be an unforgettable experience for residents and visitors alike. It is crucial, however, that before we venture out into nature to make use of the opportunities

that we can find there, that we are mindful of our responsibility towards our natural heritage and the impact that our actions can have. Just as nature heals us, so we must also nurture our environment. For in reverse, nature can respond mercilessly to human irresponsibility! Climate change makes itself felt in Jūrmala every day. Jūrmala stretches over 24 km between the Gulf of Rīga and the Lielupe River and is only 320 m wide at its narrowest point between Lielupe and the sea. Through coastal erosion, storms break off pieces of land from the city every year. We are quite literally disappearing. The effects of climate change can also take the form of regular peat fires and threats to biodiversity along the coast. The list goes on...

#### A challenge is an opportunity

One might ask why a city with challenges like this should become the European Capital of Culture. It is because we know how to turn these challenges into opportunities. Each challenge is a way in which **Jūrmala can lead the way: to be an example of a city where culture unites the population; to be an example of a city where culture can help people find mental and physical equilibrium; to be an example of a city where development has struck a balance between preserving natural and cultural values.**

We are already changing, all the while keeping our eyes on the ECoC title. In recognition of the value of cooperation, we, self-sufficient Jūrmala, are inviting our neighbouring counties Tukums and Talsi to join us in this bid.

#### We are changing because we believe that:

- culture is the key to building a united city. Culture can act as a catalyst for neighbourhoods and citizens to participate in city life and decision-making more actively, in this way giving new life to real democracy based on the values of respect and solidarity,
- cultural activities promote inclusion and equality, which create a more united and more tolerant world,
- culture can draw attention to the impact that modern life has on the environment and on people's health, which can help us take responsibility for the impact of climate change for future generations,
- cultural experiences can help restore and balance people's mental and physical health,
- culture is a way to open the city up to new connections that will allow us to introduce ourselves to Europe and to the world, and in return see influences from Europe and the world in our city. It allows us to envision a future together in these uncertain times.

ECoC is a unique opportunity for Jūrmala to change: **to find a new place for itself in Latvian and European culture and to forge new collaborations and partnerships on a regional, national and European level. We will also take this opportunity to show the world our experience and solutions, while looking for new approaches to providing quality of life and culture after the pandemic.** ■



## Does your city plan to involve its surrounding area? Explain this choice.

Jūrmala's geographical location in the centre of Latvia is significant. Our city is close to the capital Rīga, and lies between Rīga and the counties in Kurzeme, Latvia's western-most region. To the north-west, Jūrmala is connected to Kurzeme's cultural heritage via a number of transport routes: the railway, waterways, highways and bicycle paths. On a more spiritual level, we are connected via routes created by history, culture and people's stories. These are our "arteries" and our inspiration for the concept of our ECoC 2027 programme – *ARTeries*. Being the connecting link is Jūrmala's strength and creates a lot of opportunities, but we are mindful of the challenges this role can bring.

**The seven county municipalities in the Kurzeme region – Tukums, Engure, Jaunpils, Kandava, Talsi, Roja and Dundaga – are our partners in the Jūrmala ECoC application.** Due to an administrative-territorial reform on 1 July 2021 these counties will merge into two – **Tukums and Talsi**. Going forward, we will be referring to this new territorial division in our application.

Together with Jūrmala, the new counties cover the entire north-western coast of the

Gulf of Rīga and northern Kurzeme. Our combined area is 5,305 km<sup>2</sup> and the population is almost 140,000. This represents around 8.2 % of Latvia's total territory and around 7.3 % of the entire population.

Jūrmala is only about 25 km from Rīga. Almost a third of Latvia's population lives in Rīga, so having and maintaining cooperation links to the capital is particularly important. To this end, we have initiated talks with **Rīga municipality** on how to develop cultural projects with the aim to engage residents and welcome international visitors together.

■ **We are united by common historical roots.** Jūrmala was born from a number of small fishing villages uniting and is today the largest resort town in Latvia. Similar villages still remain in Talsi and Tukums counties, scattered along the coast of the Gulf of Rīga that stretches to the north-west from Jūrmala. You can still find old fishermen's farmsteads here and culturally significant traditions like the Fishermen's Festival are still alive. Residents continue to smoke the fish from their first catch of the day and the smoky flavours are unique to this coastal region.

We are connected to Tukums by one of Latvia's oldest railway lines, which will be 150 years old in 2027. We want to find ways in which to turn railway stations and train carriages into spaces for art and culture as a way to highlight environmentally friendly transport. We want to tackle this creative challenge that bringing culture to a bustling environment poses and find ways to entertain the steady stream of people by involving citizens, artists and experts from different fields.

■ **We are united by ecotourism.** Cycling and hiking routes for active tourism connect Rīga, Jūrmala, as well as Talsi and Tukums counties to Europe. The *EuroVelo* and Baltic Coastal Hiking routes run along the entire north-western coast of Kurzeme (more than 160 km of the total 500 km length of the Latvian sea border). The sandy beach all along the coast is also very popular in the summer, and has stimulated the development of a rich cultural life throughout the region.

■ **We are united by two unique minorities.** The history of two minority groups are intertwined with the story of the Latvian people – the Roma and the Livs,

who have Finno-Ugric roots. The Roma have historically lived in Jūrmala, Tukums and Talsi, while the Livs have lived in coastal fishing villages in Talsi and Tukums counties. We see these minorities and their culture and traditions as a resource that we want to integrate into our ECoC programme in a creative way so as to promote cooperation within the counties and the population as a whole.

■ **We are united by our love of folk culture.** Locals of all ages sing, dance, paint, play and work with crafts, gardening and forestry. There are 14 art and music schools in the region that our children and youth attend, and we have a very diverse range of activities, which is reflected in the 337 amateur groups in our region.

■ **We are united by our experience of cooperation.** So far, we have successfully implemented several EU projects to restore architectural monuments and create nature and cultural tourism services along the west coast of the Gulf of Rīga together. Among the joint projects that we have implemented in Jūrmala, Tukums and Talsi counties are several restoration projects: the Mēluži open-air stage, the Ķemeri water tower, Šlokenbeka Manor, the park adjacent to the Latvian Maritime Academy

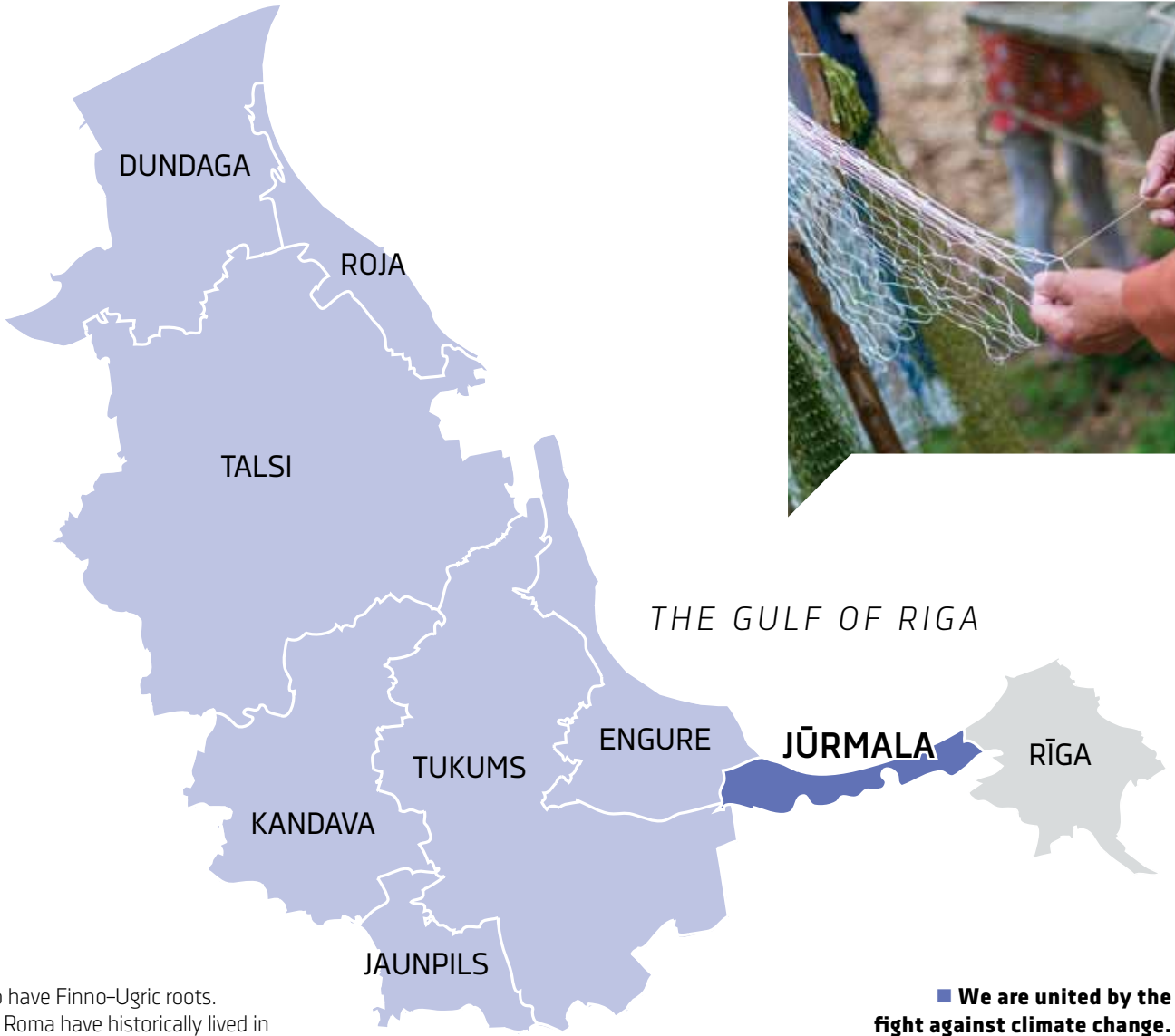
in Engure, and the outdoor area at Engure beach, the Mērsrags open-air stage and the new open-air stage in Roja. We have created and are continuing to build an infrastructure for bringing professional art into the region, for example through the Pedvāle Art Park, which hosts international art workshops, and, since 2020, also an artist residency.

■ **We are united by our common challenges.** Our cooperation partners are as diverse as Jūrmala itself is with its different neighbourhoods. Our partner counties are currently facing a big challenge as several municipalities will merge following the 2021 administrative-territorial reform. This is not something that the population supports unanimously. The Latvian mentality means wanting to be independent, different, and self-sufficient! Just as Jūrmala wants to unite its citizens, so the new Talsi and Tukums counties are striving to unify and engage their citizens in all areas of society.

■ **We are united by the fight against climate change.**

We definitely feel the effects of climate change here on the Baltic Sea coast – coastal erosion causes us to lose around 5–10 ha of our natural beaches, foreshores and coastal dunes every year. We share the challenge of preserving our unique protected dune biotopes and the wealth of the flora and fauna in our national nature parks, reserves and trails. Our natural heritage is important and unique in Europe. The Ķemeri National Park, the Slītere National Park, the Abava Valley and the Stikli Mires Nature Reserve constitute some of the most significant natural treasures on the north-west coast of the Gulf of Rīga.

■ **We are united by a desire to live in a clean, healthy environment and to preserve it for future generations.** We plan to involve children and youth in our ECoC programme and activities through a network of 58 educational institutions (including 4 vocational schools). It is the next generation that will keep our cultural story and our values alive beyond the ECoC year. We see it as our job to give children and young people in our towns and counties the opportunity to be engaged and to gain experience. ■





## Explain briefly the overall cultural profile of your city.

Jūrmala is mainly associated with beaches, pine forests, peace, rest and fresh air. It does, however, also play an important role in Latvian cultural life. It is a city of art, music and inspiration. Historically, it is a city where Latvian cultural legends have come to replenish their creative energy. Rainis and Aspazija, the most significant Latvian poets of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, lived in Jūrmala. Emīls Dārziņš composed the "Melancholic Waltz", a classical Latvian masterpiece, in Jūrmala, and it is also the birthplace of the free-thinking rock group *Menuets* in 1968, who were later banned during the Soviet era. The first Baltic art exhibition took place in 1904 in Majori, which is now the centre of Jūrmala. During the Soviet era, Jūrmala was a hub for art, music and literature residencies that gathered artists not only from the Soviet Union, but also from Vietnam, Germany, France and the USA, among other countries. Today, Jūrmala hosts annual world-class music festivals, and has made a name for itself in the film world because of the number of internationally acclaimed films that have been shot here: "Blizzard of Souls", "The Pagan King", "Dangerous Summer", "The Mover" as well as many others.

### Music in open-air concert venues

Today, it is the Dzintari Concert Hall that carries on Jūrmala's almost century old musical tradition. It is included in the Latvian Culture Canon and is one of the largest open-air concert halls in the Baltic States. It is a unique place where the distant cries of seagulls and the sound of waves crashing beyond the dunes filter through during concerts. **Dzintari Concert Hall organises around 150 high-quality events a year, which attract 150,000 visitors from Latvia and abroad.** The most important events at the Dzintari Concert Hall include the *Jūrmala Festival* in the summer and the *Christmas Festival* at the end of the year, the *Jūrmala Jazz* festival, *Ballet Stars in Jūrmala*, the *Kremerata Baltica* festival, the international symphony orchestra festival *Rīga-Jūrmala*, and the Hans Gabor Belvedere Competition for young opera singers. One of the concert hall's newest traditions is the International Baltic Sea Choir Competition, created by the Jūrmala City Council in cooperation with the *Baltic Choir Association*. 41 choirs from 14 countries have taken part in this competition. A new festival tradition is the *Sunrise Concert*, where

world-famous organist Iveta Apkalna plays her instrument on the beach at Dzintari. This concert attracts more and more people every year who listen both on land, as well as from yachts anchored out at sea.

A host of world-class musicians have taken the stage at the Dzintari Concert Hall, including opera singers **Elīna Garanča, Kristīne Opolais, and Aleksandrs Antonenko**, accordionist **Kseniya Sidorova**, as well as the best Latvian and international symphony orchestras directed by world-renowned conductors such as **Mariss Jansons, Ainārs Rubiķis, Zubin Mehta, Gidon Kremer, Vello Pähn** and many others.

Alongside the Dzintari Concert Hall programme, visitors appreciate the open-air jazz concerts in Horn's Garden every summer, whereas in the winter, jazz fans head to the Jazz Club in the Jūrmala Culture Centre.

The **open-air stage in Melluži** is more than 90 years old and hosts **an accessible programme of light summer music** for both adults and children. Balls, theatre performances and musical autumn fairs also take place on this newly renovated stage.

### Art in museums and public spaces

**Art Station Dubulti** is the only contemporary art space in Europe that is located inside a working railway station. This unique exhibition and event platform is housed in a modernist building from the 1970s that resembles a surging wave. One of the more notable exhibitions that has been held here was "The Sensorium", which was a special project of the Rīga International Biennial of Contemporary Art (RIBOCA1). It was created by a group of four artists under the direction of Danish curator Solvej Helweg Ovesen. The international contemporary art exhibition "Location/ Dislocation. Between Remembering and Forgetting" and virtual reality artist Gints Gabrāns' exhibition "The Grand Opening of the Finale" have also been held here. **Art Station Dubulti** hosts annual contemporary prose readings where each visitor to the station can contribute to a collaborative literary work.

The **Jūrmala City Museum** is another of the city's exhibition centres and organises

around ten exhibitions by both Latvian and international artists annually. The museum also regularly displays the exhibitions that have represented Latvia at the Venice Biennale. Since 2017, the museum has organised the international sea themed biennial *Marina*. For several years now, the Bulduri Exhibition House, a branch of the Jūrmala City Museum, has stood out with its "underground" exhibitions, the most significant of which is the interdisciplinary exhibition "Yes/No Independence".

The Jūrmala City Museum has the only exhibition in Latvia that is dedicated to the culture and history of resort towns. This has made it a popular destination for both Latvian and international tourists. **The Jūrmala Open-Air Museum** is also worth mentioning. It annually hosts traditional midsummer festivities and introduces visitors to Jūrmala's fishing history.

### Unique and remarkable architecture

Jūrmala is home to unique 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century wooden buildings, most of which are summer houses built in the Art Nouveau and National Romantic style. We call ourselves a **city of "lace architecture"** because the decorative carvings on the facades of our wooden houses resemble fine lacework. The architecture in Jūrmala makes up a significant part of Latvia's unique **Art Nouveau heritage**, a style which the craftsmen have also been able to incorporate into the woodwork itself. The geometry of Art Nouveau decoration, as well as the floral shapes and motifs found in the romantic décor, give the resort's wooden buildings an unexpected lightness. A significant number of wooden buildings can be found on the list of 390 architectural monuments in Jūrmala, 105 of which are of national significance and 250 of local significance.

### Literary heritage and continuity

Jūrmala is the home of two towering figures of Latvian literature: poets Rainis and Aspazija. There are even two museums dedicated to them – **The Rainis and Aspazija Summer House** and the **House of Aspazija**. The poetry days tradition is sustained through a cooperation with the Latvian Writers' Union and multiple new works have been created at the Jūrmala Writers' House because of this cooperation.

### A cultural city for children and youth

Children and youth are the future of Jūrmala. One of our sustainable development projects, **Dubulti Culture Quarter** was created in 2018 with them in mind, which is made up of the Jūrmala Music School, the Jūrmala Art School and Jūrmala Central Library. The modern **Dubulti Concert Hall** in the Jūrmala Music School is the first venue for many future musicians. The school has also hosted the International Academic Music Competition *Jūrmala* for more than 20 years – it is the only competition in Latvia where young pianists can perform together with an orchestra. The exhibition hall at the Jūrmala Art School favours exhibitions by children's book illustrators, which have included works by renowned Latvian illustrators Gundega Muzikante and Gita Treice. The Jūrmala Central Library and the Children's Library in Dubulti organise engaging meetings and interesting conversations with writers.

The night-time adventure **In The World of Fairy Tales** is a unique event for children and young people that gives them the opportunity to experience and participate in art and music at a time when they would usually be in bed. The expedition takes place in the Dzintari Forest Park and attracts up to 8,000 visitors.

### Enjoying and co-creating culture

Jūrmala hosts on average around 800 large and small events a year. Before the pandemic, the biggest and most popular annual events in Jūrmala were the **Opening Celebration of the Jūrmala resort season**, the **Jomas iela street festival** and the **Kauguri Festival**. Each of them draws between 20,000 and 40,000 visitors. World-famous musicians have performed at these festivals, such as Suzi Quatro, legendary British rock band Smokie, and many local favourites. In total, the city annually attracts over 400,000 visitors (from Jūrmala, elsewhere in Latvia, and from abroad) to its cultural venues and events. As a reference, the city itself has 57,000 inhabitants.

Our residents are actively engaged in the city's cultural life – around 1,300 children attend the art and music schools, while adults of all ages are involved in 25 amateur artistic groups. Neighbourhood resident associations, minority cultural associations and church congregations increasingly take an initiative in cultural life. Local residents also freely join in various participatory activities, like lighting a candle in the **Way of Light**, a 30 km long candlelit way along the main street in Jūrmala on the Proclamation Day of the Republic of Latvia.

Acting and the theatre are an important outlet for locals to express themselves artistically. **The Jūrmala Performing Arts Theater** is one of the leading amateur theatres in Latvia and stages an average of 70 productions a year. The **Jūrmala Theatre's Puppet Theatre** stages an average of 10 performances per year. There are two youth theatre studios and several theatre groups in the city's schools and the Kauguri Culture Centre's youth theatre studio *Experiments* has garnered international success.

### Regional programme – from traditional to contemporary art

Our regional partners' cultural life is also rich and diverse. It is characterised by amateur artists, exhibitions by professional artists, concerts and poetry days. The region's thematic events (historical, seasonal or national celebrations), festivals (cinema, music, nature) and town festivals attract visitors from Latvia and abroad. The events are busy and diverse, offering something for every preference.

One of the oldest traditions in Talsi is the Dižmāra annual fair that dates back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The fair gathers many traders and local artisans. The Rose Festival floral show was established in neighbouring Tukums in 2008 and has since become a beloved tradition. The largest wreath made out of living roses in the world is woven at the festival in honour of locals' rose-growing and gardening traditions.

One of the most important centres is the Pedvāle Art Park in Sabile that has 30 years of experience of hosting international sculpture symposia. Sabile has hosted the Sabile Wine Festival every summer since 1999. This festival celebrates the Sabile Wine Hill, which is the most remote grape plantation in northern Europe.

The *Home Café Days* movement has developed over the last few years to honour the region's culinary heritage and hospitality. During these days, residents open up their homes to guests and offer traditional dishes made from local produce. Local Kandava acorn coffee is a traditional delicacy that has been revived through the *Home Café Days*!

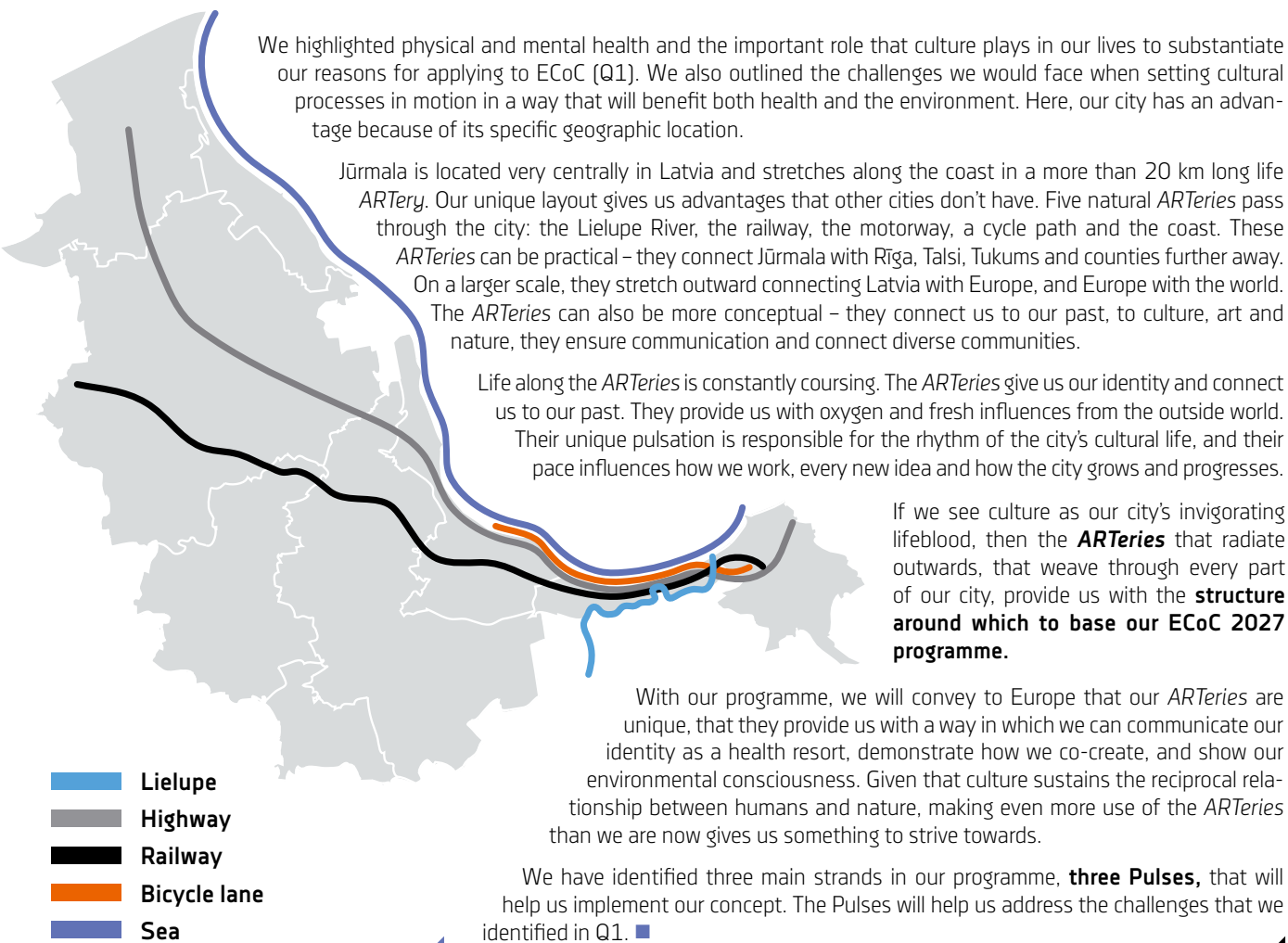
Tukums county has been an important filming location for decades. Along with the large number of Latvian feature films that have been shot there, Tukums is increasingly attracting the attention of the international film industry. *Cinevilla Studio* is an important filming location that also hosts educational events and festivals, whereas the *Royal* Film Festival offers a broad film, art and music programme in Roja every year.

The North Kurzeme coastline acts as the outer border of both counties. The most important festivals and events in the villages along the coast revolve around the sea and the light. Both elements are historically vital to local life – the sea, although treacherous, has sustained these communities, and the light has guided fishermen and sailors to safety throughout the years. For over six years, all villages from Engure to Lapmežciems have participated in the **international Ancient Lights festival**, where bonfires are lit on both sides of the Baltic Sea coast. This shows the coastal communities' unity and recalls their common history and cultural heritage. Traditional **Sea or Fishermen's Festivals** are held in honour of ancestors and the younger generations that still continue to fish. There are no coastal households that do not have a relationship with the sea, which is why the festival has been an annual event since time immemorial. Even today, many locals are involved in fish processing, and **smoked fish is a trademark of these coastal villages' culinary heritage.** ■





# Explain the concept of the programme which would be launched if the city is designated as European Capital of Culture.



**Health Pulse – a response to the challenge of physical and mental health.**

Inactivity affects both physical and mental health, something that has become increasingly apparent during the *Covid-19* pandemic. What active lifestyle habits can do for physical health, art can do for mental health and adding nature into the mix creates a winning formula. Organising high-quality cultural events in nature will create a space for people to experience serenity within and find harmony between themselves and their surroundings. Choosing unconventional venues will open people's minds and help them see the wealth of their inner resources. We want cultural life in Jūrmala to develop in a direction where it is increasingly accessible, awe-inspiring and environmentally friendly.

**Co-creation Pulse – a response to the challenge of local and international cooperation.**

Jūrmala is a geographically fragmented city that together with its partner counties covers a large area of the Baltic Sea coast. Jūrmala is also a multicultural city. People from different ethnic backgrounds have not only found a home here, but have found a variety of ways in which to participate in the city's life. The foundation for cooperation is to involve as many residents as possible on a local, neighbourhood level, and from there also on a regional level. To cooperate we need to reach out and encourage people to co-create and be creative. Co-creation for us can mean bringing culture, science and the tech field together to see what new interdisciplinary objects and events can emerge where they intersect.

**Environmental Pulse – a response to the challenge of sustainable development.**

We are proud of our resort culture and history, but in order for this part of our identity to have a sustainable future, we have to respect our natural resources. The four beautiful seasons that are characteristic of Northern Europe give Jūrmala a distinct natural rhythm. Each season brings different cultural opportunities, but inviting the broader public out into nature carries with it a serious responsibility to protect and care for our natural resources. Art is a language through which we will address many climate-related issues including conserving biodiversity, promoting sustainable mobility, reducing household waste, and using our natural resources with care. Cultural experiences will help shape sustainable habits in a thoughtful and thought-provoking way.

# CONTRIBUTION TO THE LONG-TERM STRATEGY

## Describe the cultural strategy that is in place in your city at the time of the application, including the plans for sustaining the cultural activities beyond the year of the title?

## How is the European Capital of Culture action included in this strategy?

Jūrmala has never been a city with a significant industry, neither is it a transport hub or a centre for education. Jūrmala is a resort town, whose economic development is shaped by health and leisure tourism and, of course, by culture. Culture weaves throughout Jūrmala's policy planning documents at all levels in acknowledgement of the integral role that it plays in the city's life.

To recognise the ways in which culture has contributed to developing Jūrmala, the **Jūrmala City Cultural Development Plan 2017–2020** was drafted and approved on 12 January 2017. On 29 October 2020, the plan was extended until 31 December 2022. The new **Jūrmala City Cultural Development Plan 2023–2029** is being developed at the same time as the ECoC application. It is expected that the plan will be adopted in early 2022.

The aim of the cultural development plan is to **highlight Jūrmala's unique nature as a resort town, to create a range of cultural events and high-quality cultural tourism activities for both visitors and residents and to provide quality in the living space through creative neighbourhoods and by making culture accessible.**

This aligns with the aim outlined in our ECoC application: **to become an example of a Europe where culture is the foundation for unity, mental and physical harmony, and where urban development is in balance with preserving natural and cultural heritage.**

The cultural development plan outlines the following courses of action:

**Creativity** – strengthening the unique features of neighbourhoods and encouraging citizen engagement.

- Diversity** – developing high quality cultural activities in a systematic way, by and for different population groups at a local, national and international level.
- Cultural heritage** – preserving and promoting cultural heritage, and interpreting it in a contemporary way.
- Cooperation** – fostering cooperation between the people involved in developing the cultural sector.
- Accessibility** – developing a geographically balanced cultural infrastructure and promoting accessibility.

**Many of the activities in the current cultural development plan are long-term and will continue to be implemented and included in the new Cultural Development Plan 2023–2029.** Working on the ECoC application and the next cultural development plan simultaneously ensures that the ideas, priorities and projects included in the ECoC application will also be included in the city's new plan. This will ensure the longevity of cultural events. The new cultural development plan will strengthen the horizontal and collaborative nature of culture and its role in driving the city's development. The plan will emphasise cooperation and networking on a national and international level.

The **Jūrmala City Development Strategy for 2010–2030** (adopted on 16 December 2010) reflects the meaningful role that culture plays in promoting citizens' sense of belonging, and the extent to which it contributes to the city's competitiveness. The strategy wants to promote the idea that anyone can feel like they're a local in Jūrmala, whether they live here, or are pass-

ing through. The development strategy sets out three objectives envisioning that in 2030 Jūrmala will be:

- 1) An internationally recognised and modern seaside resort and the most popular resort town in the Baltic Sea region,**
- 2) A place in the Baltic region where the East and West can meet and network,**
- 3) A worthwhile and rewarding place to live and vacation as well as a centre for culture and sports.**

The development strategy identifies culture to be a valuable part of the following areas that are important to the city's development:

- building the city's image (prestige),
- communicating the city's international identity,
- ensuring quality in the living space (a diverse range of cultural events for all audiences, an active social life, opportunities for lifelong learning),
- creating a high-quality urban environment (outdoor sculptures and the preservation of cultural heritage),
- developing the resort and supporting entrepreneurship (developing crafts),
- promoting public health.

Culture is included in strategic policy planning documents, as well as in action plans, where significant funding has been allocated for cultural development. As culture is an important factor in developing the city's and the resort's image, and as something that creates quality living space, it has also been included in the **Jūrmala City Development Programme 2014–2020**

## Describe the city's plans to strengthen the capacity of the cultural and creative sectors, including through the development of long term links between these sectors and the economic and social sectors in your city.



### COURSES OF ACTION IN THE CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

### ECOC APPLICATION OBJECTIVES

### ECOC APPLICATION STRANDS

**Creativity:** to strengthen neighbourhoods' unique nature and encourage citizen engagement.

**Accessibility:** to develop a geographically balanced cultural infrastructure and promote accessibility.

**Diversity:** to develop cultural activities in a systematic way for different target groups at a local, national and international level with a focus on quality.

**Cultural heritage:** to preserve, and promote cultural heritage, and to interpret it in a contemporary way.

**Cooperation:** to foster cooperation between the people involved in developing the cultural sphere.

To highlight culture as the key to creating a united city. To see culture as a catalyst for neighbourhoods and citizens to take an active role in the city's life and decision-making, which gives new life to true democracy based on the values of respect and solidarity.

To organise cultural activities that promote inclusion and equality between different people, creating a more united and tolerant world.

To organise cultural experiences that help people regain their mental and physical balance.

To foster a culture that pays attention to the impact that modern life has on natural heritage and human health, in this way taking responsibility for the consequences of climate change for future generations.

To view culture as a way in which to open the city up to new relationships, to present ourselves to Europe and to the world, and to see influences from Europe and the world in our city. To appreciate culture as a way in which to envision the future together in these uncertain times.

(approved on 7 November 2013, and extended until 31 December 2022). In 2021, work started on the new Jūrmala City Development Programme 2023–2029. The new programme will focus on developing culture in the following directions:

- To create access to good quality and diverse cultural and sporting activities for everyone,
- To promote international competitiveness and excellence in culture, cultural heritage and sports,
- To develop and make efficient use of cultural and sports infrastructure.

The cultural development plan addresses several of the challenges identified in the ECoC application (Q1), and the priorities outlined in it correspond to the main directions and objectives of the ECoC application. The table below shows the relationship between the Jūrmala City Cultural Development Plan and the ECoC application. ■

■ **The Co-creation Pulse** directly addresses this cultural policy goal by strengthening the unique nature of various neighbourhoods and by encouraging citizens to get involved in cultural processes (e.g. *Community Spirit, Being Neighbours*).

■ **The Environmental Pulse** will provide equal access to cultural events, establish new venues and organise events in different neighbourhoods of the city (e.g. *Nature as a Stage, Station Renaissance*).

■ **The Co-creation Pulse** creates opportunities for different groups of people to be able to participate in creating and enjoying cultural activities (e.g. *Steps in the Sand, Community Spirit, Artificial*).

■ **The Environmental Pulse** envisions more physically accessible venues and a unique, high quality, international cultural experience (e.g. *All the Railway is a Stage, Nature as a Stage, Pro-Nature, Pro-Art*).

■ **The Health Pulse** highlights art and participation in cultural activities as a way for people to reinvigorate and improve themselves with creativity (e.g. *Slow-Down Festival, Green Arteries, Bon Voyage*).

■ **The Environmental Pulse** highlights the reciprocity between culture and nature and the importance of creating urban environments that use natural resources in a balanced way. It highlights humans' responsibility to preserve our natural resources (e.g. "lace architecture", *Pro-Nature, Pro-Art, Think Again, Use Again*).

■ **The Co-creation Pulse** highlights the importance of collaboration to being able to create a high-quality cultural experience (e.g. *Artificial, Design Dubulti*).

Jūrmala and its partnering municipalities do not have a broad representation of creative industries. Our creative minds prefer to take advantage of the proximity to Rīga and the opportunities that are available to them there. Jūrmala has not created many strong links to professional networks internationally and only infrequently makes use of them. Our goal is to create a city where cultural operators not only want to live, but also to work. This will mean reaching out to engage people, to develop world-class ideas and projects with them, and to bring these ideas to fruition. It will be a gradual process. We want to make use of the opportunities that the ECoC will bring to strengthen the cultural and creative sectors and to promote their economic contribution and cooperation with other sectors, both here at home and internationally.

### HOW TO GET THERE?

#### Cultural mapping

Identifying cultural resources and their potential locally is an important step for fostering local and international cooperation in culture and the creative industries. In preparing this application and developing the contents of the programme we organised joint discussions between experts and creatives from different sectors. These discussions acted as an important step towards creating closer intersectoral cooperation at a local level, and this cooperation will continue in the future.

Our regional cultural experts and creatives are a resource. Following the administrative-territorial reform in 2021, cultural operators from the newly formed counties will have to learn to cooperate and to plan cultural events together.

We are, however, also looking more broadly. It's not just creatives and cultural operators who stimulate local culture, but also the entrepreneurs who organise events, individual proprietors who own historic buildings, local administrations and politicians who make decisions about the city's cultural life, NGOs

that engage people in events and others. All of them are crucial to making our cultural life and the ECoC programme exceptional.

#### Building local cooperation platforms

We will be driving this process in the run-up to the ECoC year so that we can get to know people and make introductions. We will create platforms that facilitate meetings, help people generate new ideas and ultimately to implement them.

#### Cultural planning

Culture unites neighbours in various parts of Jūrmala. It encourages them to get involved in neighbourhood regeneration and increase quality of life locally. Cultural planning is a collaboration between three forces: the municipal administration, local citizens and the cultural sector. This method was successfully utilised in Denmark in Aarhus' ECoC programme in 2017. We will implement it in Jūrmala and in our partner municipalities as well, in cooperation with the Danish Cultural Institute, who is currently the lead partner in the *EU Interreg Baltic Sea Region* programme's project *UrbCulturalPlanning*.

We will develop **guidelines** for cultural events together that 1) are environmentally friendly; 2) make them accessible to a wide range of people, including people with different types of disabilities, seniors, low-income people; 3) will provide the opportunity to combine fields that might not seem compatible, like sports and culture. Together, we will work to ensure that all ECoC event organisers adhere to these principles and also introduce our partners to these guidelines.

#### Training

One of the obstacles to developing the cultural sector's capacity is a lack of practical knowledge and cooperation. To address this, one of the courses of action in Jūrmala's city cultural development plan is "Cooperation in Jūrmala: fostering coopera-

tion between participants involved in developing the cultural sphere". This emphasises the need to strengthen cooperation at all levels and supports training for cultural operators.

Our ECoC targets are broader. They require even more knowledge, skills and open-mindedness. In preparation for the ECoC year, we will develop a detailed **capacity-building programme – the Brain ARtery**, with a special focus on strengthening international project management skills: 1) we will find out what knowledge and skills our people lack in order to be able to achieve excellence, and how to best structure the training. We will regularly follow up on this, so that our activities align with real needs and with what is possible technologically; 2) we will organise open training series and workshops on practical, legal, theoretical, and methodological issues. These will take place both in person and online. We will cover a wide range of issues such as volunteering, design thinking, crowdfunding, project management, bookkeeping. These events will also address how to organise sustainable events, how to make culture accessible, and how to integrate events from different sectors. Most of these sessions will be available online to anyone interested; 3) we will organise individual sessions to give advice and training to project applicants, helping to develop and shape even the craziest idea into a viable project.

#### International networking

We have identified a lack of international networking as one of our main obstacles. We will overcome this by involving cultural operators and creatives from Jūrmala and our partner municipalities in international cooperation projects and networks. We will organise targeted activities for people to be able to build lasting professional connections. This will include organising exchanges with artist residencies, touring exhibitions, musicians, dancers, theatre exchange projects, concerts, seminars and conferences (for more, see Q11, Q16). ■



If your city is awarded the title of European Capital of Culture, what do you think would be the long-term cultural, social and economic impact on the city (including in terms of urban development)?

When planning the ECoC programme, we imagined what we would like Jūrmala to look like in 2028, after the programme. We want to set an example for Europe: **an example of a city where culture provides the foundation for unity, for improving citizens' mental and physical health and for balancing urban development with preserving natural and cultural heritage.** As we wrote in Q1, we see culture as being the key to building a united city and as a means of promoting inclusion and equality between diverse people. We see how culture can help people regain a sense of mental and physical balance, and draw attention to the impact that our modern way of life has

on natural heritage and health. In this way culture can make us take responsibility for the consequences of climate change for future generations. **We see culture as a way to open the city up to new partnerships and as a way to present ourselves to Europe and to the world. In reverse, culture also brings influences from Europe and the world in our city so that we can envision the future together.**

We planned the programme and evaluated the cultural, social and economic impact and also the effect on urban development that the programme's main strands, the Pulses, would have, according to these objectives.

	Health Pulse	Co-creation Pulse	Environmental Pulse
CULTURAL IMPACT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The cooperation between culture and sports strengthens, which opens up the possibility of incorporating elements of sports into cultural events and vice versa.</li><li>■ Combining sports, an active lifestyle and cultural events helps involve more people into cultural life, including youth.</li><li>■ Cultural activities embody a "culture without additives" principle meaning they are environmentally friendly, healthy and adapted to the interests of the population rather than artificially created.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Citizens and local artists are increasingly involved in cultural events, not only as participants but also as co-creators, making cultural activities more relevant to a wider range of people.</li><li>■ Cultural events become more popular, which in turn attracts both well-known artists and a broader audience.</li><li>■ Searching for new cultural expressions cultivates international cooperation in the culture field, and new cultural directions emerge that are connected to these new support instruments.</li><li>■ Creative activities create an image of a city that is open to international contemporary arts events.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Jūrmala becomes known as a place for environmentally friendly cultural events: a new type of event develops – small, remote and environmentally friendly; events that are a process rather than a one-off; events that allow their audiences to enjoy nature and culture in all seasons.</li><li>■ Cultural events in unexpected places broaden the understanding of the culture infrastructure.</li><li>■ Cultural events organised in other places than the classic venues provide an opportunity to engage people who do not usually attend professional cultural events.</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Cultural events in unconventional places make life more interesting, promote wellbeing and reduce depression.</li><li>■ There's a growing awareness of the importance of maintaining a healthy, active lifestyle to improving quality of life.</li><li>■ Health events help different population groups feel included socially.</li><li>■ More people adopt a healthy, active lifestyle, which leads to better public health overall.</li><li>■ Sports brings neighbourhoods and families together.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Open collaboration with citizens allows the municipality to respond to the population's social needs in a timely manner.</li><li>■ People's sense of belonging to the city increases.</li><li>■ Cultural events in different neighbourhoods encourage families to come together and encourages neighbourhood unity, which in turn inspires residents to participate in their city's life.</li><li>■ Cultural events that are closer to people, more accessible and free of charge encourage different population groups to get involved and will strengthen family ties.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Accessible cultural activities outdoors are beneficial for individuals' mental and physical health.</li><li>■ Cultural events outside the city centre make them more accessible to different population groups, which promotes inclusion and integration into city life.</li><li>■ Unexpected, contemporary cultural events in non-traditional venues attract young people, including at-risk youth.</li></ul>



ECONOMIC IMPACT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ New resort-related businesses emerge in the city, which creates new jobs.</li><li>■ By becoming a centre for resort-oriented tourism expertise, Jūrmala attracts EU funding to develop new projects and pass on experience to other resort towns.</li><li>■ The city hosts European and global sporting events and health conferences, which attracts new visitors and contributes positively to the economy.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ More events take place thanks to internal and external cooperation, which includes international events. This brings more visitors to the city who use companies' services and thus contribute to the economy.</li><li>■ More active and creative entrepreneurship, open cooperation with the municipality and a creative environment encourages an influx of new residents and labour.</li><li>■ Cooperation with the creative industries encourages new businesses to develop, which in turn creates new companies and jobs.</li><li>■ Participating in projects by the EU and other funds brings additional revenue for implementing ideas, which contributes to the city's budget.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ More visitors are attracted to the city thanks to open-air cultural activities. The visitors use various services, which in turn contributes to the economy.</li><li>■ Deviating from traditional cultural venues and forms reduces the impact of seasonality on tourism and on business activities.</li><li>■ New venues and outdoor events attract new businesses to the city.</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Active recreation areas and nature trails are established in different neighbourhoods to promote an active lifestyle. These are all made accessible to different groups including seniors, families with children and people with mobility, hearing and visual impairments.</li><li>■ The infrastructure in the city (parking lots, cycle paths, bike racks, sports equipment rental places) enables residents and visitors to be healthy and active on foot, on bicycles and scooters, or even on skis.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Openly cooperating with citizens ensures that urban environments and infrastructure develop in a way that corresponds to the interests of citizens in various neighbourhoods and sectors, and ensures that they're adapted to people with different abilities.</li><li>■ Thanks to external cooperation, the city adopts best practices in modern urban planning.</li><li>■ Cultural events in unconventional places help restore neglected areas of the city.</li><li>■ Cultural events in different areas help showcase the distinctive character of the city's various neighbourhoods.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ As commuter habits change, the municipality builds infrastructure to encourage the use of sustainable transportation (bicycle lanes, bicycle parking, electric car charging stations).</li><li>■ The way in which urban areas and nature parks are used is defined and appropriately communicated to residents and visitors in order to keep a balance between nature and the urban environment, between the interests of permanent residents with those of tourists as well as balance the interests of different population groups.</li><li>■ Cultural events in unexpected locations complement and enhance the cultural and tourism infrastructure.</li><li>■ Cultural events in nature help new ideas for the city's image to develop.</li></ul>



We designed the monitoring and evaluation plan of the *Jūrmala 2027* foundation so as to 1) ensure that the *Jūrmala 2027* programme is systematically monitored and evaluated internally, as well as to provide data for the European Commission's (EC) external evaluation; 2) focus the development and implementation of the city's development and cultural policy's strategic planning documents; 3) ensure that the cultural, social and economic benefits of *Jūrmala 2027* is visible to the stakeholders involved in the city's development and planning. **The plan was drafted by cultural policy and city development/planning experts, who cooperated with experts on cultural programme impact assessment from the Latvian Academy of Culture.** It is based on studying previous ECoC experiences (especially *Rīga 2014*) and on a holistic analysis of the cultural strategies and impact indicators of various cities, regions, countries, the EU and other international organisations (UNESCO).

Our approach to evaluation is based on the basic principles of change and action theory. These make it possible to establish a causal link between the programme's contribution and the ECoC objectives as outlined by the EC, and the objectives of the *Jūrmala 2027* programme that are subordinated to these, as well as to assess why and how the link has been established. To evaluate *Jūrmala 2027* it is particularly important to 1) dynamically map and assess how culture, the environment and health interact in the city's ecosystem; 2) to formatively assess the inhabitants of Jūrmala and communities in our partner regions as a source of the city's cultural dynamism, and as ambassadors of natural heritage and a healthy lifestyle. In monitoring and evaluating the programme we will use elements of participatory research design and social sciences. These will ensure that the participating communities, project beneficiaries, residents and visitors of Jūrmala are actively engaged in collecting the data. The work of the team of *Jūrmala 2027* volunteers will play an important role in conducting audience research, as will the participation of students and researchers from Latvian arts and culture academies.

**We plan to assess the objectives of the ECoC and *Jūrmala 2027* and how the planned results that correspond to them are being achieved in three levels: 1) the contribution of the programme's**

**participants, participating communities and funded project teams; 2) the contribution of the *Jūrmala 2027* foundation team, Jūrmala City and partnering municipalities; 3) the *Jūrmala 2027* foundation's activities' contribution to national cultural policy and to achieving overall ECoC objectives.**

We selected **quantitative and qualitative indicators** to measure whether the programme corresponds to its objectives and to measure its cultural, social and economic impact. They will be grouped into the following categories:

- citizens of Jūrmala as "creators" and "consumers" of the urban environment and the cultural programme,
- cultural participation: going-out participation and identity-building participation,
- social cohesion and involvement based on territory, ethnicity, economy, values, etc.,
- synergy between culture-, nature- and health ecosystem services,
- culture and the arts as a restorative resource for people and nature,
- the integration of natural and cultural heritage into arts and cultural management,
- new sustainable cultural spaces in the urban and natural environments,
- linking cultural and artistic innovation to urban planning activities,
- international cooperation: participation in networks, artist exchanges, international projects and events.

We will pay special attention to studying citizens' cooperation and co-creation activities in order to perform an in-depth assessment of the impact that ECoC has on transforming the identity, sense of belonging and representation of the citizens of Jūrmala, as well as on the cultural, mental and physical healing that the city's visitors experience during the ECoC. The key impact indicators will be tested periodically for both the project's monitoring and for its final evaluation.

To evaluate and monitor *Jūrmala 2027* we will use **data** from Eurostat, the Central Statistical Bureau of the Republic of Latvia and the Latvian Cultural Data portal *Kultūras dati*. We will also use databases that contain information on the socio-demographic structure, employment and income, cultural and creative industry employment, the tourism and hospitality sector's economic indicators and on public and private sector

cultural organisations in Jūrmala and the participating partnering counties. We will also use monitoring indicators of the Latvian population's cultural consumption and engagement, data from ticket sales, etc.

To measure impact, we will use quantitative and qualitative data obtained from 1) surveys, interviews and focus group discussions with inhabitants of Jūrmala and our partnering counties, event audiences, project beneficiaries and cultural operators, cultural policy and city development/planning experts, *Jūrmala 2027* administrative staff and other relevant groups; 2) project beneficiaries' activity overviews/reports, where information will be included in the form of focused reports according to evaluation indicators. The methodological principles of ecosystem mapping and network analysis will allow data to be grouped and analysed in order to identify changes in the city's development trajectory during and after the implementation of the *Jūrmala 2027* programme.

The **evaluation and monitoring process and the timeframe** have been adapted to include all stages of the development, implementation and evaluation (including long-term effects) of the *Jūrmala 2027* programme:

- **2021:** benchmarks will be set and included in the Jūrmala City Cultural Development Plan 2023–2029.
- **2024–2025:** all stakeholders involved in the implementation of the programme will perform a self-assessment regarding anticipated results, monitoring report will be prepared.
- **2022–2027:** data is collected while the programme is being implemented.
- **By 1 July 2028:** the final evaluation of *Jūrmala 2027* is prepared.
- **2030:** final evaluation of the Jūrmala Cultural Development Plan 2023–2029 and the Jūrmala City Development Programme 2023–2029.
- **2031–2032:** long-term impact assessment in synergy with the final assessment of the Jūrmala City Development Strategy 2020–2030.

The *Jūrmala 2027* foundation will have administrative **responsibility** for evaluation and monitoring and will work with 1–2 evaluation experts in the long term. It will also ensure that the results of the evaluation are communicated. ■

## What is the artistic vision and strategy for the cultural programme of the year?

We introduced five *ARteries* that run through the natural and urban environment of Jūrmala in outlining the concept for our ECoC programme (Q4). Drawing a parallel to the way in which human arteries supply cells with life-sustaining oxygen, Jūrmala's *ARteries* supply the city with a life-sustaining flow of people and ideas that, among countless other things, facilitate common goals and development.

The *ARteries* are constantly coursing. They connect everything that sustains life, on both a physical and spiritual level. It is an endless cycle. People arrive in Jūrmala bringing their experiences and stories with them. They leave their mark by influencing those they meet. They can rest, heal, then take what they have gained back home with them. In the same way we can go out into nature, gain strength and spiritual clarity, and in turn invest that energy and newfound awareness back, by taking care of the environment – for ourselves, and for future generations. The *ARteries* have no beginning and no end.

Our programme strategy is based around **five principles that flow through all ECoC activities:**

**1) Unity and cooperation.** We want to become a city where culture is the foundation for cooperation, for active participation and ownership. We value openness in all its forms: openness to change, challenges and cooperation; openness among neighbours and among communities; openness between artists and entrepreneurs, NGOs and municipalities; openness between neighbouring counties, national and international cultural organisations, European and global cities. We recognise that unity can provide people with a secure foundation that they can lean on and gather strength from to defend their interests. Unity has been the

**The *ARteries* are alive, the *ARteries* are pulsating, the *ARteries* are everywhere. The core concept of Jūrmala's ECoC application is to make culture and art available in unexpected places and in unexpected forms. We envision a culture and art created in collaboration with people and with the world, a culture and art that honours our natural and historical heritage. Being surprised by art might persuade someone to participate unexpectedly. By infusing the *ARteries* with culture, we hope to reach even the furthest corners and Pulse locations of Jūrmala.**

foundation of democracy throughout European history and still is today.

The city will be a platform where science and technology can come together with art to create unexpected, surprising and innovative solutions.

**2) Inclusion and equality.** We are working towards being a tolerant place where culture can help people feel at home and be treated equally regardless of age, gender, nationality, sexuality, social background, religion or physical ability. We will respect cultural diversity and differences, because everyone can find belonging in Jūrmala.

**3) Responsibility to future generations.** Our cultural programme will inspire people to think. It will inspire people to act with respect towards nature in all areas of their lives. It will inspire people to understand the impact of their actions on the environment and on their health in this way being able to act responsibly towards future generations.

We intend to become a place where people can come to find physical and mental balance and experience harmony between nature and digital technologies. We will draw from our cultural heritage to offer people ways in which they can check in on themselves and their health and to then rejuvenate spiritually and physically. The way that our events are organised will encourage partici-

pation and will challenge people in unexpected ways – some might find serenity and experience harmony between themselves and their surroundings, some might open their minds and unleash their creativity, some might gain understanding and discover their inner resources. Our world class professional art events will in turn stir a sense of empathy, they will inspire, open people's eyes and stimulate debate.

At the same time, we will demonstrate that urban development can progress and simultaneously respect natural heritage and future generations. Nature preservation is not just about keeping it untouched at the expense of progress. Humanity and nature can co-exist if people live with respect for nature.

**4) Discovery.** We want to surprise visitors by turning something familiar into something wonderful. Mundane things will turn into revelations. Railway stations, hangars and factories will suddenly seem extraordinary. One of our goals as ECoC is to view things through a child's eyes, to finally notice the things we walk past and overlook every day. Culture and art will help us in this mission and turn everyday life into a joyful adventure. It will help us question old beliefs, shake off tired ideas and instead celebrate the diversity already right in front of us.

**5) Participation.** One of our programme's strategies is to issue co-financing calls for local and international projects. This will give us the opportunity to base a significant part of our programme on people's own creative ideas. We want to see what local and international artists and cultural organisations can come up with. We want to be surprised, foster participation and belonging and at the same time attract private funding to implement the programme. ■



Give a general overview of the structure of your cultural programme, including the range and diversity of the activities/main events that will mark the year.

Our ECoC programme is divided into three main strands, three Pulses, that contain all the ideas that we want to communicate to Europe. The Pulses also cover all the ways in which we want to bring Europe to Jūrmala and represent European values here. The Pulses will take on a variety of forms: events in nature, in the urban environment, on the internet. They tell the story of Europe, the Baltic Sea coast, Latvia and Jūrmala. They will communicate our partner counties' aspirations, changes and new directions.

## Health Pulse

We find good health in the interaction between a balanced mind and a balanced body. We find healthy lifestyles in the interaction between art, sports and health. Different kinds of therapies – be it dance, movement, drama, music or art – are important, but so is our cultural and historical heritage. Living in harmony with nature, regardless of season, can bring serenity, and various sporting activities can provide clarity. We want to surprise our visitors about what health and art can look like and encourage people to think outside the box. Looking at health in a new way can become a surprising cultural experience in itself.



## Environmental Pulse

Nature often serves as a stage for cultural experiences in Latvia. With our ECoC programme, we will open the largest art galleries and concert halls up to our events – our parks, forests, and the coast. Embracing non-traditional cultural spaces will allow audiences to feel that they can participate in a new way. Taking audiences out of traditional concert and exhibition venues will foster empathy and co-creation. Any space in nature can become a cultural space if events are produced in a respectful, environmentally friendly way.

We are very grateful for our sustainable transport network, the railway. After the planned opening of *Rail Baltica* in 2026, the railway will not only connect Jūrmala to the Riga International Airport, but also to Tallinn, Vilnius, Helsinki, Warsaw and Berlin. Most of the city's inhabitants and visitors meet in stations and on trains every day making the railway an important venue for us. By combining high quality and unusual cultural activities with sustainable transport, we will incentivise people to choose trains, bicycles or electric cars over private transport. We

want people's commuter habits to change both during the week and on weekends.

A large part of our beautiful "lace architecture" was constructed at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and many of these buildings were meant to be used as summer houses. Restoring and adapting them to modern living standards requires serious financial investment. In the early 1990s in Latvia, synthetic building materials were favoured over natural materials and since then, Jūrmala's lace architecture has been left to decay. We have sadly already lost many of the buildings that gave the city its character and identity. The arrival of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, however, has introduced a new European vision – green thinking, sustainability, and urban development that is open and accessible to the public. The ECoC is therefore our chance to show that wooden architecture is not just an aesthetic choice. If architects, builders, scientists and building owners develop wooden architecture collaboratively, it can become an environmentally friendly and people friendly solution. This is an opportunity for us to find ways in which wooden architecture can become the energy-efficient and environmentally friendly foundation for construction in Europe in the future.



## Co-creation Pulse

The ECoC will act as a catalyst for engagement and collaboration. When the foundations of the European Union were being laid, Latvia was still a part of the Soviet Union where double standards and doublespeak were the rule. Culture therefore became the space where people tried to express their true thoughts and opinions, albeit indirectly. Today this is already history, especially for today's youth, but remembering our totalitarian past and given the rise of populism in this time of the pandemic, it is increasingly important to emphasise European values and goals – democracy and solidarity. Culture is what can bring people together to create experiences – not merely aesthetic ones, but ones that are opportunities for participation. Co-creation leads to a sense of ownership, togetherness and pride that can spur citizens to engage in the daily life of their city, or in international cooperation projects. Starting locally, this can

radiate outward and breathe new life into democracy reaching a national and even European level.

Art and culture benefit from openness. When experience and ideas can flow freely between the municipality and its institutions, between cultural organisations, NGOs and artistic groups, this generates creativity. If the city fosters long term cooperation with other cities in both Latvia and Europe, this will inspire the city's residents and visitors to get involved. Inspiration is circular and reciprocal.

We see how technology has helped shift the boundaries of traditional culture and art. Art, traditions and heritage can merge with technology. By using these new tools, like augmented reality (AR), 3D, digital painting or multimedia experiences, we can see the familiar in a new light. We will become a place where artists can collaborate with tech professionals to create new, amazing cultural experiences!

Our approach can be summarised by our wish to encourage people in Jūrmala, Latvia, Europe and the world to rediscover values that bring them happiness and contentment. A balanced approach to nature and the seasons, to physical activity and mental health, to the past and the future can hold the answer. A sense of belonging and tolerance can help us feel safe to explore these values. Finding the right combination is an art form.

Three types of events will characterise each main strand, or Pulse, of the ECoC programme:

- **Flagship events** will attract broader attention and foster local and cross-border cooperation by highlighting each strand's core message.
- **Regional flagship events** will highlight the unique, the local and the traditional and attract local and international partners to the region.
- **Heartbeats.** In a world where people increasingly spend time in social and information bubbles, initiatives that reach out and connect with people where they are, and where they're already used to spending time are particularly valuable. This is why our programme's most important strategy is to identify these places and organise smaller events that are more accessible. **We will achieve scale by organising several events at the same time that involve many people across different locations.** This aligns with the new realities of life after the pandemic and with our efforts to engage and co-create. ■





**POTENTIAL ARTISTS:**\* *Riverside Music* (LT), *Casa da Musica* (PT), *Cryptic Theatre from Glasgow* (UK), *Sigrid Strøm Reibo* (NO), *Artemis String Quartet with Vineta Sareika* (DE), *Real Group with Jānis Stradiņš* (SE), organ players: *Iveta Apkalna*, *Jānis Šipkēvics*, *DD Studio*, *Roberts Rubīns*, *Artistic*.

**POTENTIAL COOPERATION PARTNERS:**

Cultural operators: Dzintari Concert Hall, *Latvijas Koncerti*, Festival Ljubljana (SI), Vilnius Festival (LT), International Light Festivals Organisation (INT).

State and local authorities: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Culture, the Saeima (the Parliament of Latvia), the Chancery of the President of Latvia, international diplomatic missions in Latvia, twinning cities.

ECoC cities and candidate cities: *Faro 2027*, *Braga 2027*, *Leiria 2027*, *Rīga 2014*.

**TIMEFRAME:** January 2027.

## Opening event: ARTeries

The ECoC year in Jūrmala will begin at the Dzintari Concert Hall with a sprawling performance that will bring together light, music and sound. The event will introduce the cultural programme's three strands – health, co-creation and the environment. The first *ARTery* will be a light and sound projection that will illuminate the concert hall's façade. It will dissolve the barrier between inside and outside making the building accessible and give passers-by the same experience as visitors inside. The second *ARTery* will be a participatory multimedia performance in the Small Hall that will immerse visitors in a world of live sounds and lights. The third *ARTery* on the open-air stage and in the park surrounding the concert hall will invite people to enjoy the natural sounds around them – the babble of voices, bird song, the rush of the sea – and experience how they come together in harmony with the waning evening light. The fourth *ARTery* will connect and activate our various Pulse locations in Jūrmala, our partner regions, and those of our international cooperation partners. This event will also be available for audiences to enjoy online. ■

## Closing event: Light Augmented

We lit a light in the dark at the Dzintari Concert Hall in January, and we will return here again in December to look back at the brightest events of the ECoC year and appreciate all that we have achieved. We want everyone who participated, and who experienced Jūrmala as ECoC to join us for the closing event. Putting technology to creative use, we will not only be able to involve our partner regions, but also our twinning cities abroad. Virtual replicas of the outdoor sculpture Pinecone in Jūrmala, will pop up in urban spaces in both Latvia and abroad at the same time as the official closing event. There is new growth concealed within a pinecone, bursting to get out. This imminent surge of energy symbolises the future. The sculptures will be created in collaboration with artist Gints Gabrāns using his AR app SAN. The app will allow people to look back at the highlights of the ECoC year in a contemporary, visually engaging, environmentally friendly and accessible way. ■

**POTENTIAL ARTISTS:** Gints Gabrāns, video artists Ineta Sipunova, *Artistic* and other local and international artists.

**POTENTIAL COOPERATION PARTNERS:**

Culture and other operators: Dzintari Concert Hall, *Latvijas Koncerti*, International Light Festivals Organisation (INT), *Latvian Mobile Telephone*.

State and local authorities: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Culture, the Saeima, the Chancery of the President of Latvia, international diplomatic missions in Latvia, twinning cities.

ECoC cities and candidate cities: *Faro 2027*, *Braga 2027*, *Leiria 2027*, *Rīga 2014*.

**TIMEFRAME:** December 2027.

\* Both current and planned cooperation partners and artists are listed here and under the events below, but only those ECoC cities that we have already approached about cooperation are listed.

## Main flagship event: Slow down!

Modern life can be fast paced, and digital oversaturation can stop people from taking the time to pause, breathe, and think. Through a series of **Find Your Balance** events over several years, we will give people a space where they can slow down. These events will demonstrate a wide range of methods for restoring health, balance and wellbeing. Socialising with others through art and music therapy is a way to reduce depression and anxiety. With this in mind, we will be organising classes and workshops that will be open to anyone interested. They will be accessible and inviting for young people, seniors and people with disabilities. The classes will be led by art therapists and the creative workshops and conversations will be held in cooperation with local artists. People can come to the *Craft House* to learn more about different crafts and trades and how these can help find balance. We will create *Digital Escape Zones* on the beach, where people will be encouraged to put down their mobile devices and appreciate their surroundings anew. We will set up stalls around the neighbourhood to share information on meditation, breathing exercises and other techniques that people can utilise to restore their wellbeing.

**SlowDown XS** – mini festivals will be held at fairs in towns and villages in the surrounding regions in the lead up to the *SlowDown Festival*. Through these, we get to connect with people where they are, demonstrate different ways in which people can regain their physical and mental balance and encourage them to be more active in their everyday lives. *SlowDown XS* will also be a way for us to introduce healthy foods made from local ingredients, collect and teach traditional preservation practices, and learn new recipes. The emphasis will be on the “farm to fork” principle to encourage a fair, healthy and environmentally friendly food system.

These all will culminate in the *SlowDown Festival* in 2027 where everyone will be able to participate in workshops, master classes and lectures to learn about different forms of art therapy and ways in which to incorporate these techniques in their everyday lives. Visitors will be able to draw patterns in the sand in the sand therapy area, enjoy the sounds of the forest and learn meditation in a hammock among the dunes in the forest therapy area, and express their emotions through drama therapy. The *SlowDown Festival* will become a regular tradition that focuses on creating opportunities for people to reintroduce a sense of balance to their daily lives. ■

**POTENTIAL COOPERATION PARTNERS:**

Institutions of higher education: Rīga Stradiņš University, Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music, Art Academy of Latvia.

Professional associations: the Latvian Association for Art and Music Therapists, European Federation of Art Therapy (BE), Latvian Drama Therapy Association, Latvian Music Therapy Association, Latvian Art Therapy Association, Latvian Dance Movement Therapy Association, Latvian Association of Zhong Yuan Qigong, The Latvian Association of Physiotherapists, Latvian Association of Diet and Nutritionists, Baltic Osteopathic Association, Latvian Society of Neurologists, Latvian Association for the Study of Pain, Latvian Red Cross.

Latvian arts and crafts societies: *Džīpars*, *7 Balles*, *Radīts Jaunpils novadā* (Made in Jaunpils County), Jaunpils Castle, Decorative Folk Art Studio *Durbe*, Talsi Community Centre, *Talsu novada garšā* (Talsi Co-Op), Kandava Municipal Crafts Centre, Engure Folk Applied Arts Studio, *Pinumu darbnīca* (Wicker Workshop), *Amatu biedrība Durvis* (Durvis Crafts Association).

Other organisations: *Valguma Pasaule* recreation centre, *Elfas* dance studio, the organisation *Piekrastes konvents* (Coastal Convention), *Grašu Māja* creative space.

ECoC Cities and candidate cities: *Braga 2027*, *Leiria 2027*, *Guarda 2027*, *Aveiro 2027*.

**TIMEFRAME:** Activities will be implemented gradually starting in 2025 and culminate in the summer of 2027. They will continue after 2027 making use of the cooperation mechanisms developed during the ECoC year.







**Regional flagship event: Villages: Ready, Steady, Go!**

Every spring, a running race winds through several of our partner counties. The race course leads through the coastal villages and has stops along the way for various activities. At each stop, people are introduced to ways in which they can cultivate health, responsibility and a caring mindset so as to live in harmony with nature and with their bodies. Inspired by this tradition, more villages further inland in the Tukums and Talsi counties will be included in subsequent races. These will be open and inclusive events so that locals and visitors are able to cover the distance by running, walking, cycling or sailing or by using Nordic walking poles, making several stops along the way. ■

**POTENTIAL COOPERATION PARTNERS:**

Sports associations: Engures Sportam association, Latvian Orienteering Federation, Jaunpils sports club, Brīvības sports club, Latvian Cycling Federation, sports and recreation society Magnēts, Nordic Walking Latvia, Latvian Paralympic Committee.

City and county sports schools: Jūrmala, Talsi county, Tukums, Roja.

Other organisations: Latvian Academy of Sport Education, Latvian Country Tourism Association Lauku ceļotājs, "Apeirons" Organization of People with Disabilities and Their Friends.

**TIMEFRAME:** Activities will be implemented gradually starting in 2025 and culminate in the summer of 2027. They will continue after 2027 making use of the cooperation structures developed during the ECoC year.

**Green Gym**

The unspoiled nature in Jūrmala and Talsi and Tukums counties, the forests, meadows, parks and wide sandy beaches, can be seen as one large, green gym.

We will develop nature trails, **Green Arteries**, to encourage people to make use of all the space available to them. These trails will create a network of routes for hiking, Nordic walking and cycling that will weave through the entire region. The network will connect with and incorporate the many existing routes. These trails will run by historical sites, new Pulse locations, past outdoor sculptures and connect to ECoC events and exhibitions. We will create apps for games, through which you will be able to check in at various points, and which will have exercise routines that need to be performed in specific places. Let an AR trainer guide you!

Not everyone can find the time to go for a long walk. Our solution to engage these busy people is **Courtyard Fitness**, which will bring exercise closer to home. Courtyard Fitness is something that people can do together with their neighbours. We will expand our outdoor gyms, encourage people to exercise with trainers or with their energetic neighbours. Communities will be able to practice yoga and Qigong, go Nordic walking, skateboard in their courtyards, exercise on the beach or in a nearby birch grove.

We will organise educational events about how to be more environmentally friendly, explain the health benefits of various natural remedies (sauna rituals, herbal teas, beds of bees, etc.) and prove that bad weather is not a good reason to stay indoors! In the spring and summer, we will organise **Healthy Nature – Healthy Body clean-up events**. These will educate participants about the importance of communal clean-ups for nature preservation, and an accompanying physiotherapist will help people do manual labour without hurting themselves. There will also be **beach volleyball matches** where neighbourhoods can play against one another, employees in the creative industries can challenge the municipality, and doctors can play civil servants. These matches will take place throughout the year, summer or winter! During the **Sea Hike** weekend, everyone will be welcomed to walk along the coast from Jūrmala to Cape Kolka. Those looking for a bigger challenge can take a few steps into the sea at the *Run on Water* event, and see what it's like to run in 10–20 cm deep water. At the **Winter Plunge with Rainis** event, both seasoned winter bathers and beginners same time up and down the coast, will take a dip in the freezing sea at the same time in honour of the famous Latvian poet and Jūrmala native, Jānis Rainis. ■

**Arteries of Light**

Light plays a vital role in the Baltic and Northern European countries during the darkest months of the year. It can help combat low spirits and seasonal depression that the lack of light can cause. We will not only celebrate light at our opening and closing events, but all year round to remind ourselves of the importance that light plays in our everyday lives.

Our culture is rooted in our ancestors' traditions and revolves around the cycles of the sun. The winter solstice, the shortest day of the year, and the **summer solstice**, or *Jāņi*, the longest day of the year, are natural markers of time in Latvians' lives.

The Independence Day of Latvia occurs in the darker half of the year, on 18 November. **Way of Light for Latvia** is a tradition to make this day brighter. For several years now, citizens of Jūrmala have lit candles to create a way of light through the city. For the ECoC year, we will invite towns in Tukums and Talsi counties to join us. To create an even greater sense of community, we will supplement the way of light with a concert on mobile stages that will move along this way and through the towns. *Way of Light for Latvia* will take place at the same time as the well-known *Staro Rīga Light Festival* in the capital and the **Arteries of Light festival** will radiate through Jūrmala, to the coast, and all the way to Tukums and Talsi counties making this day into a larger, national celebration of light. ■



**POTENTIAL COOPERATION PARTNERS:**

Sports associations: Latvian Street Workout Association, Latvian Street Workout and Calisthenics Federation, Latvian Association of Zhong Yuan Qigong, Latvian Volleyball Federation, *Latvijas pludmale* beach volleyball association, *Baltā kalna komanda* hiking society, International Winter Swimming Association (INT), Latvian Orienteering federation, Jaunpils sports club, *Engures sportam* society.

City and county tourism information centres: Jūrmala, Talsi, Tukums, Kandava, Roja, Engure.

Other organisations: Rīga Stradiņš University, Latvian Academy of Sport Education, Ķemeri National Park, Latvian Country Tourism Association *Lauku ceļotājs*.

ECoC cities and candidate cities: Oulu 2026, Tampere 2026, Aveiro 2027.

**TIMEFRAME:** Activities will be implemented gradually starting in 2025 and culminate in the summer of 2027. They will continue after 2027 making use of the cooperation structures developed during the ECoC year.

**POTENTIAL ARTISTS:** video artist Ineta Sipunova.

**POTENTIAL COOPERATION PARTNERS:**

Cultural centres in cities and counties: Jūrmala, Tukums, Roja, Engure, Lapmežciems, cultural centres and manors in the city of Talsi, and Talsi county.

Other organisations: neighbourhood associations, the organisers and partners of the *Night of Ancient Lights* (EE), International Light Festivals Organisation (INT).

ECoC cities and candidate cities: Rīga 2014, Evora 2027, Faro 2027.

**TIMEFRAME:** Activities will be implemented gradually starting in 2025 and culminate in the summer of 2027. They will continue after 2027 making use of the cooperation structures developed during the ECoC year.

**CURATORS:** Inga Šteimane (LV), Kestutis Kuizinas (LT), Shady El Noshokaty (EG).

**POTENTIAL ARTISTS:** John Bock (DE), Ragnar Kjartansson (IS), Jordi Colomer (ES), Anna Kirse, Krista Burāne, Kristaps Epners, Thomas Hirschhorn (CH), Marina Abramovič (USA), Kara Walker (USA) and others.

**POTENTIAL COOPERATION PARTNERS:** *Art Station Dubulti*, *Julia Stoschek Collection* (DE), CAC (Vilnius) (LT), Kiasma (Helsinki) (FI), ASCII Foundation for Contemporary Art Education (Cairo) (EG).

**TIMEFRAME:** January – December 2027, exhibition May – September 2027.

**Contemporary art exhibition Bon Voyage**

Jūrmala became a popular health destination in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Europe because of the healing natural resources that can be found here. This took place at a time when travelling for health, or medical tourism, was growing in popularity. The custom of the Grand Tour was still strong in Europe at this time. These trips were seen as an educational rite of passage to broaden travellers' horizons and introduce them to new cultures. We can draw certain parallels between contemporary medical tourism and art travel in that they are both in their own ways pursuits of physical and mental balance. Experimentation in contemporary art is a similar pursuit, a way to learn and gain unexpected experiences. The idea for the international contemporary art project *Bon Voyage* sprouted from the intersection of these concepts. The core of the exhibition is made up of artworks by both Latvian and international artists that have been inspired by travel. Parts of the exhibition will be displayed throughout Jūrmala

and the partner counties, but the centre will be at the *Art Station Dubulti* art space. This entire area will thus be transformed into a large exhibition space. *Bon Voyage* is envisioned as a form of "voyage" accompanied by "travel notes" that small groups can embark on via land, water, or rail. The voyage will run along the *ARteries* and make stops at various Pulse locations. ■

**The contemporary sculpture and environmental art project Equilibrium**

*Equilibrium* is a contemporary sculpture and environmental art project that will encourage people to pause. In this pause, they will be given space to think about themselves, the nature around them and about the shared circulatory system that joins humans and nature. The works in the exhibition are designed to involve viewers actively by encouraging them to participate, rather than just observe. By interacting with a work of art, people have the opportunity to bring it to life, and discover the power of balance. The plan is to exhibit the pieces in districts further out from the city centre – in Kauguri, Sloka and Ķemeri. This sculpture *ARTery* will connect Pulse locations and ensure that art is distributed evenly throughout the city, in this way also carrying out one of our ECoC visions. Encouraging public participation, the people of Jūrmala will be able to vote for one of the pieces to become a permanent outdoor sculpture. In a direct way, the project implements and addresses balanced development, which is one of the basic principles of Europe. ■

**CURATOR AND POTENTIAL ARTISTS:** sculptor Kristaps Gulbis, with participation of local and international artists, for example Aigars Bikše.

**POTENTIAL COOPERATION PARTNERS:** *Leitrim Sculpture Centre* (IRL), *The Association of Icelandic Artists* (IS), *The Centre of Polish Sculpture in Oransko* (PL), Estonian Academy of Arts (EE), Escola Massana Art and Design Centre (ES), Latvian National Museum of Art, Talsi Bush Art Group, Talsi Regional Museum, *Roja ART LAB* association.

**TIMEFRAME:** 2026 – 2027.



POTENTIAL COOPERATION PARTNERS:

Cultural organisations: We have entered into talks with the Latvian National Centre for Culture who are the main organisers of the Latvian Song and Dance Festival. Latvian dance groups, municipalities, municipal cultural institutions, public organisations, minority organisations and organisations for people with disabilities.

Other organisations: World Wildlife Fund (INT), Newcastle of the World (INT).

Our partner counties' twinning cities that are located by a sea or ocean: Batumi (GE), Cabourg (FR), Pietarsaari (FI), Terracina (IT), Palanga (LT), Pärnu (EE), Gävle (SE), Alanya (TR), Saaremaa (EE), Valdemarsvik (SE).

ECoC cities and candidate cities: Oulu 2026, Tampere 2026, Leiria 2027.

**TIMEFRAME:** A pilot project for the large dance event will start in the summer of 2023. It will be developed and improved during 2024 and 2025 with the number of participants increasing each year. The event will culminate in 2027 as a large-scale collaborative event.

Main flagship event: folk dance festival  
*Steps in the Sand*

*Steps in the Sand* is a great example of how a long-standing, local folk dance event can be transformed into a shared European event through the ECoC. The festival will bring together several thousand dancers by the sea in July 2027, stretching for 140 km from Jūrmala to Cape Kolka. Participants will dance together to encourage the public to think about the fragile relationship between humans and nature. There are 876 dance groups in Latvia with over 18,000 dancers. To implement this ambitious idea, we will not only invite the entire community of Latvian folk dancers, including wheelchair dancers, but open it up to the inhabitants of our twinning cities, ECoC and other cities. Everyone who wants to dance, regardless of experience, will be encouraged to head to the nearest seaside, be it by the Baltic, Black or Mediterranean Seas, or even by the ocean. Because this is an environmentally friendly event, the music will be provided through headphones. Live music will play at certain Pulse locations, which will feed to different venues in both Latvia and the world. Preparing for the dance (choosing the dance and learning the choreography) and organising the event itself will be done through cooperation and co-creation – our vision for ECoC! We will show the beauty of the patterns the dancers make by filming them from above with drones, and transmitting this to play on screens. ■



Regional flagship event: *Culture in Signs*

*Culture in Signs* is a project created jointly by Latvia and Portugal. It is intended as a series of applied arts workshops that will bring two distinct cultural heritages together. Latvian ethnographic signs will be painted onto Portuguese *azulejo* tiles, and Portuguese ornaments will be knitted into traditional Latvian mittens. In the run-up to the ECoC year, we will also explore the cultural signs of prior ECoC cities in Germany, Slovenia, Finland and Slovakia. This collaboration will take place on multiple levels by involving both applied arts professionals and art school students. All artisans will have the opportunity to participate, however, as they will be able to give advice on a website and on social media. The art that is created will be made into a traveling exhibition and provide digital and multimedia solutions to help break down barriers between cultures. This will also make it possible to enjoy the exhibition from anywhere in Europe. ■

POTENTIAL COOPERATION PARTNERS:

Cultural organisations: the Ethnographic Open-Air Museum of Latvia, Latvian National Centre for Culture, *Museu Nacional do Azulejo* (PT), the Institute of Latvian History at the University of Latvia, Latvian National Museum of Art.

City and regional museums: Jūrmala, Tukums, Talsi county, The Roja Fishing Museum.

City and county art schools: Jūrmala, Talsi, Tukums, Engure, Roja.

City and county youth centres: Jūrmala, Talsi county, Tukums county.

Crafts and culture organisations: Talsi Folk House and other cultural centres and manors in Talsi county, applied arts groups in Talsi, Talsi Bush Art Group, *Džipars, 7 Balles, Radīts Jaunpils novadā* (Made in Jaunpils County), Decorative Folk Art Studio *Durbe*, Kandava Municipal Crafts Centre, National Costume Center *Senā Klēts*, Engure Folk Applied Arts Studio, *Amatu biedrība Durvis* (Durvis Crafts Association), the organisation *Piekrastes konvents* (Coastal Convention), Latvian Chamber of Crafts. ECoC cities and candidate cities: Evora, Faro, Coimbra, Leiria, Aveiro (all 2027).

**TIMEFRAME:** Collaboration starts in 2025 with classes and workshops organised in 2026. Travelling exhibition in 2027 that continues in 2028.



Community Spirit

It is people that give communities their character. Neighbours' willingness to cooperate, ability to coexist and motivation to shape a place together is crucial for developing community spirit. The Talsi and Tukums counties will join Jūrmala in the **Neighbourhoods in Motion** challenge to encourage people to come together. We will bring in experienced partners to help promote cooperation by organising networking events, meetings, workshops and classes, by developing websites and effective ways of exchanging information. Together, we will learn how to implement participatory budgeting principles into local governments. We will initiate **Community Placemaking** to gradually create and equip areas in the city and tailor them to the specific needs of various communities – this can include setting up chess boards, installing benches for senior citizens, or creating places for swimming. This can also include graffiti walls made by and for at-risk youth in low-income neighbourhoods, collaborative outdoor sculptures made by youth and seniors together with professional artists, or urban gardens nestled in among high-rise buildings. We will let ideas flow freely from the communities and help them get implemented through various neighbourhood project open calls. ■

Design Dubulti

The annual environmental design project *Design Dubulti* was launched in 2021 and makes Jūrmala a destination for contemporary discussions on design. The project will focus on how to weigh aesthetics against environmental impact to find a harmonious balance. It will encourage contemporary discussions about the role of design in developing sustainable cities. *Design Dubulti* chooses a theme each year, and in 2027 the focus will be on book design and technology. Making a book is a great example of creativity and co-creation. Through the project, we will introduce Europe to what a 21<sup>st</sup> century Latvian book looks like and tell the story of socialist book design in Latvia between 1940 and 1991, a subject that is not very well known in Europe. A programme of public events will be held on the last weekend of May. These are intended for the broader public as well as professionals. The ECoC programme's events at libraries throughout the region will supplement and work together with this project. Together, we will be able to follow a story through from its inception to finished book, how it makes its way from the minds of authors and artists into a reader's hands. ■

POTENTIAL COOPERATION PARTNERS:

Danish Cultural Institute in Latvia (DK), Metropolis (DK).

Neighbourhood, county and district associations: Jūrmala Citizens' Forum, Jaunpils Regional Development Centre *RATS*, the *Partnership for Rural and the Sea*, *Kandava Partnership*, Talsi Region Community Foundation, Kandava Region Opportunity Foundation, the organisation *Piekrastes konvents* (Coastal Convention), the association *Engures izglītības un kultūrvides attīstībai* (organisation for the development of education and culture in Engure), the society *Zinis*.

ECoC cities and candidate cities: Bodø 2024, Tampere 2026, Riga 2014, Faro 2027, Trenčín 2026, Aveiro 2027, Kaunas 2022.

**TIMEFRAME:** This is a long-term project that will begin in 2022. It will continue and develop through co-creation projects in 2027 and expand the cooperation in subsequent years.

**POSSIBLE COOPERATION PARTNERS:** *Art Station Dubulti*, *Green Expo Riga*, National Library of Latvia, Latvian Writers' Union, publishing houses, *Zelta Ābele* book art competition, and others.

**TIMEFRAME:** Exhibition in the *Art Station Dubulti*, the Dubulti Cultural Quarter, in other stations and places in Jūrmala and in our cooperation counties in March–June 2027.



#### POTENTIAL COOPERATION PARTNERS:

Film organisations: National Film Centre of Latvia, the *RojaL Film Festival*, *Cinevilla*, Riga International Short Film Festival *ZANNAS*, *Auseklis* cinema in Talsi.

City and regional cultural centres: Jūrmala, Kauguri, Roja, Tukums.

Associations: Jūrmala minority associations, *Varavīksne*, the association *Engures izglītības un kultūrvides attīstībai* (organisation for the development of education and culture in Engure), the organisation *Piekrastes konvents* (Coastal Convention).

Theatre and youth associations: Jūrmala Performing Arts Theater, Jūrmala Culture Centre Youth Theatre *Ekspēriments*, Jūrmala Children and Youth Theatre, New Theatre Institute of Latvia, *Kvadrifrons*, Jaunpils Theatre, Viesīti culture centre theatre group *Pupukis*, Tukums youth theatre *Brīvā versija*, Jūrmala Youth Initiative Centre, Kandava youth centre *Nagla*, Roja youth leisure centre *Strops*.

EU institutions and other organisations: Latvian Academy of Culture, European Parliament Liaison Office in Latvia, EU country embassies in Latvia, EaP country embassies, our partner counties' twinning cities.

**TIMEFRAME:** Activities will be implemented gradually starting in 2025 and culminate in 2027. They will continue after 2027 making use of the cooperation structures developed during the ECoC year.

## Being Neighbours

In order to love and respect your neighbours, you first need to get to know them. Leading up to, and during the ECoC year, there will be events at different Pulse locations where people can meet, get to know and learn to love their diverse neighbours. Jūrmala, Talsi and Tukums counties have historically been a home to a variety of different nationalities – Livs, Latvians, Roma, Jews and Russians. Many other communities have joined them in more recent years – Ukrainians, Belarusians, Americans, Chinese, Brazilians. The traveling festival **Neighbourfest** will be an opportunity for people to get to know the wealth and diversity of European culture, and to celebrate our similarities and differences. We will invite various local national communities, international cooperation partners and twinning cities to help us in this. To engage all our senses we will involve amateur artistic groups, professional artists and chefs so that we get to dance, sing, see, hear and taste the cultures around us.

Creating and then watching the **Neighbours' Footprints** film series together, we will get to know the people around us better. We will look for, study and film the footprints that people have left on Latvian and European history and in nature. We will actively seek out "invisible people" to include them in the series. These are people who don't usually get a lot of attention, who live quiet lives in high-rise buildings, but who are nevertheless an important part of their communities, and who influence national events through their political engagement. With the help of various embassies, we will get access to European and international films about footprints that people have left on nature and on their communities. These will include winners of the European Parliament's LUX Prize and form the central theme of the *RojaL Film Festival*.

Youth theatre groups from Jūrmala and the Tukums and Talsi counties will cooperate with international partners to get the **Theatre on Wheels** project moving and spread stand-up comedy throughout the region. The stand-ups will draw people to towns, villages, marketplaces and farmsteads, get people laughing together and help them reflect on their surroundings with humour. ■

## Artificial

Technology is evolving rapidly. What feels futuristic and abstract right now, could become reality in just a couple of years! It is difficult to predict what technologies there will be in 2027 and what surprises the future might hold in how technology is used in art. In the run-up to the ECoC year, we will bring artists and tech professionals together to create new forms of culture and hybrid events at various **workshops and hackathons**. These will give them the space to come up with the best solutions for challenges like how to address climate change through art by using new technologies.

Artificial intelligence (AI) is not only used for complex technology, but is increasingly used to create works of art. With our **AI Visions** initiative, we will invite students from our art and music schools, young people and professional artists to **create works of art with AI**. Visitors to the exhibition will not only be able to see works of art or listen to music, but also co-create a piece themselves by using the AI tools available on site. ■

#### POTENTIAL COOPERATION PARTNERS:

Academies: Latvian Academy of Culture, The Art Academy of Latvia, Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music.

City and county art and music schools: Jūrmala, Tukums, Talsi, Valdemārpils, Sabile, Kandava, Engure, Roja.

City and county youth centres: Jūrmala, Tukums county, Talsi, Roja, Jaunpils.

Technology companies: *Latvian Mobile Telephone*, *Microsoft Latvia*, Latvian Information and communications technology association.

Other organisations: *AIArtists.org* (US), Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art, *Kim?* Contemporary Art Centre, the organisation *Piekrastes konvents* (Coastal Convention), the association *Engures izglītības un kultūrvides attīstībai* (organisation for the development of education and culture in Engure), *Roja ART LAB*.

ECoC cities and candidate cities: *Aveiro 2027*, *Trenčín 2026*, *Oeiras 2027*.

**TIMEFRAME:** This is a long-term project that will start in 2022. We will continue to build on and implement the co-creation projects in 2027 and develop the collaboration in subsequent years.

## Beyond Books

More than just places to borrow books, libraries are also centres where communities socialise. However, promoting literacy remains one of the primary roles of libraries. At a time when visual media is challenging reading habits, literacy is increasingly on the agenda giving schools and other cultural and educational institutions a lot to think about.

Our **I Love to Read** initiative will jump in here to help people rediscover how much they enjoy reading, or to discover the magic of books in the first place. We want to make reading a social activity. There will be neighbourhood book swaps, **Let's Read Together!** communal readings at libraries or in meadows, and children will be able to meet characters from their favourite books and spend some time in their world at the popular event *In the World of Fairy Tales!* At the flash mob *Write!*, young people will be able to write down their favourite poems straight onto the streets. These and other ideas will be created and developed in cooperation with local and European libraries and writers. Organising both traditional and not-so-traditional international conferences will promote knowledge and experience exchange. One of these will be the international bicycle non-conference *Cycling for Libraries Jūrmala* in 2025 at which participants will link 13 libraries by cycling 320 km and visit cultural sites along the coast on the stretch Rīga-Jūrmala-Talsi-Tukums. An international literacy conference will take place in 2026, and the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) Satellite Conference in 2027 will open the IFLA General Conference, which traditionally brings together around 3,500 librarians from around the world. ■

#### POTENTIAL COOPERATION PARTNERS:

Libraries and associations: The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions IFLA (NE), Library Association of Latvia, National Library of Latvia, The Jūrmala Central Library, Tukums Library, Talsi Central Library, Jaunpils Library, Kandava Library, Roja County Library, Engure Library.

Other organisations: school and cultural institutions in Jūrmala, Ministry of Culture, Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Latvian National Commission for UNESCO, Tukums Writers' Association, Talsi county Writers union, Latvian Writers' Union.

**TIMEFRAME:** 2025 – 2027.

## Unity = Democracy

2027 will be an important year for many significant events and programmes that have been milestones for the EU: it will be the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Treaty of Rome, the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Treaty of Lisbon and the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the *Erasmus+* programme. The ECoC will be a great opportunity to remind people of the core values and foundations of the EU: the European Charter of Fundamental Rights; the opportunities for cooperation and mobility; international education projects; ECoC volunteering programmes; the upcoming Latvian EU Presidency in 2028; the prospects of the new long-term EU budget after 2027. **Europe Week** will start on 4 May, the Day of the Restoration of Independence of the Republic of Latvia, and end on 9 May, which is Europe Day. The embassies of EU member states and EaP countries, representatives from twinning cities and other ECoC cities will be invited to participate in Europe Day in Jūrmala to present and introduce their cultures. Local and international photographers will be invited to display their visions of the present and the future of Europe at a photography exhibition, and a youth theatre festival will be organised where young people will be encouraged to improvise around how they perceive and interpret democracy. Games about Latvia's role in Europe and Europe's role in Latvia will be organised to take place at schools as part of the **Europe's Footprints in Jūrmala and the Counties** project. The games will help students think about features that European countries have in common, features that are unique, and learn interesting facts. They will promote cooperation, civic engagement and raise awareness about Latvia's European identity. The games will be educational and give the schoolchildren an understanding of the state and of democracy in action. We will work together with other small European municipalities at the **Charter of European Rural Communities** meeting in July 2027 to find shared solutions to the threat of climate change and ways in which to find mental and physical balance. ■

#### POTENTIAL COOPERATION PARTNERS:

EU and national institutions: European Parliament, European Commission, European Parliament Liaison Office in Latvia, European Commission Representation in Latvia, Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, State Education Development Agency Republic of Latvia, the European Union, the embassies of EU candidate countries and EaP countries, our partner counties' twinning cities.

City and county youth centres and schools: Jūrmala, Talsi county, Tukums county, Kandava, Jaunpils, Roja.

Other organisations: European Movement Latvia, the University of Latvia, Charter of European Rural Communities, Brussels Office of Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments.

ECoC cities and candidate cities: *Faro 2027*, *Braga 2027*, *Trenčín 2026*.

**TIMEFRAME:** 2027.







### Main flagship event: *All the Railway is a Stage*

The railway that runs through Jūrmala is one of our *ARteries*. It connects the city with Rīga and our neighbouring municipalities. The residents of Jūrmala and Tukums use the railway daily, as do visitors to our region. Taking the train is the most sustainable and environmentally friendly way to get to Jūrmala. Being what residents and visitors first see upon arrival, our stations are the face of the city. There are 14 railway stations in the territory of Jūrmala, five of which have been designated as architectural monuments of national or local significance. As technology evolves, stations lose their primary function and are underutilised. They become symbols that tell the stories of individuals, families and communities, and hold both painful and happy memories from Latvian history.

Involving locals, artists, local governments and the *Latvian Railway*, we will start a **Station Renaissance!** Stations have the potential to be unique places for creativity. They can become educational, cultural and artistic spaces, or platforms for local residents to co-create. Trains, stations and their surrounding areas can become blank canvases on which new, creative and inclusive works of art can emerge. Experiencing and appreciating this art can become a casual part of everyday life.

Putting on events in trains is an effective way in which to reach out to visitors coming to the city, as well as to engage people who, for various reasons, cannot afford to enjoy other cultural events. We will bring art into railway carriages through the **Trains Educate** campaign. Videos telling the story of different stations and neighbourhoods or that highlight the most significant art and culture from the area will be shown on screens in the carriages, and on personal smart devices.

It will be the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the railway line from Rīga to Tukums on 21 September 2027. This will be celebrated with the sprawling performance **All the Railway is a Stage** that will entertain passengers traveling this stretch. A contemporary curator will bring together a mix of both local and international, traditional and dazzling performances that will highlight the cultures of different neighbourhoods, twinning cities or other ECoC cities. The artists will welcome passengers disembarking from trains, entertain them while they wait, and see people off as they go about their day. ■

#### POTENTIAL COOPERATION PARTNERS:

Cultural organisations: Latvian National Centre for Culture, The Association of Latvian Culture Centres, dance groups in Jūrmala and the partner counties, artists, musicians, writers, the Latvian cultural ambassador program of the Latvian National Centre for Culture, Tukums Culture Centre, Tukums Writers' Union, Jūrmala Culture Centre (LV), Art Station Dubulti, Community centre in Smarde Railway station, minority organisations, twinning cities, embassies.

Businesses and other organisations: *Latvian Railway*, *Pasažieru vilciens* railway company, Latvian Railway History Museum, Vulca.org – Casa Branca Makers Space (PT).

ECoC cities and candidate cities: *Evora 2027*, *Faro 2027*, *Rīga 2014*, *Aveiro 2027*.

**TIMEFRAME:** 2022 – 2028.

### Regional flagship event: *Think Again, Use Again*

The **Think Again, Use Again Festival** will be the culmination of a series of *Think Again, Use Again* events that will take place over several years. Each event is open to anyone who wants to use their hands, or share their recycling story. Their message is to repurpose the past to create a more sustainable future. At the festival, people will be able to attend a recycled fashion show, concerts, dance performances and other unique events. Guests will also be able to repurpose used or found materials into art. There will be educational events that will strengthen and promote intergenerational cooperation where people will be encouraged to mend, improve and transform objects and adapt them for new uses. In cooperation with partners from Portugal and other countries guests will be able to create outdoor sculptures from debris and litter found on beaches to draw attention to pollution and responsible consumer practices. By involving children and young adults in developing and promoting green thinking, we will create a cooperation network of coastal eco-schools and educational institutions by 2027. We will also start a creative platform **Think Again, Use Again** that will focus on environmental culture and circular economy. We will organise creative eco-city laboratories at the nature education centre in Ķemeri.

Through a cooperation between the Fashion Department at the Art Academy of Latvia and various art schools and high schools, creative sustainable fashion design programmes and fashion shows will be developed and implemented throughout the counties. These will help draw attention to the impact that the fashion industry has on the environment and the role it plays in climate change. The events will culminate in 2017 with the show **Salvaged Fashion** in cooperation with designer Agnese Narņicka (*One Wolf*), which is intended to become a long-term tradition. ■

### “Lace Architecture” and the modern urban environment

Jūrmala is home to unique wooden buildings that date back to the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, which locals call “lace architecture”. Yet still, all too often these incredible wooden buildings are demolished due to ignorance. This rich cultural heritage doesn't just speak to who we were or who we are today, but also to who we want to be. Architecture is a recognised resource for the city's identity and its economic development as it contributes to the city's global competitiveness. The *New European Bauhaus* initiative is currently very relevant in Europe. This is an initiative that gives classic *Bauhaus* values new meaning through European green policies. The initiative raises interesting questions: How does preserving cultural heritage interact with developing the urban environment? How can preserving and developing wooden architecture not only cultivate old skills and crafts, but also reduce the negative effects of climate change? Other ECoC cities, and our twinning cities will be invited to the international conference **The Role of Cultural Heritage in Sustainable Urban Development** to share their good practices and experience with how cultural heritage and the urban environment can coexist. We will invite leading cultural heritage experts from ICOMOS, *Europa Nostra*, urban planners and architects, and cultural heritage expert Hermann Parzinger. An international **symposium** on art and public spaces in the urban environment will be organised in 2025 in the lead up to the conference. This symposium will gather artists, architects and urban planners in Jūrmala. In 2026, a laboratory of ideas and solutions will challenge young architects and urban planners to answer the question: How to make high-rise neighbourhoods open and inviting to the public?

The wooden building that now houses the Jūrmala City Museum in Majori (on 15 Lienes iela) was built as a residential summer house in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The house will be restored and the interior will be recreated to reflect the resort town design from the time when it was built. The project will serve as a model to showcase green construction principles in **wooden architectural heritage restoration** and the rooms will be supplemented with interactive and educational programmes for young people. The *Craft House* in the old Ķemeri post office building will host open arts and crafts workshops and a wood restoration centre as well as a series of seminars and master classes on how to best preserve our tangible and intangible cultural heritage. ■

**POTENTIAL ARTISTS:** Agnese Narņicka (*One Wolf*), Ieva Zāgmane.

#### POTENTIAL COOPERATION PARTNERS:

Environmental organisations: Ķemeri National Park, Ķemeri Nature Education Centre, Green Liberty NGO, *Coalition Clean Baltic* (SE), World Wildlife Fund (INT), *Re:pair Café* movement.

Artist associations: Tukums Artists' Group, *Roja ART LAB*, Talsi Bush Art Group, the creative association *RAD-DAR*, Jūrmala Artists' Group, *Latviešu sapnis* (*Latvian Dream*).

City and county art and music schools: Jūrmala Tukums, Talsi, Valdemārpils, Sable, Engure, Kandava, Roja, Dundaga.

City and county youth centres: Jūrmala, Talsi county, Tukums county, Jaunpils, Kandava, Roja.

Other organisations: Art Academy of Latvia, Talsi county amateur artistic groups, Talsi Regional Museum, Talsi county cultural centres and manors, waste management companies, the organisation *Piekrastes konvents* (*Coastal Convention*), Union of the Baltic Cities (INT).

ECoC cities and candidate cities: *Faro 2027*, *Leiria 2027*, *Trenčín 2026*.

**TIMEFRAME:** Activities will be implemented gradually starting in 2024 and culminate in 2027. They will continue after 2027 making use of the cooperation structures developed during the ECoC year.



#### POTENTIAL COOPERATION PARTNERS:

EU, national and international organisations: National Cultural Heritage Board (LV), International Council of Museums *ICOM* (FR), International Council on Monuments and Sites *ICOMOS* (FR), *Europa Nostra* (BE), European Commission, The New European Bauhaus Initiative, The Ministry of Economics.

Associations and other organisations: Kurzeme wood design centre, *Koka Rīga* wooden building renovation centre, Latvian Association of Architects, Latvian Association of Local Governments, cultural heritage experts, architects, artists, urban planners, representatives of cultural heritage organisations, representatives from our partner region's twinning cities.

ECoC cities and candidate cities: *Trenčín 2026*.

**TIMEFRAME:** 2025, 2026 and 2027.



**POTENTIAL ARTISTS:** Iveta Apkalna, *Jūrmala Beach Band*, dance group *Jūrmaldancis*, folk singing group *Saucējas*, Saulkrasti mixed choir *Anima*, Kristaps Krievkalns, Kārlis Kazāks, Ainārs Rubiķis, Jānis Ozols, the choir *Maska*, Ints Teterovskis, the choir *Balsis*.

**POTENTIAL COOPERATION PARTNERS:**

Cultural and other organisations: Dzintari Concert Hall, *Latvijas Koncerti*, *Nature Concerthall*, *L Tips Agency*, *Balsis Music* and Art Development Fund, Choral Festival Network (INT), European Choral Association (DE), Estonian Choral Association (EE), Lithuania Cantat (LT).

City and county cultural centres: Jūrmala, Tukums city, Kandava, Matkule, Roja, Viesati, Jaunpils, Talsi county cultural centres and manors, *Saieta Nams* community centre in Engure.

Other organisations: Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music, Ķemeri National Park, *Valguma Pasaule* recreation centre.

ECoC cities and candidate cities: Oulu 2026, Tampere 2026.

**TIMEFRAME:** The concert series will start in 2025, and the biggest concerts will take place in 2027.

## Nature as a Stage

Inspired by the *Sunrise Concert* on the beach that opened the *Jūrmala Festival* in Latvia's centenary year, the ECoC programme will put on a **series of musical adventures** letting nature take centre stage. We want our audiences to experience an epiphany, be it by dancing in a marsh, playing music on a beach, singing on the banks of a river, or acting in a town square.

Choir music holds a very special place in Latvia. We will celebrate the human voice by inviting choirs from different European countries to sing by the sea in the nocturnal concert *From Sunset to Sunrise*, participate in a *Traditional singing performance*, experience the *Nature Concerthall* or partake in a *Silent Concert* at night, where we will have to take the utmost care not to disturb the sleeping birds around us. With these concert experiences we will show that we are one with nature, and that we have more to gain from listening and observing, than from destroying or hurting. This series will culminate in the **Jūrmala Festival** that will start with the *Sunrise Concert* where Iveta Apkalns will play the organ on the beach at Dzintari. In the evening, the concert *Born in Latvia-Europe* will fill the Dzintari Concert Hall. Every young Latvian musician will be able to invite a musician from another European country to participate in the concert and play a programme led by conductor Ainārs Rubiķis. At night, the *Jūrmala Beach Band* will play rhythmic jazz on the beach, and *fadu* artists will introduce listeners to traditional Portuguese singing. ■



**POTENTIAL COOPERATION PARTNERS:**

Artist associations: the *Pedvāle* association, the *Roja ART LAB* association, Tukums artists' association, Talsi *Bush Art Group*, the creative association *RAD-DAR*, Jūrmala artists' association, *Latvieša sapnis (Latvian Dream)*.

Cultural and other organisations: The Art Academy of Latvia, Art Station Dubulti, Tukums Museum, Jūrmala City Museum, Sculpture Quadrennial Riga, Vilnius Painting Triennial (LT), Union of the Baltic Cities (INT).

Other organisations: the organisation *Piekrastes konvents* (Coastal Convention), the association *Engures izglītības un kultūrvides attīstībai* (organisation for the development of education and culture in Engure), "Apeirons" *Organization of People with Disabilities and Their Friends*, Roja invalid society, Sabile art, culture and tourism centre, *Valguma Pasaule* recreation centre.

City and county art schools: Jūrmala, Tukums, Roja, Talsi, Valdemārpils, Sabile, Kandava, Engure.

City and county youth centres: Jūrmala, Talxi county, Tukums county, Jaunpils, Kandava.

ECoC cities and candidate cities: Guarda 2027, Evora 2027, Braga 2027, Aveiro 2027.

**TIMEFRAME:** 2025 – 2028.

## Pro-Nature, Pro-Art

Art is a powerful tool for drawing attention to climate change, and to call for humans and nature to coexist on an equal footing. We will attract local and international artists to create a platform for discussions and workshop creative ideas that will use art to attract attention, persuade and possibly to shock. This will include **artist residencies** that are open to international artists at the Pedvāle Art Park, **projects** in the urban environment and in nature that young people, seniors and artists have co-created, as well as **wheelchair art** events. The relationship between humans and nature will be the theme of the international children and youth art competition **I Live by the Sea** and the international sea-themed biennale **Marīna**. ■

## Future Gardens

Many historic parks surround the castles and manors in our region. There are also a number of newer parks, green areas and private gardens. With the **Natural Gardens** popular movement, we will invite people to see them with new eyes and revisit the green areas that help preserve the biodiversity of our region. To promote the wealth of our parks and gardens, we will work to be included in the **European Route of Historic gardens of the Cultural Routes initiative of the Council of Europe**. In order to achieve this, we will educate ourselves, exchange experiences and of course, restore and revitalise our historic gardens. ■

**POTENTIAL COOPERATION PARTNERS:**

National and international organisations: National Nature Conservation Agency, World Wildlife Fund, The European Institute of Cultural Routes (EICR), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Latvian Cultural Heritage Agency, Newcastles of the World (INT), European Historic Houses Association (BE).

Other organisations: Kandava Region Opportunity Foundation, Latvian Association of Private Historic Buildings, *Moirunams* association, Bulduri Gardening College.

Castles and parks: Jaunpils Castle, Jaunmokas Palace, Šlokenbeka Castle, Durbe Manor, Kukšas Manor, Spāre Manor, Tiņģere Manor, Strazde Manor, Talsi Regional Museum, Firkspedvāle Manor House, Ziedonis garden in Māikalns.

ECoC cities and candidate cities: Tampere 2026, Aveiro 2027.

**TIMEFRAME:** Activities will be implemented gradually starting in 2024 and culminate in 2027. They will continue after 2027 making use of the cooperation structures developed during the ECoC year.

## Modern Life by Martin Parr

At the centre of British documentary photographer Martin Parr's world-famous exhibition *Modern Life* is his Jūrmala series that was made in the late 1990s. The way Parr documents life, his anthropological touch and the honesty of the moments he captures creates universal images that make us contemplate identity, society and the environment. *Modern Life* is like looking at ourselves, but from a historical distance. In February 2027, Parr will give a public lecture during the exhibition. The opening of the exhibition at the end of 2026 is intended to announce the start of the Jūrmala ECoC year. ■

**ARTISTS:** Martin Parr (UK).

**POTENTIAL COOPERATION PARTNERS:** *Magnum Photos* (USA, UK), *Art Station Dubulti* (LV).

**TIMEFRAME:** Exhibition in *Art Station Dubulti* from November 2026 – February 2027.







### Opening event: **ARTeries**

We will open the ECoC year by bringing together nature, light and music. Visitors will be introduced to the programme's themes, events and people through a performance that will awaken the senses, both inside the Dzintari Concert Hall and outside it. The event will also be available live remotely.



### **Bon Voyage**

New discoveries and novel experiences await as contemporary art moves beyond conventional exhibition venues and embarks on a journey through the region on water, land and rail. The innovative art space *Art Station Dubulti* is the centre for this exhibition that has been created by an international group of curators and artists.



### **Way of Light for Latvia**

We will light candles to create a way of light in different cities across the region on the day of the proclamation of the Republic of Latvia. This event invites people to appreciate Latvia as an independent and democratic country within the European community.



### **Culture in Signs**

In Latvia, mittens aren't just for keeping your hands warm! The knitted patterns also carry a message, and each region has different knitting traditions. Similarly in Portugal, ornamental tiles are not just decorative, they are also an important and distinctive cultural expression. In a series of applied workshops, we will invite you to knit Portuguese motifs into mittens and paint Latvian ethnographic patterns on tiles, in this way learning more about both cultures.



### **All the Railway is a Stage**

To celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Riga-Tukums railway line, each station along the route will be transformed into a stage for different performances. Passengers will be able to listen to different kinds of music and see dance, or theatre performances while waiting for, disembarking from or while they are still onboard their train. Through these performances, passengers will be able to explore the cultural history of the different neighbourhoods and our partner cities.



### **Lace architecture**

Jūrmala's unique wooden architectural heritage is a significant resource in the city's economic growth. This means that conservation is important to us, as is developing the urban environment, preserving historical skills and being environmentally responsible. We will pay special attention to the topic of cultural heritage in sustainable urban development.

### **SlowDown Festival**

Let's take a break from our daily grind to spend time in nature and enjoy cultural experiences in this way, restoring our sense of balance. We will present a range of art, music and drama therapies and invite visitors to participate in sand and forest therapy workshops. Let us regain our health together!



### **Winter Plunge with Rainis**

We will read the poetry of Rainis, a Jūrmala native and a towering figure of Latvian poetry, to sharpen our minds. To strengthen our bodies, on the other hand, we will take an ice-cold dip in the Baltic Sea and invite people all along the coast from Jūrmala to Cape Kolka to join us.



### **Steps in the Sand**

We will bring several thousand dancers together in a 140-kilometre-long choreographed folk dance stretching from Jūrmala to Cape Kolka. Dancers on the shores of the Black and Mediterranean Seas will join our dancers on the shore of the Baltic Sea to encourage the public to reflect on the fragile relationship between humans and nature.



### **Art!ficial**

In the lead-up to the ECoC year, we will become a platform where artists and tech professionals can collaborate. We will create an amazing cultural experience at the intersection of these disciplines where familiar art formats will be transformed into new, technology-driven ones.



### **Think Again, Use Again Festival**

The festival will conclude a series of *Think Again, Use Again* events that will focus on issues concerning pollution, the environment and circular economy, and include activities that promote green thinking. As part of this series, we will hold a recycled fashion show and create art from recycled objects.



### **Community Spirit**

Regardless of age, nationality or worldview it is natural to desire to live in beautiful surroundings and not to feel like a stranger in one's own backyard, to participate and contribute to a neighbourhood and to a city. At these events, we will co-create and improve our neighbourhoods, learn how to cooperate and represent our interests, and get involved in municipal development planning.





## Explain succinctly how the cultural programme will combine local cultural heritage and traditional art forms with new, innovative and experimental cultural expressions?

There are many renowned professional artists and musicians, craftspeople, choirs and dance groups in Jūrmala and our partner counties. Their work can be seen in traditional venues, like concert halls, cultural centres, open-air stages, museums, exhibition halls. However, only a fraction of the population that would be interested in these events visit these traditional venues.

**So how can we engage the people who are difficult to convince to visit a museum or a cultural centre?** Our programme addresses this by going to where people already are, by going to the Pulse locations. We'll display our local cultural heritage and both traditional and innovative art forms at these locations. We will give traditional activities an extraordinary twist. **We will challenge people to look at everyday things in a new light** by showing classic paintings in trains, putting organs on beaches, working Portuguese tile patterns into Latvian mittens, dancing on train platforms, on a beach or swamp boardwalk. We will encourage people to write poetry directly onto the street with crayons, or organise conferences and plays on bicycles. We will invite people to go outdoors, to new unexpected locations in order to experience culture in real life. This past year has shown us that **we have had enough of life online!** We want to be together, we want culture and we want to experience it in a safe way.

Through the **Health Pulse** we will encourage people to become more active while looking for a balance in their mental and physical wellbeing. *The Big Clean-up* is a popular event in Latvia each spring. We will hold our own clean-up event, *Healthy Nature – Healthy Body*, to compliment this nationwide movement. By inviting a physiotherapist we will impart valuable lessons about health and educate people about the importance of the work they are doing not only to preserve nature, but also how they can maintain their own health. And why not combine learning about cultural and historical sites with exercise and be guided by an augmented reality trainer that you can access on your smartphone? Everyone has heard of beach volleyball in the summer, but what about beach volleyball in the winter? Swimming in the summer is the traditional thing to do, but with *Winter Plunge with Rainis* we invite you to join us for a swim at the coldest time of year and enjoy our beaches during a new season! Running along the beach is simple, but we will challenge you to run in the sea at a depth of 20 cm. We will organise a series of voyages or outings in small groups together with artists as part of the international contemporary art exhibition *Bon Voyage*. In this way visitors will be able to enjoy different forms of art in a variety of locations, such as in a boat on a river, in urban environments, in villas and in the courtyards between high-rise buildings.

The concept of the **Co-creation Pulse** can best be understood through the choreographed group dance *Steps in the Sand* showing how traditions can be challenged and transformed. It will be the longest collective folk dance event on a beach, and it will take place in Latvia and also all over the world! It will be filmed with drones and broadcast live in our partner countries. Just as the traditional Latvian Dance Festival, *Steps in the Sand* will bring together a large number of participants, but in our case, they will be dancing on the shores of different seas and oceans. **We will not only place folk dancing in a new setting, but also give it new meaning by making it a tool for conversations between humans and nature and between people in different countries.** To give traditional folk crafts, specifically knitting mittens, a new context we have created the event *Culture in Signs*. At this event, we will invite people to knit traditional Portuguese tile patterns into mittens and to paint Latvian symbols onto tiles. We will make the *Theatre on Wheels* project happen together with local young people. This event will be brought to life by young actors riding around Jūrmala, Talsi and Tukums on their bicycles to gather inspiration for an improvisational theatre performance. In *Artificial* workshops and hackathons, artists and tech professionals will explore the opportunities of blending information technology and art. The idea is to enable artificial intelligence to create works of art through interactions with an exhibition's visitors.

In the **Environmental Pulse**, traditional large-scale events will be transformed into personal, almost intimate experiences by involving and working with the environment around us. The *Nature Stage* will allow audiences to spend peaceful evenings and dynamic mornings by listening to music in unconventional places – on beaches, in marshes, and in forests. The performance *All the Railway is a Stage* will turn stations and platforms into stages and passengers into audiences. Meanwhile, *Natural Gardens* will transform the city's manicured lawns into lush, flowering meadows.

To mark the ending of the ECoC year an augmented reality event will reach out from Jūrmala and be available throughout Latvia and even further. We will create AR replicas of the outdoor sculpture Pinecone in Jūrmala through which we will be able to look back at the highlights of the ECoC year in a visually striking, contemporary, environmentally friendly, interesting and accessible way. ■



## How has the city involved, or how does it plan to involve local artists and cultural organisations in the conception and implementation of the cultural programme?



### Generating creative ideas

Jūrmala has prioritised involving local residents and cultural professionals in writing the ECoC application, not only in the preparation process, but also in implementing the programme. Representatives from cultural institutions and local artists' and photographers' associations, local and nationally recognised sculptors and teachers from the Art Academy of Latvia – Olga Šilova, Glebs Pantelejevs and Kristaps Gulbis – actively participated in developing the programme. Jolanta Borīte from the Latvian Centenary office LV100, Lilita Sparāne, who is an expert in the development of Latvian creative industries, and Signe Adamoviča, one of the founders of the creative economy and cultural policy think-tank *CreativityLab*, also joined our discussions.

In response to an open call to help create our cultural programme more than 280 ideas for cultural programmes were submitted to the Ideas Bank, 50 of which came from cultural professionals and cultural institutions from Jūrmala and our partners. Talsi county and other partners also organised creative discussions and meetings to evaluate the submitted ideas together. Artists from Jūrmala and our partners participated in developing the ECoC logo (see Q17).

### By the people, for the people

Our plan is for at least 80 % of local artists and cultural experts to be involved in implementing the programme and for about 20 % of events to be curated by members of cultural institutions and associations from Jūrmala and our partner municipali-

ties, such as *Art Station Dubulti*, Dzintari Concert Hall, the Jūrmala City Museum, Jūrmala Central Library, Pedvāle Art Park.

**We based our programme on ideas that local residents and artists submitted to the Ideas Bank with the expectation that they would be able to implement their projects as part of the ECoC. You would be hard-pressed to find a project in the programme that will not be implemented by, or involve a local artist or cultural organisation.**

Several of our main and regional flagship events, such as *Steps in the Sand*, *Culture in Signs* and *Neighbourhoods in Motion*, were chosen from projects proposed by our partner municipalities Talsi and Tukums, with the respective authors of the ideas taking on their implementation. We designed the main events at each Pulse location so that they would take place in both Jūrmala as well as in cities located in our partner municipalities. For example, the choreographed dance *Steps in the Sand* will take place all along the seashore from Jūrmala to Cape Kolka and the performance *All the Railway is a Stage* will involve both the Jūrmala and Tukums municipalities.

### Direct involvement in implementation and monitoring

An advisory council will be established for the ECoC project to strengthen links with local artists and cultural organisations, which will be composed of representatives

from the creative sector in Jūrmala and from our cooperation partners. They will advise on the creative programme, assess the programme in relation to the objectives and help evaluate the programme's impact (see Q32).

The municipality is already organising **open calls for co-financing cultural projects**: "The accessibility of professional arts in Jūrmala", "Promoting the creativity and diversity of culture in Jūrmala" and "Open call for citizens' initiatives in the cultural sector". New open calls for co-financing cultural projects will be created and the terms of existing co-financing competitions will be restructured in order for the widest possible range of local artists and cultural organisations to be able to participate in implementing activities from the programme.

### Young creative minds

Many of the young creative minds who will be part of the ECoC programme and who will shape our cultural life in years to come are today still in school. We have detailed plans for how to cooperate with schoolchildren and with young people in general (see Q19). Reaching out to art and music schools is important for initiating cooperation with young artists and musicians. Together, we will be exploring ways in which to fuse art with information technology and learn how to tame AI. This will be done at workshops and hackathons together with these budding talents. Through *Community placemaking* we will draw, plan and sing out ideas to create new places in neighbourhoods that correspond to residents' needs. ■



## Give a general outline of the activities foreseen in view of:

- Promoting the cultural diversity of Europe, intercultural dialogue and greater mutual understanding between European citizens;
- Highlighting the common aspects of European cultures, heritage and history, as well as European integration and current European themes;
- Featuring European artists, cooperation with operators and cities in different countries, and transnational partnerships.

We've been working on our ECoC application at a time that has been very challenging for the whole world. Travel has been restricted, national borders have been closed, and people have been isolated due to the *Covid-19* pandemic. These are barriers that would once have seemed unthinkable in a Europe that has free movement as one of its fundamental pillars. On a political level, our representatives are looking for solutions to the global socio-economic crisis. On a psychological level, the emotional strain of the restrictions has increased anxiety and fatigue. On a social level, the many unknowns have resulted in fear and rising aggression and intolerance. On top of this, scientists are sounding alarm bells about environmental pollution and the increasingly unpredictable effects of climate change, the media is reporting on growing consumption and depleting natural resources, and the possibility of new viruses looms in the future. The pandemic has really illustrated that we all live in a single interconnected network that knows no borders. Global events inevitably affect us here in Jūrmala, in the north of Europe. It would be foolish to deny this, to bury our head in the sand and hope that we somehow stand apart.

We come from a totalitarian past. We know what it's like to live in denial, to have our speech and our free movement restricted. We know what it's like to have our nature subjugated in the interests of development. Now, however, we see our place in this global interconnected network. We reap its benefits and we give back. We take responsibility for the part we play in the environment, in health and

in co-creation. These are the ideas we have woven into our ECoC programme. To reinforce this global network and communication is to reinforce democracy. These are our *ARteries*. The values and ideas outlined here are our privilege as European citizens, and the fundamental principles of Creative Europe.

The European Union's motto "united in diversity" can also be applied to our ECoC programme. We recognise how our unique experience can benefit Europe, and how the diversity of European experiences can in exchange help us. Our programme is designed to provide many opportunities for involvement and co-creation. We want to invite partners from different countries to come to Jūrmala so that we can explore the wealth of cultures from both Europe and the world, and in turn share our experience and traditions with them.

### Shared European values for a shared future

Democracy is undeniably one of the values that unites Europe. Democracy is not just a top-down system, however. With this in mind, the activities in our programme place a strong emphasis on mobilising citizens on a grassroots level. Fostering unity and engagement in neighbourhoods will demystify power structures and have a ripple effect empowering people to participate in decision-making on a municipal, national and even on the EU level.

2027 will mark the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Treaty of Rome, the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Treaty of Lisbon, which gave legal force to the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, and the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the

*Erasmus+* programme. For young people, these events are already history, but given our totalitarian past and the rise of populism in Europe and the world, it's important to highlight where our European values and goals come from. We will implement cultural projects that emphasise the EU's values and various topical issues in co-operation with the European Parliament Liaison Office, the European Commission Representation, public bodies, embassies and the Charter of European Rural Communities. These will include *Europe Week* and *Europe's footprints in Jūrmala and the counties*. The target audience of these projects is young people, as in six years' time they will be the ones involved in art, science, politics and business. Engaging them is essential for Latvia and for the whole of Europe. The *Erasmus+* exchange programme and volunteering for ECoC projects in Jūrmala and other ECoC cities will provide young people from different countries with opportunities to gain first-hand work experience and is a great way to promote intercultural dialogue.

### Meeting point between East and West

Looking back at our history, Jūrmala was one of the most popular resort towns in the Soviet Union. The Dzintari Concert Hall became Latvia's cultural calling card in the East. The classical and modern music concerts and festivals that took place here were broadcast to all the republics of the Soviet Union. Jūrmala has retained this reputation and it forms the foundation for our intercultural cooperation with twinning cities in EaP countries like Brovary, Odessa (Ukraine) and Batumi (Georgia). Through

embassies, we will invite other countries and cities in the region to participate in Europe Day events, conferences, the *Steps in the Sand* folk dance event, symposia and workshops through artist residencies at the Pedvāle Art Park, the *All the Railway is a Stage* event, *Neighbourfest* events and in other events from the ECoC programme.

### Health, emotional wellbeing and social inclusion

Health and emotional wellbeing have become priorities both locally and internationally. A series of events popularising art therapy and an active lifestyle will culminate in the *SlowDown Festival*, which is to become a regular tradition. International organisations such as the European Federation of Art Therapy will be invited to participate in organising the festival. The groundwork that will be laid here will continue to offer practical solutions for preventive health care, reducing social exclusion, depression and anxiety, and will focus on young people, seniors and people with disabilities. Jūrmala is planning to create *Digital Escape Zones* on the beach, where people will be encouraged to put away their phones for a moment to get a well-deserved break from technology. Our events will be designed so that everyone will be able to participate and enjoy them.

### Climate change, the environment and green thinking

These are interconnected global and local issues that affect people's daily lives, habits and health and we have devoted the Environmental Pulse to them:

- To highlight all the beautiful, fragile, wonderful and, unfortunately, also the terrible things that humans have caused and need to change: the *Marīna* biennial, the *Rojal Film Festival*, the competition *I Live by the Sea*, the outdoor sculpture exhibition *Equilibrium*, the *Natural Gardens* movement, a series of outdoor concerts, artist residencies at the Pedvāle Art Park.
- To emphasise environmentally friendly transport: *All the Railway is a Stage*.
- To show how resources can be used in a responsible and sustainable way and how consumer habits can be changed: the *Think Again, Use Again* series, an international sustainable fashion show.
- To discuss urban development and the challenges of energy efficiency and restoring wooden architecture: an international symposium for artists, architects and urban planners, the international conference "The Role of

Cultural Heritage in Sustainable Urban Development", the think-tank "How to Make High-rise Neighbourhoods Open and Friendly to the Public".

(Artists, organisations, cities, countries mentioned under specific activities in Q11).

Together with international partners (e.g. Union of Baltic Cities, European Festivals Association, ECoC cities) we will look for solutions for how we can create culture and arts events in nature that leave a minimal ecological footprint in order to keep our natural heritage intact.

### Ready for the digital age

Developing technology and digitalisation is a priority for the EU, and art isn't far behind. In the run-up to the ECoC year, we will organise hackathons to give creatives and tech professionals the chance to find original ways in which to merge art, IT and AI. By doing this, we will make sure that the projects we implement in 2027 are relevant and innovative. The hackathons will be organised in cooperation with ECoC cities and various international organisations (e.g. AIArtists.org).

### Cultural diversity and variety

Developing the ECoC programme, we spoke with our people and responded to their





wishes to see and hear more of Europe than they have until now. Our activities are therefore designed to promote cooperation between municipalities, professionals and citizens by involving artists, collectives and organisations from different countries in Europe and the rest of the world. Some of the events from our programme that will bring international influences into our city are the film series *Neighbours' Footprints*, the *Design Dubulti* project, Martin Parr's photography exhibition *Modern Life*, the *Jūrmala Festival*, the *Culture in Signs* series of applied arts workshops, the *All the Railway is a Stage* performances and the contemporary art exhibition *Bon Voyage*.

(Artists, organisations, cities and countries are mentioned by specific activities in Q11).

We will not only get to know different cultures through external cooperation projects, but we value that Jūrmala itself is a multicultural and multinational city. The travelling festival *Neighbourfest* will provide a space for the diversity of our own minorities' cultures and traditions to be seen and heard.

#### Dance – a European cultural heritage

Every nationality has its own characteristic dance: some are well known and some less so, some are fiery and unrestrained, and some are calm and formal. UNESCO has recognised the traditional large-scale Baltic Song and Dance Festivals as being Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity. To emphasise this tradition and the importance of folk dancing, the event *Steps in the Sand* will showcase our unique cultural and historical tradition to Europe on a grand scale. Dancers and enthusiasts from Jūrmala's twinning cities in France, Italy, Sweden, Finland, Estonia, Lithuania, Georgia, other ECoC cities, and from anywhere in the world will be welcome to join in this ambitious choreography.

Latvia has a strong tradition of amateur dance groups. This is something that we are proud of and want to promote. It provides an excellent foundation on which to build a narrative about the diversity of European and world cultures. We will incorporate performances by music, dance or folk-art groups from different countries into our ECoC programme to foster intercultural dialogue and build on this cultural narrative. We will supplement these performances with fresh ideas about how to organise sustainable outdoor activities, and lay the foundations for an active lifestyle as a preventive health measure.

#### Historical and ethnographic cultural signs

The beloved Latvian poet Imants Ziedonis once had this to say about traditional Latvian mittens: "Latvians go out into the world wearing patterned mittens and throw them into the treasure chest of cultures along with Persian rugs, Indian and Japanese silks, Chinese porcelain, Russian woodcuts, Brussels lace and latticed Caucasian metalwork." Mittens adorned with ethnographic signs and symbols have been a popular and meaningful gift in Latvia for centuries. This year, however, mittens were suddenly thrust into the global limelight. The unexpected reason was American politician Bernie Sanders, whose handmade mittens stole the show at the inauguration of the current US President. Spotting this, the keen eyes of netizens and commentators swiftly made mittens into the season's most coveted accessory! Portuguese *azulejo* art, on the other hand, doesn't need an introduction. Portuguese painted tiles are a well-known, valuable and unique cultural expression. The ECoC programme will feature the **Culture in Signs series of applied workshops where both cultural legacies will come together: Latvian ethnographic signs will be painted onto Portuguese tiles and Portuguese ornaments will be knitted into Latvian mittens.** Portugal will be introduced to Latvian ethnographic heritage in cooperation with among others the National Tile Museum Museu Nacional do Azulejo, while in Latvia, craftsmen and art school students will study the ornaments from the *azulejo* tiles to then knit them into traditional Kurzeme mittens.

#### Reviving our international cooperation network

Jūrmala has experience in organising international music competitions, festivals, concerts, exhibitions and workshops with world-class artists. We have a strong network of international partners who organise activities in Jūrmala (like concerts, exhibitions, masterclasses, lectures and creative meetings) that are also included in the city's festivals: the EC Representation, the EP Liaison Office, the EU House, embassies and 19 cooperation cities in 15 countries (Canada, China, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Israel, Italy, Lithuania, Portugal, Russia, Sweden, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan). Jūrmala actively participates in the **Union of Baltic Cities**, which is a network of 70 cities in 10 countries, and is a member of the **European Healthy Cities network**. In preparing our programme we have also started cooperating with several ECoC cities (see Q16).

We are aware that we need to get more involved in international cultural and other professional networks. This is not only crucial for us to be able to implement our ECoC programme successfully, but also to help us improve culture, the urban environment, architecture, arts and health in our city in general. As a first step, we have started exploring cooperation opportunities with, amongst others, the following organisations:

#### Co-creation Pulse

- Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe (European Route of Historic Gardens, European resorts),
- The European Festivals Association,
- The European House for Culture,
- The European Network of Cultural Centres,
- The European platform IN SITU,
- International Society for the Performing Arts,
- Federation of European Photographers,
- Newcastles of the World,
- European Historic Houses Association,
- Choral Festival Network,
- European Choral Association,
- International Council on Monuments and Sites ICOMOS.

#### Health Pulse

- International Winter Swimming Association,
- International Light Festivals Organisation.

#### Environmental Pulse

- *Re:pair* Cafe International and *Re:pair* Cafe Europe,
- Green European Foundation.

European and international artists, experts and organisations are listed in Q11 and we are continuing to work on cooperating and establishing collaborations.

Looking at other cities' ECoC experience, we can see how these programmes change and evolve in response to local and global events. We realise that we also need to be ready for change and stay open to new ideas. Europe is not made up of paperwork and conferences. **Europe is made up of people and their lives.** We are the ones who tell the European story to one another, to future generations and to other countries and continents. ■

## Can you explain your overall strategy to attract the interest of a broad European and international public?

Jūrmala is well known as a resort town and as a tourist destination in Lithuania, Estonia and Russia, as well as in other countries of the former Soviet Union (including Belarus and Ukraine). Most tourists that come to Jūrmala are from these countries. Because of our active participation in tourism fairs and exhibitions, tourism from the Nordic countries (Finland and Sweden) is increasing. Although this is a good start, seasonality is still a factor – Jūrmala is still predominantly a popular destination during the summer season, but we want to break this pattern.

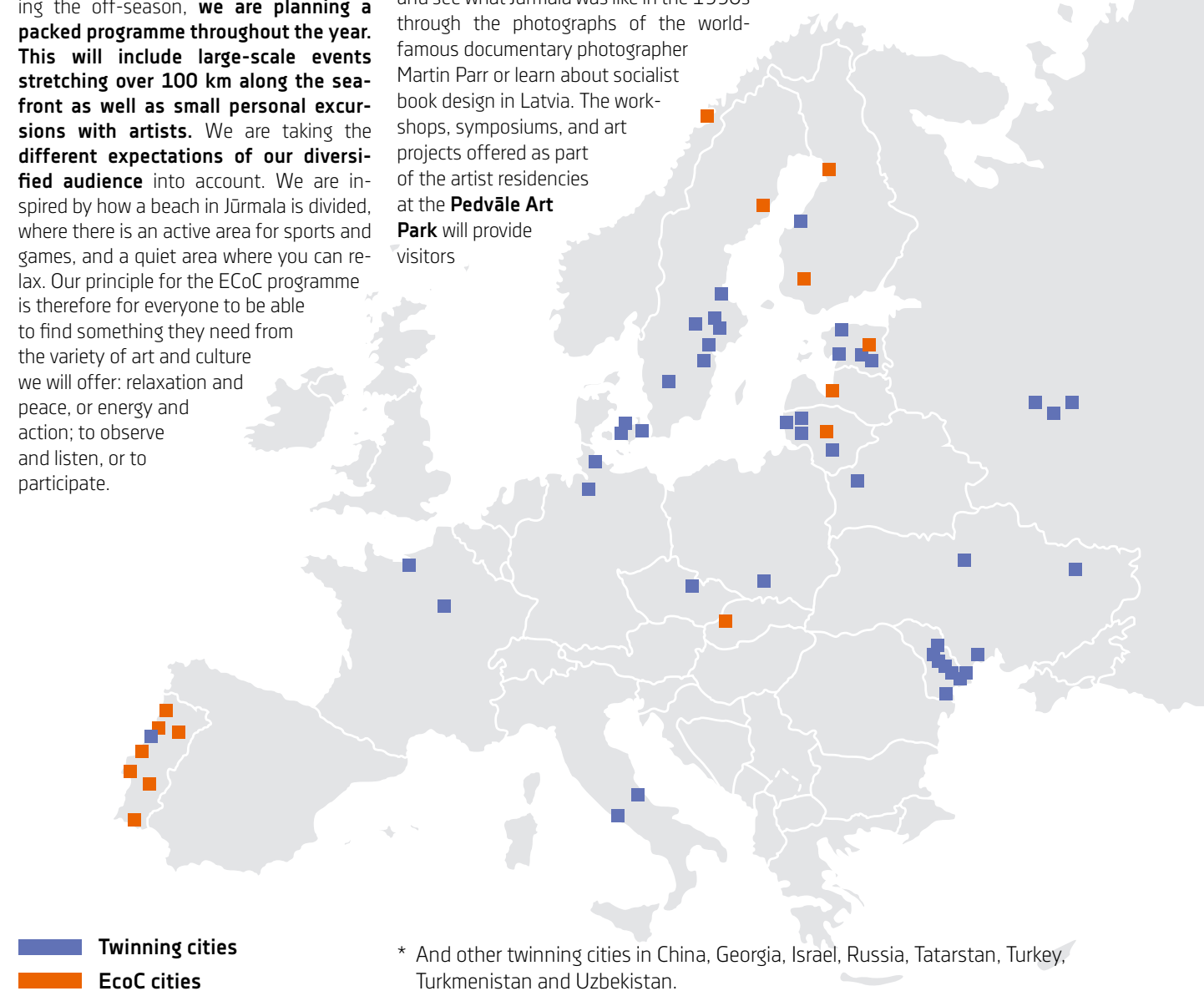
#### Events for different interests and needs, from high culture to personal experiences

To attract international attention also during the off-season, **we are planning a packed programme throughout the year. This will include large-scale events stretching over 100 km along the seafront as well as small personal excursions with artists.** We are taking the **different expectations of our diversified audience** into account. We are inspired by how a beach in Jūrmala is divided, where there is an active area for sports and games, and a quiet area where you can relax. Our principle for the ECoC programme is therefore for everyone to be able to find something they need from the variety of art and culture we will offer: relaxation and peace, or energy and action; to observe and listen, or to participate.

Those **interested in professional art events** will have plenty of concerts and festivals to look forward to. The **Dzintari Concert Hall** will host performances by internationally renowned musicians such as Gidon Kremer, Iveta Apkalna, *Casa da Musica*, the *Cryptic Theatre* from Glasgow, *Sigrid Strøm Reibo* and the Artemis Quartet with Vineta Sareika. People drawn to the visual arts, on the other hand, will be able to appreciate the contemporary exhibitions in **Art Station Dubulti**, or choose to go on an individualised art adventure with a "Bon Voyage" tour where they will get to enjoy the works of John Bock, Ragnar Kjartansson, Jordi Colomer, Anna Kirse, Krista Burāne, Kristaps Epners and others. Visitors will also be able to go back in time and see what Jūrmala was like in the 1990s through the photographs of the world-famous documentary photographer Martin Parr or learn about socialist book design in Latvia. The workshops, symposiums, and art projects offered as part of the artist residencies at the **Pedvāle Art Park** will provide visitors

with the opportunity to experience how art and nature interact. Established events, such as the international sea-themed biennale *Marīna*, which already attracts more than 100 artists from 12 countries, will be scaled up to attract even more artists from a variety of countries. The target audience for these events is the general public, local and international artists and professional networks.

International visitors and partners who are **interested in becoming co-creators** will have **ample opportunity to get involved in our events.** Participation plays an important role in our strategy. Everyone will be able to feel that they're a part of and enjoy the *SlowDown Festival*, learn new skills at *Think Again, Use Again* events, help





## To what extent do you plan to develop links between your cultural programme and the cultural programme of other cities holding the European Capital of Culture title?

co-create the opening event, attend events during **Europe Week** and participate in the folk dance event **Steps in the Sand** on the shores of the Baltic Sea. We challenge those looking for more of an adventure to impersonate a Baltic Sea seal for a day and take a bracing dip at the **Winter Plunge with Rainis** event, named after the great Latvian poet Rainis. The target audience for these events are students and families with children from Latvia and abroad.

There is also plenty to do for those guests who enjoy culture, but tend to **avoid crowds and instead look for peace, quiet and balance**. These guests can walk around the city and explore the subtleties of our **“lace architecture”**, go for a **Sea Hike** along the sea, use any of our **Green Arteries** to revel in nature, cycle through blooming meadows along the bike path from Jūrmala from Rīga and admire the artworks that have been placed along the way, or get the space for introspection at any of the **Digital Escape Zones** throughout the city. We know of no other European city that can offer as many activities as we can within the boundaries of one small city. These activities can be combined with exploring Kurzeme’s charming small towns – Tukums, Talsi, Kandava and Sabile – or Northern Kurzeme’s tranquil fishing villages. **Silence, peace and space are qualities that tourists from urbanised European countries already appreciate** when coming here. Information about all of these experiences will be widely available around the city, in hotels, at tourism information points and online.

We are convinced that the **topics** that we raise in our programme are **important to everyone**: health, looking for mental and physical balance and ways in which to regain it; the environment and how to preserve it for future generations; co-creation as a way to build unity, cooperation and, dare we say, European democracy itself. These are all topics that we believe appeal to the broadest possible international audience.

### Ways in which to attract new audiences

While we are confident that our events will cater to a variety of tastes and interests, this does not guarantee that they will be able to attract the attention of international audiences. Something that we will be mindful of in the run-up to the ECoC year is the **availability of information about our events and the accessibility of the events themselves**. Our **proximity to Rīga** is an indisputable advantage. The capital is a hub for international tourists because of Riga Airport, which is the largest international airport in the Baltic States, and the **Rail Baltica** railway, which will connect us to all the major cities in the region. Jūrmala’s ECoC programme is only 30 minutes away from Rīga! This, and the fact that the events and activities will take place in locations and at times convenient for visitors from Rīga, will undoubtedly make them even more of a draw and will help attract tourists from target countries (see Q34) to Jūrmala (see the additional benefits of transport, hospitality and accessibility described in Q37). Imagine boarding a train during your visit to Rīga and having an unexpected cultural experience, for example by watching an **All The Railway is a Stage** performance, or by listening to any of the **Trains Educate** stories about different artists or stations.

One of the ways in which the **Covid-19** pandemic has changed our everyday lives is that it has increased the use of online technologies. This has allowed people to communicate and enjoy cultural events even during lockdown and under various restrictions. Even though we believe that people will be able to travel freely in 2027, we will still **make use of various technologies** because of how they can make events feel closer and more accessible. We will therefore try to **live stream** all our flagship events and **record** most others.

Jūrmala, and the Kurzeme region in general, has a very **strong tradition of amateur artistic groups and crafts** that we take a lot of pride in. Getting them involved in the programme will help **launch international initiatives and attract audiences** from different countries to events such as **Steps**

**in the Sand, Culture in Signs, and Think Again, Use Again**.

Professionals are a special target audience and, as we already stated in Q14, we aim to work on developing our networks. This includes organising conferences to bring together professionals and experts from different cultural disciplines and other sectors (like the arts, environment, health, urban planning and development, education, psychology, library science, architecture and other fields). These meetings will cultivate the public’s and professionals’ interest and at the same time create a platform for further cooperation and the development of common projects in the future.

Our art and music schools are a huge asset, and our talented children and youth can help us stand out internationally. The international competitions that these schools organise put Jūrmala confidently on the map more effectively than any advertising campaign could. For example, the children and youth international visual arts competition **I Live by the Sea** attracts 500 organisations and 4,600 entries from 29 countries.

Our **twinning cities, foreign embassies and the Union of the Baltic Cities**, with whom we have extensive cooperation in disseminating information, also act as strategic partners in attracting audiences from countries in the Baltic Sea Region to Jūrmala. ECoC is an excellent platform for refreshing partnerships with Jūrmala’s and our regional partner counties’ twinning cities (see map on p.37) and for reaching diverse audiences with our projects and joint marketing activities.

As Jūrmala is located in the centre of Latvia, our geographic position allows us to become a hub from which guests will easily be able to visit the **other Latvian candidate cities** Kuldīga, Cēsis, Liepāja, Daugavpils, Valmiera, Jēkabpils, Jelgava and Ogre during the ECoC year to learn about the unique features of their ECoC programmes. We will encourage the whole of Latvia to co-create!

Our strategy is based on being proactive and staying open to dialogue, to exchanging ideas and to co-creation. Our approach is to “keep an open mind”. If we were to be presented with an unexpected surprise, like the opportunity to communicate with a new civilisation from another planet and invite it to participate in our ECoC programme, we would jump on it! Our approach that a culture based on universal respect facilitates dialogue with various peoples and minorities here on Earth is supported by our personal experience. This would, undoubtedly, also be the best way in which to initiate a dialogue with extraterrestrial civilisations, should the opportunity arise. ■

To develop our own ECoC cultural programme, we have studied and evaluated the programmes of other cities that have received ECoC status. Preparing the ECoC programme, we learned from the examples of **Rīga 2014** (Latvia), **Umeå 2014** (Sweden), **Kaunas 2022** (Lithuania), **Tartu 2024** (Estonia) and **Bodø 2024** (Norway) in particular. **We have already discussed ways in which we could cooperate with several other candidate cities** like Guarda, Évora, Faro, Coimbra, Leiria, Braga, Oeiras and Aveiro in Portugal, Oulu and Tampere in Finland and Trenčín in Slovakia. We are currently exploring shared issues and potential cooperation projects with **Elefsina 2023** (Greece), **Timișoara 2023** (Romania), **Veszprém 2023** (Hungary), **Bad Ischl 2024** (Austria), **Chemnitz 2025** (Germany) and **Nova Gorica 2025** (Slovenia).

**Strengthening local communities** is an important aspect of city life and something that poses a challenge to Jūrmala, and to our new partner counties in the future. Rīga faced a similar challenge in the run-up to their ECoC year in 2014. We will learn from their experience and reinvigorate neighbourhood cooperation. We have also started communicating with **Bodø 2024** and **Tampere** to learn how to best cooperate with our citizens during the ECoC year, and how to integrate them into city life in general. We are developing lasting cooperation with both cities and our project application to the Nordic-Baltic Mobility and Network Programme for Public Administration has already been approved.

The city that inspired us with how they **engaged youth in the ECoC programme and in volunteering** was **Kaunas 2022**. Jūrmala will offer all ECoC cities the opportunity to set up volunteer networks as part of the **Erasmus+** programme to give young people the opportunity to get experience in international cultural project planning and implementation. Participating in this programme, young people will also be able to learn about the culture of other cities. The cities that have responded to this initiative so far are Bodø in Norway, Oulu and Tampere in Finland, Aveiro, Oeiras and Guarda in Portugal and Trenčín in Slovakia, but we are looking forward to seeing more cities get involved.



We are cooperating and developing projects about **cultural environment issues** in our programme together with Oulu, Guarda and Aveiro. We share an interest in **health and an active lifestyle** with Oulu, which has already expressed a willingness to organise certain activities from our programme in their city in 2027, such as the winter swim.

We feel that a very important aspect of cooperation is to supplement our cultural programme with **guest artists and through artist exchange programmes**. To facilitate this, we will offer all ECoC cities and embassies the opportunity to take part in events in Jūrmala leading up to 2027 so that they can present their programmes. These cities include the European Capitals of Culture **Tartu 2024**, **Bodø 2024**, and the cities from Finland and Slovakia that will hold the title in 2026. The cities that will come after us will have the opportunity to participate in Europe Week, Europe Day, **All the Railway is a Stage** and in other events, giving them space to publicise their culture and ECoC programmes. In the same way, we plan to present our programme by participating in events organised by neighbouring cities, such as **Tartu 2024**.

We also want to develop cultural cooperation through **artist exchange programmes**, using the residency at the Pedvāle Art Park as a hub. Evora, Guarda and Aveiro in Portugal have already shown interest in partnering with us. We will also make use of the culture and the arts

exchange visits organised by the Nordic Council of Ministers, to Tampere in Finland, for example, which will facilitate exchanges between the Baltic and Nordic countries.

**Cultural heritage**, specifically our wooden and modern architecture, links us with the ECoC candidate city Oeiras, and two ECoC cities preceding us, **Tartu 2024** and **Kaunas 2022**. We plan to develop joint projects with them because of this shared theme. Additionally, we want to develop a collaboration between counties in Kurzeme and the Portuguese ECoC candidate cities that revolve around our local Kurzeme mittens and Portuguese tile patterns.

**Covid-19** has made digital communication essential to a much greater extent than it was before. The trend of providing ways in which people can **participate in events remotely** is likely to continue in the post-pandemic era. This poses a challenge, but at the same time it offers us more **opportunities to engage with events in other ECoC cities and invite their citizens to participate in our events online**. One of our strategies will be unified communication about the ECoC cities’ cultural programmes. We will propose that we exchange information with the Portuguese 2027 ECoC city and the ECoC cities before and after us so that we can best coordinate the international communication and marketing activities of our programmes. In 2025 and 2026, we will launch a section on our website with information on other ECoC cities and their programmes. ■





Explain how the local population and your civil society have been involved in the preparation of the application and will participate in the implementation of the year.



To keep this flow of creative ideas going, and to allow as many people as possible to express themselves, we kicked off 2021 by launching the **Ideas Bank**. With this initiative, we invited the city's residents, NGOs and event organisers to submit their dreams and visions for what they wanted to see implemented as part of the ECoC programme. Within a few weeks, we had received more than 150 ideas!

We are grateful to the Jūrmala Youth Initiative Centre (JIC) for the work they have done together with youth to develop a vision for activities that young people would find interesting in the ECoC programme. The JIC will also support us in preparing for the ECoC year by implementing the programme's events and by involving young people in creating and enjoying them (see more in Q19).

When our partner municipalities responded to our offer to contribute to the ECoC programme, we opened the **Ideas Bank** up to the citizens from our partner regions as well. We received many surprising ideas, both big and small, fun and serious. Trying to choose which ones to include in our cultural programme proved to be a real challenge. **We wanted to include them all, but that would have required using up the entire national budget. That's how creative our partners and the people of Jūrmala are!** It breaks our hearts that we had to choose, but ultimately we could only select the ideas that best corresponded to our strategic principles (outlined in Q10) and those that addressed the challenges that our three Pulses represent.

Recognising the creative potential of our residents, we invited them to submit **proposals for our ECoC logo** and ended up with 51 amazing ideas! We got children and young people, artists and other professionals involved in generating ideas. In one case three generations from the same family submitted ideas.

2020 and early 2021 were very challenging years because of the restrictions imposed on us due to the *Covid-19* pandemic. As we were writing this proposal, we did not have the opportunity to meet our people in person, or to visit and learn from previous ECoC cities. It naturally also affected how our team was able to meet to discuss ideas. This of course does not mean that we isolated ourselves from the world. On the contrary, **we used technology to find out what our citizens think about the cultural life in Jūrmala, various issues and the city's unique selling points.**

In order to keep in touch, keep discussing and keep ideas flowing, we had to go digital. As it turned out, it's often much easier to arrange meetings online than to try to coordinate them in person! We held **eight structured discussions** in order to brainstorm ideas, which attracted more than 200 participants, cultural professionals, young people, environmentalists, urban-

ists, health professionals and enthusiasts, residents from Jūrmala, entrepreneurs, representatives of minority groups and experts in various fields. Although meeting online can sometimes make participation more passive, we managed to inspire our groups to feel free to share their opinions and develop the ideas that our application was consequently based on.

We also invited residents to participate in an online survey. **It was through these conversations and from the results of the survey that we understood what the city's challenges are and were able to address them in our application.** We got more than 130 ideas for a wide range of both larger and smaller events and environmental and infrastructure projects out of these creative discussions. We won't even try to list the countless **Zoom** calls by the creative team and the brainstorming that we had with NGOs, event organisers, cultural institutions, partner cities, as well as all the personal calls with local artists and others.

The logo represents the five arteries that connect Jūrmala to the world, and the world to Jūrmala. The lines in the logo portray these arteries – they convey motion and are of differing lengths suggesting that at times one is more significant, at times another.

Toms Vītiņš, a multimedia artist from Jūrmala, ended up with the winning submission, while the artists Baiba Jirgena and Krista Miltiņa, from our partner municipalities, were runners up.



Small projects, which have been conceived of and designed with love, are a stepping stone for us to change and be open to new experiences.

## Volunteering

Our JIC has a lot of experience with hosting young people from other countries, as well as with coordinating opportunities for youth from Jūrmala to volunteer abroad. The Jūrmala JIC is actively working on improving and developing a unified system for volunteering locally by promoting volunteering as an opportunity to gain a variety of lifelong learning skills and practical experience. It

is often due to a lack of experience that young people in Latvia can face difficulties in finding jobs. Introducing organised volunteering work practices in several municipalities, including in Jūrmala, is the key for them to get this experience. We will provide volunteering positions at different levels of the municipality and in cooperation with local businesses and other interested parties. We will set up a Mentoring Programme and invite entrepreneurs, creatives and staff from the municipality to become mentors for our young people. We will continually test and improve the programme, and it will continue on after 2027.

Based on this experience, we will build an ECoC volunteering programme that will be open to everyone. It could be a challenge to convince adults of the benefits of volunteering, but we have every reason to believe that people will be responsive considering that the *The Big Cleanup* event brings together more than 100,000 volunteers all over Latvia each spring. We see our volunteers as not only being able to help us with simple tasks, but also to get involved in the programme as exhibition curators, to conduct post-event surveys, help us with our communications, or as sponsorship consultants, amongst other things. ■

Explain how you intend to create opportunities for participation of marginalised and disadvantaged groups.

Each neighbourhood in Jūrmala is different, and so are their residents and our visitors. We do not intend to organise special programmes for seniors or devote specific days to the Roma or create special activities for people with disabilities. Rather, we intend to give all residents an equal opportunity to participate in and co-create any event during the ECoC year. **Our goal is to create events where everyone feels welcome!** Some groups might, however, need additional support.

We have identified **four groups of people who will receive extra attention:**

- seniors,
- people with disabilities,
- people of different nationalities,
- poor and low-income citizens.

## Seniors

The population of Europe is ageing, and Latvia, Jūrmala and its partner municipalities are following the same trend. In Jūrmala, just over one fifth of the 57,000 inhabitants (about 12,500 people) are of retirement age. Many seniors are at risk of social exclusion due to low income, poor health, diminished social ties or a lack of the digital skills that are crucial to navigating daily life today. We will work closely with active retirement groups in the city and in the counties in order to involve seniors in our cultural events. We will reach out to seniors in as personal a way as possible by going to the places where they already spend a lot of time, like community centres, social care centres or libraries. We will not only reach out to provide information about our events, but also to talk about the contents of our programme in order to find out what their interests are, as well as to assess







their needs and what possibilities they have for participation, including transport needs. We will also involve senior dance groups, choirs and crafts groups to encourage seniors to co-create events.

Intergenerational cooperation is a way for older generations to pass on their experience, and for younger generations to explain modern developments and bring vitality to seniors' lives. Already now, students from Jūrmala State Gymnasium are cooperating with students from the Art Academy of Latvia to create an urban environment that is creative and suitable for senior citizens. We will build our future activities around the results of this cooperation.

#### People with disabilities

Making culture accessible to people with disabilities is one of the most important parts of building an inclusive society. Even though most cultural institutions, especially those that have been renovated in recent years, have been made accessible, we expect challenges when organising events outdoors or in unusual spaces (e.g. in historic buildings and spaces that have not yet been renovated). To find solutions, we will cooperate with organisations such as *Apeirons*, which is an association of people with disabilities and their friends, as well as with similar local organisations. We will develop recommendations for event organisers that will not only include guidelines for making venues physically accessible, but also information about other measures they can take, such as providing support staff, assistants, sign language interpreters, transport services to venues, etc.

By using braille, spatial drawings, audio guides and sign language, we will ensure that information about our events is accessible to people with different types of functional disabilities. This includes the ECoC website as well as on location at our events. We will make sure that the information about our events and opportunities for how to get involved is also available for as-

sociations working with these groups (e.g. the Latvian Society of the Blind, Latvian Association of the Deaf, etc.). Information will also be disseminated through organisations that provide social services. To ensure that people with mental disabilities are able to attend and appreciate the contents of our programme, we will set up a support programme that will provide individual assistants at all events. We will also make sure that a certain number of seats are reserved for wheelchair users and their assistants, including at paid events.

"Nothing about us without us" is the guiding principle of the UN's Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN-CRPD). In order to respect this principle already during the development of our ECoC application, we provided sign language interpreters so that people with hearing impairments could take part in our focus group discussions, as well as NGOs representing people with visual and mobility impairments. This cooperation will continue so as to include people with disabilities in co-creating our cultural events. Wheelchair dancers will, for example, participate in the large folk dance event *Steps in the Sand*, and our *Wheelchair Art* event will be accessible, where one of the challenges will be to create an artwork on climate change.

#### Different nationalities

Jūrmala is diverse. With 49 %, Latvians make up almost half of the population, and 35 % are Russian. Other nationalities include Belarusians, Ukrainians, Poles, Jews, the Roma, etc. There is a large influx of holidaymakers in the summers, which makes the city even more rich and diverse.

Kauguri is a residential area where more than 30 % of Jūrmala's population lives making it the most densely populated area of the city. The proportion of Russian-speaking citizens is the highest here. By organising events close to where people live, by creating recreational areas and co-creation opportunities, we will continue to integrate the different communities of Jūrmala.

There is a significant Roma community in Jūrmala and our partner regions. It is well known that many Roma in Latvia still face difficulties in fully integrating into the education system, the labour market and society. We will reach out to them and to the other nationalities that live in Jūrmala through minority organisations, embassies and social media to involve them in events and at the same time give them the opportunity to show us their rich cultures. This will be done by including them as co-creators in various ECoC events, for example in *Neighborhood events*, in the *Neighbours' Footprints* film series, or by dancing together in *Steps in the Sand*.

#### Poor and low-income people

Unemployed people, single parents and senior citizens, especially single seniors, are particularly at risk of social exclusion due to their limited financial means. According to the State Employment Agency, the unemployment rate in Jūrmala at the beginning of 2021 was 5.8 %. 74.9 % of single seniors, 53 % of pensioners and 26.2 % of single parents are at risk of poverty in Latvia. Being in a precarious financial situation can affect people's mental health, and because they are so focused on solving their problems they might not have the space to pay attention to cultural events. In addition to the social support these groups already receive from the Jūrmala Municipality, we will pay particular attention to engaging them in our cultural events.

We will work together with the social services to find ways in which to reach out to them and encourage participation. To give as many people as possible the opportunity to take part in the ECoC programme, most events will be free of charge. Events will also be organised in many different locations, including close to neighbourhoods where more socially at-risk populations live. **Using the experience we will gain during the ECoC year, we will choose projects and approaches that will continue beyond 2027.** ■

## Explain your overall strategy for audience development, and in particular the link with education and the participation of schools.

### The community's power to attract new audiences

Part of our ECoC programme involves engaging and including audiences over the course of several years. We will help our citizens see that you don't have to be the best painter, singer, musician or dancer in order to co-create and participate in a cultural experience. Our small, cosy Pulse locations are the way in which to engage the broadest possible audience.

### A programme for neighbours and neighbourhoods

In this programme, we will talk to people in various neighbourhoods so that we can develop activities and events together. We want to make sure that events are relevant to people so that they are genuinely interested in participating. Participation does not just mean being a listener or spectator. It means taking part in organising and communicating with one another which in turn strengthens people's sense of belonging to a neighbourhood. We will plan and develop cultural strategies together with cultural operators from across the region. A large part of our cultural programme will consist of workshops, hackathons, placemaking events and discussions.

### Events everywhere – nearby and online

The basis of our audience engagement strategy is to reach people through cultural events in places where they already spend time (like on trains, at stations, in supermarkets, at sporting events, etc.). **We will take part in fairs, town festivals and Fishermen's Festivals bringing a touch of Europe with us. We will introduce local residents to different European cultures, art forms and people.** Wherever possible, we will arrange for live broadcasts or recordings of events to be made available online or on television. This will make our events accessible not only in Latvia, but also further afield.

### Students – a source of incredible ideas

There aren't any higher education institutions in Jūrmala or our partner municipalities, but this does not mean that our work will exclude them. Our closeness to Rīga makes all the universities and academies in the capital our partners. Jūrmala already has cooperation agreements with

the Latvian Academy of Culture and the Art Academy of Latvia. In 2022, we plan to sign a cooperation agreement with the Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music and possibly also with other universities. Jūrmala State Gymnasium already co-operates with Rīga Technical University, the University College of Economics and Culture in Latvia, the BA School of Business and Finance, as well as the Institute of Atomic Physics and Spectroscopy of the University of Latvia. We will use the students' and teachers' creative ideas and bring them to life through our ECoC programme.

### Youth – the audiences and co-creators of today and tomorrow

There are 58 educational institutions with more than 14,000 pupils in Jūrmala and its partner counties Tukums and Talsi. Bulduri Horticultural Secondary School is another significant partner, and Jūrmala has already established a creative cooperation with them to landscape the city's green areas.

Young people bring creative energy to the city. Preparing the ECoC programme, we have outlined a **youth engagement programme** with the JIC as coordinators in order to involve young people and give them the chance to express themselves. Soon, the JIC will move into the new Youth Centre in Kauguri, which will become a new space for fresh ideas. Additionally, there are also experienced and dedicated youth initiative centres in our partner counties, Talsi and Tukums. These will ensure that local youth will get involved in ECoC events.

To involve schoolchildren, we have an agreement to set up a **school coordination network**. Cooperation between schools is crucial to ensure that information about the opportunities and events of the ECoC programme is disseminated at schools so that children learn about events that they can attend, help co-create and volunteer at.

The **Jūrmala Youth Council** is an additional instrument with which to involve young people. The Council actively contributes to young people's social lives in addition to the local authorities and the JIC. The Youth Council is a platform that has access to the Jūrmala City Council and can therefore defend young people's

interests. This form of participation will also be used to help implement the ECoC programme.

Young people were invited to join focus groups as the ECoC programme was being developed so that we could learn what they are interested in and come up with new ideas together. The JIC cooperated with young people to submit projects that would interest them to the *Ideas Bank*. To increase their understanding of and interest in the contents of our ECoC programme, we will provide students with topics that they can research during their annual **Project Weeks**. Once this comes to a close, we will organise joint discussions with the help of which we aim to identify and include activities that interest young people into the ECoC programme. In order to implement these ideas, there will be a youth initiative project competition through which it will be possible to obtain municipal funding. To help implement their ideas, financial instruments, project competitions and national and European networks in the youth field will also be utilised.

### Engaging street youth

Of course, not all young people go to school, study, learn a profession or work. These are the young people who are also generally dismissive of traditional cultural events. Efforts to involve and engage them will be a specific area that we focus on. Part of our activities include **Community Placemaking**, which will involve youth in the process of transforming places. Their involvement will make sure that we work on places that are actually important to them and implement activities that are useful to them. We will research and look into what young people from our city are interested in to gauge the need for a form of street youth work. This form of work would need to be appropriate to the city of Jūrmala, considering its geography, and be able to reach groups that JIC activities have not been able to reach so far. Street youth work involves attracting young specialists who have training to be in the places where young people actually live. In this way, it would be possible to involve young people in activities that they enjoy, encourage them to develop their talents and skills, including through the ECoC programme, such as with sporting events or graffiti art, etc. ■



Q20

Annual budget for culture in the city.

YEAR	Annual budget for culture in the city (EURO)	Annual budget for culture in the city (in % of the total annual budget for the city)
2017	4,235,798	5.8 %
2018	6,441,852	7.8 %
2019	5,543,394	6.2 %
2020	4,751,352	5.3 %
2021	6,745,278	5.4 %

The annual budget for culture includes all costs related to the maintenance of all cultural institutions in Jūrmala (including the Dzintari Concert Hall and its share capital), staff salaries, event / project costs, sports and recreation, but excludes infrastructure.

The increase in the budget for culture leading up to 2018, and the drop off after, is due to the extensive celebrations for the Latvian centenary in 2018. ■

Q21

Plans for using the cultural budget to finance Jūrmala 2027.

We will not be using the existing municipal cultural budget directly in order to fund the ECoC programme. We will keep existing cultural co-financing target programmes in place, but from 2022 we will adjust them and add new criteria that promote European values, align with themes that are topical in Europe, and encourage civic engagement and responsibility among citizens. Starting from 2024, the existing programmes will also gradually be refocused towards the ECoC programme. By supplementing the criteria of co-funding programmes, existing cultural projects will not be affected, but will rather be supported in a more targeted way and linked to ECoC objectives and the new Jūrmala City Cultural Development Plan 2023 – 2029. Starting in 2025, we will develop additional targeted co-funding programmes that will be focused on implementing the ECoC programme's strands. ■

Q22

Intended amount of the overall budget to be spent for culture after the ECoC year.

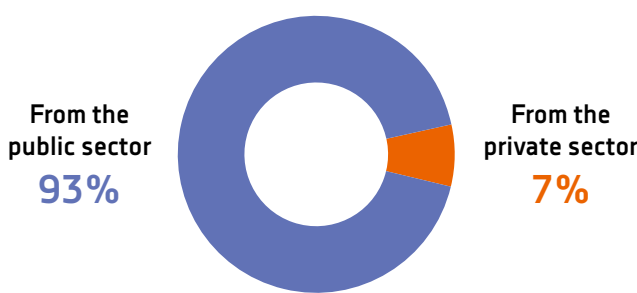
The resources allocated to culture between 2017 and 2021 made up 5.3 % – 7.8 % of the Jūrmala municipal budget. Taking the new activities that will be implemented leading up to the ECoC year into account, and including the ECoC year, the annual budget for culture is expected to increase by around 10 %.

The budget is expected to increase because the new open calls for citizens' initiatives that will activate neighbourhoods, develop communities and improve the urban environment, will continue. New co-funding target programmes will be set up to develop liveable urban design, implement new studies on wellbeing, promote heritage conservation, active and green lifestyles, nature therapies, etc.

Considering that new cultural infrastructure is being developed in Jūrmala in the run-up to the ECoC year (e.g. a new multifunctional nature education centre in Ķemeri is being constructed, the Ķemeri post office is being converted into the Crafts House, a youth centre is being created in Kauguri, the Jūrmala City Museum is being restored and the Dzintari Concert Hall is being renovated) additional funding will be needed to create content and organise events here. ■

Q23

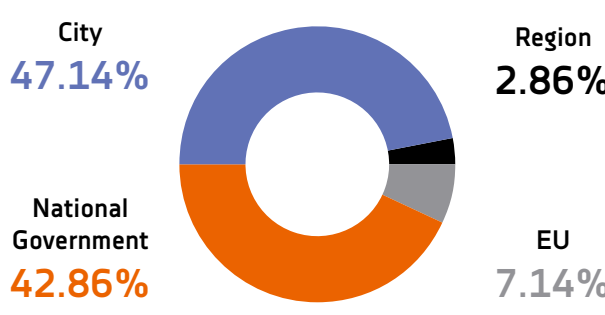
Overall operating budget.



	EURO
From the public sector	14,000,000
From the private sector	1,000,000
<b>Total income to cover operating expenditure</b>	<b>15,000,000</b>

Q24

Income from the public sector to cover operating expenditure.



Income from the public sector to cover operating expenditure	EURO
National Government	6,000,000
City	6,600,000
Region	400,000
EU (with exception of the Melina Mercouri Prize)*	1,000,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,000,000</b>

\* Although most EU funds and programmes for the new planning period are currently still under discussion, we have identified several programmes whose priorities closely correspond to our ECoC objectives. Programmes that we could submit projects to include: the **Creative Europe Media** programme for film projects, to boost the creative industries in our partner regions, for artist and cultural professional mobility (e.g. the *I-Portunus* initiative); The **Citizenship, Equality, Rights and Values** programme for citizen engagement and participation activities, or the *Daphne* programme so that we could provide art therapy for women who have suffered from domestic violence; **Erasmus+** for teacher and student mobility and to encourage our youth to take part in European democracy; **Horizon** to find sustainable solutions to preserve our wooden architecture; the **Life** programme to teach owners of wooden buildings how to renovate them in a environment friendly way, or to find ways to preserve our biological diversity; **EU4Health** could be a source for active lifestyle projects for senior citizens; **Cross-border programmes** like Interreg Baltic Sea Region, Estonia-Latvia, Latvia-Belarus and **EEA grants** will provide opportunities for closer cooperation with our neighbours. All these programmes foresee involving international partners and will therefore serve as a foundation for broader international cooperation within the ECoC project.

Q25

Financial commitment to cover operating expenditure.

By approving this application, Jūrmala City Council has made an initial approval of the total budget to cover the costs of the ECoC programme. It is expected that the Council will take the final decision on the amount of funding at the end of 2021, which ties in with the preparations of the second phase of the application. The City of Jūrmala's planned contribution is 6,6 m euros.

As we are preparing our application, there is an ongoing administrative-territorial reform in Latvia. After the local elections on 5 June 2021 there will be 42 local authorities instead of the current 119. This reform will affect our partner counties Tukums and Talsi. Tukums county will be merged with Kandava, Jaunpils and Engure, and Talsi county will be merged with Dundaga, Roja and Mērsrags. The new municipal councils of the Tukums and Talsi counties will not start work until July 2021, so they are not yet able to make budgeting decisions on behalf of the new municipalities. They will take a decision on the amount of funding at the end of 2021 after agreeing on the funding model for ECoC, which ties in with the preparations of the second phase of the application. The 400,000 euro investment that the counties have currently defined is up for negotiation as soon as the new legal structures will be in place.

At the time of submission, the national authorities have not yet made a decision regarding funding for the ECoC year. The funding amount from the state budget in Q24 is based on a letter from the Ministry of Culture on 23 February 2021, saying that up to 50 % of the ECoC programme's budget, but not exceeding 10m euros, could be publicly funded (excluding wages, overheads and administration expenditures). The final decision will be made in 2023 and specific amounts of public funding will be determined in medium-term budgetary frameworks for 2024, 2025 and 2026. ■



Our fundraising strategy will be based on fostering cooperation between the municipality and cultural operators, companies and NGOs. In this way we will be able to generate new initiatives and ideas and end up with a varied programme of events. Sponsoring cultural events is not that common in Jūrmala. Implementing the ECoC programme will build on proven experience with co-financing and donation habits, while at the same time creating new mechanisms.

Funding from private sponsors

We have already mentioned that sponsoring cultural events and donating are not common practices in Jūrmala. We are, however, close to Rīga where some of Latvia's largest companies are based. This includes banks, state and municipal companies, including *Latvian Railways*, the public railway company *Pasažieru Vilciens*, *Latvian Mobile Telephone*, *Latvian State Forests*, *Riga Forests*, *airBaltic*, etc. We want to highlight that any cooperation partners will be carefully assessed.

It is important for us that the companies that we cooperate with are socially responsible and that their activities align with the priorities and values of Jūrmala's ECoC programme.

Working on our cultural programme we have already approached several large companies and have received positive responses to cooperate in the future. These answers are not however definitive because of the uncertainty that the current crisis has created. We have started talking to the domestic public railway company *Pasažieru Vilciens* about the possibility of joint events, about support for marketing activities, and about the possibility to offer discounted fares for passengers going to some of the major ECoC events. Many of the largest companies are already implementing various support programmes in the cultural sector. We will reach out to these and other large companies to look for shared interests. We will also initiate talks with patrons of the arts such as the *Boris and Ināra Teterev Foundation*, the *Zuzāns family (Zužum)*, etc. The ECoC Communication Council, which will be composed of public relations and marketing experts from

the largest companies in the region, NGOs and municipalities, will provide crucial support in attracting sponsors.

We will develop a detailed **sponsorship programme** with different types of sponsorship opportunities in order to attract companies. Companies will, for example, be able to become sponsors for the entire year, or just for a specific event. Depending on the sponsor's interest level and contribution capacity, we will offer visibility in our marketing and promotional materials, media publications, urban spaces and in the design of individual events. In special cases, we will consider organising joint events if they align with the themes in our ECoC programme. For example, we have already approached the major mobile telecommunications operator and technology company *Latvian Mobile Telephone* who could lead and oversee the hackathons we are planning and help us bring artists and technology developers together to create technology-based art. We would also like to approach companies such as *Latvian State Forests* to create events that highlight the impact that climate change is having on forests, or *Latvian Railways* to create a joint vision for how to utilise railway stations, and so on.

It is especially important to cooperate with various **media outlets to get them on-board as media sponsors**. Thanks to our previous experience with organising large events in Jūrmala, we have established good cooperation links with several media partners and we will be inviting them to become media sponsors of our ECoC programme.

Donations

The Jūrmala ECoC programme will be implemented by a foundation, for which we will seek the status of public benefit organisation. This will enable us to ensure that our donors get the appropriate tax benefits. Donating to cultural events is not a common practice in Latvia, so we will build on the existing culture of private donation, which is mostly focused on social issues. We believe that we will be able to capture people's interest with **specific donation targets**, such as donating to build an outdoor gym, light a footpath, buy new playground equipment, or to create intergenerational meeting places in various neighbourhoods.

We would like to thank all our supporters in a public and eye-catching way. **We will look for both digital solutions and ways in which to display signage on location throughout Jūrmala's ARTeries (by the sea, along cycle paths, by the train tracks, by the riverside and in other locations).** These signs will take the shape of specially designed, ergonomic benches that will be installed at picturesque locations throughout the city. They will feature the names of various sponsors and donors and will serve as a reminder of Jūrmala as ECoC long after 2027. We will also express our gratitude by including donors' and sponsors' names in digital art projects. New artworks created by teams of artists and tech experts at the hackathon could be based on donors' names, for example. We see this as a challenge without a clearly visible solution, meaning that we don't want to limit people's ideas by defining a specific direction.

Open calls for projects

We know that we face difficult times ahead that might impede our plans for attracting private financing to our ECoC programme. We will therefore build on our extensive experience in developing and implementing co-financing programmes for both cultural projects and citizens' initiatives, which motivates companies and organisations to create interesting and innovative events in Jūrmala. **The programme is based on the concept that in order for companies and organisations to receive funding from the municipality, they have to put in their own funds in return.** Currently, depending on the specifics of the programme, municipal co-financing can range from covering 20 % to 90 % of a project's total costs.

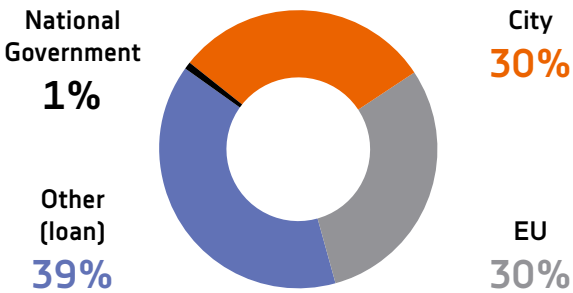
At the moment the municipality offers co-financing for the following cultural programmes: "Access to professional arts in Jūrmala", "Promoting the diversity of creativity and cultural formats in Jūrmala", "Call for proposals for citizens' initiatives in the cultural field". An average of 25-30 projects are implemented through these programmes every year, which attract private funding of **up to 700,000 euros annually**. Looking ahead to the ECoC year, we will definitely develop **targeted open calls** and incorporate the themes and principles from our ECoC programme into the regulations of the above-mentioned programmes. ■

Breakdown of the operating expenditure.



	EURO
Programme expenditure	9,600,000
Promotion and marketing	2,400,000
Wages, overheads and administration	2,670,000
Other	330,000
Total programme expenditure	15,000,000

Income from the public sector to cover capital expenditure.



Income from the public sector to cover capital expenditure*	EURO
National Government	700,000
City	23,747,990
Region	0
EU (with exception of the Melina Mercouri Prize)	24,053,570
Other (loan)	30,849,020
Total	79,350,580

\* The capital expenditure of Jūrmala city foreseen for 2021 – 2027, according to the preliminary Investment Plan.

Financial commitment to cover capital expenditure.

The capital expenditures listed in table Q28 for the period from 2021 to 2027 are systematically planned in accordance with the strategic long-term goals outlined in the Jūrmala City Development Strategy 2010 – 2030, which is reflected in the investment plan of the medium-term development planning document Jūrmala City Development Programme 2014 – 2022, as well as in the investment plan of the Jūrmala City Development Programme 2023 – 2029 document that is currently under development.

Jūrmala is preliminarily planning to invest a total of 79,3 m euros to develop culture, tourism, the environment, education, sports, health and bicycle infrastructure to make Jūrmala an internationally renowned, modern coastal resort and the most popular resort town in the Baltic Sea region by 2027.

There are plans to attract 24 m euros in EU funding between 2021 and 2027, anticipating co-financing from the municipal budget. At the same time, there are plans to find other funding opportunities. In case this funding isn't secured, we will take out a loan from the State Treasury to partly finance the construction of infrastructure in certain areas. In 2022, Jūrmala City Council will approve the investment plan for 2023 – 2029, which will identify real and potential funding sources and outline opportunities for national and regional funding. ■



Fundraising strategy for financial support from Union funds to cover capital expenditure.

The Jūrmala City Council has systematically planned to attract funding from EU funds and other programmes to construct infrastructure projects defined by the city in each Cohesion Policy programming period. In the new Cohesion Policy programming period for 2021 – 2027, Jūrmala City Council plans to attract financing from EU funds according to the main objectives of the nationally approved operational programme and the municipality's strategic planning documents, which are hierarchically subordinate to the national strategic objectives. At the same time, it will consider acquiring funding from the European Recovery and Resilience Facility and other EU programmes.

Jūrmala City Council has the administrative capacity and the know-how to attract

external funding. **One of the tasks of the Development Department's Infrastructure Investment Project Division is to carry out and coordinate the attraction of EU funding, or other external financial instruments from foreign and national institutions for the development, implementation and the post-implementation monitoring of infrastructure investment projects owned by the municipality during the project monitoring period.** This includes the Development Department's Project Division having to carry out and coordinate the attraction of financial resources from foreign and national institutions (including from the EU and other financial instruments) and municipality projects (not infrastructure projects). The unit's task is also to coordinate the devel-

opment of existing and planned projects of other municipal departments, institutions and companies subordinated to the municipality, to monitor their implementation and to provide post-implementation monitoring (including for infrastructure projects).

Attracting external financing for projects that are planned by the departments, institutions and companies of the Jūrmala City Council is determined by the council's ordinance "On the procedure for implementing projects co-financed by the EU and other external financial instruments in Jūrmala City Municipality". The ordinance defines the municipality's procedures for the conception, implementation, completion and follow-up on any projects financed by resources from the EU or from other external financial instruments. ■

Spending on new cultural infrastructure to be used for Jūrmala 2027.

INFRASTRUCTURE ASSETS / OBJECTS		SUM IN EUROS	TIME PERIOD
1	The new multifunctional nature education centre construction project and landscaping the forest park in Ķemeri.	15,926,130	2021 – 2023
2	Developing the multifunctional nature education centre's services and completing the landscaping work of the forest park in Ķemeri. Improving the forest park territory, including a gazebo for smaller events, building premises and creating a permanent nature exhibition.	5,621,920	2021 – 2023
3	Restoring the historical park at Ķemeri and regenerating degraded areas.	4,066,530	2021
4	Reconstruction and restoration of the Ķemeri water tower, which is a cultural monument of national importance, and creating a tourist information centre with a gallery and viewing platform.	114,159	2021
5	Reconstructing the Ķemeri post office building to create the Crafts House.	187,075	2025 – 2027
6	Creating a recreation park and youth centre in Kauguri. Constructing infrastructure for recreation and for small and medium-sized businesses to be able to conduct their business. Constructing a youth centre to support the business environment, youth employment and leisure activities.	9,365,800	2021 – 2022
7	Reconstructing the Dzintari Concert Hall's Great Hall and landscaping the grounds.	12,237,940	2021 – 2025
8	Renovating the Jūrmala City Museum building at 15 Lienes iela to create architectural cohesion with the modern museum building next to it. Installing the exhibition "Summer Residents in Jūrmala".	130,000	2024 – 2027
9	Creating open-air environmental objects in various neighbourhoods in Jūrmala.	129,050	2021 – 2026

Please give an outline of the intended governance and delivery structure for the implementation of the European Capital of Culture year.

If Jūrmala is selected as the European Capital of Culture in 2027, the Jūrmala City Council will establish the **Jūrmala 2027 Foundation**. We have created a structure that is as functional and transparent as possible, that complies with principles of good governance and that will be able to deliver on the ECoC objectives in order to effectively prepare and implement the 2027 programme.

The **governance structure** is made up of a Supervisory Council and a Management Board. The function of the **Supervisory Council** is to appoint the management of the executive structure and to approve the financial and action plans. The Supervisory Council is made up of representatives from the municipality, our partner municipalities, public authorities, civil society and culture.

The **Management Board** is approved by the Supervisory Council. The Board's function is to ensure the alignment of the foundation's activities with its objectives and their operational execution. This includes staffing, budget planning and financial performance monitoring. The Management Board consists of a Chairperson and three Board Members.

The **executive structure** consists of a Director General and three Directors – an Artistic Director, a Communication Director and an Administrative Director. The Supervisory Council selects the Director General and the Artistic Director through international open calls. The Director General and the three Directors are also members of the Management Board. The **Artistic Director** is responsible for planning and implementing the creative programme and for establishing and maintaining creative partnerships. They are also responsible for the capacity building of cultural operators, for regional and international cooperation and for the evaluation of co-financed projects. The **Communication Director** is responsible for communication (media, social media), marketing, sponsorship, participation and engagement, attracting local and international audiences and the evaluation of co-financed projects. The **Administrative Director** is responsible for launching open calls for projects, supervision, pro-

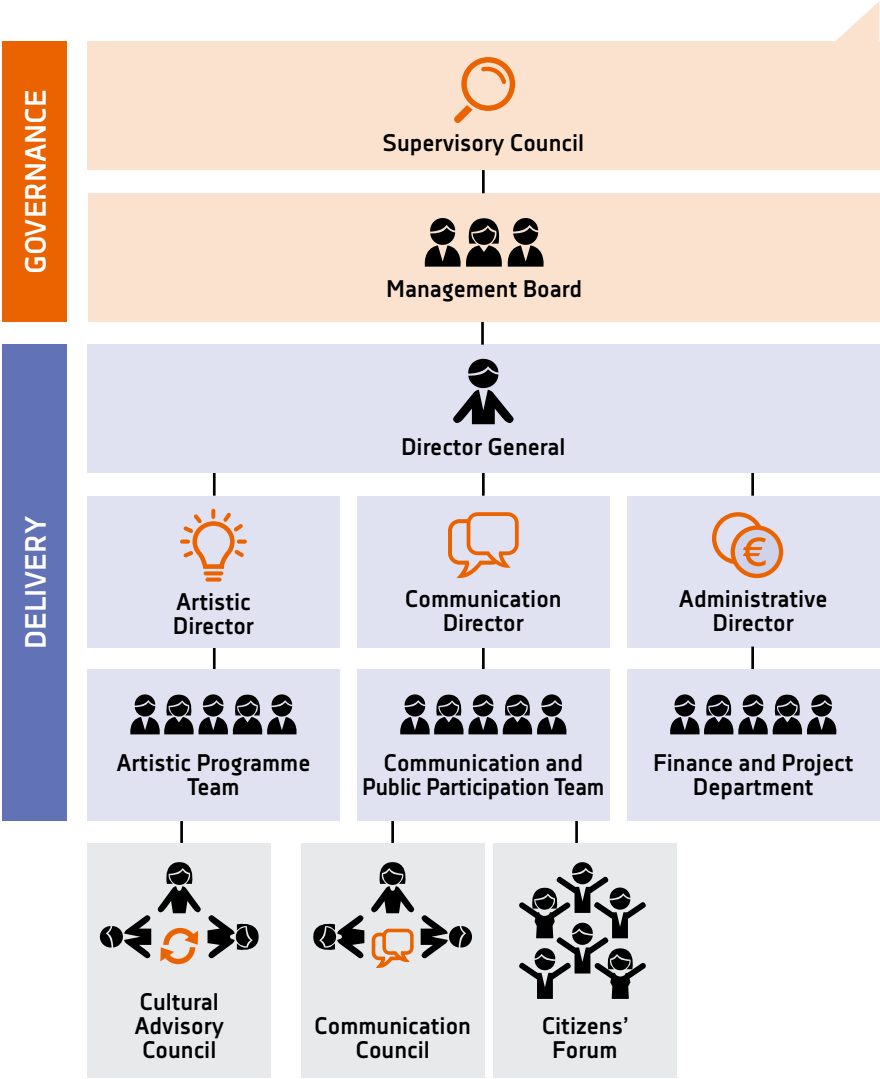
curement, financial management, planning, evaluating and monitoring the impact of ECoC activities, reporting, attracting EU and other funds, human resources, legal consultations, administrative support and the evaluation of co-financed projects.

We are planning to set up **advisory councils** – a Cultural Advisory Council, a Communication Council and a Citizens' Forum. The **Cultural Advisory Council** will advise on the creative programme, assess the programme's relevance to the objectives, and help evaluate the programme's impact. This council will include international art curators, teaching staff from institutions of higher education and creative experts from our part-

ner regions. The **Communication Council** will oversee the building of partnerships for joint communication activities and serve as a channel for communicating with partners and attracting sponsors. This council will be composed of public relations and marketing experts from the largest companies, NGOs and municipalities in the region.

The **Citizens' Forum** will be set up to evaluate ideas, build partnerships and to establish communication channels with citizens, foreseeing the participation of residents and associations from our neighbourhoods and from our partner counties.

It is expected that some technical tasks will be outsourced. ■





Q33

What are the main strengths and weaknesses of your project?  
How are you planning to overcome weaknesses identified?

When we applied for ECoC status in 2008, we were the only city out of four that did not pass the pre-selection stage. We have learned from our mistakes. Since then, Jūrmala has developed a good cultural infrastructure. This time, we prepared our application by taking the cultural interests of our citizens into account as well as their willingness to participate in organising events. This approach has strengths that we are proud of, and weaknesses, which we have identified in order to be able to look for the best solutions. ■



STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	SOLUTIONS
This application has been developed using a <b>combination of bottom-up and top-down approaches</b> . It incorporates the public's opinions and is tied to the city's policy planning documents.	Cooperation with citizens, including with community associations, and these associations' ability to implement different types of projects.	A targeted programme to strengthen neighbourhood initiatives by supporting new associations being created, organising open project calls with a simplified application process, reducing bureaucracy for implementing these ideas, organising training, creating real mechanisms for citizens to be able to influence the contents of the programme (see Q32, e.g. Citizens' Forum).
<b>A realistic, practical programme based on the city's strengths</b> , which takes the city's finances, infrastructure, strong and active local cultural organisations and human resources into account.	Our cultural operators are insufficiently involved in international networks and their capacity to implement international projects is therefore limited. This is reflected in our cultural programme.	We will implement a targeted capacity-building programme for local cultural organisations and cultural operators by organising international experience exchanges, seminars and by developing artist residencies.
A well-developed mechanism for <b>financing</b> municipal cultural institutions and <b>co-financing</b> local cultural NGOs and SMEs.	An inadequately developed structure for cultural sponsorship and for attracting EU funding for culture.	A specific sponsorship strategy has been developed (see Q26). The qualified specialists that will be recruited for the <i>Jūrmala 2027</i> Foundation will work with attracting funding from the EU (see Q32).
<b>Strong regional</b> partners with long traditions in culture, art and creativity.	Regional cooperation is jeopardised by the 2021 administrative-territorial reform, which could lead to disputes in the newly merged partner counties.	In preparing this application we have been communicating with all municipalities individually, and we are including activities that might be of interest to them in our programme. After the new Talsi and Tukums counties have been established, we will renegotiate how our cooperation will continue.
<b>Unanimous political support</b> from all current municipal policy-makers.	There will be two local elections before 2027, which could change the political landscape and the current position.	We will integrate the ECoC programme into the municipality's newly created development and cultural strategies, giving them political weight.
<b>Resilient, experienced cultural operators</b> that have lived through several major crises – changing political systems, multiple economic crises and the pandemic.	The current pandemic is an indicator of potential economic, epidemiological and security crises in the future.	The ECoC programme has been designed to be adaptable to potential future risks through planning many smaller events, using digital technologies, relying on tested methods for financing cultural events and by mostly using or renovating existing infrastructure, instead of building something new.

Q34

Please provide an outline of the city's intended marketing and communication strategy for the European Capital of Culture year.

Our communication and marketing strategy is based on our programme's objectives and themes – health, co-creation and the environment (Q4). These guidelines will also run through, accentuate and shape our communication.

Communication principles

Our communication and marketing strategy is based on three principles:

- **Synergy and partnership** – by working together with other organisations, partners and people, we can reach a wider audience than we would be able to individually,
- **Impact** – by reaching people where they are, and through the media they consume, we can communicate with them in a more targeted way than by spending money on large-scale advertising campaigns,
- **Visibility** – our communication and marketing activities need to be eye-catching and original.

Communication objectives

Our objectives in implementing our communication and marketing activities are:

- **Recognisability** – to make Jūrmala, its cultural activities and the ECoC programme known to the widest possible European audience; for Jūrmala to be recognised as one of the leading cultural destinations both locally and internationally, in this way increasing the number of visitor to the city,
- **Participation** – to involve as many citizens from Jūrmala and our partner municipalities as possible in the city's cultural activities, not only as participants, but also as co-creators, especially those who are traditionally less active in this way increasing their sense of belonging to the city,
- **Awareness** – to ensure that information about the ECoC programme is available via the most appropriate channels,

languages and formats to guarantee the broadest possible attendance,

- **Credibility** – to make sure that Jūrmala is perceived as an open, safe, competent and willing cooperation partner, including as an ambassador of the EU's values outside the EU, in this way increasing the number of international partnership projects that are implemented in Jūrmala and bringing new inspiration and ideas into the city.

Target audience

We consider the **local population of Jūrmala and our partner municipalities** to be a crucial target audience. They will be the ones who experience the events in the ECoC programme most directly and will participate in their implementation. **Other Latvian residents**, in particular from nearby Riga, are also an important audience as potential visitors to our ECoC events.

**It is residents from our neighbouring countries** (Lithuania, Estonia, Sweden, Finland, Poland, Russia) who visit our city most often. We are already comfortable in our communication with them and we want to make sure we inform them about our ECoC programme.

**Our biggest challenge will be to make Jūrmala known beyond these usual circles.** We want the message about our programme to reach a **wide European and global audience**, so that we can interest them in what we have to offer. To step outside our comfort zone, we want to make use of an advantage that we have, namely how well Jūrmala is known in the former Soviet republics that are now EU EaP countries (Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan), as well as in Russia. Countries that have a considerable Latvian diaspora (like the UK, Ireland, Denmark and the heart of the EU, Belgium) are markets that we can reach and that are of interest to us. We will also, of course, focus on all ECoC countries in the lead up to 2027 (like Finland, Slovakia, Germany, Slovenia, Norway, Austria, our neighbour Estonia and others).

Communication channels

Our communication will be based on four directions: 1) the traditional media, 2) social media and other digital communication platforms, 3) events, and most importantly 4) through our cooperation network.

Media

Although the role of the media has lessened in recent years, for many, it remains an important source of information. Especially digital media. We will not only prepare press releases about ECoC events, but also facilitate interviews, articles and broadcasts in both the Latvian and international media. We will invite international journalists to participate in ECoC events and we will approach the media to become information partners. We will build this cooperation gradually leading up to the ECoC year and continue after. We will work together with the National Electronic Mass Media Council to ensure that coverage of ECoC events is included in public service broadcasting programming.

Social media and other digital communication platforms

The Jūrmala ECoC website will provide extensive and detailed information in multiple languages. Special attention will be paid to make it accessible for people with disabilities. Of course, we will also be using social networks and create specific accounts (on *Instagram*, *Facebook*, etc.) in order to communicate with our audience. Our mobile app will also be useful for providing targeted information and entertainment. The app will contain practical information like the programme and also be compatible with AR, contain user-generated content and engage users in other ways.

The best way to experience an event is, of course, to attend it in person. But recognising that this might not be possible for everyone, we will provide the option for people to participate in major events remotely online and by providing recordings and making them available on the ECoC website, or elsewhere.



## A variety of popular events

A variety of popular events can give us an excellent platform from which to reach our target audience. We will continue to participate in annual tourism fairs in strategic markets and will present the Jūrmala ECoC programme at these events with our own booth, or by joining the Latvian Investment and Development Agency (LIAA). Additionally, Jūrmala hosts a number of international cultural and sporting events that get a lot of publicity. By using the communication channels of these events we can reach their audiences to inform them about Jūrmala's cultural programme. Advertisements can then be placed at the venues and printed programmes can be made available at information booths to promote Jūrmala as ECoC.

## Network

As information is nowadays becoming increasingly segmented, the ability to disseminate information through existing information channels and networks is particularly important. Our communication will build on our existing and emerging networks, which aligns with one of our programme's core content areas – the Co-creation Pulse.

In order to reach an international audience, it will be important to cooperate with national institutions, such as the **LIAA Tourism Department**. It is the department's task to promote Latvia abroad and market it as an attractive tourist destination. It is important that informational ECoC materials are included in their marketing activities and promotional campaigns abroad. Another important partner is the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs** and its embassies,

which we will engage to promote Jūrmala as ECoC and our cultural programme. The embassies and LIAA's extensive network of foreign trade representations will help us attract new partners in the United States, the United Arab Emirates, Japan, Denmark, France, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Norway, Finland, Germany and other countries around the world. We will also get the message about our ECoC programme out by cooperating with the **twinning cities of Jūrmala, Talsi and Tukums, international embassies, missions, cultural institutions and EU institutions**. In this way we will systematically communicate with audiences abroad and introduce citizens of Jūrmala to the cultures of our twinning cities.

We will work closely with our partners, the newly created **Talsi and Tukums counties**, and we will also use Jūrmala municipality's local communication channels. Of course, we will also be cooperating with Rīga, which is Latvia's most popular tourist destination, by reaching out to both its residents and visitors.

Jūrmala is close to many important transport networks, so cooperating with large **transport companies** will be a great opportunity for us to reach both existing and new audiences. We will work with the national airline *airBaltic*, who fly to a wide range of destination, *Latvian Railway*, with whom we'll arrange to make use of Riga Central Station and the stations in Jūrmala to disseminate information, and *Pasažieru Vilciens*, with whom we'll discuss how to best utilise train carriages to disseminate information. Another important partner is the new *Rail Baltica* railway which will link

Helsinki, Tallinn, Pärnu, Riga, Panevėžys, Kaunas, Vilnius and Warsaw. We will reach out to the passenger ship companies operating out of the Freeport of Riga. We plan to display banners or show information on screens at the Riga International Airport, which is the largest airport in the Baltic States and therefore an important cooperation partner. We also plan to create a booth with an original design that will represent the city and distribute informational material promoting Jūrmala's ECoC programme.

We want to focus on involving people in creating the contents of our communication in particular. We see this as essential, so we will invite people to be creative together. We want people to get involved, to add to the information we already have, and to create new and unique content.

World-famous athletes and artists from Jūrmala will be invited to become ambassadors of Jūrmala as European Capital of Culture. They will promote Jūrmala and the ECoC programme through their personal channels and add personal touch. We also want to reach out to the Latvian diaspora in different countries around the world in order to create excitement about the European Capital of Culture.

To make Jūrmala an even more attractive tourist destination, we will invite **tourism organisations and tour operators** to plan special travel offers in cooperation with representatives from Jūrmala's tourism industry. ■

CHANNELS / TARGET AUDIENCE	JŪRMALA	LATVIA	NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES	EU, EAP and OTHER COUNTRIES
Local newspapers				
Outdoor advertising				
Other Latvian municipalities				
Social media, the internet				
Media				
Riga International Airport				
<i>airBaltic</i>				
<i>Rail Baltica</i>				
Tourism exhibitions				
Tourism organisations/operators				
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Latvian embassies				
LIAA				
International events				
Twinning cities, missions				
Famous Jūrmala citizens				

## How does the city plan to highlight that the European Capital of Culture is an action of the European Union?



The **opening and closing ceremonies** are important moments during the ECoC year. It is an important way in which European ideas and values can be communicated, and a platform for telling the story of the ECoC tradition and the benefits that come with this status. We will invite representatives from previous and upcoming ECoC cities, as well as EU officials to the opening and closing ceremonies.

Leading up to, and during the ECoC year, we will carry out **joint projects with the EU House** (the European Parliament Liaison Office and the European Commission Representation) and the **European Movement in Latvia**. Building on the experience that we have already developed, representatives from the EU House will be invited to participate in activities in Jūrmala. The main event of the year in Jūrmala are the celebrations for the opening of the resort season. The EU House has participated in the celebrations for several years now to promote European values and various projects.

2027 is also special because 25 March will mark **70 years since the Treaty of Rome** was signed, and on 13 December it will be **20 years since the Treaty of Lisbon** was signed. These treaties were important mile-

stones in the history of the European Union. We want to highlight this by organising an international forum about the long-term vision for Europe, about working and living together in Europe, and to emphasise the European values of respect, solidarity, freedom and democracy.

Lithuania will hold the EU Presidency in the first half of 2027. We want to include our events and activities into the **Lithuanian**

To emphasise the EU's contribution, we will expand Europe Day into an entire Europe Week in 2027. As part of this event, embassies of the EU countries, candidate countries, EU EaP countries, EU institutions and other ECoC cities will take part in an open-air event and display their cultures.

**EU Presidency's cultural programme** to promote our programme and highlight ECoC as an EU initiative. We will also make use of the opportunities that will come about as Latvia prepares for its upcoming EU Presidency in the second half of 2028.

We will showcase how the EU has contributed to implementing the ECoC programme throughout Jūrmala's **urban environment**:

■ Specially designed billboards will be placed throughout the city to inform people about Jūrmala becoming the ECoC.

■ These billboards will be actively used during 2027 to inform residents and visitors about the city's cultural programme and events.

■ We will create and install open-air art objects throughout the city that will become symbols of Jūrmala's ECoC status and which will at the same time display the role that the EU plays.

The EU's identity will be incorporated into all **communication and promotional materials and channels**. We will not only inform the public about ECoC events through our channels and the media, but also about the history, objectives, benefits and the European

values at the core of this tradition.

The Bank of Latvia creates coin collections by regularly issuing coins commemorating special events, achievements, people and cultural signs. We will approach the Bank of Latvia to issue a **two-euro commemorative coin** to celebrate the Jūrmala ECoC year, similarly as they did when Rīga became the ECoC. We will also approach Latvia Post to discuss issuing a **special stamp** to highlight the EU's contribution in establishing the ECoC. ■



## Q36

Please confirm and supply evidence that you have broad and strong political support and a sustainable commitment from the relevant local, regional and national public authorities.

We, as well as other Latvian municipalities, are writing our applications at an interesting moment in Latvian politics. Local elections will be held in Latvia on 5 June, just one day after we submit this application. These elections will also mark a major administrative-territorial reform, after which a number of municipalities will cease to exist, while new territories will be added to others. This will create a lot of confusion, uncertainty, concern and possibly conflict. We will have to learn how to work together. We in Jūrmala are lucky, because we are one of the few municipalities that will not have new territories added or taken away. We will remain who we are.

We don't have to worry about political changeover in the municipality. At a meeting of the Jūrmala City Council

on 29 October 2020, deputies from different parties gave **unanimous approval** for Jūrmala's application to the ECoC programme. They also gave the green light to establish regional cooperation with the neighbouring counties. On 27 May 2021, Jūrmala City Council made a unanimous decision to submit this application, which included giving general approval to the planned financial investment.

In November 2020, we approached our neighbouring counties, which will merge into the new Tukums and Talsi counties on 1 July 2021. In January and February 2020, **deputies voted to approve the seven municipalities' participation in the ECoC application.** In a separate vote on 25 March 2021, the Jūrmala City Council unanimously approved the partnership with these municipalities.

When the new Tukums and Talsi municipalities commence their work after the local elections and the territorial and administrative reform is over, we will continue our joint work, making sure that the two new municipalities are interested and able to participate in the ECoC programme.

At the time of preparing this application, **public authorities** have not yet made a decision on what the national financial contribution to the ECoC programme will be. Responding to a question from all Latvian ECoC candidate cities on the planned public funding, the Ministry of Culture confirmed national political support and indicated that the cities could receive financial support of up to 50 % of the total cost of the programme. ■



Please confirm and provide evidence that your city has or will have adequate and viable infrastructure to host the title.

## Q37

## Cultural infrastructure

Jūrmala's geographical location and the seasonal nature of resort towns defines the scope and development of our cultural infrastructure. Although our cultural infrastructure is small seen from a global perspective, it does however mean that several cultural institutions can be involved in a single event at the same time.

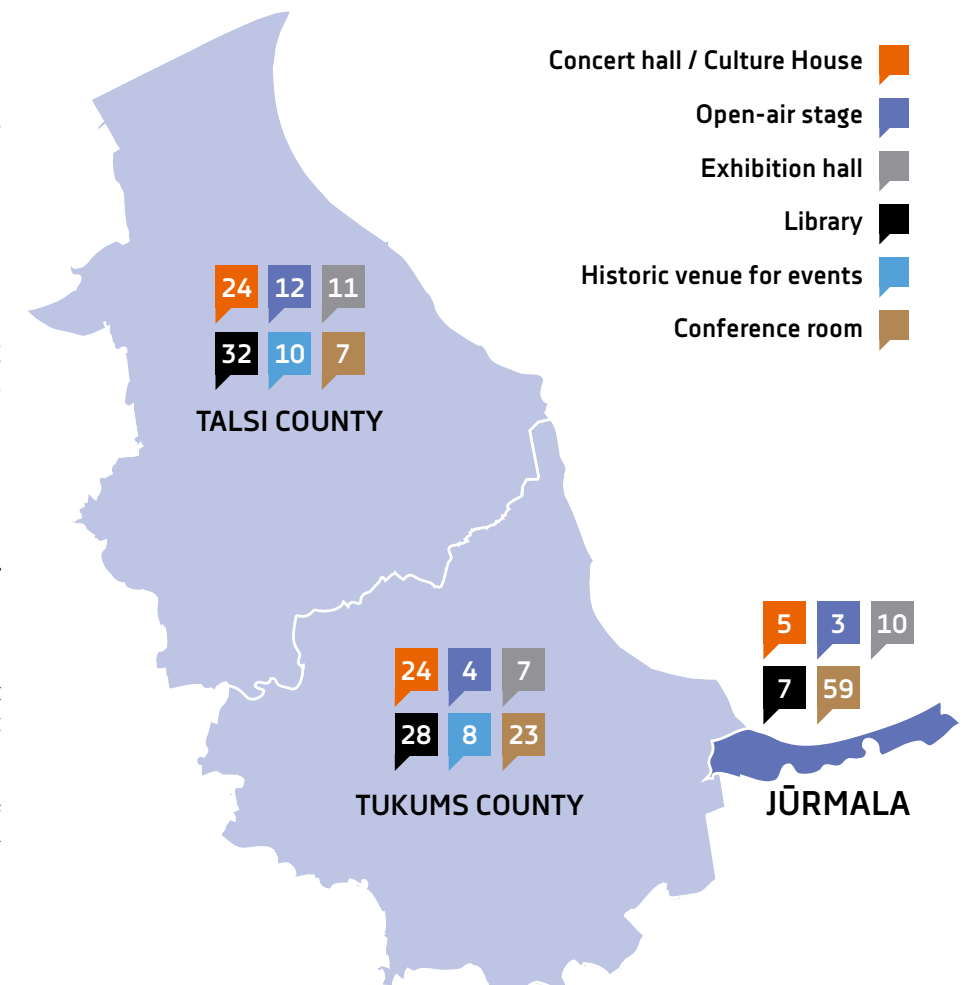
**One of the main intentions of our ECoC programme is to bring cultural events outdoors and take them out of the usual venues. However, to take both the weather and the nature of certain events into account some events will still take place in existing cultural institutions in Jūrmala as well as in our partner municipalities.**

## Concert halls

The most distinctive and spacious concert halls in Jūrmala are the Dzintari Concert Hall and the Dubulti Concert Hall. The Dzintari Concert Hall's large Outdoor Concert Hall can accommodate an audience of 2,100 in the summer season (the number of seats is planned to increase to 2,900 by 2027), and the Small Hall which can seat 460 people in the winter season. The Dubulti Concert Hall has 400 seats in the Great Hall and 130 seats in the Chamber Hall. Other important event venues in the city in any season include the Jūrmala Culture Centre (600 seats in the large hall), the Kauguri Culture House (200 seats) and the Jūrmala Theatre (96 seats in the chamber hall). Meanwhile, the cultural centres in Tukums and Talsi municipalities are important to cultural life in their towns and municipalities. There are 21 cultural centres in Talsi county and 24 in Tukums county.

## Open-air stages

Open-air stages are important event venues during the summer season, both in Jūrmala and in our partner municipalities. The over 90-year-old Mēluži open-air stage in Jūrmala is only one of two acoustic wooden shell-type stages in the Baltic region, and it can accommodate an audience of around 800 people. Horn's Concert Garden can accommodate 500 people. There are eight open-air stages in the neighbouring counties. Tukums has



the Durbe open-air stage (2,500 seats), which is the third largest open-air stage in Latvia, and the *Ozolāji* open-air stage (800 seats). Talsi municipality has the *Jēgerleja* open-air stage (1,500 seats), the Roja open-air stage (1,000 seats), the Sauleskalns open-air stage (1,700 seats), the Dundaga Castle Park open-air stage (480 seats), Dupurkalns open-air stage (400 seats) and the Tiņģere open-air stage (200 seats).

## Exhibition halls

Regarding visual arts, we have to mention all the exhibition halls we have available for exhibitions. One of the most important exhibition venues for contemporary art in Jūrmala is *Art Station Dubulti*, which has two exhibition halls with a total area of 367 m<sup>2</sup>. There is also the Dubulti Culture Quarter Exhibition Hall (70 m<sup>2</sup>), the Jūrmala City Museum (632 m<sup>2</sup>) and the

Bulduri Exhibition House (120 m<sup>2</sup>). There are 7 exhibition venues in Tukums county, and in Talsi county there are 42 venues for exhibitions or permanent expositions, and 11 venues for temporary exhibitions. We want to highlight the Pedvāle Art Park in Talsi county that can admit an unlimited number of visitors. In total, there are 13 museums in Tukums county, 4 museum-type spaces with exhibitions on local history, and 13 museums in Talsi county.

## Libraries

The ECoC programme will incorporate 7 libraries in different neighbourhoods in Jūrmala, 32 libraries in Talsi county and 53 libraries in Tukums county.

## Historic venues for events

There are many historic castles, manor houses and the surrounding them in the Tukums and Talsi counties. These can all



also be used as special venues for events and festivals. The largest in Tukums county are Durbe Manor, Jaunmokas Palace, Jaunpils Castle and Šlokenbeka Manor. Talsi county boasts the largest castle in Northern Kurzeme, Dundaga Castle, as well as two privately restored manor houses, Lielvirbi Manor and Nurmuiža Manor. The Talsi Regional Museum Park and Spāre Manor with its ancient park are also notable in the region.

**Other significant venues**

The fishermen's farmstead in the Jūrmala Open-Air Museum regularly hosts various thematic events and is another suitable and important venue for events in the

ECoC programme. So is the Jūrmala Beach Centre that is located on the 640 m long beach in the city centre. It contains 6 beach volleyball and tennis courts, 3 transformable beach football, handball and rugby courts, as well as an additional area that can be adapted for large events and has a capacity of 3,000 people. A multifunctional nature education centre will be opened near the Ķemeri water tower in 2023. It is expected to attract at least 60,000 visitors a year to its exhibitions, educational programmes and landscaped territory. The *Cinevilla Studio* in Tukums is also a major attraction. It is the largest film backlot in the Baltics, a venue for events and festivals, and has an important place in Latvia's

cultural sector. The disused Jūrmala Airport airfield in Tukums can accommodate between 25,000 and 30,000 visitors at its air shows.

**Conference rooms**

Jūrmala is also ready to host high-level conference visitors in 59 conference halls of various sizes, the largest of which can accommodate up to 800 participants.

Through our *ARTeries*, we have access to the largest and most impressive stages and art galleries imaginable: the Lielupe River, the beach that stretches for more than 160 km from Jūrmala to Mazirbe, railways, roads and cycle paths, forests, swamps and meadows. ■



**Accessibility**

Jūrmala's location is enviable. Only Rīga can be considered to be more central in Latvia. Although Jūrmala is said to be 25 km from the centre of Rīga, it actually borders Rīga. Why is proximity to Rīga so important?

- About 1/3 of Latvia's population lives in Rīga.
- Rīga has the largest airport in the Baltics, which in 2019 served more than 7,5 m passengers.
- Jūrmala is only 25 minutes away from central Rīga by private transport, 30 minutes from Riga Central Station by train, and 30 minutes away by bus.

This means that Jūrmala as ECoC can become a day destination for people visiting Rīga. And this is not a small number – 2,85 m visitors came to Riga in 2019!

**Getting to Jūrmala is easy!**

**By plane.** Jūrmala is 17 km from Riga International Airport (only 15 minutes by car), which has direct flights to more than 100 destinations. The other option for reaching Jūrmala by air is to fly to Tukums Airport, which is about 40 km from Jūrmala. The airport has plans to start cooperating with low-cost airlines, which will create new ways in which to reach Jūrmala by 2027. We will be following this development closely.

**By train.** More than 30 trains a day connect Jūrmala with Riga Central Station. The train ride to any of the 14 stations in Jūrmala takes between 21 and 52 minutes. The railway also connects Jūrmala with our partner municipality Tukums. This means that our guests will be able to reach almost all ECoC venues by train. More than 1,2 m people a year travel to Jūrmala by train.

*Rail Baltica* will open in 2026. This railway line will join the Baltic countries together with the European rail network. This will be a way for European visitors to reach Jūrmala and our ECoC programme. We treasure our railways, as this is one of the most sustainable modes of transport that keeps the air clean in this way combating the threat of climate change. We will encourage our guests to use this environmentally friendly mode of transport!

**By bus.** Jūrmala is connected to Rīga by a busy minibus network making more than 50 trips a day! The minibuses stop at the Riga International Bus Station. Several major bus lines from Rīga also connect Jūrmala with major centres in Kurzeme: Tukums, Kandava, Sabila, Kuldīga, Kolka, Talsi, Ventspils, Liepāja, Mazirbe, Roja, Dundaga and Pāvilosta.

**Private transport.** Jūrmala can be reached in 25 minutes from Rīga via the only highway in Latvia that has three lanes in both directions. To limit transit and reduce air pollution, Jūrmala is the only city in Latvia to have introduced

an entry toll (2 euros between 1 April and 30 September). Guests who pay the toll receive free municipal parking in the city and free entry to municipal museums and exhibition halls.

**By water.** Jūrmala is located between the Baltic Sea and Lielupe, which is one of Latvia's longest rivers. Jūrmala's ten marinas are among the busiest ports in Latvia, attracting regular yacht and sailboat traffic. In recent years, yachting has become increasingly popular in the Baltic Sea, thanks to EU funding being invested into developing small ports. Our beach concerts are already well attended by guests on yachts who enjoy the concerts from the sea. We look forward to making use of this potential even more.

**By bicycle.** What could be better than exploring a city by bike? You can breathe the fresh air, get exercise and revel in your surroundings for longer than you could by car or train. That's why we are prioritising cycle lanes and paths. Already today, you can reach Jūrmala by a 21 km-long cycle path from Rīga. Cycle paths also connect the more distant neighbourhoods in Jūrmala. There is a 13 km-long cycle path from Bulduri to Buļļuciems, an approximately 12 km-long one from Majori to Bulduri, and one from Majori to Kauguri that is about 25 km and the 48 km-long Liedaga cycle path connects Lielupe with Ķesterciems. ■

**Accommodation**

Being a historic resort town, Jūrmala has centuries of experience in welcoming guests. We have welcomed guests from both East and West, visitors staying for a long time, and others coming for just one day. We can accommodate guests for whom cost is a factor, and those with more options. We have something for everyone.

The average visitor stays in Jūrmala for around 3 days, but this depends very much on where they're from, the season and the purpose of their stay. Visitors

who come to Jūrmala's resort rehabilitation centres for their various health services stay for 1–2 weeks, while holiday-makers from Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia and conference guests are more likely to stay for 1–2 nights. Before the recession, Jūrmala hosted over 170,000 foreign guests and more than 80,000 domestic tourists per year.

Jūrmala has 26 hotels, resorts, spas and resort rehabilitation centres that can accommodate 3,332 guests. This statistic does not include guesthouses, camp-

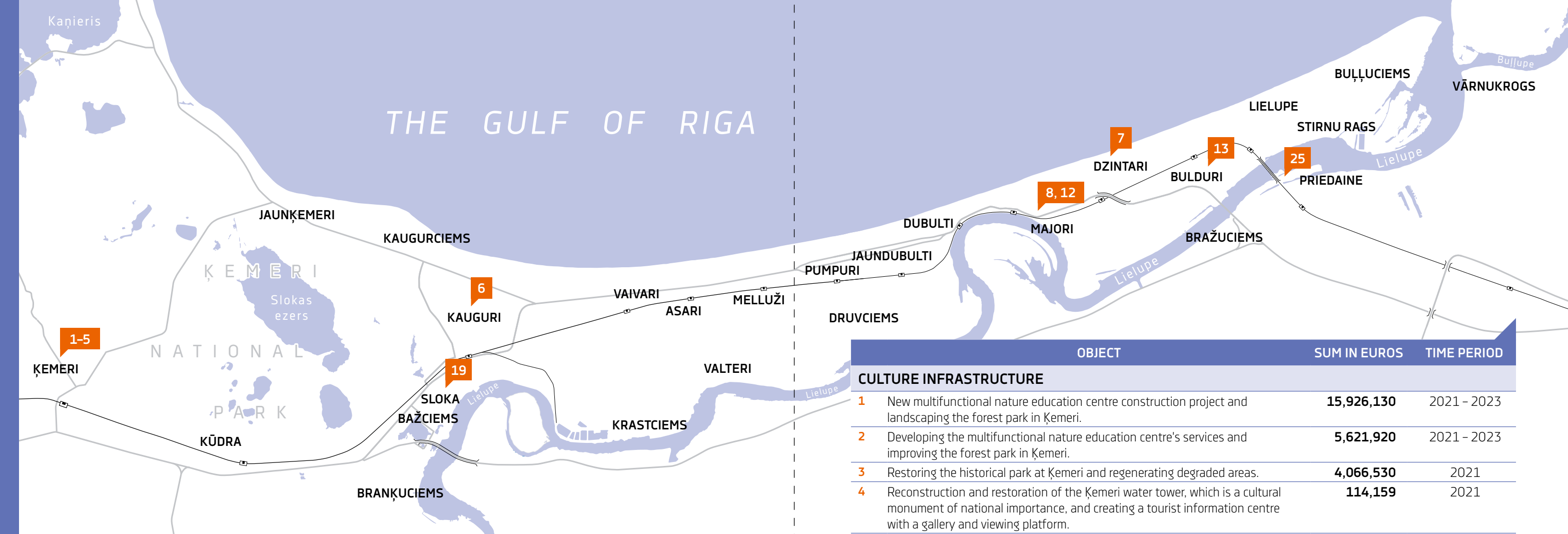
sites and hostels, and Airbnb currently offers more than 300 places to stay. If you include these types of accommodation, Jūrmala can host more than 7,000 guests per night at any one time.

If necessary, ECoC guests will also have Riga's tourism infrastructure at their disposal, which is just 25 minutes from Jūrmala. They can also make use of the facilities of our partner hotels, guesthouses and campsites in Tukums and Talsi counties. We are confident that no guest will be left without lodging. ■

TYPE OF ACCOMMODATION*	NUMBER	AVERAGE OCCUPANCY, %	NUMBER OF BEDS
<b>Hotels and similar accommodation</b>			
Resort rehabilitation centres	5	42.4	1,096
Resort hotels	10	32.3	1,769
Hotels	11	12.2	467
<b>Other accommodation</b>			
Guest houses	11	12.6	173
Camping sites	1	No data available	802
Guest apartments	11	10.7	432
Hostels	2	No data available	263

\* This list only includes accommodation that reports to the Central Statistical Office.





In terms of cultural, urban and tourism infrastructure, what are the projects (including renovation projects) that your city plans to carry out in connection with the European Capital of Culture action between now and the year of the title?



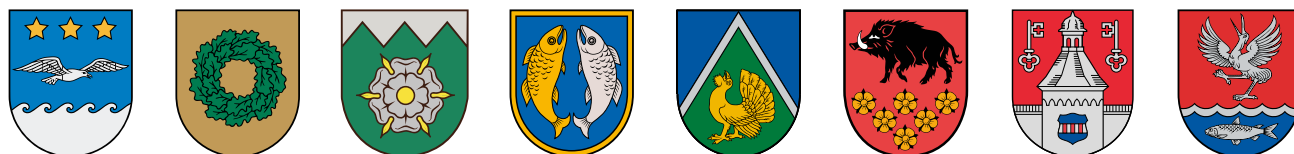
Evaluating the city's budget and development plans, we will not build self-serving infrastructure just for the ECoC year. **In developing our cultural, urban and tourism infrastructure, we will focus on preserving our cultural heritage by restoring it and adapting it to new uses.** In the coming years, significant financial investment is planned for the area surrounding Ķemeri. This has been identified as one of Jūrmala's priorities and has been included in the Jūrmala City Development Strategy 2010 – 2030. The historic Ķemeri water tower will be opened to the public this year complete with a tourist information centre, an interactive exhibition and a 42 m-high viewing platform. The buildings and the landscaped territories in Ķemeri and else-

where in the city will serve as important Pulse locations for ECoC activities. A considerable part of the investment is allocated to restoring or renovating existing, but outdated infrastructure objects. This investment will allow them to be brought up to standard making them sustainable, energy efficient and accessible.

Given Jūrmala's status as a resort town and a WHO Healthy City, developing sports and active living infrastructure will play an important role in the coming years. This will include constructing new sports facilities that residents require, such as a swimming pool and an ice rink, which will complement existing opportunities and make it possible for residents to be active even during the winter months. ■

OBJECT		SUM IN EUROS	TIME PERIOD
CULTURE INFRASTRUCTURE			
1	New multifunctional nature education centre construction project and landscaping the forest park in Ķemeri.	15,926,130	2021 – 2023
2	Developing the multifunctional nature education centre's services and improving the forest park in Ķemeri.	5,621,920	2021 – 2023
3	Restoring the historical park at Ķemeri and regenerating degraded areas.	4,066,530	2021
4	Reconstruction and restoration of the Ķemeri water tower, which is a cultural monument of national importance, and creating a tourist information centre with a gallery and viewing platform.	114,159	2021
5	Reconstructing the Ķemeri post office building to create the Crafts House.	187,075	2025 – 2027
6	Creating a recreation park and youth centre in Kauguri.	9,365,800	2021 – 2022
7	Reconstructing the Dzintari Concert Hall's Great Hall and landscaping the grounds.	12,237,940	2021 – 2025
8	Renovating the Jūrmala City Museum building on 15 Lienes iela to create a new exhibition.	130,000	2024 – 2027
9	Creating open-air environmental objects in various neighbourhoods in Jūrmala.	129,050	2021 – 2026
10	Creating and restoring infrastructure that promotes a healthy lifestyle.	409,080	2021 – 2027
11	Renovating and repairing Jūrmala's libraries.	500,000	2023 – 2027
12	Renovating and enlarging the Jūrmala City Museum.	225,720	2021 – 2022
13	Improving the energy efficiency of the Jūrmala Theatre building.	681,990	2021 – 2022
CITY INFRASTRUCTURE			
14	Reconstructing beach rescue stations.	4,530,000	2022 – 2026
15	Building new changing rooms on the beach.	674,000	2021 – 2027
16	Restoring infrastructure at exits to the sea.	190,000	2021 – 2027
17	Developing bicycle routes in the city of Jūrmala.	5,427,050	2021 – 2027
18	Restoring and creating children's playgrounds and sports fields.	1,237,380	2021 – 2027
19	Improving the Sloka stadium.	236,250	2021 – 2022
20	Constructing an indoor football/track and field arena.	9,700,000	2023 – 2026
21	Renovating schools' sports halls/gyms.	1,400,000	2021 – 2023
22	Modernising sports stadiums near schools.	1,709,920	2021 – 2023
23	Building the Jūrmala city swimming pool.	4,200,000	2023 – 2026
24	New development of Lielupe Ice Hall.	5,000,000	2024 – 2027
TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE			
25	Creating an outdoor environmental object, a border landmark for the city of Jūrmala.	174,300	2021
26	Establishing a Jūrmala water tourism service centre and developing the infrastructure.	756,800	2021
27	Developing the port infrastructure in Jūrmala.	120,000	2021
28	Developing the navigation infrastructure on the Lielupe River.	180,000	2024 – 2026





#### APPLICANT:

**Jūrmala City Council** in collaboration with **Talsi, Dundaga and Roja counties** (which will become Talsi county) and **Tukums, Kandava, Jaunpils and Engure counties** (which will become Tukums county).

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**A special thank you to all the supporters and co-writers of this bid book!**

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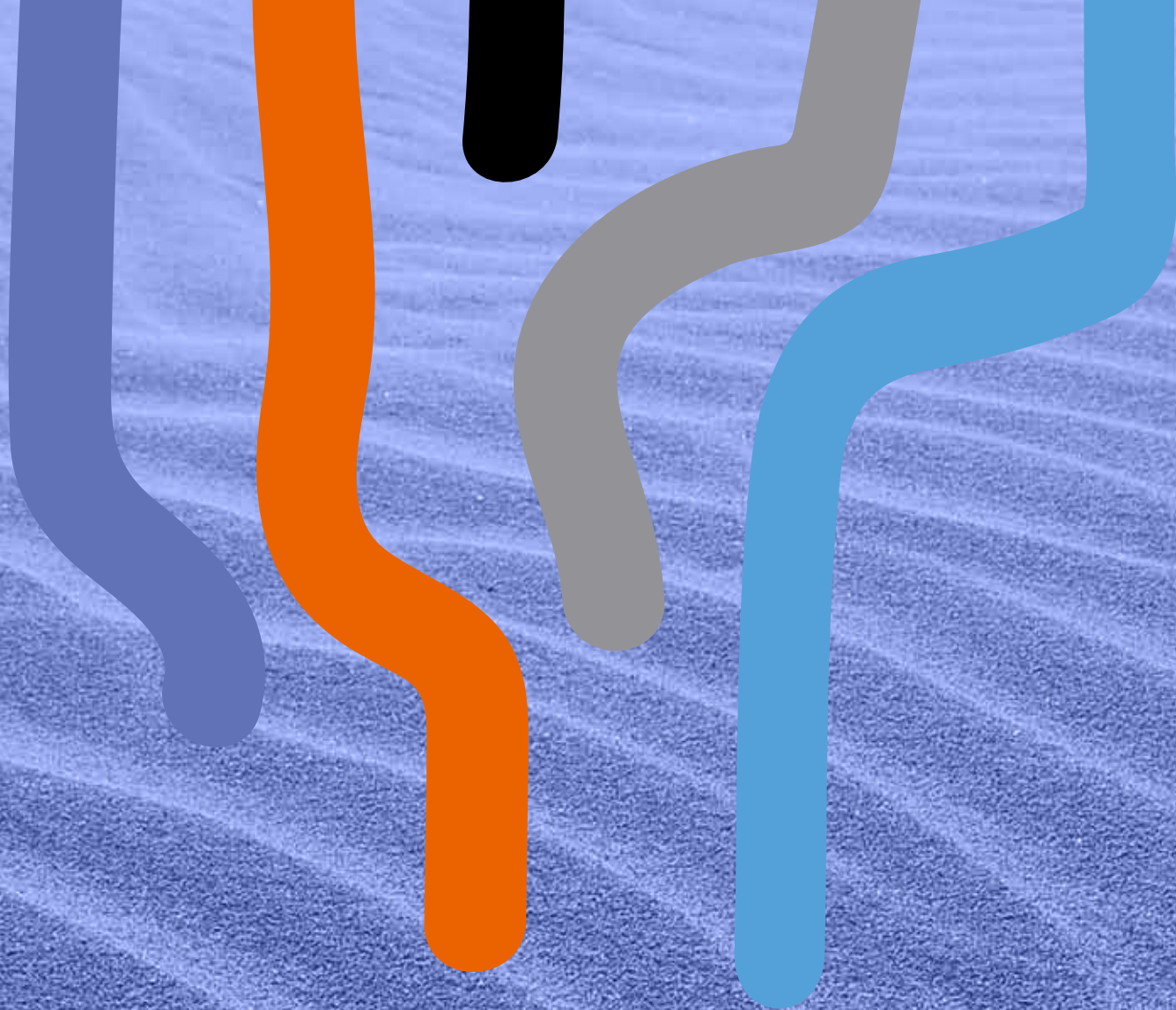
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Jūrmala