



Latvia: An Internationally Recognised Destination for Cultural Tourism

The Baltic States will hold a press conference – presentation at the Travel Trade Show *ITB Berlin* at noon on March 7 to talk about the latest travel trends and opportunities in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The press conference will be held at the Palais Funkturm, West Messedamm 22, 14007 Berlin.

Latvia will be presented as a destination for tourists who are interested in culture. Visitors can enjoy several cultural and environmental objects that are of international importance in Latvia, as well as intangible elements of the country's cultural heritage which have become part of the World Heritage List of UNESCO. The general secretary of the Latvian National Commission for UNESCO, Dagnija Baltiņa, will be at the press conference to talk about these objects and treasures.

Watching water birds in the Kemerī National Park in April, Easter as an ornate festival with a bit of Christianity and a bit of paganism, the 16th Baltic Ballet Festival in Riga from April 11-19, opening of the summer season in Jūrmala on May 12, a celebration of ancient Livonia with battles among knights, Medieval fashions and entertainments in Cēsis on May 26 and 27, the European autocross championship stage in Bauska on May 26 and 27, the annual market for Latvian craftspeople at the Open-Air Ethnographic Museum in Riga on June 2 and 3, the *Summer Solstice festival* on June 23 and 24, concerts by the globally recognised Kremerata Baltica orchestra that is conducted by Gidon Kremer in Sigulda from June 28 to July 2, the international folklore festival *Baltica 2012* in Ikšķile from July 5-10, the 6th international sand sculpture festival *Summer Signs* in Jelgava from July 9-15, the largest Baltic rock, pop and arts festival, *Positivus*, in Salacgrīva on July 13 and 14, the international flower carpet festival at the Ventspils city festival from August 3-5, the *Arsenal* and *Baltic Pearl* cinema festivals in September, the *Winterfest* winter music event and *Sparkling Riga* light festival in Riga in November – these are just a few of the exciting and high-quality events that will be a part of cultural life in Latvia in 2012.

It is no accident that in 2014 Riga will be the European Capital of Culture!

It is also true that UNESCO has put three major anniversaries from Latvia's cultural world in 2012 and 2013 on its calendar of celebrations – the 150th anniversary of the birth of the writer Rudolfs Blaumanis (1863-1908), the 150th anniversary of the birth of the composer Jazeps Vītols (1863-1948), and the 150th anniversary of the birth of the chemist Paul Walden (1863-1957). The 10th Latvian Student Song and Dance Festival were also on the calendar in 2010 and 2011.

Latvia is distinguished as a destination for cultural tourism not just because of its art, music and non-tangible cultural heritage. There are other objects that are of national and international importance as well. The Historic Centre of Riga was inscribed on the UNESCO World heritage list in 1997 because of its relatively untouched urban construction system which dates back to the Middle Ages, the huge amount and outstanding quality of Art Nouveau architecture in the area, as well as wooden





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buildings from the 19th century. In 2005, the list was supplemented with the geodesic ring which is 2,822 km long and stretches from the icy seas of Norway all the way to the Black Sea, crossing 10 countries along the way. Two of the points along this ring are found in Latvia – one in Jekabpils, and the other in Sestukalns.

More information about Riga, tourism opportunities elsewhere in Latvia, exciting events in 2012 and in future, and UNESCO signs on the map of Latvia will be available at the Latvian stand at the *ITB Berlin* and at the press conference which the Baltic States will be organising at noon on March 7.

Welcome to ITB Berlin and welcome to Latvia!

For more information:

Latvian Tourism Development Agency
Brivibas Street 55, Riga LV-1519, Latvia
Tel. +371-6722-9945

www.tava.gov.lv

www.latvia.travel

www.greetingsfromlatvia.lv

R.S.V.P. for the press conference:

SIA Tels PR (the Tourism Development Agency's communications and PR partner)

Tel. +37167289073

E-mail liene@tels.lv

