

cēsis
EUROPEAN CAPITAL
OF CULTURE

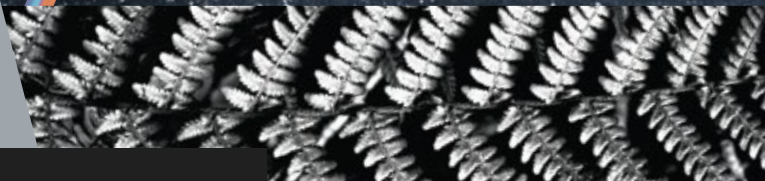
2027

CANDIDATE CITY

XXII century

cēsis

16291 Number of inhabitants
19,28 km² Territory
~30 000 000 Annual budget of the municipality
~400 000 Number of annual visitors
20+ Number of cultural organizations
19 Number of amateur art groups
~500 Number of members of amateur art groups
2 Cultural education institutions
~30 Number of annually funded cultural projects
1000+ Number of cultural events per year
Anno 1206 Cēsis is the third oldest town in Latvia
est. 1590 Oldest business in Cēsis – Cēsu alus



2021



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

Q1



Can Cēsis afford not to take part?

In early 2019, when Cēsis accepted this challenge, we asked this question of one another. Yes, it is complicated. Yes, a reorientation of development and politics is needed. Yes, Cēsis is a small town. Yes, we are not entirely sure how the locals will benefit from this project. Does Cēsis have an adequate infrastructure? Cēsis is not well known. Europe does not even know we exist. Would Europe be interested in us? Is there enough to do here? People still leave Cēsis. We need better streets and roads. The European Capital of Culture (ECoC) requires funds, but where do we get them?

Can Cēsis afford not to take part? No!

Cēsis must take part in the competition for the title of European Capital of Culture in 2027. It is a motivating process that mobilizes the locals and injects new life into local communities. It does away with constructed administrative boundaries and launches new co-operations. With the help of ECoC processes, we also develop trust in one another. This application to Europe is, first of all, an announcement to ourselves and our neighbours.

Cēsis is ready to reorient itself. Cēsis capabilities have increased rapidly in recent years. There are very capable people here, including creative people in the arts, supportive businessmen, wise teachers, and an open local government. Cēsis is a place of interest to those who come here, and some of those who come never leave. It is not paved streets that attract people, it is new ideas, the vibe of the place, love, sentiment, peace, good feeling, and joy. And the more ideas and people Cēsis has, the greater the chance will be to obtain resources – let's be honest and admit that money too is important.

Cēsis has been little noticed on the map of European stars. Yet cultural astronomers are probably looking in the direction of Cēsis, having a clear impression that something must be there, that a new star in the European cultural constellation is being born because the force of gravity keeps intensifying. Cēsis is attracting new talent and welcoming European-level artists. Cēsis is a place where people create, think, learn, and heal.


But how can Cēsis become a bright star in the European constellation? First, we should look at the star treasure that we already possess: in the master hall of the medieval castle, in the church, at the top of the Victory Monument. It is even more important to look and find the myriad of visible and also invisible stars, some of them misunderstood or unheard, that make up the Cēsis of today. These stars are the people of Cēsis and our neighbouring municipalities. Every one of these stars is unique: some are very bright, others are still dim; some are large, others are tiny. Together with the nearby municipalities, a true undiscovered galaxy is formed. At the European level, it is the small ones that acquire greatness with their calm pace in an ever-accelerating world.

We sincerely believe that the small can become great:

- Acquire visibility on the European level;
- Accomplish a social and economic breakthrough not only in our town but the entire region;
- Inspire many other small towns in Europe and the world;

For all of the above reasons, we must take part in the competition for the European Capital of Culture title, so that we can shine bright and long in the European cultural constellation.

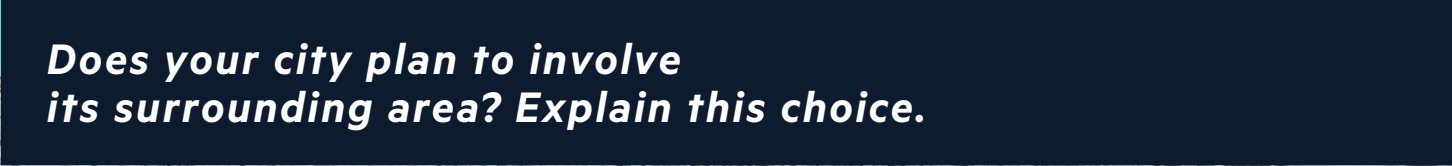
Cēsis is a star rising on the European cultural scene!



In Latvia, the period of preparing the ECoC application coincides with the processes related to an administrative territorial reform. The submission of the first application will coincide with local government elections. Because of this, it is of essence that, in its application, Cēsis collaborates with other municipalities. In our opinion, the year 2027 and the period before it will be the post-pandemic transition when large crowds will still not be able to gather. But by networking and involving the neighbouring municipalities, it is possible to achieve the set ECoC goals.

We also believe that the ECoC process should not be limited to a single town. It is regional in nature, so we have involved the municipalities of Amata, Jaunpiebalga, Līgatne, Pārgauja, Priekule, and Vecpiebalga. We have held meetings together and discussed not only issues relating to the culture programme but also how best to reinforce our application by combining existing resources. We are working with the aforementioned municipalities, their governments, and various organizations to continue the ECoC process after the submission of the first application.

We are also cooperating with other local governments in the region: Madona, Gulbene, Smiltene, Limbaži, Alūksne, and Sigulda. This multifaceted network allows us to realize our star-studded ambitions with regard to human resources and cultural events.



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

Q2

The Cēsis municipality has a high concentration of cultural resources, including cultural and historical sites, frequent and varied cultural events, strong cultural institutions, vigorous activity of culture-related businesses, cultural-educational institutions, and other organizations, which can provide a good basis for developing culture and a creative economy.

Every year, Cēsis offers quality, multifaceted, modern, and traditional cultural events targeted at different audiences and social groups. According to a 2020 survey of the Cēsis population, about 75% of respondents assess the versatility, accessibility, and quality of the cultural events offered as very high.

Cultural life in Cēsis is active and the cultural sector is undergoing stable development. The existing cultural infrastructure in Cēsis, the castle complex, regional concert hall, central library, Rucka estate, the co-creation house Skola6, the Old Town, and town squares and parks have all received important investments targeted at preserving the cultural and historical heritage. In 2021, the Cēsis castle received recognition for quality conservation work from the jury of the prestigious Europa Nostra award. The preservation effort started already in the 19th century, but it is the last 15 years that have seen the most impressive conservation projects involving several parts of the castle. In 2020, similar recognition in the category “Education, Training, and Awareness-Raising” was granted to the exhibition “Burning Conscience”.

Cultural life in Cēsis is characterized by active public participation. Cēsis has a well-tended soil for the promotion of social self-organization and cultural processes that foster personal growth, life-long learning, and development of creativity.

Cēsis has institutions that offer professional cultural education, including the Cēsis Alfrēds Kalniņš Music Secondary School and the Cēsis City Art School, which make an important contribution to the cultural education of children and youngsters. The professional Vidzeme Chamber Orchestra also plays a significant role.

In developing an inclusive society, amateur art groups not only ensure the continuity of the Song and Dance Festival movement but also foster public participation in cultural events and developing cultural offerings, providing opportunities for socializing, helping people maintain their mental and physical health, communicate with one another, and enhance their emotional intelligence. Over 500 Cēsis residents are active in such groups.

Cēsis also has several informal communities, whose members are united by their professional activities or common values and attitude towards life. These communities gather around the cultural loci, e.g. Skola6, art space Mala, Cēsis Concert Hall, CATA Cultural Centre, etc. Over 20 different local government institutions and non-governmental cultural organizations are active in Cēsis, injecting Cēsis cultural offerings with quality and multifaceted content.

Regular competitions for local government co-financing of culture-related projects are held in Cēsis, with open invitations for larger and smaller cultural and socially important initiatives by non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

Several festivals take place in Cēsis every year, fostering international and local cultural tourism in the municipality. The Cēsis Art festival, Conversation Festival LAMPA, town festival, and Cello Cēsis are widely anticipated cultural events. Latvia celebrated its centennial in 2018 and 2019, with large-scale national events taking place, including remembrance of the Cēsis Battles and events related to the Latvian diaspora.

The 2020 global COVID-19 pandemic has of course affected Cēsis and its cultural and tourism industries. The impact of the pandemic is still impossible to calculate. Despite that, cultural organizations in Cēsis are looking for and finding ways to continue functioning, creating cultural events in keeping with restrictions set by the national government.

The local government’s cultural-educational institutions and NGOs even now ensure that there are quality cultural and interdisciplinary events offered and have jointly become participants in the ECoC project, collaborating with one another and coming up with new initiatives that will foster Cēsis long-term development (please see the Cultural Programme section for more information).



Explain briefly the overall cultural profile of your city.

Q3



XXII century

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

Q4

For Cēsis, the main ECoC concept is “22nd Century”, which implies asking questions not only about the next five but the next 70 years, involving the changes and working together of two generations, exploring experiences and the legacy of the past and gaining new understanding and hope that life-long learning, not placing people above nature, caring about what happens not only within the boundaries of their town but beyond, is all possible. The Cēsis ECoC project is about how to find solutions for the 22nd century issues, it is a story that we want to create and tell our children and grandchildren, showing them that people in small places can ask big questions, offer solutions, and make themselves heard and that ties among people are important for the future.

The Great Question

As a potential European Capital of Culture, Cēsis intends to involve neighbouring countries and various civil society forces in Latvia and Europe to become the greatest think-tank in Northern Europe. In the period leading up to 2027 and beyond, it will use various formats, forums, educational programmes, and cultural expressions to discuss the most essential issues of the 21st century, develop a strategy for preserving a democratic Europe, and foster the development of a diverse pluralist political culture in Europe. With its planned activities to foster democracy in culture, media, and public policy, Cēsis is hoping to engage neighbouring countries where departure from the principles of a democratic political culture are ever more pronounced.

Learning

Historically, Cēsis has served as a school – the place itself has served as a school. Many outstanding intellectuals and writers are from Cēsis; they studied in nearby Tartu (then Dorpat) and brought the knowledge they gained to 19th and 20th century societies.

Regeneration

The 22nd century Cēsis and European residents have already been born. Health, lifestyle, peace, quiet, meditation, recovering what has been lost are all part of this section of our ECoC programme. We seek a new quality of life, curiosity, and balance; the ability to create and the space to think are important to us. “Regeneration” will be a programme, which will seek resources in the Cēsis spa, sporting and healthcare traditions, and local advantages for the benefit of our insecure contemporaries, as well as the humans of the future.

Our programme rests on five pillars:

Human Nature

With this section of the programme, Cēsis is planning to show that human nature can be changed vis-à-vis the environment and looking for connections between art, ecology, energy, design, economy, politics, and education. A change in thinking about the relationship between the natural environment and humans gives rise to a new language, cinema, literature, and contemporary art, not just from a technological point of view but also in terms of the message. Cēsis has all that it takes to have a say in this kind of future. The Cēsis ECoC programme involves modelling a future lifestyle that can be started now. For each and every guest artist who comes to Cēsis as the European Capital of Culture, we will plant a tree.

The Nearby Cosmos

Modelling the future is possible owing to the people who lived in the Cēsis cultural area in the past, and whose legacy was passed on to the next generations or must still be recovered. People who lived here and represented a link to the foundations of European and global culture are a motivating force that helps appropriate the best of what seems to be foreign. The gravitational pull of Cēsis has brought many creative people to live in Cēsis, and this trend will be a section in our ECoC programme: a story of people whose vision has helped and keeps helping involve Cēsis in European cultural processes.

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.

Development of the cultural sector has been included in municipal development documents since 2008. The Cēsis Municipality Cultural Strategy 2030 currently in effect was developed and approved in 2020.

Cēsis Municipality Cultural Strategy 2030 is a local-level policy planning document, specifying the instruments for carrying out long and medium-term developmental priorities outlined in the Cēsis Municipality Long-Term Development Strategy 2014-2030 and the results achieved in the cultural sector. The directions and actions in culture are evaluated in accordance with United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals, with particular emphasis on the aspects of environment and climate, learning and education, cultural diversity and accessibility to different social groups, various partnerships in achieving the goals, etc. Strong cultural management and observance of principles of equality in realizing management functions have been set as one of the strategic goals.

In designing the cultural strategy, we have observed the 19 principles of cultural policy set forth by KEA European Affairs (international policy design research centre specializing in culture and the creative industries <https://keanet.eu/>). These principles suggest ways to foster wider changes in the development of our town/municipality through culture, taking into account Latvia's sustainable development strategy Latvija 2030. Both in the cultural strategy and our ECoC application, much emphasis is placed on cooperation with other municipalities and other countries.

Our Cultural Strategy was designed in a joint effort by the Cēsis local government cultural institutions and representatives of non-governmental and private sector organizations. This cultural strategy came about at a difficult time. First of all, just like other administrative territories in Latvia, Cēsis finds itself facing changes because administrative-territorial reform is planned in 2021, which will result in the Cēsis municipality becoming larger, because a large rural territory will be added to it. Second, circumstances related to the Covid-19 pandemic require that work on the strategy be conducted remotely; face-to-face discussions are very limited and informal conversations over a cup of tea, so essential to capture everyone's emotions, foster the sense of belonging and exchange of opinions, cannot take place. In designing the Cultural Strategy, the title of European Capital of Culture is a unifying element and driving force at a time when many people working in culture and facing uncertainty need a clear vision of future development and practical steps to attain it.

The vision of the cultural strategy and strategic goals have been worked out for the period until 2030 and the course, action plan, and results to be attained have been developed for 2020-2022. Currently, work has begun on the planning documents for the new Cēsis municipality, including the sustainable development strategy for the period until 2035 and the medium-term programme for the years until 2027; in both documents, the development of the cultural sector and creative industries, as well as their interaction with other sectors, have been accorded a significant role.

Four strategic goals have been outlined in Cultural Strategy 2030:

- 1** High-level cultural management and openness of local government to society. Culture is considered an essential and significant sector of the economy with an impact on the economic processes in the municipality and ensuring its wellbeing.
- 2** Diverse, modern, and accessible cultural offerings that enrich society and foster its openness and creativity. A pronounced self-organizing ability of local communities in folk and amateur art groups and various individual initiatives. High-quality offerings for cultural tourists based on cultural heritage and traditions, and diversity of cultural events, which are present in the urban environment. Lessening of the negative impact of cultural events on the environment.
- 3** Preservation, research, and accessibility of cultural heritage for residents.
- 4** In accentuating and preserving its cultural heritage and traditions, Cēsis in 2030 is an internationally recognized locus for novel cultural and artistic events and experiments, creativity, various cultural laboratories, and residencies.

Cēsis culture development vision for 2030

“ *In 2030, we find culture and creativity in Cēsis inspires and enriches us. They make us feel good, laugh and cry, love and be loved. Culture is something very human, it inspires people to strive to attain new goals in their lives.*

Culture and creativity are a part of our everyday lives. Even on a grey day, the streets of our town are full of surprises. There is a wide offering of cultural events and artworks. Even the grey firewalls have become canvases for art.

We continue to preserve our cultural treasures. We protect and record them, keep them in museums and digital clouds, as well as memories and narratives. They are present in the ornaments of our national costumes and needlepoint works. They are recorded in our grandmothers' recipes as well as in almanacs and diaries.

Culture and creativity are among the reasons people from all over Latvia want to be in Cēsis and continue writing its story. Education, business, politics,

health, nature, climate, research, innovations – all of these exert their gravitational pull. Culture and creativity attract indispensable new talent to Cēsis. Culture is the true magnet for talent.

Cēsis was a European Capital of Culture in 2027. It was an exciting, heady event. There were events, conversations and discussions, parties, splendid shows and concerts, exhibitions, and international guests. That year is still alive in our memories. Even the most luxurious palaces of Europe are jealous of what the walls of our castle saw. We were and still are extremely privileged.

Now, in 2030, culture in Cēsis is participatory and open. It is what helps our society to be tolerant, democratic, and free. Our people are free, educated, and creative, and they demand cultural events of international scale. Culture provides wings for our people's dreams!

Champions have their championship cups, but an analogue for Cēsis is culture and creativity!

”

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.

Potential for interdisciplinary collaboration

To foster development in different sectors through a cultural prism, it is essential for the cultural sector to interact with other sectors. To this end, the potential for interdisciplinary collaboration is highlighted, involving entrepreneurship, the digital environment and ecosystem, environment, ecology, climate, social sphere, and education.

- Digital solutions in culture (parallel programming in the virtual environment, online events, etc.).
- Cēsis Digital Centre and its involvement in seeking solutions for culture and arts-related issues
- Accessibility of information about cultural events and organizations in the digital environment

Culture - Entrepreneurship

- Coworking house "Skola6"
- Creative and digital quarter "Neredzīgo kvartāls"
- Project competition "Dari Cēsim"

- Space Exploration Centre
- Pluriversity
- Cēsis Digital Centre and its work in developing digital skills in people of all generations.
- Regional project "Talent Economic Area". Attraction of talent and the international marketing of Cēsis culture space
- Lifelong learning programs
- Development of Vaive Craft house

Culture – Education

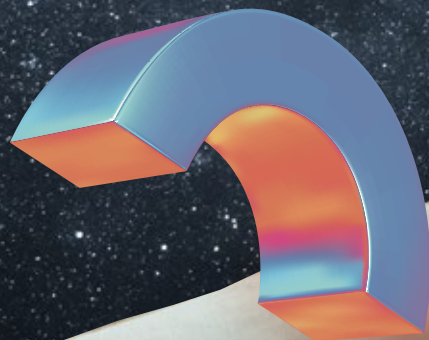
Culture – Digital Environment

- The municipality has joined the Diversity Charter. The first municipality in the Baltic region to open its doors to diversity
- Democratic Conversation Festival LAMPA, respect for difference and diversity. Mutual respect
- Deinstitutionalization centre and its programme that fosters the creation of special cultural offerings
- Support for the activities of amateur art groups
- Involvement of local community in organising cultural events: cooperation with senior NGO's and the Youth Council
- Cultural projects in Cēsis youth detention centre

Culture – Environment and Climate

- The municipality has joined a Zero Waste Manifesto, becoming the first municipality in Latvia to announce the zero waste lifestyle as a goal
- Institution for environmental solutions and the general theme of climate
- Integrating environmentally friendly elements in cultural events

Culture – Social Sphere



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

European Capital of Culture is fully included in both the local government's long-term development documents and its cultural development strategy.

In these planning documents, we emphasize that the European Capital of Culture is an opportunity!

It is an opportunity for Cēsis to explore new directions in culture, to form new partnerships and synergy with other sectors, an opportunity to develop an inclusive society and promote tolerance of the different, and an opportunity to foster public participation in different processes. It is an opportunity to develop trust in one another, an opportunity to learn, and to foster the growth of the individual personality and development of the place by involving the available people and natural resources. It is an opportunity to introduce the zero waste principle and to pursue the green course of Europe.

Q7/Q8

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)? Outline briefly the plans for monitoring and evaluation.

Programme pillar

Cultural impact

Social impact

Economic impact

Indicators for measuring success

The Great Question

Democratization of cultural processes. Introduction of better management based on public management competence, communication, and consistency.

A greater understanding of democracy by the public, openness to diversity, and development of inclusive society. Reducing social inequality. Promoting accessibility to culture for different social groups, including people with special needs and minorities.

New entrepreneurs, who develop their businesses in communities, attracted and supported by the local government, promoting their joint work and creativity.

- Level of tolerance in society
- Number of interdisciplinary projects carried out in collaboration with different groups of society
- Number of new neighbourhood communities that have developed
- Introduction of participatory budgeting and number of supported projects
- Number of local organizations involved in the ECoC process
- International collaborations
- Number of open data sets on ECoC
- Number of public engagement projects
- Number of projects fostering accessibility
- Number of projects fostering democracy

Human nature

Development of concert halls, stages, and behind-the-scenes spaces outside the usual cultural environment; exploring new and wide-open space in nature.

A deeper understanding of climate change among the public that results in activities to protect the environment and lessen the impact on the climate.

New social innovations created for solving environmental issues and lessening the impact on the climate. Public infrastructure that is self-sufficient and reduces the consumption of energy.

- Number of events that have happened in nature (outdoors)
- Number of events with an environmentally friendly approach and a reduced ecological imprint
- A reduced CO2 emissions level
- A reduced volume of waste
- Number of projects carried out to promote public understanding of the impact on the environment

Nearby Cosmos

Accentuating cultural history, according priority to local talent in culture, sports, politics, education, etc., thus emphasizing the international significance and impact of the place.

Development of local patriotism and identification of local power sources, thereby promoting a sense of belonging.

Increase in the number of people in the region who have a greater sense of belonging. Development of infrastructure for new cultural events, living, education, and 21st century communications.

- Number of people who have returned to live in Cēsis
- Percentage of people who are proud to be living in Cēsis
- Percentage of Cēsis residents who consider it a part of their identity

Learning

Cultural organizations, those working in culture learning new skills both in the digital sphere and in international networking.

With the help of culture, society acquires new skills and is introduced to new horizons of knowledge, skills, and attitude.

Reduction of income inequality. A higher standard of living and higher income in a highly educated and skilled society.

- Number of residents involved in lifelong learning
- Number of international conferences
- Number of businesses in culture and creative industries
- Digital skill level in society
- Average income level in the region
- Number of residency and project exchanges with European organizations
- Number of pupils who have attended cultural events
- Number of student innovation projects
- Number of scientific projects and the international recognizability of their results
- Number of cooperation projects with world's best universities
- Number of events for children and families
- Number of events for elderly people

Regeneration

Development of new cultural projects that offer solutions for public mental health issues and foster recovery from the consequences of the pandemic.

Recovery of public mental health and overcoming the challenges brought on by the pandemic.

High productivity of businesses and organizations possible because of a healthy society.

- Public satisfaction with life (happiness index)
- Number of start-up businesses

- **What is the artistic vision and strategy for the cultural programme of the year?**
- **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. – Explain succinctly how the cultural programme will combine local cultural heritage and traditional art forms with new, innovative and experimental cultural expressions? – 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?**

When we started work on the European Capital of Culture programme, the world was overcome by fear, uncertainty, sadness, and pain related to the global pandemic. It showed that no one on earth is safe against the consequences of the pandemic; even in the smallest places in the world, each and every person was very directly affected by these events. It showed that the world, albeit negatively, can impact anyone anywhere, and it changed and keeps changing how we can predict and shape our lives and futures.

The Cēsis European Capital of Culture project is being developed at a time of reviewing the traditional course of civilization, redefining culture and humanity, accentuating the need to return to the origins in order to find the causes of problems and seek a new language for thinking about current events and creating completely different novels, musical compositions, films, discussions, and new politics of cooperation. Extreme situations, such as the global pandemic, offer a new opportunity to form a new vision, a new narrative, and new habits. The only question is whether or not the opportunity is used. When, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the great East European novel was expected to tell the story of what happened in this region in the course of fifty years, it turned out that there was no 'drawer of literature' hidden away from censors and kept for publishing sometime in the future. Cēsis, as European Capital of Culture, has the ambition of modelling such a future, a city of the 22nd century, by developing a vision that takes from others and processes what has been taken to make it its own.

Extreme situations can give rise to creativity if people are sensitive to the creativity of one another, if creative people are left in peace, if they are given a chance to communicate with one another or be alone when necessary, if they can invite friends over, or just think about what is happening 100, 1,000 or 10,000 kilometres away or what may happen to our children and grandchildren. Any place, even one with a population of 15,000, can become a point where global processes receive their initial push, while also letting everyone to have a sense of excellence and humility at the same time. In fact, there are really no small places: any place can initiate global-scale events, both positive and negative. Cēsis, as European Capital of Culture, intends to become a creator of positive global processes that will help us to find a chance to think, escape and renew ourselves to then return and engage in processes of joint creation.

The Cēsis of 2020 was a place to which people tried to escape: urban dwellers had a chance to disappear into the forest. The nature paths

set up with European or local government funds or trodden by locals helped people protect themselves. Cēsis's European Capital of Culture programme entails consciously building a network of paths that would lead to Tartu, Riga, Berlin, Vecpiebalga, Bayreuth, Kaliningrad; to Richard Wagner, Marija Leiko (a.k.a. Maria Leyko), Imants Ziedonis, Walter von Plettenberg, Jānis Doreds, Imants Kokars, and Andrejs Žagars. The programme will be the story of a human scale and of nature; it will contain hope that the pandemic can be viewed as an opportunity to develop a truly global humanity to which "outside" does not mean "alien" or "dangerous". We do not yet know when the global processes related to the pandemic will end and if they, in fact, can, and whether or not the world will have become more creative, more willing to learn from mistakes, and able to transform the negative into a valuable experience. We do not know if they will have taught politicians to cooperate, similar to scientists and medical workers. Cēsis's European Capital of Culture programme involves modelling the kind of lifestyle that can be started now.

On the one hand, currently and in the near future, Cēsis can be viewed as a sleepy place that keeps aging and emptying, becoming a bedroom community in the periphery of Europe, but it can also be viewed as a place with a chance of becoming a European think tank, a laboratory of excellence, a future policymaker, a place on the map with tourists coming and leaving, but one that leaves its imprint in destinies, a place significant in Northern Europe and the world, where education is not just a part of school curricula but also of lifestyles, where nature is not something opposing culture but a part of it, a place where people think about those who will live here in 30 or 100 years. In 2027, the ambition of Cēsis, as European Capital of Culture, will be to create new thinking about humans in the context of the future.

Why
are?
We
thinking of

the 22nd century

Q9-Q12



cēsis

EUROPEAN CAPITAL
OF CULTURE

2027

CANDIDATE CITY

The graphic symbol of Cēsis as European Capital of Culture is the star. This symbol, just like culture itself, can be interpreted from the points of view of theology, astronomy, popular culture, nature, science, poetry, or mythology, and all these interpretations will be part of the story of Cēsis as the European Capital of Culture. "Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe, the more often and steadily we reflect upon them: the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me," wrote the Königsberg philosopher Immanuel Kant. We gained the inspiration for this symbol in the Master Hall of the Cēsis Medieval Castle. To notice it, we had to look up and recognize the starry network which was created there around the year 1500, and which has no analogue in any other medieval castle in Latvia. The 8-metre-high brick vault rests on a masterfully wrought plaster console. The round stones in the intersections of the vault's ribs were at one time decorated with ornaments painted on wood, possibly, many-pointed stars, which are no longer visible. Even though it was the bedroom of Walter von Plettenberg, Master of the Livonian Order, there is documentary evidence that it was also used as a venue for diplomatic negotiations. Cēsis has historically been a place where different political trends intersect, which guarantees it a role in the modern network of the historic Hanseatic League.

A star is at the top of the Victory Monument, which is a symbolic tribute to brotherhood in arms with our northern neighbours Estonians during the First World War. Dismantled during Soviet occupation, the monument was restored after the renewal of Latvian independence. It is a good place to reflect on Cēsis in the context of the 20th century and a confirmation of our ties with our northern neighbours. A star also adorns the altar at St John's Church.

Interpretations, constructions, and deconstructions of the star symbol will be at the foundation of Cēsis as European Capital of Culture, when building the Space Centre, inviting guest performers from Bayreuth, involving locals, and forming a wide star network in the Vidzeme region. And the star does not only have to do with Cēsis – Europe is also a star. Europeans are stars. And the 22nd century is the yet unnamed star in our galaxy.

Thematic components of the cultural section

The project of Cēsis as a potential European Capital of Culture is being developed at a time when the great narratives of the 20th century are still being told, both in our region and Europe at large, whereas the great story of the 21st century has yet to be clearly understood. This task, however, needs to be addressed as soon as possible, because the future question is really a question of the present. The end-of-the-20th-century supposed triumph of democracy has turned out to be a mere illusion, the looming ecological crisis and development of biotechnologies have made it doubtful whether the next generations will live in a better world, and whether the promised human lifespan of 100 years will become the new reality.

The old educational establishments, which for a long time ensured learning and provided certainty that the knowledge gained will be useful, no longer answer the needs of today, and learning has become a part of everyday life. The definition of culture, in which human actions are opposed to nature, has also become useless, and there is reason to ask: in what kind of world - Europe, Latvia, and Cēsis - will our children age and grandchildren study? What can we do now? Do we need a new approach to these issues?

The global pandemic revealed that the world is interconnected and there are no places left unaffected. Cēsis is a case in point. One of the oldest towns in Latvia, Cēsis was a member of the Hanseatic League, the residence of the Master of the Livonian Order in the Middle Ages, and its past provides the basis for our point of view today. The star, which was chosen as the symbol for Cēsis as European Capital of Culture, is connected mythologically to the gods residing somewhere in the heavens. Yet the 21st century has demythologized stars: our project is being developed in the so-called Anthropocene era when human behaviour has already had an irreversible effect on the climate and ecology of the planet and the stars have supposedly come down to earth.

The concept of Cēsis as European Capital of Culture includes five thematic parts, which will ask questions and seek answers for our projection of the 22nd century. These five themes relate to the environment and ecosystem, contemporary political culture, the relationship between people and places, and the intersection between the past and the future. The programme will serve as a good source for anyone seeking advice as to their course of action. It will provide a legitimate basis for a small place to become an exemplary model, to become great without growing physically; global processes of the end of the 20th and beginning of the 21st centuries have shown that "small" can well be the new "great".



The Great Question

Democracy. 20th-22nd century transit

Small places ask big questions, and Cēsis would like to become a kind of Northern European Davos.

In the authoritarian system, politics and culture interacted in the sense that the subtexts present in literature, theatre, or cinema represented the unofficial political culture of society. The folk festival in the 1980s in Cēsis was the first public event that displayed free spirit and asked inconvenient questions, writers and musicians demonstrated peaceful resistance and paid tribute to the contributions of Latvian women in the Reawakening processes in Latvia. Thirty years have passed since 1991 and the great democratic transformations in which Cēsis and its people played an active role. Political culture changes very slowly, usually within a generation. Since these last thirty years involve a change of generations, the question is whether or not political culture in Latvia has transformed itself toward democracy and whether the 21st century challenges to democracy leave us with a hope that democracy can be protected in the future.

Cēsis is where the national flag was born. During the First World War, decisive battles for Latvia as an independent and democratic republic took place by the town walls. The ECoC process urges us to re-examine the life of different communities in our town and municipality. It seems that this process has helped us activate informal communities, which play an essential role in the development, maintenance, and preservation of democracy.

Even though Latvia is still relearning democracy, we can already give a helping hand to our neighbouring countries. So we will use the ECoC process to talk about democracy in a wider context, including the challenges to the European Union.

The section of the Cēsis ECoC programme “The Big Question” is conceived as a wide forum of political culture: a set of discussions, events, and think tanks; a stage for lectures, digital solutions, and political theatre and cinema; a format for the music festival and educational programme in our attempt to find an answer to the question of how to preserve democracy throughout the 21st century, given that democracy and respect for human rights, that supposedly have won all over the world, has turned out to be a pipe dream.

LAMPA

Democracy forum: the Conversation Festival LAMPA

The democracy festival tradition was started in 1968 by Olof Palme, the former Swedish Prime Minister who spent his childhood summers with his grandparents at the Skangali Estate in the Cēsis Municipality. Palme, then the Minister of Education, made a speech to several hundred people who had gathered in the Almedalen Park in Visby. Neither Palme, nor the people present had any idea that they had participated in a historic event, laying the groundwork for a new Nordic tradition where people spend a few days together discussing how to improve their countries.

In 2017, eight democracy festivals in the Baltic and Nordic countries created a new platform for democracy festivals to share experiences and promote participatory democracy in their countries and elsewhere in the world. That year, all eight democracy festivals organized a total of 8,700 events and, over the course of 29 days, drew 150,000 visitors. In Cēsis, this tradition has given rise to the festival LAMPA, a large-scale initiative and an open platform whose contents have been developed by over 300 organizations and active individuals, exchanging views and

organizations and active individuals, exchanging views and discussing topics important to society in a mutually respectful way. The goal of the festival is to foster participatory democracy in the region and elsewhere in the world: it is care for democracy in the widest sense – from a democratic conversation culture to public participation and interest in the political processes in the country, Europe, and the world. The 2027 democracy forum will involve wide political participation and activities in cooperation with other countries' democracy festivals. In addition to the event in June of 2027, there will be many related undertakings over the course of the entire calendar year and with a large-scale international event to conclude the programme. The festival will take place in a variety of formats: workshops, public discussions, street pop-up events, role plays, interviews and voting simulations, political stand-up, lectures, master classes, and exhibitions. It will take place both online and face-to-face. Special Olof Palme readings will take place in the Skangali estate, where Palme spent his summers with his great grandparents Woldemar von Knieriem and his wife Elizabeth, who owned the estate.

Implementers:
Format:
Time:

Open Society Foundation “Dots”, Cēsis Municipal Government
discussions and forums
2021-2029

Potential partners: Tartu 2024, Kaunas 2024, Oulu 2026, Aveiro 2027, Tampere 2026, democracy festival; Arvamusfestival (Estonia), SuomiAreena (Finland), Almedalsveckan (Sweden), Arendalsuka (Norway), Folkemødet (Denmark), Fundur Fólksins (as of 2018 – LYSA, Iceland), and Diskusijų festivalis Būtent! (Lithuania), coordinated by the agency of change We Do Democracy, the advertising agency Armadillo, communication management agency Deep White and the British Council



Media Conference INPUT 2027

The media, and particularly public media, are being paid increasing attention in both the European Union at large and in each individual member state. Economic, cultural, social, and technological change in the media environment and change in audience habits create new challenges and magnifies the responsibility of the media to provide the public with quality independent information and research, and analysis of the social processes, as well as a plurality of views. The media and particularly public media, play a special role in a democratic society – they ensure communication and discussion. In its capacity as European Capital of Culture, Cēsis is planning an international public media conference INPUT. For some time now, it has been one of the most important world public media conference formats, in which different European and world media professionals debate how media messages could best serve the public interest. In recent years, such a conference has not taken place in this region, and it would be an opportunity for this format to find a venue, either as a large or a miniINPUT conference, in Cēsis. The festival would also be an opportunity to form partnerships among the media in the region, media policymakers in the European Union, and outside its borders.

Implementers: Cēsis 2027
Format: conference
Time: 2022 and/or 2027

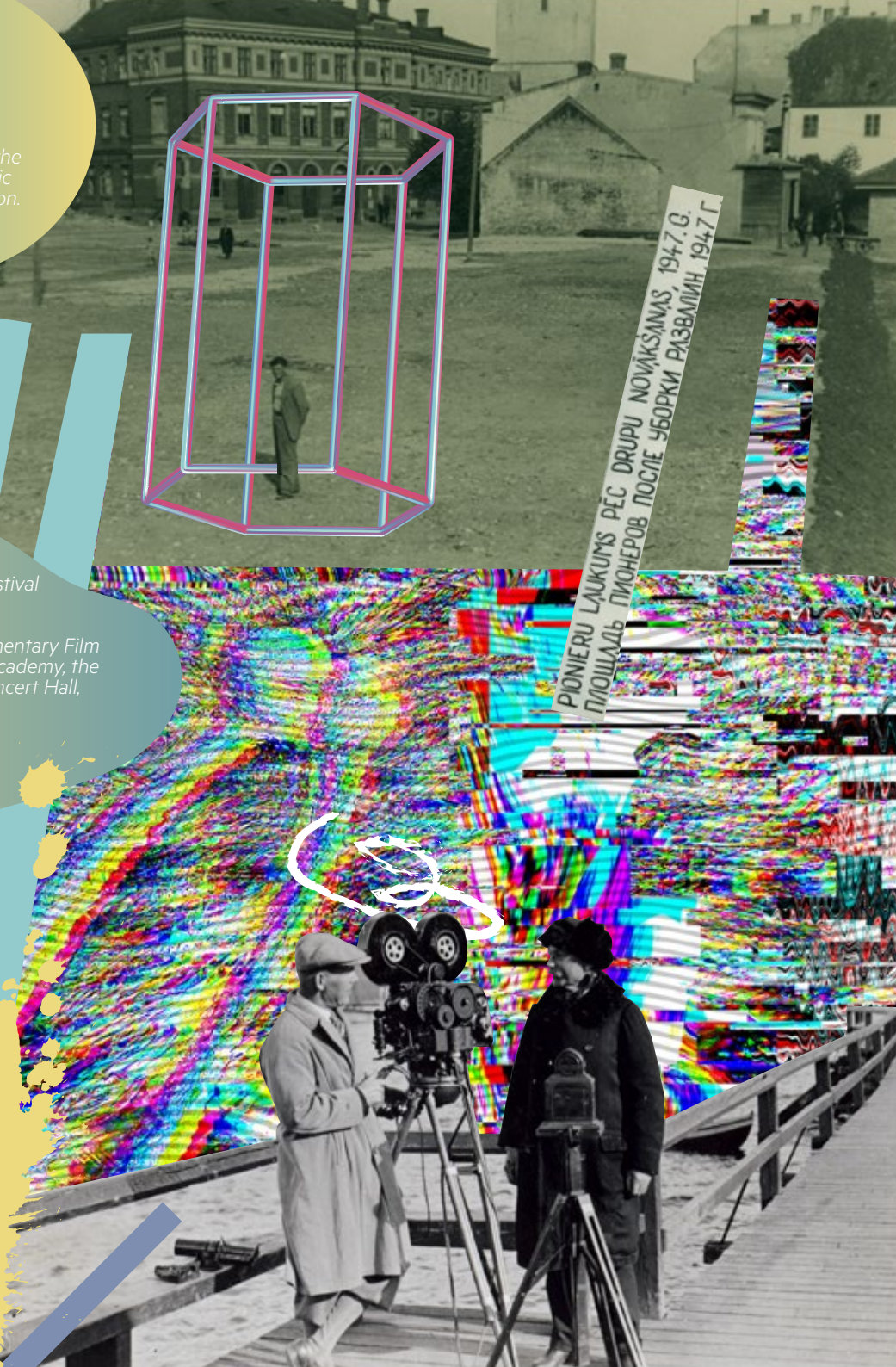
Potential partners: Goethe Institute, Prix Europe, the Embassy of Latvia in Germany, the Embassy of Denmark in Latvia, Latvian public media, and the Latvian Journalists Association.

Implementers: Cēsis 2027
Format: Democracy Film Festival
Time: 2027

Potential partners: International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam, the European Film Academy, the Baltic Documentary Film Forum, Cēsis Concert Hall, and Rīgas Kino Skola

Doreds Democracy Film Festival Film festival, documentary forum, retrospective

Jānis Doreds (1881-1954), a Cēsis-born filmmaker and photographer, was a wartime reporter called a "Latvian with a lion's courage and a child's heart". He was one of the most highly acclaimed film and chronicle reporters of the first half of the 20th century, and the only foreigner who surreptitiously filmed Lenin's funeral in 1924. Known as "Pathe News" and "Paramount News", he was said to be the most frequently arrested cameraman in Europe. He was a Latvian who had the "world as his oyster", who kept maps of countries and regions and ship and train schedules within an arm's length and knew politicians and journalists all around the world. The idea behind the special Democracy Film Festival, planned for Cēsis, is that political cinema and the audio-visual branch of art, in general, provide an opportunity to discuss topical problems faced by democracy. The festival will feature a special film programme selected in cooperation with the European Film Academy, with digital and online screenings as a prominent event in European cinema at the end of 2027. The European Film Academy, in its annual programme and selection, always pays attention to European and world political problems in film. Cinema has always been connected with both the memorial and political cultures as the most democratic form of art. Cēsis has already developed a good working relationship with Riga International Film Festival and the Freedom Film Festival. On-site premieres, as well as a special debut film competition on visions of the future for young filmmakers from the Baltic and Nordic countries are going to be part of the programme.





FOLK UP Festival of Free Thinking **An international songwriter and freethinker (folk music) festival**

Implementers: *Cēsis Cultural Centre*
Format: *cultural event, concerts*
Time: *July 2027*

Potenciālie partneri: *PORTA Music Festival, Institute of Latvian Literature, Culture Management Centre "Lauska" (Ethno-eco Festival "Sviests"), Institut Français, Tampere 2026*

The festival will be organized in honour of the legendary folk festival in Cēsis in 1988, which stood out during the so-called Singing Revolution: participants gathered under the red-white-red flag of the independent republic and protested against the official political culture through their music and writing.

Just like troubadours in the past, the songwriters of today reflect the era and the mood in society directly and boldly. It is music which "speaks to the heart" and for which presence is important. The festival aims to gather the most outstanding songwriters and writers in Europe and the world to foster new creative partnerships and to bring the sound of world music and the free word to Cēsis. Singing was one of the sources of spiritual strength and unity for the Latvian nation at the time when it was fighting for the right to live in a free and democratic country. The Latvian national flag was raised on the Cēsis stage for the first time after a long period of Soviet occupation during the Third All-Latvian Folk Festival in July, 1988. In October of the same year the flag was hoisted onto the tower of the New Castle.

Implementers: *Cēsis 2027*
Format: *theatre*
Time: *2027*

Potential partners: *Organisation "Democracy through Theatre", New Theatre Institute, Cēsis Theatre, Cēsis Small Theatre, Latvian Daile Theatre, Latvian National Theatre, KVADRIFONS*

Agora: New Theatre Festival. Meeting of theatres, premieres of political theatre, theatre as a school of democracy

Agora was a town meeting in Ancient Greece, a square for meetings, and later, the central market square where social, religious, political, and economic life was conducted. Ever since the time of Ancient Greece, the agora has been directly related to cultural processes. Historically, democracy began as theatre, and to this day theatre is an essential artistic format for the meeting of ideas, values, and all that's necessary for democracy. As European Capital of Culture, Cēsis expects to develop the planned contemporary theatre programme "Agora" together with the Democracy Through Theatre organization, the New Theatre Institute, the Cēsis Theatre, the Cēsis Small Theatre, and leading Latvian theatre directors. Within its framework new plays would be staged, guest performances of leading European political theatres held, special joint projects of amateur and professional theatres developed, as well as open-air formats sought for theatre which would represent contemporary society in all its diversity. In 2020, the Homo Novus festival took place within the framework of the European Magic Carpets project. In the festival, juvenile inmates from the Cēsis Detention Centre were helped with putting on the play Svidanka (their slang term for the room in which they can spend time with their families), so that the stories of these young men would be heard outside the fence that surrounds their temporary home. Agora would represent an opportunity for various social groups to put on new plays as part of the Cēsis cultural programme. Also in 2027, a special programme of new productions is planned for professional theatres, which will engage in themes forming the political discourse of contemporary Europe.

Livonians. 1577: a Multimedia Project

In 2027, four centuries will have passed since one of the most tragic events in Livonian and early modern European history when, during a siege, about 300 people, mostly women and children who had sought refuge in the Cēsis Castle, committed suicide. The war launched against Livonia by Muscovy in early 1577 soon turned into a conflict directly or indirectly involving all the rulers around the Baltic Sea. This war became the first large and prolonged military conflict in Livonia, which changed the geopolitical situation along the Baltic shores for several centuries. Towards the end of the war, battles took place with the troops of tzar Ivan the Terrible, wreaking destruction both to the castle and the town, bringing the castle notoriety as a place of collective suicide. At the same time, it was also the beginning of a string of losses for the Russian troops, with Poles getting the upper hand in the Livonian War. Having aggregated the information gleaned from various written sources with direct references to the battles near Cēsis, the Cēsis Museum of History and Art is planning a special memorial multimedia project "Livonians. 1577" which would involve research, exhibition and a contemporary dance performance that would interpret the descriptions found in the sources written by the contemporaries of the tragedy. Misery and suffering accompanying military conflicts started by aggressive great powers, suicide as a solution under extremely desperate circumstances, and the related moral, ethical, and philosophical problems all stem from the imprints of great powers in history and culture.

The chosen venue for the contemporary dance performance is the open stage in the Castle Park, whose backdrop is the ruins of the western wing of the Castle destroyed in a September 1577 explosion. The exhibition "Livonians. 1577" will help viewers get a better understanding of the interrelatedness of different regions in Europe 500 years ago.

Implementer:

Cēsis Culture and Tourism Centre, Cēsis Museum of History and Art

Format:

multimedia project, exhibition

Time:

August-November 2027

Potential partners: Savolinna 2026, Association of Contemporary Dance, Dance Studio "Dzirnas" etc.

"Cilpo"

Virtual exhibitions of/excursions in European history from a Cēsis vantage point. Collaboration with the Museum of European History in Brussels and the Cēsis enterprise "Eži".

The Great Question section is expected to include several ideas already submitted to the Cēsis as European Capital of Culture programme:

Baltic Pride

Cēsis was the first town in Latvia to sign the Diversity Charter, so one of the subsections of the Great Question section could be a Baltic Pride event that would bring LGBT rights in Northern and Eastern Europe to the foreground.

Democracy School

A special lifelong learning programme for popularizing democratic political culture in a virtual environment developed jointly with the University of Latvia and Cēsis public schools until 2027. In 2027, Cēsis would become the venue for the Youth Saeima of the virtual Latvian Parliament.

Traces of Baltic Germans

Traces of Baltic Germans in former Livonia and the regional culture. An exploration of the inconvenient issues of history and the Baltic German legacy. A Cēsis History Museum project on historical controversies.

WomanLatvia

In 1990, the Latvian Popular Front's subdivision, the Women's League, organized an event in front of the Cēsis Exhibition Hall where military service certificates were ritually thrown into a refuse bin to protest against young men from Latvia being drafted in the occupying Soviet Army. This was yet another form of informal political participation at the time. The awarding of the honorific Sieviete-Latvija (Woman Latvia) in Cēsis represented an emphasis on gender equality. The 2027 Cēsis ECoC programme will be a continuation of the traditions already launched here in emphasizing the role of gender in political culture. One possibility would be to include an international conference titled "Lidere" (Female Leader) as a forum for Latvian and European women to share their experiences and inspirations. A part of the programme would be a multifaceted professional development project and special cultural residences for professional women.

"New Hansa"

Restoration of the historical Hanseatic ties among the regional cities and historical Hanseatic League towns using the tourism platform "New Hansa", adding value to tourism. Collaboration with the organization The Hanseatic League and the government of Pskov.

Melānija Vanaga's Culture of Memory

Herself among the deported to Siberia, lawyer and journalist Melānija Vanaga documented one of the greatest tragedies of the region – the mass deportations of people from the Baltic countries. In partnership with the Melānija Vanaga Museum, a cooperation platform project on European memorial culture in the 21st century would be developed along with the small-size museums of the region and Europe (e.g., Žanis Lipke Memorial, Museum of Occupation).

Human nature

The Cēsis European Capital of Culture project is being developed at a time of reviewing the traditional course of civilization. Current times are redefining culture and humanity, accentuating the need to return to the origins in order to find the causes of problems and seek a new language. A language for thinking about current events and creating completely different novels, musical compositions, films, discussions, and new politics of cooperation.

The Cēsis ECoC programme has been conceived as a story of nature, where culture is part of human nature and humans are a part of nature. Because of the city's location in the territory of the Gauja National Park, nature is directly present in Cēsis. Cēsis possesses an ecosystem, yet this seemingly self-evident ownership is the beginning of the endangerment of the ecosystem. The Cēsis ECoC programme, therefore, includes events that address these issues both locally and in the global context. For each and every guest artist who comes to Cēsis as a European Capital of Culture we will plant a tree and our culture capital will become a forest. We will promote environmentally friendly organization of events to leave as little impact as possible on the environment and to seek synergy instead – an event should not leave mountains of waste behind.

In this section, we will also talk about traditional culture and crafts and the connection of society's everyday rhythms with nature and the natural order, about traditional skills and world views, and the intangible cultural heritage. It will be a story of the human scale and nature and about not losing hope that the pandemic can be helpful in creating a global humanity. The Cēsis ECoC programme involves modelling the kind of lifestyle that can be started now. Cēsis is hoping that with this programme it can offer an alternative to the world, which currently seeks security by secluding itself or excluding others. Ecology and our environment present us with 22nd century problems that should be addressed today.



Cēsis Sustainability Embassy / Laboratory

The Cēsis Sustainability Laboratory is being developed by the Environmental Solutions Institute (ESI). Its main task will be to study and evaluate the environmental and natural resources of Cēsis municipality, with the participation of various professionals and local inhabitants. The Laboratory will engage in natural and social science research and host creative workshops, exhibitions, and discussions, and practices will be introduced to promote wise management and recycling of resources, development of a bio-economy, adoption of decisions based on science and data, and the preservation of welfare and cohesion of the community in various crisis. The Cēsis Sustainability Laboratory will use the ecosystem approach, involving various important ecosystem players – natural scientists, social scientists, forestry and agriculture experts and practitioners, nature conservation specialists, policymakers, developers of new technologies, artists, designers, anthropologists, philosophers, chefs, entrepreneurs, teachers, activists, and local residents.

Within the ECoC framework, special attention will be paid to the following issues: defining the environmental and natural canon of Cēsis municipality; zero waste approach to environmental management; development of the Gauja National Park; relationship between biological and conventional agriculture; environmental education and accessibility.

Ecology of Ruins in Cultural and Historical Monuments

For several decades, the ruins of historical brick buildings have been viewed not only as architectural and archaeological monuments but also as specific biotopes, inhabited by a peculiar set of species characteristic to only this kind of environment (cracks in walls, piles of rock, a limey substratum, etc.). Quite often, rare and protected species of plants and animals are found in such ruins and their protection is regulated by international conventions and laws of EU member states. Cēsis Castle ruins and the adjacent territory is an important habitat for many different species of plants and animals.

To ensure sustainable development of Cēsis Castle as an important habitat, without affecting the accessibility of the Castle to tourists, it is planned to make improvements to the environment in parts of the complex that are not on the tourist route.

The project will involve surveying and researching the habitat of the ruins and exchanging good practice with potential international and national partners, emphasizing biological diversity and the need to protect it.

Implementers: *Environmental Solutions Institute*

Format: *research, synthesis between art and science*

Time: *2021–2028*

Potential partners: *(yet to be confirmed) Trans Europe Halles network, Latvian Food Bioeconomy Cluster, Vidzeme Planning Region, Rucka, local chefs and restaurants; developing partnerships with Enter Gauja Cluster; art and culture curators, professionals, and organizations; Pauls Stradiņš History of Medicine Museum, RIXC, Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art (LCCA) (research); Latvian National Library, Institute of Literature, Folklore and Art of the University of Latvia (ILFA); Chemnitz2025*

Implementers: *Cēsis Museum of History and Art, Cēsis Medieval Castle*

Format: *seminars, conferences, experience exchange programmes*

Time: *2022–2029*

Potential partners: *Medieval castles and ruins in Europe (Castelo de São Jorge, Lisbon, Portugal; Grad Predjama, Slovenia; Abbaye de Jumièges, Normandy, France; Ruine du Château de Montrognon, France; le Groupe Chiroptères Languedoc-Roussillon, France; Savonlinna 2027; France (Rouen, Bourges, Clément-Ferrand), Latvian Fund for Nature, Latvian Fund for Environmental Protection, Faculty of Biology of the Latvian University*

The Loud Silence of Nature

A series of interdisciplinary open-air events. Musical, artistic, literary, and cinematographic projects in rivers and forests and on meadows and fields, where the natural landscape becomes a backdrop, with an emphasis on the diversity of the Vidzeme landscape throughout the four seasons. Through surveying the environment that will serve as the venue, the best way for culture to meet nature without harming it but highlighting its uniqueness will be found. The events will involve the variety of the environmental scenography – concerts at sunrise and sunset, stories told by meadow, river, and forest. There will be an opportunity to become a “star sniper” – to look at the sky through binoculars, enjoy the presence of the sounds of nature and their minimalism, and to meditate in silence. In the “million-star hotels”, five-star hay hotels, and mosquito tent camps, it will be possible to enjoy piccolo music programmes, stare at the galaxies, and train one’s ear to the ever-present rustling of nature or radio readings, or meditative music. Another subsection will be titled “Rivers: the Earth’s Blood Circulation” and involve joint creative projects of artists and craftsmen – boater and rafter stories, workshops, making bridges and rafts. Venues: rivers Gauja, Amata, Raunīs, Rakšupe, Mellupe, and Vaive.

Nature film evenings on riverbanks, using the exposed rock walls as a backdrop; traditional projects “Cinema Floats on the Gauja” and “Cinematic Elements in Landscape”.

“Higher than the Ground” – renewal and silence retreat places in trees and placed in various nature territories, as well as in slowly flowing rivers. Slackline art performances, balance and harmony camps. Forest paths through the trees and over river rocks.

Implementer: Cēsis 2027
Format: concerts, performances, cinema, exhibitions
Time: 2027

Potential partners: Cēsis Concert Hall, Cēsis Cultural Centre, Cēsis Central Library, Cēsis Mazais Theatre, Society Art Cēsis, Amata administration, Līgatne administration, Vecpiebalga administration, Priekulji administration, Jaunpiebalga administration, Pārgauja administration, Sigulda local government, international partners, Country Tourism Association, Vidzeme Planning Region and private partnership organizations, the International Slackline Association

Implementer: Cēsis 2027
Format: multimedia concert, hybrid event
Time: Summer/Autumn of 2027

Potential partners: Production company “Untitled Unlimited”, Cēsis Cultural Centre, Cēsis Youth House, Coimbra 2027, Choirs of Cēsis Municipality, Latvian National Symphony Orchestra, Vidzeme Chamber Orchestra, Lode Brick Factory and musical groups from its client cities, Honorary Consulate of Latvia in Portugal, National Tile Museum of Portugal, and Camoes Institute

Clay and Porcelain

An interdisciplinary hybrid project that includes music, art, and production, with the joint participation of history researchers, geologists, professional and amateur choirs and symphony orchestras, as well as Lode brick factory employees. Combining different digital possibilities, it will be a synergy of concerts and production in a natural amphitheatre, a place where mining for Devon clay is taking place. A Museum of Clay will be later constructed from the bricks produced during the concert programme. Motto – “From the depths of the earth to the rooflines... basking under the eye of the Universe”.



Green Bank (O2)

An all-inclusive public participation project of sowing and growing various herbs, plants, and trees that produce oxygen. The green initiative that has everyone sowing the city garden, developing 'green thumb' squares, growing Christmas trees and greening balconies and classrooms under the slogan "A garden in every classroom!".

"Flower Gardens" – exploratory and inspirational projects – visits with plant specialists, Jānis Rukšāns's glass castle with the world's largest crocus collection (1,500 specimens), as well as phlox and lily collections.

"Historical Greenery" – restoring historical gardens with heirloom plants in the Cēsis Castle Park. Given that during the time of Counts Sievers, oranges and lemons were grown in Cēsis, building of a glass greenhouse with historical plants. Renewing the historical parks at Lielstraupe manor and Ungurmuiža. Identification of the historical parks and manors in the Vidzeme region, restoration of the historical greenery and the creation of a joint route.

Implementer: Cēsis 2027
Format: community engagement activities
Time: 2027

Potential partners: farms Jaunrūjas, Eicēni, Kligēni, gardening societies, private farmsteads, international cooperation, Latvijas Valsts meži, Vidzeme Planning Region, Cēsis Museum of History and Art, Romania historical gardens, Alūksne and their partners, Limbaži, Association of Castles and Manors



GreenFest

GreenFest is an interdisciplinary green lifestyle festival in which locals are urged to pay attention to ecology and environment related issues not only in the Gauja National Park (GNP), but also elsewhere in Latvia and the world. GreenFest vision is GNP as a region of biological management. In GreenFest, environmental issues will be treated through art events, involving different artists (musicians, painters, environmental and performance artists, and fashion designers), with the target audience comprising different generations.

Implementer: GreenFest in cooperation with Radītava Zaļā Villa, Sigulda
Format: concerts, landArt, exhibitions, workshops, discussions, masterclasses
Time: May-September 2027

Potential partners: local governments in GNP territory, art schools, Environmental Solutions Institute, State Cultural Capital Foundation, Art Academy of Latvia, Latvian Academy of Culture Latvian Culture College, Rucka Art Residence Centre, entrepreneurs, international partners and artists, Nature and Technology Park URDA, Esch 2022

Tradition Fair

Preserving and passing on intangible heritage and traditions is one of Cēsis' priorities, given the long history of the municipality and its cultural and historical heritage. The Wends, Livs, Latgalians, and other tribes chose Cēsis and its vicinity to settle down, appreciating both the rational advantages of the place (soil, proximity of rivers, etc.) and the presence of natural forces. The rhythm of human life in harmony with natural rhythms was a given because humans were perceived to be a part of nature.

An essential part of the Cēsis European Capital of Culture programme will be taking an inventory of traditions, preserving them and passing them on to the next generations: mapping of the ancient crafts, surveying the master practitioners, and developing the programme "Master's Disciple" for the masters to be able to pass on their know-how to the next generations, so that they carry them into the 22nd century with their authenticity preserved and new solutions and methods added.

A Traditional Fair, the largest fair in Vidzeme with the usual buying and selling of crafts and an international folklore group festival, would be organized as part of the traditional culture programme, highlighting the multifaceted character of Latvian culture and the diversity of cultures in Europe. In cooperation with Vidzeme Crafts House masters, individual craftspeople, and individual partners, crafts master workshops would be organized, fostering public participation in preserving the traditions.

Implementer: Cēsis 2027
Format: fair, concerts, master classes, lifelong learning
Time: 2022-2029

Potential partners: Latvian National Culture Centre, Vidzeme Planning Region, Municipalities in Vidzeme region, Vēveri Branch of the Open Air Museum, Society of Traditional Culture "KasTe", Cēsis Cultural Centre, administration of Vaive municipality, European Network of Cultural centres (ENCC)

The Nearby Cosmos

This section in the Cēsis ECoC programme has been conceived remembering our contemporaries and those who came before us – the people who are the reason the story of Cēsis as a European Capital of Culture in 2027 is even possible.

A person's connection to a place is something concrete and at the same time the stuff for legend, a part of national identity and culture. Culture is what makes people into stars in the metaphoric sense, either while they are alive or after their death, but one aspect that makes them into stars is their belonging to a certain region. "The Nearby Cosmos" is a story about the fact that Cēsis has long been the birthplace for many historic and 21st century people whose creative and professional path has taken them into the world and whose return has failed to happen – or who have been lost – because of regime change or other fateful circumstances. The ECoC programme provides us with an opportunity to return outstanding personalities to the town and municipality, to reconstruct memories, to form the processes of social memory, organize master classes, retrospectives, make use of ties to Europe and the world, and to form a new feedback loop between Cēsis, Europe, and the world in various cultural formats, and to offer ideas for the next generations. For Cēsis, the 22nd century will be a generational experience exchange programme.

People from a small nation or a small place tend to have a special relationship to the luminaries of their nation, town, or area – the stars seem to indicate what may be possible. The title of this section of the programme has been borrowed from astronomy and refers to the nearest galaxy to the Earth. The Cēsis ECoC programme will highlight people who are already or are becoming cultural markers in European culture. Being part of different constellations, they form a constellation of their own, characterized by interactions with European or world culture. The gravitational pull of Cēsis has brought many creative people to our town, so the past and present connection of people with a place will inform a section in the programme.

Native Europe. Biographical Readings

The observations of the history of this region by doctor and writer Miervaldis Birze, who lived in Cēsis until the beginning of the 21st century, are on par with those by the best European writers. When, at the turn of the century, Latvia was still aspiring to join the European Union, Birze was asked whether or not Cēsis was Europe. The intellectual and critically thinking writer replied: overturn a rubbish bin at the Cēsis railway station and you'll see that we've long since been Europeans. His irony implies that global processes are inevitable and Cēsis is a part of every way these processes express themselves. Having been incarcerated in German concentration camps, Birze spent his writing career reflecting on the relationships between history, power, culture, and everyday life, talking about the inconvenient questions in European and Latvian history, about collaborationism and memorial culture. Birze's biography is representative of the 20th century.

Cēsis in 2027 is conceived as a residency centre and a venue for European literature, where outstanding European writers and intellectuals can meet and converse about their visions of the present and future of Europe and the world.

Implementer:
Format:

Cēsis Central Library
*literature, discussions,
storytelling*
Time:
December 2027

Potential partners: Latvian National Library, Latvian Literature centre, embassies of Nordic countries to Latvia, PEN, Latvian Writers Union, Tampere 2026, Faro 2027, Culture Society "Harmonija"



Implementer: Cēsis Concert Hall
Format: concerts
Time: June 2027

Potential partners: VSIA "Kremerata Baltica, Latvian Radio", Cēsis Municipality, Embassies of the Baltic countries to Latvia

Implementer: Cēsis Concert hall
Format: music festival, forum
Time: April 2027
Potential partners: Baltic Sea region States, Embassies of Baltic and Nordic countries to Latvia, Latvian Composers Union, Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music, Art Academy of Latvia.

Gidon Kremer and Kremerata Baltica 110 / Public diplomacy

The violinist Gidon Kremer, founder and artistic director of the chamber orchestra "Kremerata Baltica", is a world renowned musician whose original approach to art cannot abide compromises. The legendary Lockenhaus festival in Austria in 1997 first witnessed a small revolution: the great violinist Gidon Kremer introduced the world to a new orchestra with musicians from Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia. Today, "Kremerata Baltica" is considered one of the best international orchestras in the world and has secured itself an outstanding reputation performing in the world's most distinguished concert halls. Since the beginning of the 21st century, the orchestra has given more than 1,500 concerts in over 50 countries, travelling around the globe and performing in Asia, Australia, North and South America, as well as Europe. Having produced more than 25 CD recordings, "Kremerata Baltica" has been awarded several Grammy awards and an ECHO award. Ever since the opening of the Cēsis Concert Hall in 2014, it has had a very close creative relationship with Gidon Kremer and his orchestra. Every June, the music festival "A Weekend with Kremerata Baltica" takes place, with presentations of unique musical projects developed specifically for this event. The 2027 festival will see the anniversaries of both: Gidon Kremer will turn 80 and Kremerata Baltica 30: an excellent reason for special musical programmes, special guests, and keen media attention!

The programme will include chamber music, vocal, and symphony music concerts, multimedia projects developed around Kremer and "Kremerata Baltica", as well as their friends, guest soloists, and world renowned musicians. The concerts will be recorded by Latvian Radio 3 and broadcast by European Broadcasting Union (EBU) stations throughout Europe.

Light of the Nordic Golden Hour

Festival of Academic Music "The April of Pēteris Vasks's Music" and events inspired by Vasks's music.

The concept of golden hour in the title is well known to all artists, as it refers to the ideal light, which is warm, adds depth, colour, and dimension to everything. Pēteris Vasks's music does the same.

A sub-dimension of the programme refers to the edge, to what is characteristic of Northern Europe, including Cēsis – a particular aesthetic that involves art, perception of nature, and lifestyle – and is also expressed in the music of Pēteris Vasks and his Scandinavian colleagues.

Just like other European countries, Latvia too has its cultural canon, a register of the most important and outstanding works of art and cultural treasures that reflects the nation's greatest achievements in culture over time. In our canon, one of the greatest treasures is composer Pēteris Vasks. Conscious of this, in 2018, which was Latvia's centennial, the Cēsis Concert Hall created a unique festival dedicated to Vasks music. Every April, the Festival rouses immense interest among both Latvian and foreign audiences. In 2027, the tenth festival will take place.

At the basis of the music of both Vasks and his like-minded colleagues, is nature, its processes, and its interactions with people – nature which inspires, calms, and strengthens us.

A part of the Festival will be concerts and contemporary ballet performances with the participation of Latvian and world professional art groups and solo performers. Pēteris Vasks has been commissioned to produce a new composition, which will see its world premiere. Within the framework of the Festival, a multimedia sacred music project will be presented at Cēsis St John's Evangelical Lutheran Church. The concerts taking place within the Festival will be recorded by Latvian Radio 3 and broadcast by EBU radio stations throughout Europe.

A residency of young composers from Nordic countries will take place, during which a new composition or new compositions will be created and included in the programme of the Festival.

Simultaneously, in partnership with the European Art Academy Alliance EU4:ART (Art Academies of Latvia, Rome, Dresden, and Hungary), a plein-air workshop of European young artists will be organized in Cēsis, renewing the city's plein-air tradition and contributing to the interactions between visual art and music.

Within the Forum, there will be panel discussions among art professionals about the interactions between art and the environment, cultural policymakers and environmental experts will discuss how art could help expand the understanding of the need for positive changes in the treatment of environment, and how the cultural sector could help environmental activists in their efforts to put environmental issues on the agenda of the EU and its member states.



Northern European Song Festival 2027

In the 1930s, the Cēsis Teachers Institute provided excellent education for potential teachers. One of them was Imants Kokars - an outstanding choir conductor who is now memorialized with a plaque on the Institute's wall. Imants Kokars was also an initiator of the 1995 Nordic and Baltic Song Festival tradition. The festival took place for the first time in Riga in 1995 and afterwards in different Nordic countries. The idea behind the festival was to bring together amateur choirs from the region, perfecting large-choir singing and promoting cultural exchange. To honour Imants Kokars and the a cappella singing tradition, Cēsis plans to revive the festival, which has not taken place in recent years.

Implementer: Cēsis 2027
Format: concerts, masterclasses
Time: August 2027

Potential partners: Latvian National Culture Centre, Cēsis Cultural Centre, local governments of Vidzeme region, Rakvere local government (EST), Tyreso local government (SE), Oulu 2027, Savonlinna 2027



Implementer: Cēsis 2027
Format: forum
Time: 2027
Potential partners: Cēsis Natives Club, World Federation of Free Latvians, Global Center for Latvian Art in Cēsis, Cēsis Cultural Centre, public schools of the municipality.

Freedom Forum

The idea behind the Freedom Forum is to develop a special European Capital of Culture program for the entire year 2027 in the format of exchanges of ideas, discussions, lectures, readings, and conversations, inviting former natives of a particular town, region, and place who have achieved outstanding results in their careers and have changed their geographic location. One of human rights is the freedom to leave for any reason, but mostly to succeed. The connection between Latvians in exile and in Latvia played an enormous role in the restoration of the country's independence. A link between the new Latvian diaspora abroad and remigrants might be no less significant. The Freedom Forum, in cooperation with the Cēsis Natives Club, World Federation of Free Latvians and Global Center for Latvian Art in Cēsis will invite the contribution of the diaspora in the form of ideas and suggestions, as well as inspiration for the coming generations.

The Freedom Forum involves aggregating ideas for the next century; it aims at creating a feedback loop and an exchange of ideas and thoughts among the outstanding current and former Cēsis municipality residents on topics that match their professional skills and interests: the nation's health, language, economy (successful businesses), and many others. For instance, Latvian scientists, including astronomer Jānis Klētnieks and geologist Valdis Segliņš, both of whom have ties to Cēsis, have made a significant contribution to the study, preservation, and popularization of the Egyptian pyramids. The methods for measuring and scanning the pyramids were first used in the Cēsis medieval castle by Jānis Klētnieks.

The format will be conversations with five to ten Cēsis-related people about their life experiences and their view of the future, as well as suggestions for cooperation among people from different spheres – artists, musicians, engineers, chemists – trying to find synergy between them, a synergy which also refers to the New European Bauhaus initiative. Possibly, masterclasses will be conducted with the participation of art-related professionals and also chefs, gardeners, scientists etc. Another possibility would be a sports day, together with the best athletes of the municipality. The Freedom Forum will demonstrate Europe as it returns to Cēsis, transformed by experience.



Wagner: The Bayreuth of the Baltic

The years under Cēsis-born intendant Andrejs Žagars (1958–2019) was a brilliant period for the Latvian National Opera, introducing Europe and the world to the stars of Latvian music. He helped young and talented Latvian opera singers and conductors Elina Garanča, Kristīne Opolais, Andris Nelsons, Maija Kovaļevska, Aleksandrs Antonenko, and Egils Siliņš reach the world's most prominent stages. In partnership with the Latvian National Opera, Cēsis as European Capital of Culture 2027 plans a special joint project with the Bayreuth Festival, involving Žagars's colleagues in Latvia and the world.

Contemporary Latvian culture is ever more extensively and deeply approximating European and world culture. The world famous name of genius Richard Wagner is directly linked to Latvia. Riga is one of the few world cities in which Wagner lived, worked and composed, and it is here that he started on his creative quest. Wagner's life and career still attract millions around the world, offering new and surprising discoveries, which are all leading to Wagner's all-encompassing vision of Gesamtkunstwerk – the joining together of all arts.

The summer of 2027 will see a new international Richard Wagner opera festival, the Bayreuth of the Baltic, spanning two months. This festival would be particularly significant in the context of European Capital of Culture not only because of Wagner's name, but because of its grand scale. Yet a democratic dimension will be lent to what is traditionally considered high art by placing it in Cēsis within the framework of the ECoC programme. Cēsis will be at the centre of attention of Europe's musical audiences, potentially attracting international culture tourism and taking its place as the showcase event of the musical programme of the ECoC summer.

Richard Wagner's musical legacy is inexhaustible and requires great artistic resources. Participants will include the Latvian National Symphony Orchestra, Latvian National Opera and its orchestra, choirs "Latvija" and "Kamēr...", the most outstanding opera soloists, directors, scenographers, and ballet dancers from Latvia and elsewhere. Four performances of Wagner's operas will take place during the summer. In cooperation with the Sigulda Opera Festival and the Latvian National Opera and Ballet, two large new productions of Wagner's operas will take place in the open-air Cēsis Castle Park and in Sigulda Castle Ruins. The venues for the other two productions will be the inner courtyard of Cēsis Castle and the Cēsis Concert Hall. Already existing Wagner productions of European opera houses will also be a part of the festival.

The festival will end with a gala concert of Richard Wagner's music on the open-air stage of Cēsis Castle Park and will include performances by a constellation of Latvian opera soloists: the outstanding wagnerian Egils Siliņš, Maija Kovaļevska, Marina Rebeka, Kristīne Opolais, Aleksandrs Antonenko, the world's greatest Wagner interpreters, and the Latvian National Symphony Orchestra.



Implementer: Cēsis Concert Hall in cooperation with the Cēsis Art Festival
Format: music festival
Time: July-August 2027

Potential partners: Riga Wagner Society, Embassy of Germany, Goethe Institute, Sigulda municipality. Potentially, international business executives, members of world Wagner societies.

Learning

What happens to a town when it is viewed as a school? What happens to a school when it is taken out of classrooms and blended with the environment or, vice versa, the natural, built, mental, and virtual landscape is included in the curriculum? What kind of learning is it when, instead of acquiring the accumulated social experience, it lets the global seep through to the local?

How does a place where one lives become a school? How can a whole town and region become an integrated educational ecosystem?

This is the story of a place that teaches like a school and learns at the same time. It is the story of the impossible that becomes possible. It is the story of Cēsis's learning in the 22nd century where the protagonists, along with the usual school buildings, are summer schools, residencies, conferences, workshops and plein-air as an integrated 'pluriversity'.

International Cēsis Pluriversity Summer School 22nd Century

Cēsis Pluriversity is an experimental education research and design project, whose goal, with the help of geography, design, and philosophy, is to analyse the approaching futures and collectively try to imagine the knowledge and skills that may be needed. Since 2019 the Cēsis Pluriversity has been realised by a global community of researchers and practitioners which materialises in regular in-person study events and online. The highlight of the programme is the annual summer school, where the curriculum for the next year is developed. It is a feedback process in which, in addition to the above, the public outside space of Cēsis is being researched, mapping places where it could be possible to arrange for open-air 'classrooms' and gradually turning the entire urban environment into a pluriversity – a diverse learning environment.

The 22nd Century summer school of Cēsis Pluriversity will be a global learning event that will cap the first 7-year cycle of the project, resulting in a great symposium on future education. The project draws its inspiration from the idea of 'pluriverse' and pluriversity – a model of the universe and school which incorporates diverse traditions of thinking, learning, and epistemology. It aims to rethink and reconstruct the western university, overcoming the split between different disciplines and forming a dialogue to recognize the mutual interconnectedness of all living things. The summer school results will be published in a book as guidelines for developing the 22nd century university, the Pluriversity.



Implementer:
Format:

Cēsis Pluriversity
physical virtual summer
school

Time:

Summer of 2027

Potential partners: Foundation Koprades māja Skola6, Cēsis Art School, Atlantic College (Maine, USA), Tartu University, Schumacher College (United Kingdom), Aalto University (Finland), Coimbra 2027, Tartu 2024.



International Rucka art residency, plein-air, and conference programme

The Rucka Art Foundation has been active in civil society for 14 years. It was established in 2007 by producer Ieva Ūbele and filmmaker and photographer Kaspars Goba, with the goal of drawing society's attention to important environmental protection and social problems with the help of documentary cinema and photography projects. Over the years of its existence, the foundation has produced documentaries on topical social themes (*Homo@lv*, *First Ones*, *Inga Can Hear*), in cooperation with Latvian Fund for Nature, University of Latvia, and the Nature Protection Department it has made educational films on the environment; in 2014, it realised one of the Riga as European Capital of Culture projects "The Islands of Riga" that comprised a photo exhibition and a photo album.

In 2013, the foundation moved from Riga to Cēsis, establishing an art residency centre in the former Rucka Estate. In 2027, an extensive art residency programme will be carried out in Rucka, with 20 artists from different countries producing new works. Evaluating the applications to the programme, preference will be given to artists whose works show an interest in ecology, sustainable development, zero waste lifestyle and recycling economy, biological agriculture, and smart cities and who would like to involve locals in creating their artwork. The programme will be supplemented by an international plein-air of sustainable architecture and an international conference of the world artist residency centre ResArtis with the participation of 150 recognized artists from all over the world, placing Cēsis ECoC at the centre of global art events.

Implementer:

**Rucka Art and Education Centre,
Rucka Art Foundation**

Format:

integrated programme of residencies, plein-air, and conferences with in-person and online events

Time:

2027

Potential partners:

Nordic-Baltic mobility programme, State Culture Capital Foundation, Cēsis Concert Hall, ResArtis, Riga Technical University, Science and Technology University of Norway, SIA NOMAD Architects, Tampere 2026.

Museum Collection Depository

The project entails building the most advanced museum collection depository complex in the Baltics, and, possibly, Europe. The depository would be built using the principle of the "open collection" and would both ensure the necessary conditions for storing the museum's national collection and provide its accessibility to the wider public. Through carrying out this project it would be possible to provide public access to about 84% of the material objects that are stored in the museum's collection which would constitute for about 37% of the total number of units in the collection (there are around 165 000 units in the museum's basic collection). Such a project is unique in Europe in terms of making museum collections available to the public because most items stored in museums are kept behind closed doors and are not openly accessible to the public.

The Vidzeme Restoration Center, equipped with the latest technologies that would provide internships for young restorers, as well as lifelong learning opportunities (courses in restoration of certain groups of subjects) is planned to be installed in the depositories of the collection. Vidzeme Restoration Center will have four equipped restorers' workplaces

The Cēsis Museum Collection Depository could become the base for founding an education centre for preservation and management of cultural heritage - Regional Heritage Management Training Centre. There are no similar centres in the Baltic states yet. Professionals from Baltic states could come and learn about the preservation of cultural heritage, restoration and conservation of monuments, and emergency response. Cēsis has the necessary infrastructure for this kind of education centre (convenient traffic, the regional department of the State Fire and Rescue Service that could help with simulations of emergency response) and "exemplary" objects - Cēsis Castle Complex that is an example of conservation, restoration, preservation of monuments etc.

Implementer:

**Cēsis Museum of History
and Art**

Format:

construction along with educational events

Time:

2021-2027

Potential partners:

society Cēsu Mantojums, Cēsis Municipality, Latvian National Commission for UNESCO



International Art Laboratory “artCēsis”

To improve learning and expand the uninterrupted operation of the Painting school, it is first and foremost necessary to develop a permanent painting workshop/laboratory in Cēsis. Its operation would be ensured by a rotation of painters and masters. Passing on knowledge and learning will pave the way for international cooperation as well, because learning painting technologies under a master's guidance is an exclusive experience. Professional painters could use the workshop premises to produce large-format works for which they might lack space elsewhere.

It is also planned to open a City Gallery, where works produced at the Painting School would be exhibited. Visitors would also have a chance to peruse art books and catalogues at a library.

In 2027, “artCēsis” will offer the following activities:

- a series of lectures for the general public on the perception of art and how it differs in different cultures, based on findings in cognitive sciences – in collaboration with the University of Latvia Perception and Cognitive Systems Laboratory;
- visual art comprehension school for young people;
- master classes and exhibitions of Latvian and Portuguese artists, featuring their traditional painting techniques;
- designing and producing a new environmental object in Cēsis in partnership with Latvian and Portuguese artists;
- mini film festival “Stories of Creators” – a film programme featuring stories about the lives and works of different artists;
- international 3D painting festival Art Streets 27, with the participation of artists from EU member states who would produce 3D works for the Cēsis urban environment;
- Draw in Cēsis, artCēsis will join the international initiative The Big Draw (1-3 October annually, thebigdraw.org), to popularize drawing.

Implementer: society “artCēsis”
Format: series of learning and art events
Time: 2027

Potential partners: Art Academy of Latvia, Cēsis Art School, Cēsis Pluriversity, Portuguese traditional art workshops, LU Perception and Cognitive Systems Laboratory.

yes, you can draw



Baltic Sketching Festival 2027

Implementer: Society Riga Sketchers
Format: festival, summer school
Time: Summer of 2027

Partners: Art Space MALA, Urban Sketchers, Art Academy of Latvia, Cēsis Art School

3 to 5-day event that would bring urban sketchers from Europe and the world to Cēsis. The idea is to develop master classes, lectures, sketching walks, an exhibition and an art supplies fair. The projected number of participants is 600-1,000. A similar festival was already held in 2019. Urban sketchers is a very open and united community that sketch their travels in their journals. In 2027, 4-10 artists well known in the global sketcher community would be brought to Cēsis, attracting the world's attention (every one of them has 10-50K followers on social media).

The Lake Dwelling Myths: an International Experimental Archaeology Conference

The Āraiši Lake Dwelling is a scientifically sound reconstruction of an Iron Age dwelling found at Āraiši Lake. The first house was reconstructed exactly 40 years ago. Now the need has arisen to repeat the experiment to make further conclusions and gain knowledge and practical skills relating to the construction of the lake dwelling, as well as develop hypotheses as to the life there by fitting the houses with everyday necessities. The experiments would take several years, resulting in scientific work to be presented at the concluding conference. The public, educational institutions, and scientific partners from EXARC (an international association of open-air museums) would all take part. Knowledge of life in the lake dwelling and about people's ability and skills to adjust to both climate and personal safety conditions would be useful in today's context, as would knowledge about the properties of various natural materials and their use.

The scientific research presented at the conference would be related to topical problems that we face today, accentuating parallels and seeking inspiration. The conference would conclude with a multimedia performance reflecting the origins of the lake dwelling and the related legends. The performance would take place on the lake, in the dwelling, and on the shore, involving music, holograms on the lake, light, movement, and dance.
Director of the performance: Inga Tropa-Fišere.
Composer: Edgars Raginskis

Space of digital consciousness

Development of an innovative database for cultural tourism as a pilot project for Cēsis and the municipality, later to be adapted by other local governments. Mapping of culture-related spaces, including farmsteads, castle mounds, churches, estates, schools, cemeteries, bridges, mills, old inns, crafts houses, railroads, municipal houses, post offices, libraries, cultural centres, factories, and landscape gardens.

Implementer: Cēsis 2027 in cooperation with Cēsis Culture and Tourism centre
Format: research project in experimental cartography
Time: 2021-2030

Partners: Vidzeme Planning Region, Vidzeme colleges and municipal cultural centres, Environmental Solutions Institute, Cēsis Digital Centre, Latvian Film Service Association, Latvian Academy of Culture, University of Latvia, Cēsis Pluriversity

Implementer: Āraiši Lake Dwelling Archaeological Park
Format: conference and multimedia performance
Time: Spring/Summer of 2027

Partners: Latvia's State Forests, Cēsis Concert Hall, Cēsis Pluriversity

Little Archaeologists School

The Little Archaeologists School will let children try the role of an archaeologist by working in an adapted dig. Before beginning to dig, the little archaeologists will get acquainted with publications and other material regarding the object or place under investigation. With the help of a map they will find the actual dig. Then, layer after layer, soil will be taken off to expose old objects, remnants of buildings or other traces of human activity.

"D.I.2." (Do it together)

The project aims to use culture and creativity to develop Cēsis into a better place to live and a magnet for attracting new residents and guests by identifying the needs of the residents, defining common values, and working towards them together. D.I.2. consists of two mutually related spheres, "a democratic and creative public space" and "working together", with the focus also on four ancillary themes: creation of space, aesthetics of public space, city for people, and recycling economy. The first sphere will involve visualizations and forum sessions to map common visions, needs, and desires, obtaining thorough information, the second will have these ideas realized in practice. D.I.2. is planned as a long-term project, which would already be launched before 2027 and continued afterwards.

Implementer: Art Space MALA
Format: forums, vision sessions, public debate resulting in common guidelines and maps, residencies, town festivals, urban gardens, application for sharing instruments, developing 10 places in the city with 10 different activities, community refrigerator, etc.
Time: until 2027



Regeneration

Cēsis is a city that breathes through the walls of its medieval castle and allows itself the slowness of a small town. It offers shelter from excessive comfort, garish advertisements, overpopulation and traffic jams, inviting us to enjoy emptiness and become conscious of the prospect of feeling and hearing more, at the same time offering us rich cultural horizons.

Implementer: Cēsis 2027

Format: meditation, miniconcerts, performances, street art, environmental objects, strolls

Time: 2027

Potential partners: Local governments of Vidzeme, producer companies of creative industries in partnership with Cēsis Museum of History and art, landscape architects, Psychotherapy Association, Tourism Association, Psychology Association, various meditation practices, religious organizations, Cēsis Culture and Tourism Centre, A. Kalniņš Cēsis Music Secondary School, society "ArtCēsis", Art Space "Mala", Cēsis Art School, Cēsis Small Theatre, SIA Design Elevator, international partners

Filling the emptiness

A cluster of projects that involve a quiet flow, peace, and cosiness, a chance to be in harmony with the demanding time that empties one out, and the time that flows and helps one recover and become stronger. There will be slow strolls through the town listening to the stories told by houses, exploring courtyards, and taking a rest on a "talking bench", only to resume the stroll a moment later and lose oneself in a restful enjoyment of a slower pace of life. These are solitary wanderings that bring about an understanding of the order of things and simultaneously stimulate mindfulness practices and regeneration. The streets, squares, and inner courtyards will become meditation spaces created by different arts. These spaces will be located at a short distance from one another, symbolically attesting to the fact that Cēsis is a town of proximity – it is an environment where everything one needs can be reached within 15 minutes, the time it takes for tea to cool in-cup. On weekends, these spaces will become pop-up venues for concerts, performances, exhibitions; art, music, and dance will be all around, the town will vibrate with life expressed in various projects – "Art Forest", "The Town Dances, Sings, and Plays", "Town Orchestra", "Buskers", "Houses as Museums", "Paint Cēsis from Reading", "Restortime Cēsis" – a theatrical rendition of old paintings, postcards, and literary events, "Shopwindow Art", "Idyl" – where Cēsis seniors take children and young people on a tour telling them about their Cēsis.

Slow Film Festival

Slow films and documenting slowness. Cēsis becomes a stage for the slow cinema movement, opening the curtain of a parallel Berlinale programme, yet at the same time offering something new: the town invites itself to cinema.

A special Slow Film Festival would find its home in Cēsis with the goal to highlight the genre of slow cinema – films dominated by long shots, in which form and vivid yet minimalistic means of expression play a more significant role than the narrative, the mundaneness of events replace thrilling turns of the plot, and the deliberately slow pace challenges the viewer and turns watching into a meditative experience. These kinds of films almost never enter the regular repertoire of the cinemas and are commonly material for festival events. The intended “Slow Film” festival would include the retrospections of such authors as Béla Tarr, Andrei Tarkovsky, Lav Diaz, Fred Kelemen, Roy Anderson and contemporary slow film masterclasses, as well as lectures and exhibitions about Latvian slow cinema (e.g. Laila Pakalniņa), and a special programme about the founders of the slow film genre, Michelangelo Antonioni and Andy Warhol.

Video messages from the windows of buildings. A digital hybrid event, involving communication with windows of other European towns. The material obtained is mutually integrated or projected on the surfaces of other buildings.

Implementer: Cēsis 2027

Format: film festival

Time: 2027

Potential partners: National Film Centre, Riga Film school, Film Office Latvia, Riga Film Museum, Faro 2027, Aveiro 2027, Coimbra 2027, Berlin Film Museum, architect residencies, Rucka Art Residency Centre, Cēsis Art School, A. Kalniņš Cēsis Music Secondary School, Cēsis Children and Youth Centre

Implementer:

Format:

Time:

Cēsis Museum of History and Art
research, lectures, exhibitions, walks,
small concerts, renovations, tidying
Summer/autumn of 2027

Potential partners: Local Vidzeme governments in partnership with embassies and minority communities, Pskov local government, Domus Rigensis, Rokiškis local government, RSU Department of Psychosomatic Medicine and Psychotherapy, Latvian Society of Religious Research

Cemeteries as cultural treasures

How well do we know them? Is it a place of renewal, where people can mourn and assuage their sense of guilt often felt for the dearly departed? Without a doubt, a cemetery is a unique place to gain knowledge and a sense of history, learn about architecture, landscape, and the culture of other ethnic groups. The cemetery culture in Latvia has been included in the Cultural Canon. They are often considered sacred places, yet they are still veiled in mystery. Cēsis will try to somewhat lift the veil. Looking beyond the veil starts with the 50 iron wreaths discovered in the Jaunrauna Chapel by historian Andris Grīnbergs – a vivid testimony of the tastes and pecuniary circumstances of people who lived in the area more than a hundred years ago. In the context of European Capital of Culture, Cēsis is developing a number of projects that will offer a new angle looking at the cemeteries in the town and vicinity. There will be research projects, exploratory paths, and memorial concerts with the support of countries whose people are buried there. Photographs will illustrate the trends of cemetery culture, including the bureaucratic regulations in the bygone eras, as well as present a ghost story or two.



physCULTURE*

Nowadays, physical activities are considered as important as mental health. This has been the conviction of one-time Cēsis native Ilgvars Pauls, the first Latvian mountain climber to scale the highest peaks on all seven continents, as well as several world-renowned athletes: the former European track-and-field champion Juris Grustiņš, seven-time World Cup holder in biathlon Ilmārs Bricis, five-time World Champion in sidocar cross Kristers Serģis, and the promising NBA basketball player Rodion Kurut.

Cēsis is the venue for a series of projects involving the possibility to enjoy physical activities in combination with art for several social and age groups. The climate in Latvia allows a wide variety of activities. The projects will include "Ski to the Museum" (paintings in a forest with a ski track between the area villages), "Mozart in My Ears" – cross-country ski track with musical performances, "Skate Mandalas" on the ice of a frozen lake, and "Cinema on Žagarkalns" – a mobile amphitheatre with screenings on the surface of a ski hill.

*(Literally - physical culture)

Implementer:
Format:

Cēsis 2027
exhibitions, skiing, skating,
running, orienteering and other
sporting events in combination
with art activities.
Time:
Summer/Winter of 2027

Potential partners: Cēsis Sports School, Vidzeme Sports School, Vidzeme area athletic organizations, private athletic organizations, International Biathlon Federation, Ministry of Education of the Republic of Latvia, Latvian Olympic Team, private production companies

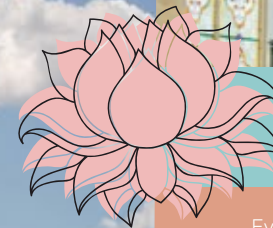
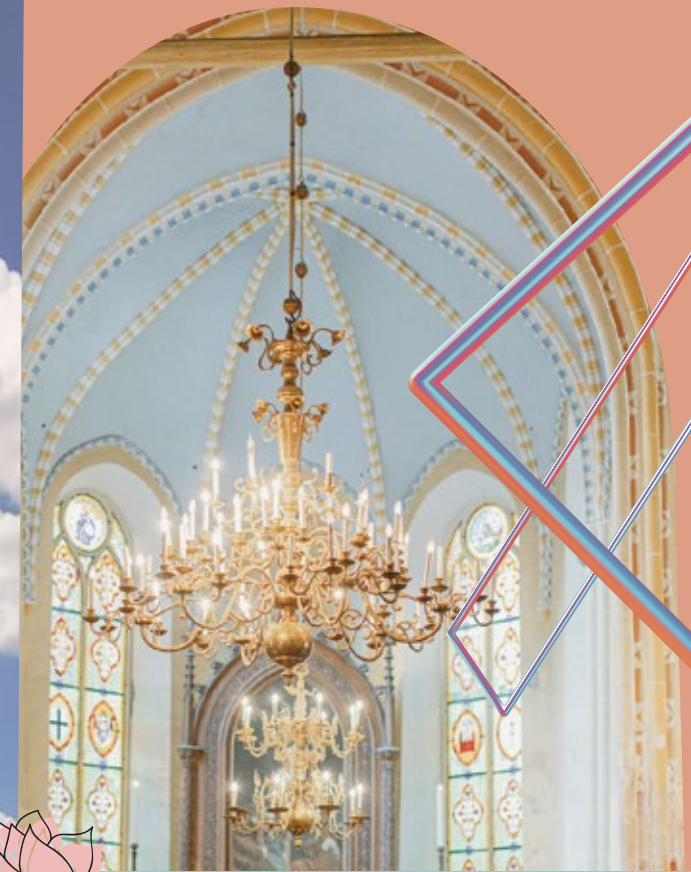


Implementer:
Format:

Cēsis 2027
concerts,
performances
2027

Time:

Potential partners: religious
organizations, local Vidzeme
governments



Ecumenic Window

Everyone has their own religion – their convictions and power of their faith. The spiritual shelter for many people is organized religion or the set of values it respects. It creates a sense of security, trust, and belonging and helps people to find inner peace. It promotes understanding as one of the pillars of healthy relationships within society.

People from different congregations will be brought together through the ecumenic window. They will come together to create a common cultural garden blooming with different projects – Festival of Bell Ensembles, programme for the small concert halls in churches, restoration of the altar and congregation hall of St John's Church, tidying the area around the churches on Palasta Street, making improvements so that an international Ecumenism Conference can take place there including lectures and seminars.



Implementer: Cēsis 2027
Format: hikes, excursions, bicycle tours, history tours, pilgrimages
Time: 2022-2027

Potential partners: Latvian State Roads, Latvian Tourism Association, Latvia Travel, active tourism centre "Eži", Piebalga museum association "Orisāre", World Nature Fund, Department of National Cultural Heritage, Culture Society "Harmonija", Cēsis Culture and Tourism centre, Gdansk, Torun, Wroclaw, Cracow, Elbong



European Slow Food Festival

Carlo Petrini's idea, from the Italian village of Bra, grew into an international Slow Food movement with more than 160 organizations joining to fight against globalization and developing local products and production as well as sustainable thinking in general. This is the basis for the gastronomy programme of Cēsis Municipality: the green eco markets, mobile shops, exchange of goods, the chance of buying directly from the producer and enjoying safe food in local tasting pavilions, bread festivals, one-day country cafés, observing chefs in action, and basking in the glow of family-friendly atmosphere. This will all be based on already existing traditions – Zaube Open Air Culinary Festival, Straupe Country Product Market, Līgatne Chefs House, Skujene one-day restaurants.

Let's Go!

A person is always en route to somewhere else, the liminal space is always present. Every year, hundreds of thousands of people are on their way to experience various revelations. The teacher brothers from Vecpiebalga in what is now Cēsis Municipality, Reinis and Matīss Kaudzīte, travelled around Europe on foot and in a horse-drawn cart. Upon returning to their village, they brought ideas from the foreign countries they had seen with them. First, they were considered strange outsiders, but later were appreciated as outstanding writers: authors of essays, travelogues, and witty sayings. Authors of the first realistic novel in Latvian literature, *Times of the Surveyors*, they used their vacation every year to go and see the world. Being on the move makes for new roads and vice versa.

Aside from the pull of large roads – the historical Livonian highway and Pskov highway, which connected Riga and St Petersburg, bringing cultural variety – small individual paths are equally important.

Cēsis will organize tourist trips, meditative travels and pilgrimages, walking tours and hikes along highways, footpaths, and bicycle paths. During these, participants will be able to enjoy nature, learn about the history of places and events, experience interactions between music and art or just do a quiet mental fast. The proposed projects to be developed or perfected will be the Cēsis Eco Trail – the run along forest trails, Green Railway – routes along where narrow gage railways used to run, Trip around the Gauja National Park, Melānija Vanaga's Path, Stories of Amata Houses, Camino – the pilgrimage road originating in the 9th century, with medieval pilgrims' attributes – a cross and a seashell – which were found in Turaida and St John's Church in Cēsis.

Implementer: Cēsis 2027
Format: eco markets, culinary adventures, cooking, events in local farmsteads
Time: 2027

Potential partners: Latvian Traders Association, Rural private partnership organizations, Gauja National Park, Straupe culinary market, Latvian Home Producers Association, Rural Support Service, Vidzeme Planning Region, local municipalities and fraternal towns, RA Skudras Metropole, Līgatne Chefs House, Latvian Winemakers Association, Skujene Junk Museum, biological farms, Slow Food Straupe, Slow Food Chefs Alliance members, Slow Food Internationale Earth Markets, University of Gastronomic Science

Renovation of spas

The vicinity of Cēsis has long been famous as a place of green spas and sanatoriums, and several of the pearls of Cēsis architecture at certain periods of their existence have served as healthcare facilities. The project involves the town of Cēsis obtaining resort status, survey of the old spas and architectural monuments and mapping a historical path that will result in a special programme for several architectural restoration projects, an exhibition, and renovated pop-up resort activities involving the old sanatoriums:

- 1. Villa Baltica** – Cēsis Red Cross sanatorium, later TB sanatorium where the outstanding Latvian writer Miervaldis Birze worked as a doctor.
- 2. Pīpariņi** – Soldiers' sanatorium for lung and other disease patients. The actress Marija Leiko, star of German avant-garde cinema, once convalesced there.
- 3. Pienotava** – A. Smilga's Sanatorium for rheumatism and nerve patients.
- 4. Cīruliši** – German Soldiers Hospital, later a USSR spa and children's summer camp.
- 5. Meža skola** – Sanatorium for children with lung diseases and other health problems.
- 6. Gaujasliči** – Sanatorium for children with tuberculosis.
- 7. Cēsis Hospital** – the old building where the first surgery was located.
- 8. Rucka estate** – Hospital of the Russian Imperial Army, later a sanatorium and tuberculosis hospital for children of railway employees.
- 9. Lielstraupe Manor** – Straupe Narcology Hospital until 31 December 2017.
- 10. Aleksandrs Bieziņš Raiskums Elementary School**, a.k.a. boarding school of Raiskums Sanatorium.
- 11. Līgatne Sanatorium**, functioning to this day.

Implementer:
Format:

Cēsis 2027

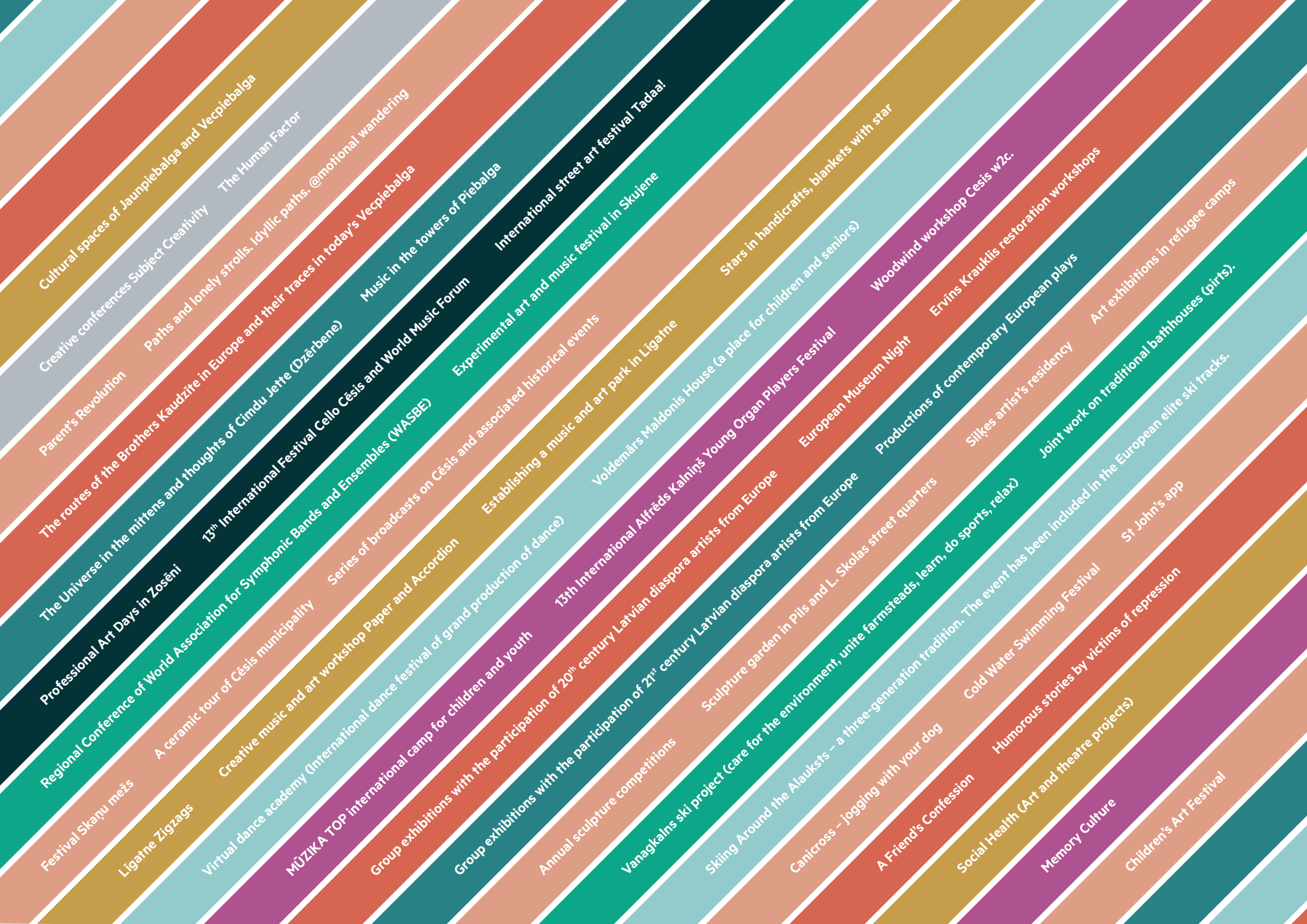
research, mapping routes for walking,
small-scale cultural programmes.

Time:

2027

Potential partners: Local governments of Vidzeme, Cēsis Museum of History and art, Association of Landscape Architects, Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Latvia, Cēsis Home Guard, Association of Latvian Resorts, Society Cēsu Mantojums





Cultural spaces of Jaunpiebalga and Vecpiebalga

Creative conferences Subject Creativity The Human Factor

Parent's Revolution Paths and lonely strolls. Idyllic paths. @motional wandering

The routes of the Brothers Kaudzīte in Europe and their traces in today's Vecpiebalga

The Universe in the mittens and thoughts of Cimdu Jette (Dzērbene) Music in the towers of Piebalga

Professional Art Days in Zosēni 13th International Festival Cello Čēsis and World Music Forum

Regional Conference of World Association for Symphonic Bands and Ensembles (WASBE) Experimental art and music festival in Skujene

Festival Skaņu mežs A ceramic tour of Čēsis municipality Series of broadcasts on Čēsis and associated historical events

Līgaine Zigzags Creative music and art workshop Paper and Accordion Establishing a music and art park in Līgatne

Virtual dance academy (International dance festival of grand production of dance) Voldemārs Maldonis House (a place for children and seniors)

MŪZIKA TOP international camp for children and youth 13th International Alfrēds Kalniņš Young Organ Players Festival

Group exhibitions with the participation of 20th century Latvian diaspora artists from Europe European Museum Night

Group exhibitions with the participation of 21st century Latvian diaspora artists from Europe Productions of contemporary European plays

Annual sculpture competitions Sculpture garden in Pils and L. Skolas street quarters Silķes artist's residency

Vanagkalns ski project (care for the environment, unite farmsteads, learn, do sports, relax) Joint work on traditional bathhouses (pirts).

Skiing Around the Alaukstis – a three-generation tradition. The event has been included in the European elite ski tracks.

Canicross – jogging with your dog Cold Water Swimming Festival St John's app

A Friend's Confession Humorous stories by victims of repression

Social Health (Art and theatre projects) Memory Culture

Children's Art Festival

Project Wall

250th anniversary of the Sievers family
Golden Moped

Blooming Skis
Lit Autosprint Cup

River race and festival on the Amata usually takes place in April since 1964

Race Jānis and Jānītis has been taking place annually since 1989 with about 400 annual participants

Orienteering competition Cēsu rudens, takes place since 1968, with about 700 annual participants.

Traditional Bicycle Marathon Cēsis-Valmiera, cycling competition VIVUS

Star Vantage Point – Balloon flights. In cooperation with Sigulda.

The largest Baltic international basketball tournament for adults (30+) Cēsis Basket Cup, with the participation of 60 teams from 9 countries, around 600 participants.

Brasla Cup
Zaube Pīke

Music Outside the Frame
Contemporary digital art event Birth of a Star

Healthy Relationship
Farmstead get-togethers (viensĒTU kultūrrandiņi)

Mapping of old/present farmsteads
Cēsis Is Green

Festival of European nongovernmental theatres
Cultural farmsteads

Cultural environment
Christmas concert in Līgaine caves

Little opera festival at Ungurmuiža
Schubertiad at Ungurmuiža

Book House/ exhibition the second life of books
Melhuri threshing barn gate

Lake dwellings as mysterious residences in Vidzeme
Personalties in Vidzeme time to times

Rebirth of a capella singing in Dziesmuvietā: art, culture and history
River Amata welcomes today, yesterday, tomorrow

handWRITINGS and The Braille Line
Līgaine's industrial heritage

Houses as museums
Gathering of electric cars

To be continued...

Guide Base – individual initiatives

Digital art festival BLACK BOX

The European Dimension

– 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.

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

– 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?

Q13/Q15





Each of the sections of Cēsis' proposal for the ECoC programme is linked to the existing and future initiatives of the European Union, adapting them with the aim to retain a diverse, open and pluralistic society in the future. When the 60th anniversary of the Rome Treaty was celebrated in 2017, one of the themes was the future of Europe: a safe and unthreatened Europe, a sustainable Europe, a social Europe, and Europe that is a stronger player on the global scene. The themes as a potential European Capital of Culture are directed toward issues and problems having to do with the future of Europe or ones that are already on Europe's political, social, and cultural agenda.

The chosen motto "The 22nd Century" has been conceived as a provocative and visionary label to draw attention to the topical problems and themes that cannot be avoided. The thematic section The Great Question follows the trends linked to the plan for European Democracy, whose global and particular goal is to preserve democracy and the election process so that in a healthy and stable democracy citizens can freely express their opinions, have a say in their future, and choose their political leaders. Democracy in Europe and the world faces challenges of extremism, dissemination of manipulative information, interference with elections, and the challenge for citizens' rights to freely express different opinions publicly have come to the forefront. Currently, the European Democracy Action Plan has been developed for the period up to the year 2023, therefore Cēsis, in choosing its already existing platforms like the democracy festival LAMPA, intends to develop it further in a new public format, turning a part of the programme into a public discussion among EU citizens on political priority issues and global challenges. In our programme, which we are planning to implement together with the EU democracy festivals, EU member states, cultural institutes, and political foundations, we plan to discuss and care for democracy not only in our own country but also in our neighbouring countries, because problems connected with the implementation of democracy are global in character, and it is in the common interests of the world democratic countries to work together on solutions. Events, such as LAMPA and the large-scale conference Input 2027, will help to emphasize the importance of public media in developing a democratic and pluralistic society, both in Latvia and elsewhere in Eastern Europe.

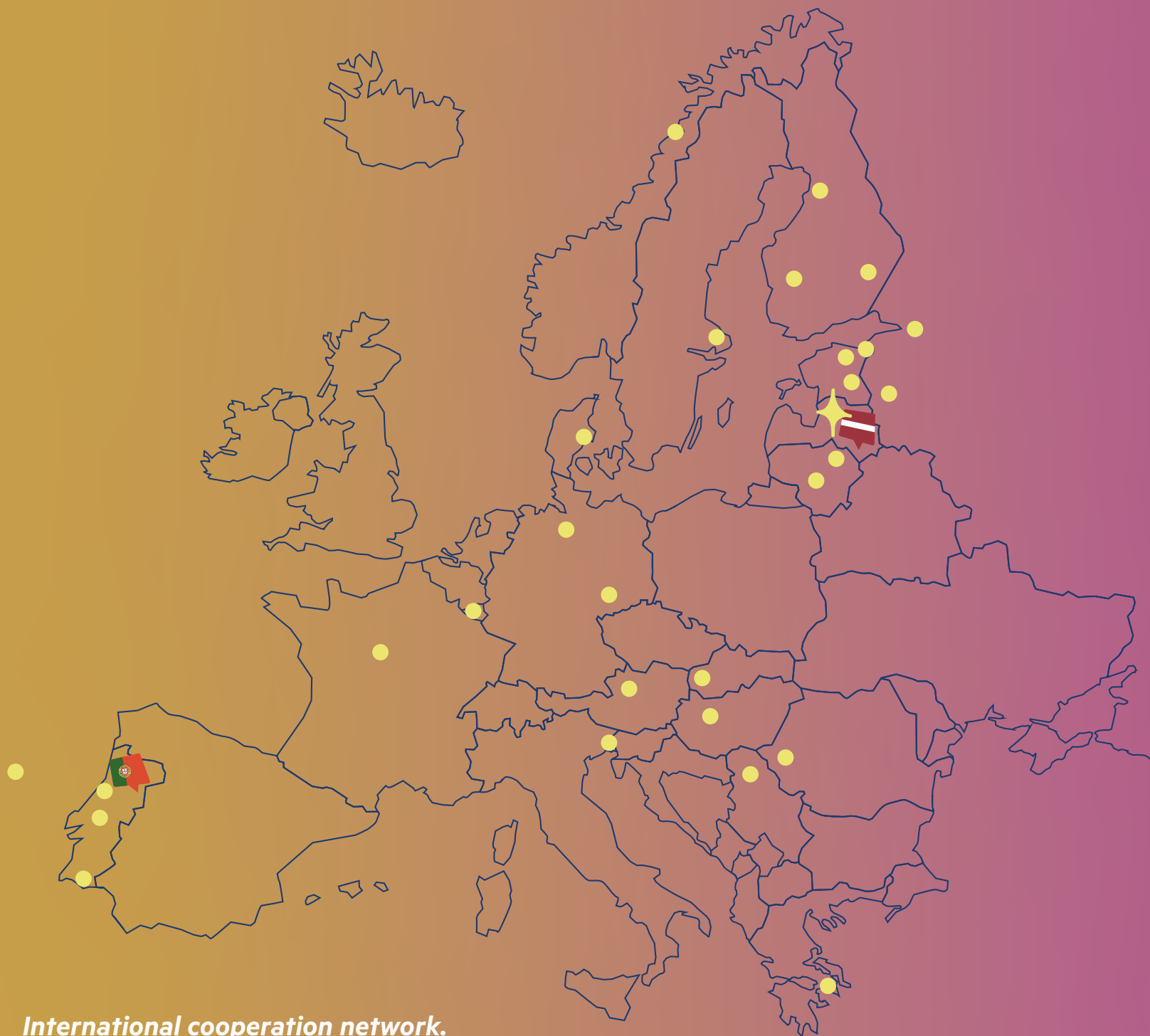
Europe's collective memory and common remembering of European history, including sensitivity to political instrumentalization, is a complicated question. It is said that a critical "remembrance culture" should be developed. To develop such a culture, the Great Question section in our democracy forum of the programme will involve attempts to accept history objectively, at the same time highlighting common European principles and values, for instance, implementing the New Bauhaus initiative.

One of the European Union's long-term goals is to make Europe climate-neutral by the year 2050. This goal is at the basis of Europe's Green Course, and it conforms to the EU resolve to act on a global scale in the area of climate politics. Environmental politics are not divorced from the cultural processes, but very tightly knit with them, and this paradigm has been included in the Cēsis ECoC programme. Climate neutrality is an urgent issue for Europe, and it is also an opportunity to make a better future for us all. Therefore the Human Nature part of the Cēsis ECoC programme will be developed thinking about present issues and challenges that can be discussed today, or that can be solved or highlighted at the level of lifestyle.

The City of Cēsis is a member of several international organizations, such as European Network of Cultural Centres, Union of the Baltic cities, Association of Castles and Museums around the Baltic Sea, and The Hanseatic League. Being a part of these organizations, the experience shared and gained, as well as existing and potential partnerships will be important tools for the implementation of Cēsis' ECoC initiatives and projects. The implementation of projects would involve both long-term and new partners. We also plan to collaborate with the embassies of Latvia in European Union states.

Work on establishing an international co-operation began back in 2019 when we visited Oulu and Århus to exchange experience. Active work on reaching out to potential international partners to establish a cooperation network began at the end of 2020. More information on the established international cooperation network is available on page 43 of this bid book.

International cooperation will be implemented through a close collaboration with embassies and foreign cultural institutes in Latvia, putting a special emphasis on working together with the French Institute in Latvia, Goethe Institut in Rīga, Nordic Council of Ministers Office in Latvia and the Danish Cultural Institute. We will work together with the Northern Dimension Partnership on Culture to create mutual cooperation, to promote the availability of support and to implement cultural and creative industry projects in the Northern European region.



Twin cities

*Rokiškis, Lithuania
Rakvere, Estonia
Achim, Germany
Tyresö, Sweden*

Baltic cities

*Kaunas, Lithuania
Tartu, Estonia
Narva, Estonia*

European cities

*Aarhus, Denmark
Oulu, Finland
Tampere, Finland
Savonlinna, Finland
Aveiro, Portugal
Faro, Portugal
Coimbra, Portugal
Azores, Portugal
Chemnitz, Germany
Pskov, Russia
Sankt-Peterburg, Russia
Esch-Uelzecht, Luxembourg
Timișoara, Romania
Hlohovec, Slovakia
Bodø, Norway
Veszprém, Hungary
Eleusis, Greece
Bad Ischl, Austria
Novi Sad, Serbia
Gorizia, Italy*

International cooperation network.

The cities that have agreed to become our partners.

Outreach

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.

The closer we were to submitting our application for European Capital of Culture, the tighter the door that would have let us organize town meetings in a customary and inclusive way closed. Despite this, we managed to talk to different groups of people, listened to them and involved them in the development of the story of Cēsis' stars. The following are the main activities we carried out.

Q16

ECoC logo and visual identity competition

We received our visual identity, of which we are so proud, not during a public tender procedure but by organizing a visual identity competition. As a result, we received 60 great ideas. We are happy that the winner was a young talent from Kaive village in the new Cēsis municipality.

Parallel to the Cēsis ECoC visual identity competition for professional artists, the call to participate was issued to Cēsis City Art School. For two weeks, their main art project was the Cēsis ECoC logo. The results were issued in a book of more than 100 pages and submitted to the Cēsis local government.

Joint work on cultural ideas

At the end of 2020, to involve locals in the search for ideas for cultural projects, we organized community brainstorming. We received 19 quality ideas that have been included in our application. They have laid the groundwork for the wider participation of society.

Agents

We have created a very active network of agents from the neighbouring municipalities and the region. They are our consultants and helpers so that we can reach the most remote farmstead to see the stars there.

Star event

The first larger-scale activity was the simple yet romantic collective decoration of Cēsis Christmas trees, using the recently adopted Cēsis ECoC visual identity with the star symbol at the centre of the logo. During Christmas time, zero waste stands with a stencil for the star were placed where the flow of people could be greater in secure circumstances.

Early in the morning, in the central square - Vienības Square, potted Christmas trees, the height of a person, were placed around the town's central Christmas tree. These became objects for decoration. In the spring, the trees were planted in nature to grow a special Cēsis star forest as a reminder for coming generations. This collective event is likely to become a permanent tradition.



Cultural walks, e.g., “re-member Cēsis” and the hybrid of sports and art

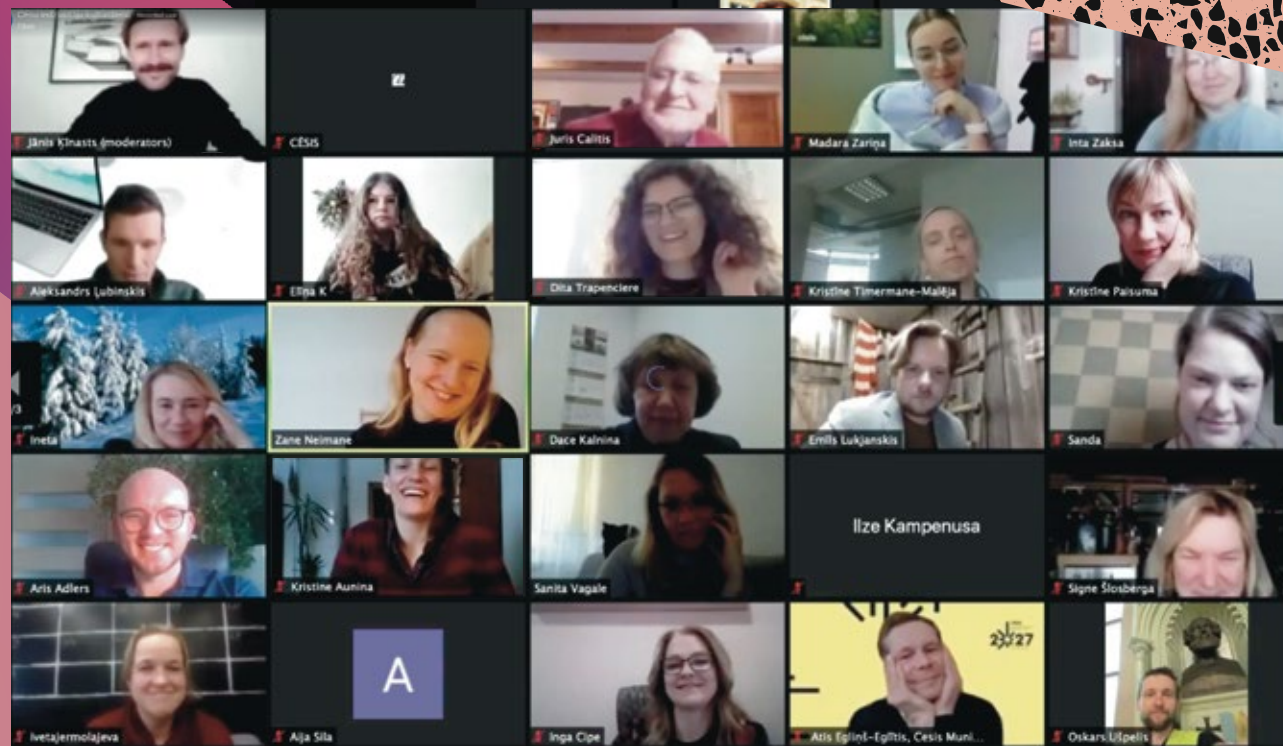
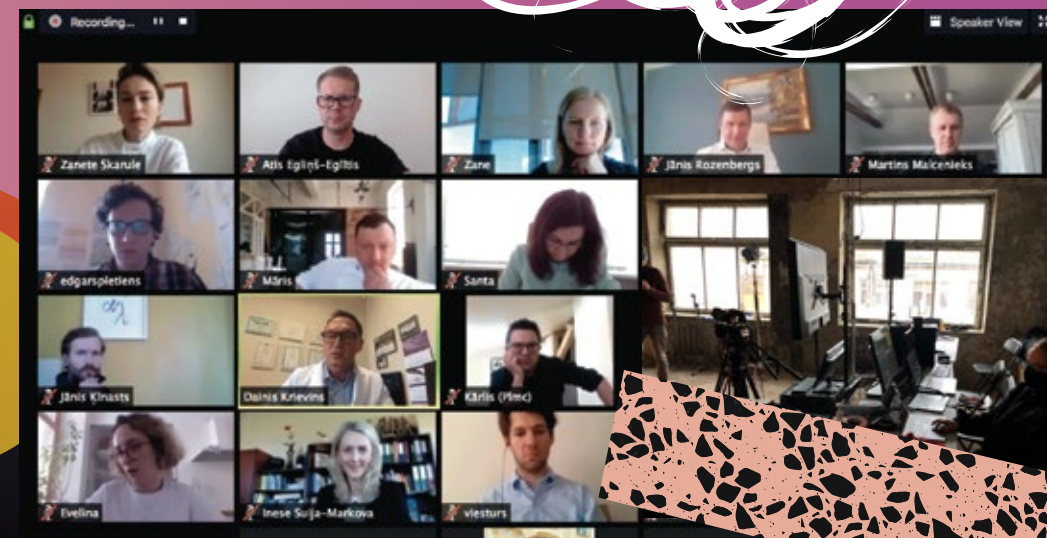
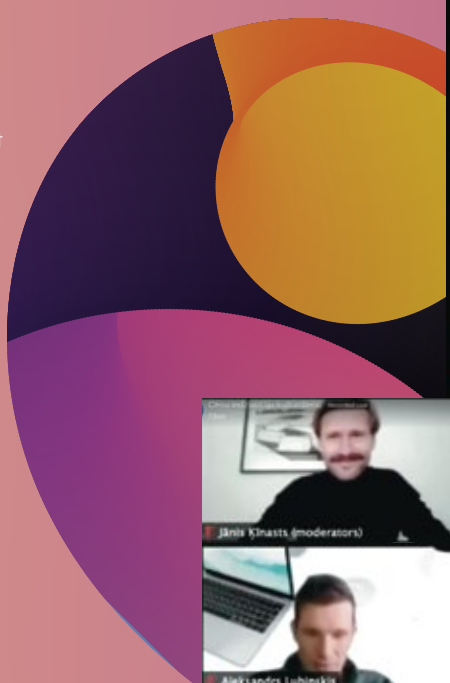
One of the first informal activities we are planning to launch at the time of writing this application, while indoor gatherings are still limited, is cultural open-air walks, using a metaphoric word game ‘re-member Cēsis’. It will be a pandemic-time hybrid between sports and art activities, linked together by cultural tourism approaches and methods. Small groups of people will be taken through the town to remember the places in Cēsis that are currently inaccessible to visitors together, to maybe invite their owners to come out, say some words of encouragement, and perhaps treat them to a cup of tea. This way, we are planning to re-access a seemingly inaccessible town, still in front of our eyes and inside our heads. This could be described as little topographic poetry workshops, during which we will establish a different but no less deep relationship with our feelings when we experience our town. In urban anthropology it is called urban diving.

Cēsis 2050

This was the beginning of our work with the public. In the spring of 2020, we organized a remote brainstorming session with former and present Cēsis residents – businessmen, city planners, doctors, teachers, and politicians. The results of the discussion laid the groundwork for the pillars of our culture programme.

Marathon of meetings

It really was a true marathon of Zoom and MS Teams meetings with different cultural organizations, local governments, and culture professionals. We met, explained, presented, and talked to different bodies, including the Cēsis Concert Hall, Cēsis Culture and Tourism Centre, Cēsis History and Art Museum and Cēsis Cultural Centre, Environmental Solutions Institute, Cēsis Central Library, society artCēsis, Rucka Art Residency Centre, Global Centre for Latvian Art, culture society Harmonija, Cēsis Pluriversity, Youth Council, Cēsis A. Kalniņš Music Secondary School, as well as several educational establishments, religious, and sports organizations. These conversations and their analysis laid the groundwork for the application.





CĒSU IEDZĪVOTĀJU KULTŪRDIENA

10.MARTĀ / TIEŠSAISTĒ

Cēsis inhabitants Culture Day

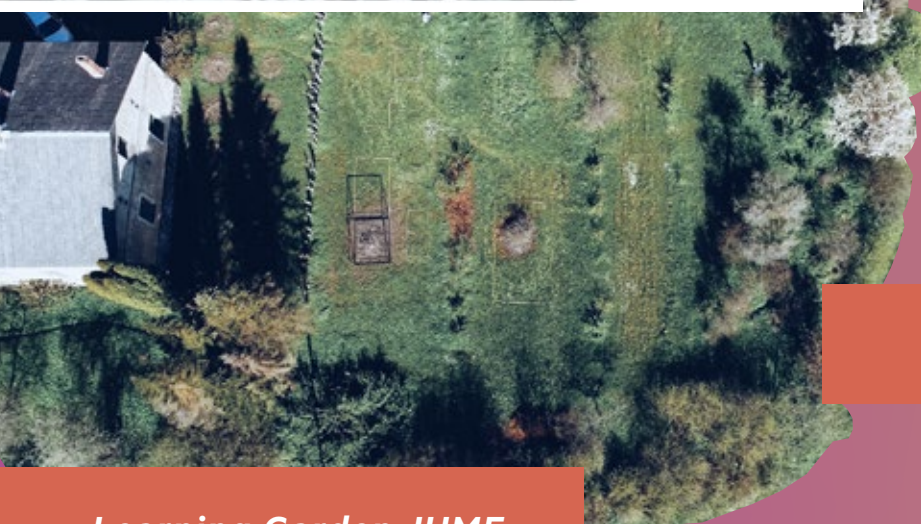
How to engage the local public in developing the urban environment at a time when we are urged not to go outside, observe distancing and be very careful? How to think about others, when one's everyday life is filled with worry about one's loved ones and oneself? How to involve people when there are increasing calls among the public for peace and quiet? These were the questions we asked ourselves while organizing our Culture Day in early spring of 2021.

The informative webinar or the Culture Day Cēsis 2027 was as simple as that: to create an event where what is happening in the world would be viewed through the four lenses chosen as Cēsis ECoC pillars: health, democracy, learning, and environment (at the time of the event, the ECoC programme had four pillars. The fifth pillar was added later). On the one hand, it involved seeing the world in Cēsis and on the other, every participant gained practical knowledge about every one of these four themes.



Vienības Square as an open-air exhibition hall

One of the boldest Cēsis ECoC process activities related to putting the brand and visual identity into practice is the plan to make improvements to the central Vienības square, in May of this year. Based on ECoC brand guidelines, the physical elements – planters and benches – will be placed in the form of a star in direct reference to the Cēsis ECoC logo. As we go on with the improvements, it is planned to use this as one of Cēsis 2027 conceptual market places, or agoras, holding exhibitions and other art activities there, transforming the square from a dead transit zone into a defined centre of gravity and a cultural hub.



Learning Garden JUME

Taking into account how important urban planning and design is for Cēsis ECoC citizen engagement process, work has begun on creating a community learning garden in the heart of Rucka park, using a small plot of land, which, since it might contain great archaeological treasures, may turn into something else in the future. Using the place creation process and phytoremediation approach based on the principles of permaculture and Cēsis Pluriversity, we have plans to establish a garden that shapes itself and through this process shapes its community.

Mapping the informal community

It is challenging to adapt to conditions where the community of creative people and intellectuals no longer meets “in the street” – in squares, cafés, at concerts and other events, including organized meetings by the art space MALA that used to gather the creative community around a dinner table once a month until the beginning of the pandemic.

To try to adapt to these conditions, we have started mapping the networks of people that have remained active but more closed and introverted during a time of social distancing.

The Blind

A public event during which we presented the former industrial block where, in Soviet times, visually impaired people were employed. This abandoned block has become an important Cēsis Municipality project to develop a creative and digital quarter which would foster the development of creative entrepreneurship. In the coldest season of 2021 we organized a huge experiment, live-streaming the presentation online from the freezing premises. Hundreds of potential entrepreneurs watched the presentation and our resolve left an impression on the rest of the country.

During the implementation of the programme in 2027, special care and attention will be dedicated to including visually impaired and hard of hearing people and ensuring possibilities for them to participate in the ECoC events.

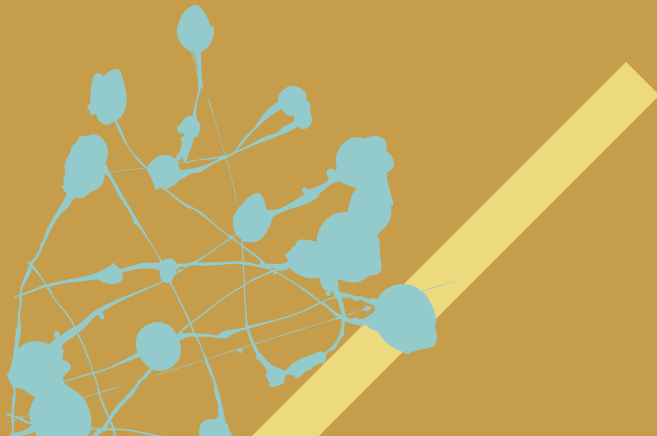
Explain how you intend to create opportunities for participation of marginalised and disadvantaged groups.

It is impossible to predict the extent of post-pandemic consequences in 2027 and whether the future can even be predicted in this context.

The future can, however, be imagined using all the currently available resources of collective intelligence and information technologies. As a result, the Cēsis ECoC 2027 cultural events programme will be developed as a hybrid reference to the conditions of adaptation, placing great emphasis on local and small-scale events in the outdoors space of the town along with larger-scale events to be developed digitally, which would mean reaching much greater audiences than we are used to seeing in concert and exhibition halls and museums. The materializing of the Cēsis ECoC culture programme can be conceptualized as 'glocal', i.e. as an interaction between the physically local and virtually global.

In such a conceptual framework, free-access cultural programme events play an immense role. The local informal art and culture community is to be involved in opening up the town's courtyards, streets, various forgotten territories, and other non-places, which have become "invisible", in the ECoC year and before.

The conceptual ECoC star story involves highlighting such places, and it is a great chance to produce and experience cultural events in a socially inclusive and responsible process, involving social centres, senior societies, low-income households, and physically and mentally impaired people. We in Cēsis already have experience, given the Blind Learning Production unit, which we intend to transform into a new quarter for contemporary crafts, digital technologies, and art education.



Q17



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

State gymnasiums, New School, Cēsis Art School, the Visually Impaired, Pluriversity, the music and art schools of the new municipality

It would make no sense to talk about Cēsis and its municipality as a potential European Capital of Culture without thinking about education, therefore through Learning as one of our pillars or Pluriversity we would like to view culture in the broader context of learning, which includes formal and informal, as well as the academic, cultural and lifelong learning dimensions.

It is important to note that the first ECoC project Explore+, involving Cēsis, Faro in Portugal, Chemnitz in Germany (ECoC2025), and Timisoara in Romania (ECoC 2023) was developed in education, thus demonstrating the great importance of education and youth in the entire ECoC application process.

Q18

What has been the annual budget for culture in the city over the last 5 years (excluding expenditure for the present European Capital of Culture application)?

In this application, we list the funds that refer to the expenditure for culture of the current Cēsis municipality. However, on July 1, 2021, the administrative territorial reform will become effective in Latvia, adding several areas of the current Amata, Jaunpiebalga, Līgatne, Pārgauja, Priekule, and Vecpiebalga municipalities to Cēsis. As a result, the traditions, human resources, and infrastructure of these localities will become an important contribution to the overall ECoC process.

Expenditures used to finance the work of the municipal agency Cēsis Culture and Tourism Centre and Cēsis Central Library are included in Cēsis municipal culture budget. In the years 2017, 2018, and 2019 the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) project “Restoration of the Cēsis Medieval Castle and Construction of the Castle Garden Structures” was carried out, which explains the substantial proportion of financing in the municipal budget in recent years.

We should note that Cēsis Culture and Tourism Centre is not only busy with various cultural activities, including those related to amateur art and folk art and maintaining National Song Festival traditions, but also ensures the functioning of the Cēsis Medieval Castle and Cēsis Museum of History and Art. The agency also holds competitions for large-scale cultural events and local projects. It has also delegated certain functions to an international residency centre that has been installed at the Rucka estate.

Vidzeme Concert Hall plays an additional, crucial role. It is not subsidized by municipal funding but, owing to its energetic activities and to the fact that the Cēsis Music School and Cultural Centre are located there, it can sustain itself and managed to take in over 1 million EUR annually before the outbreak of the pandemic.

Year	Annual budget for culture in the city (EUR)	Annual budget for culture in the city (in % of the total annual budget for the city)
2017	5 176 934	18,61 %
2018	4 194 371	15 %
2019	4 529 001	16,26 %
2020	2 399 531	8,26 %
2021*	2 905 100	7,94 %

*Year of application

The largest cultural infrastructure projects

In addition to the ERDF project, the local government has carried out several other large-scale projects. The largest investment, in the amount of EUR 13 million, was in the Vidzeme Concert Hall, which opened in 2014. In 2015, EUR 3 million was invested in the reconstruction of Cēsis Central Library. The preservation process of the Cēsis Medieval Castle has continued, using both EEA and ERDF financing, with the investment amounting to EUR 1.1 million.

Smaller but very important investment has been made in stage equipment and other facilities at Kaņukrogs, Vaive.

In addition to the acquired funds, the local government has created a special financial instrument for the support of private owners of cultural heritage. In the last four years, private owners have received over 250 thousand EUR, which helps them to carry out restoration projects as well as conduct research for further protection of cultural and historical heritage.

Other interdisciplinary cultural projects

Education plays a special role: in addition to substantial investment in formal education, the local government has started preliminary work on a Space Exploration Centre, investing over 10 million EUR to develop it as one of the most important education and innovation centres in the Baltic countries.

***In case the city is planning to use funds from its annual budget for culture to finance the European Capital of Culture project, please indicate this amount starting from the year of submission of the bid until the European Capital of Culture year.
Which amount of the overall annual budget does the city intend to spend for culture after the European Capital of Culture year (in euro and % of the overall annual budget)?***

The local government is not planning to use funds from its annual budget to finance the European Capital of Culture project and Cēsis plans to develop a separate financing fund instead.

After the European Capital of Culture year, the municipality plans to finance various activities that will ensure a transfer and sustainability of the results. After the European Capital of Culture year, the municipality intends to spend EUR 1.5 million for culture, i.e. 14.78% of the overall annual expenditures.

Q20/Q21

Please explain the overall operating budget (i.e. funds that are specifically set aside to cover operational expenditure). The budget shall cover the preparation phase, the year of the title, the evaluation and provisions for legacy activities. Please also fill in the table below.

<i>Total income to cover operating expenditure (in euro)</i>	<i>From the public sector (in euro)</i>	<i>From the public sector (in %)</i>	<i>From the private sector (in euro)</i>	<i>From the private sector (%)</i>
10 136 000	9 446 000	93,19%	690 000	6,81%

Q22

Income from the public sector

What is the breakdown of the income to be received from the public sector to cover operating expenditure?

Q23

Income from the public sector to cover operating expenditure	EUR	%
National Government	4 200 000	44,46 %
City	3 476 000	36,80 %
Region	0	0 %
EU (with exception of the Melina Mercouri Prize)	1 770 000	18,74 %
Other	0	0 %
TOTAL	9 446 000	100 %

Have the public finance authorities (City, Region, State) already voted on or made financial commitments to cover operating expenditure? If not, when will they do so?

The Cēsis municipal government has already made the first decisions with regard to preparing the bid and other matters related to the Cultural Capital of Europe process. In April 2021 the Cēsis municipal council also voted to conceptually support the above distribution of financing. Long-term financial decisions for the period until 2029 have been postponed, however, until the first stage elimination results have been received in 2021.

The Ministry of Culture of Latvia plans to apply for the necessary funds for co-financing (to provide for a culture programme and the related organizational expenditure, including for ensuring public order and medical assistance during events, international publicity and media coverage), which would amount up to 50% of the overall budget of the European Capital of Culture and would not exceed 10 million EUR for the time period for which the events of the ECoC programme are planned, including the opening events in 2025 or 2026.

Q24

What is the fund-raising strategy to seek support from private sponsors? What is the plan for involving sponsors in the event?

As the Cēsis business community grows, culture patronage is also expanding. This is borne out with regard to the Cēsis annual art festival, as well as the experiences of the concert hall administration and Cēsis city festival organizers. We are planning to implement our private financing strategies in 2021. It has been divided into three levels:

Budget for capital expenditure: What is the breakdown of the income to be received from the public sector to cover capital expenditure in connection with the title?

Q27

Income from the public sector to cover capital expenditure	EUR	%
National Government	500 000	20,95 %
City	6 865 641	28,77 %
Region	0	0 %
EU (with exception of the Melina Mercouri Prize)	12 000 000	50,28 %
Other	0	0 %
TOTAL	23 865 641	100 %

Q25

1. Developing a crowdfunding platform

The target audience for the crowdfunding platform are the people who would help finance individual projects and activities with a social impact and of benefit to various social groups. The crowdfunding platform would also be used to support projects that ensure the participation of different social groups in creating cultural events.

2. Patronage programme

The patronage programme has been planned as a long-term cooperation, starting in 2021. It would lead to financing the annual cultural programmes that would be of great importance in 2027. Funding from both private individuals and businesses would be attracted within the framework of the patronage programme. To motivate potential patrons, a special Cēsis Gold Card would be developed providing the owner with access to a special culture, tourism, and entertainment programme in Cēsis; individual publicity campaigns would also be developed to match the particular interests of would-be donors.

3. Attracting general sponsors

We plan to attract two to three national or international-level general sponsors who would be motivated by the wide publicity and visibility offered by the 2027 European Capital of Culture programme.

Q26

Please provide a breakdown of the operating expenditure by filling in the table below.

Programme expenditure (EUR)	Programme expenditure (%)	Promotion and marketing (EUR)	Promotion and marketing (%)	Wages, overhead and administration (EUR)	Wages, overhead and administration (%)	Other (EUR)	Other (%)	Total operating expenditure
6 588 400	65 %	2 027 200	20 %	1 520 400	15 %	0 %	0 %	0 %

Q28

Have the public finance authorities (city, region, State) already voted on or made financial commitments to cover capital expenditure? If not, when will they do so?

The decision on financing the Space Exploration Centre was made in 2019 and the construction is projected to begin in 2021.

The project application for the first stage of the creative and digital technologies quarter will be submitted and the decision to support it is expected in 2021. Projects for the next stages will be prepared and submitted in 2023.

At present, it is unclear as to the financing model for the Cēsis Museum depository, the largest museum depository outside Riga. It is expected that, once the sources for funding are known, they will be available starting in 2025.

Now that plans for the 2021-2027 period are already made, the local government of Cēsis municipality is an active participant in the process to develop the cultural infrastructure, educational, business, and urban environments. The title is one of the greatest priorities of the local government, since it would have a long-term impact on all further development processes of the municipality. Planning of EU funds and lobbying for covering ECoC expenditure are the utmost priorities. For instance, negotiations are taking place on the electrification of the railway to provide for a better commute from Riga and ensure connectivity with the Rail Baltica railway line. Another priority in business and education is the development of the creative and digital technologies quarter.

The municipal government, however, is aware of its responsibility not to create an infrastructure that would not be sustainable after 2027, e.g., a large open stage with seating for an audience of several thousand people. In developing the cultural programme, we are therefore taking into account the accessibility to and capacity of the existing cultural and other infrastructure and thinking of developing a pop-up infrastructure with a small ecological footprint.

Q29

What is your fundraising strategy to seek financial support from Union programmes/funds to cover capital expenditure?

Q30

If appropriate, please insert a table here that specifies which amounts will be spent for new cultural infrastructure to be used in the framework of the title year.

<i>Space Exploration Centre</i>	<i>10 065 641 EUR</i>
<i>Creative and digital technologies quarter</i>	<i>5 750 000 EUR</i>
<i>Development of museum open depository</i>	<i>8 050 000 EUR</i>

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

After being successful in the first stage, Cēsis is planning to establish the foundation Cēsis 2027, whose main objective will be to ensure a well-organized process for the next elimination stage and attract public funding. This practice, where developing the cultural programme and attracting financing is partly taken outside the local government, is common in title cities. Moreover, this is an opportunity to alleviate the administrative burden and shorten the lengthy decision-making process characteristic of bureaucratic institutions, including local governments.

One of the main challenges facing the Cēsis 2027 office will be to offer a new model of governance, dismantling structuralism and offering new solutions to ensure the preservation of knowledge, an even greater involvement of society, and maintenance of results in this multi-year European Capital of Culture process.

The Cēsis 2027 team will be formed of the existing team for the preparation process for the first stage, supplementing it in open competitions, thus ensuring that high level professionals are involved.

ECoC2027 council

The ECoC2027 advisory council is expected to function as a support mechanism. Its main task would be overseeing the transparency, openness, use of funds, and progress of activities within the European Capital of Culture process.

Head of Cēsis 2027 office

The head of the office will be charged with coordinating all processes, ensuring cooperation and the attraction of funding. They will ensure cooperation with various cultural institutions and organizations on the international, national, and local levels. They will be responsible for timely communication with the Cēsis municipal council and other regional institutions. Their responsibilities will also include attracting various EU funds for both the cultural programme and infrastructure development.

Cēsis 2027 artistic director

The artistic director will be responsible for developing a high quality cultural programme that matches the expectations of the local and national public and, with its highlights, possess international significance in the Northern European context.



**Cēsis
2027
office**

Financial and procurement structural unit of Cēsis 2027

This structural unit will be responsible for the accounting processes as well as organizing procurements (or tenders) to ensure the perfect transparency of funding.

Communication and marketing structural unit of Cēsis 2027

This structural unit will be responsible for public engagement, communications and marketing, cooperation with mass media, maintenance of Cēsis 2027 social media accounts and internet site, brand development and cooperation with private sponsors to ensure the attraction of private funding. It will also be tasked with developing cooperation networks with foreign local governments.

Cultural programme structural unit of Cēsis 2027

This structural unit will be charged with the task of developing the cultural programme in a way that would ensure the greatest public engagement. In cooperation with all other structural units, it will be the main focus for generating new ideas, developing various kinds of cooperation and bringing crazy ideas down to earth. It will be the main processor and nuclear reactor of Cēsis 2027 in our reach for the stars.

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

We developed Césis' application for the European Capital of Culture title at a challenging time, when we had very limited opportunities to meet. Active development of our application began in early autumn of 2020, which coincided with the second wave of the pandemic. Therefore, much of our energy has been devoted to organizing remote meetings, discussions, councils, pitches, public forums, and other forms of public engagement. Nothing, however, can replace a face-to-face meeting, an informal conversation during a coffee break or discussing the culture capital idea with a bartender, a random chat with a businessman or debating the idea among friends. None of that was possible. Even though we have tried to digitally reach the remotest farmstead, there are no guarantees that we were successful. From the very beginning we have said that the application cannot be written in an office, it must be developed in the streets. Yet during the pandemic, we have all been sitting in our flats or houses, with the streets out of our reach.

At the same time, we turned to our creativity to engage the public both over Christmas and in the spring. We have organized activities to keep the theme of Culture Capital in the public view, so that those who hear about it have a sense of belonging and pride that Césis has such ambitions. We have talked to our international partners, asking that they share their experiences and visions. We have also talked to regional politicians and the Ministry of Culture and had remote meetings with other candidate cities, with the goal of minimizing the risks, addressing the weaknesses of our application and reinforcing its strengths.

Strengths	Weaknesses
Significant engagement of the public	The parts of the programme have different levels of readiness
The programme's openness to diversity and dialogue	The difference in the capacities of the involved partners
Sincere and real; based on local communities, their experience and identity	The programme is complex in its search for solutions to 22nd century challenges
It hasn't been imported or bought through a procurement but created using our own resources	Low levels of engagement from national cultural organizations
Attainable budget	Many unknowns and variables – the administrative-territorial reform, the pandemic etc.
High levels of political and public support	Weak and underdeveloped network of volunteers
Good publicity and visibility (to the point that hackers saw it worthwhile to hack and delete the homepage cesis2027.lv)	
Development of a wide international partnership network	

The following matrix illustrates the main risks

Risk	Likelihood	Responsibility for risk control	Plan for diminishing the risk
<i>Pandemic: Travel is limited and ECoC is not bringing in the expected income and the cultural programme is seriously affected</i>	Medium	Cēsis 2027 office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If necessary, develop a programme, which is partly digital, thus ensuring greater international accessibility - Review the budget and planned activities - Plan activities interspersed in the Vidzeme region and rural areas to prevent mass gatherings
<i>Political: lost political support for the ECoC idea</i>	High	Cēsis municipal government, Head of Cēsis 2027 office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Include ECoC as an essential factor for municipal development in the long-term strategies of the newly formed Cēsis municipality - Provide full spectrum and open information about the benefits of ECoC - Substantiate the need for ECoC as an economic factor contributing to the growth of Cēsis City and Municipality
<i>Risk of bad publicity: negative attitude of the media</i>	Medium	Cēsis 2027 office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure regular publicity on planned activities - Ensure open procurements and competitions in all ECoC budget positions - Provide public reports on the use of funds - Regular cooperation with the media - Introduction of activities involving the public
<i>Lack of public energy and support: weak public engagement and, in case Cēsis is not successful, diminishing energy among the public</i>	Medium	Cēsis 2027 office, Cēsis municipal government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regular, even compulsory activities to ensure public engagement - Timely communication of the overall benefits of the ECoC process to the public - Development of a cooperation programme with the winner in Latvia and Portugal
<i>Management risks: frequent change of management, lack of competency, inadequate remuneration of management, inadequate capacity</i>	Low	Cēsis municipal government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction of a network-type management structure to ensure transfer of knowledge and practices even if there is a change in personnel - Forming a management structure that would ensure a distribution of risks - Developing a volunteer network - Attraction of culture professionals from different national cultural institutions and organizations
<i>Weak international cooperation and European dimension</i>	Low	Cēsis 2027 office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Start-up and activate cooperation networks and projects in a timely manner - Cooperation with Kaunas 2022 and Tartu 2024 - Consultations with ECoC candidates and winners in order to ensure transfer of best practices and knowledge

- Please provide with an outline of the city's intended marketing and communication strategy for the European Capital of Culture year.
- How does the city plan to highlight that the European Capital of Culture is an action of the European Union?

The overarching objective of communication is activating as much of the public as possible and its engagement in the ECoC story and its development.

At the same time, we would like to reach out on both the national and international levels and show Cēsis as a bold town, where creative people are carrying out ambitious projects on a global scale, ones that even seem to be incompatible with a town status.

The communication and marketing strategy will be an instrument to attract visitors from near and far, to increase the visibility of the municipality and showcase Cēsis as an excellent place to live, rest, and invest.

Directions of communication:

Engagement of the local public in the ECoC project

We emphasize that the potential title holders and winners are the inhabitants of Cēsis municipality, which fosters involvement in processes on all levels.

Informing the public in Latvia and abroad

We welcome both collaborations or simply visiting the ECoC process.



Vision for communication

We are open and honest! We are aware of both our strengths and weaknesses! We are not afraid to be frank – we admit that we have much to do for the town, municipality, and the public to think more democratically, live greener, continue learning, and be healthier.

Target groups and channels of communication

Cēsis inhabitants

Citizen engagement events, local government paper Cēsu Vēstis, local government communication channels, cesis2027.lv, newspaper Druva.

Surrounding municipalities, Vidzeme

Local society – Cēsis and Cēsis ECoC story's main advocates on the local level. Regional newspapers, regional TV, radio.

Latvia

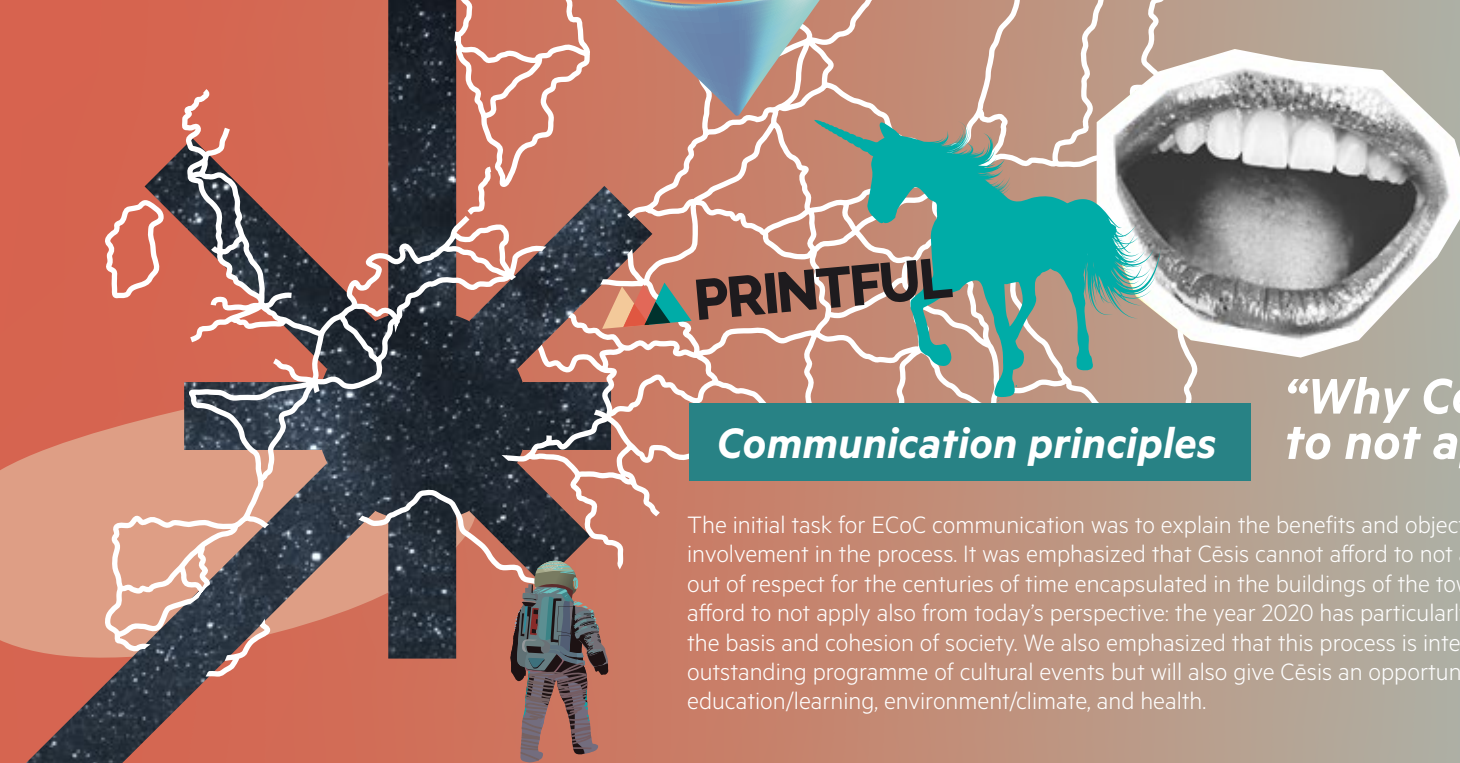
Direct communication – cultural organizations of Cēsis, NGOs, amateur artists. Traditional and digital media: cesis.lv, cesis2027.lv, social media accounts of Cēsis Municipality and ECoC2027, strengthening cooperation with the national media.

International recognizability

Twin cities, network of cooperation partners (existing and future ECoC cities), international media, embassies, culture and tourism bloggers, re-émigrés and diaspora organizations, international tourism expos.



Q33/Q34



PRINTFUL

Communication principles

“Why Cēsis cannot afford to not apply for the ECoC title?”

The initial task for ECoC communication was to explain the benefits and objectives of the competition and the necessary involvement in the process. It was emphasized that Cēsis cannot afford to not apply for the European Capital of Culture title out of respect for the centuries of time encapsulated in the buildings of the town by Latvian stars of culture. Cēsis cannot afford to not apply also from today's perspective: the year 2020 has particularly emphasized the human value of culture as the basis and cohesion of society. We also emphasized that this process is interdisciplinary: it will not only involve an outstanding programme of cultural events but will also give Cēsis an opportunity to respond to four challenges: democracy, education/learning, environment/climate, and health.

People of Cēsis are stars!

From the first days of preparing this application, we have been working on delivering the message of ECoC to the applicants, i.e. the residents of Cēsis, who, in our opinion, are the main communication channel. A Cēsis native would never sell a sincere and honest story for money. And there is nothing more valuable! Families, friends, colleagues, business partners, students, choirs, fraternal organizations are the ones that carry the story of Cēsis to the world at large.

Since the second half of 2020, countless meetings with local organizations have taken place, five campaigns to foster resident participation have been conducted, and public presentations have been given. All of this has been done to encourage Cēsis residents to shine and disseminate the message that Cēsis is an emerging new star in the constellation of European culture and that this star consists of smaller stars, each and every resident of Cēsis. Big and small, every one of them unique, and by cooperating among themselves, they emit a steady glow.

There are no former Cēsis natives!

Emigration is one of Latvia's challenges. Cēsis is no exception: in the last 20 years, many people have left the town. Since 2014 and to this day, we have been actively working on re-emigration issues. In the spring of 2021, two online meetings took place with Cēsis natives. The pronounced patriotic feeling regarding Cēsis is no myth: there are Cēsis natives who live in Cēsis and those who happen to reside elsewhere, but their connection to their town remains alive. Cēsis diaspora is found in the United Kingdom, Ireland, Germany, Denmark, Norway, Switzerland, Canada, and elsewhere. We are certain that the network of Cēsis natives abroad will help us to disseminate the story of Cēsis and promote its international recognition. We will continue our cooperation with organizations in their countries of residence – The World Association of Free Latvians, European Latvian Association, World Latvian Art Centre, and others.

Digitalism is a part of our everyday life

In recent years, Cēsis has been making strides in terms of digital development. The educational facility Cēsis Digital Centre (Cēsu digitālais centrs) has been established, digital skills workshops are taking place, forms of online society participation have been developed and a fully digital two-day town festival, as well as the four-day Conversation Festival LAMPA, a Cēsis Business Forum, presentations of different projects, etc. have all taken place online. We intend to reinforce and develop the digital participation platforms, so that every event can be fully enjoyed both on-site and online. By involving inhabitants in the local government decision-making and developing territory planning documents, we have gained experience in the use of opportunities provided by virtual and expanded realities, which will help us in developing our ECoC story.

Visual identity

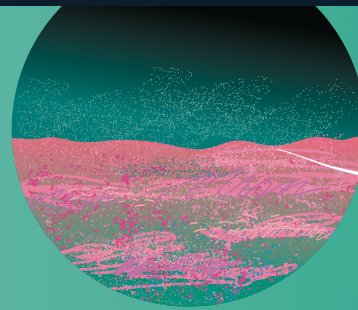
In November 2020, Cēsis' application for the European Capital of Culture title acquired a visual identity. There were sixty-one entries that, in the span of one week, were evaluated by ten experts representing different areas. Advertising the competition was an important instrument in informing the wider public about Cēsis' candidacy and promoting discussions on the importance of ECoC for Cēsis and Latvia at large. The numbers and beams are the same size and weight to shape the logo into a meaningful and powerful symbol. The beams in the logo are not the same length but that creates the effect of radiance and glow. The base colour of this visual identity is Cēsis blue, but it can be easily adapted and adjusted with other colours that might be associated with specific events and directions. The visual identity also provides endless possibilities for various needs. After producing our visual identity, we presented it on national television and other national media and popularized it locally. Large advertising stands were placed along the town borders, local bakeries baked gingerbread cookies in the shape of a star, and residents were urged to put stars on the Christmas trees placed in Vienības Square, etc.

Capacity to deliver. 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.

Q35

Cēsis made the decision to apply to become a candidate for European Capital of Culture as early as the spring of 2019: it was the first municipality that took this wise, strategic, bold, and ambitious step. Just as any other local government that makes a similar decision elsewhere in Europe, we too questioned our capacity, both in terms of finances and human capital, to carry out such a large-scale project. Even though Latvians have the expression “eyes may get scared of work, hands don’t get scared of it”, even in the decision-making process, Cēsis Municipal Council was completely united and made the supporting decision without political discussions. The Council has kept the same united stance through all the following activities and defining the objectives of the ECoC process. For instance, in defining the priorities of the 2021 budget, financing the ECoC process was considered to be one of the most important. It received complete and unequivocal support from the deputies. ECoC has also become a central question for the local administration. In Cēsis, ECoC is not just a project for people working in culture – it has become a project that enjoys wide support.

One day after the ECoC applications are submitted, local elections will take place in Latvia. They are special this time, because a regional administrative reform will be implemented. Even though at the time of preparing this application we cannot predict what support we can count on after the elections and the territorial reform, we have done careful work explaining the great benefits of the ECoC title to the leadership of neighbouring municipal councils. Up to now, the response has been very positive, and culture is the top priority of all election programmes, which implies that the support for the ECoC idea will continue to be stable and wide in the local political arena.



On April 27, 2021 heads of seven municipalities signed a cooperation manifesto for 2027 thus strengthening the political support to ECoC efforts ahead of the 2021 municipal election.

Q36

Please confirm and provide evidence that your city has or will have adequate and viable infrastructure to host the title. To do that please answer the following questions:

In the town and the surrounding municipalities, the cultural infrastructure will be used in full, starting with the Cēsis Concert Hall and down to the smallest cultural facility. Our cultural space is rich in old country estates and castles, churches, museums and exhibition halls, farmsteads, cemeteries, meadows, hills and picturesque landscapes.

Altogether we have mapped 150 potential cultural sites where it is possible to organize larger and smaller events. We have evaluated the project and come to the conclusion that we do not want to create an unsustainable infrastructure that would become a burden for the coming generations, and for that reason, we are currently choosing to make full use of the existing infrastructure, but create pop-up infrastructure where necessary for some of the projects to avoid a negative impact on the sustainability of the local economy, environment, and society.

Necessary infrastructure to be created:

- A large exhibition hall for contemporary art events;
- Black-box stage to provide for a variety of performing arts;
- Open-air stage for an extensive song festival programme.

What are the city's assets in terms of accessibility?

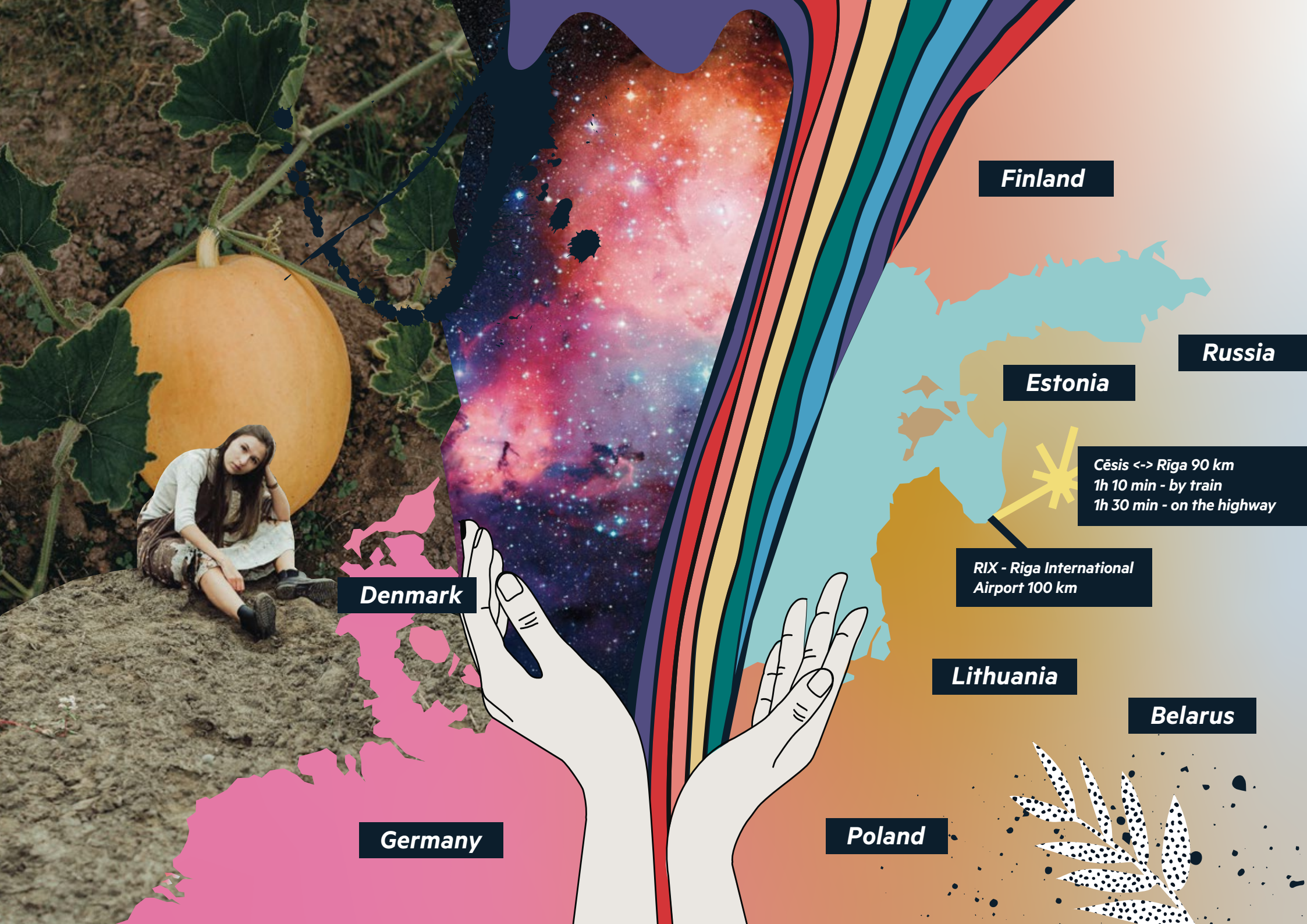
Cēsis is easily accessible from the Latvian capital Rīga, the Estonian city of Tartu, and the Russian city of Pskov. The closest is Riga, 90 kilometres away, where the international airport, international passenger port, and international railway hub are located. A road trip from Riga to Cēsis takes 1 hour, a train trip 1 hour and 15 minutes. We are working to shorten the travel time.



Q37

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?

Please see answers to questions 29 and 30!



Finland

Russia

Estonia

Cēsis <-> Rīga 90 km
1h 10 min - by train
1h 30 min - on the highway

RIX - Riga International
Airport 100 km

Lithuania

Belarus

Poland

Denmark

Germany

Collective Dreaming on Culture Day

Cēsis in 2027 is a place with many happy people – with many happy children – who bake caraway buns without consulting a cookbook – who have big dreams – and these dreams will come true – and people can meet – and hug – and hear one another – and people are healthy and full of life – and they are certain of what they will be doing tomorrow – they will be watching wonderful sunsets from hills in the Vidzeme highlands – people will not be afraid to strike a conversation and will be happy to meet someone with a different opinion – and they will be able to hear each other – they will be proud to be from Cēsis – and with their unique vision they will make Cēsis more beautiful – and they will continue the tradition of people from Cēsis running into one another in Rīga, Paris, or Moscow, and recognizing one another, and doing things together – and in 2027 there will still be snow on the ground in winter – Cēsis residents will learn from one another, parents will learn from children, children will learn from parents, teachers will learn from children, children will learn from their neighbours – and people will know their neighbours, and will borrow sugar or flour if they happen to have run out and then share the cake – they will share not only with their own but with people who have come to Cēsis or the Cēsis municipality as visitors – and Cēsis residents will go visit other places – and they will spread joy with their welcoming attitude – and Cēsis natives, in their hearts and feelings, will also be those who live in Jaunpiebalga, in Straupe, in Līgatne, and in Zaube – and when children are asked what they want to be when they grow up they will say: “A Cēsis native!” – and people of Cēsis will create valuable things – and Cēsis will be known not only in Latvia but throughout the world – people will come to Cēsis to gain experience, share, and gain knowledge – people will come to Cēsis to be born – and then they will stay in Cēsis to grow up – the municipality will be beautiful – and on some July afternoon in 2027 we will be able to meet and discuss what has come from all of this and what could happen in Cēsis in 2037 – and Cēsis will be a castle with grounds, with all the surrounding area: Jaunpiebalga, Amata, Priekuļi, Vecpiebalga, Pārgauja and Līgatne, because, as we can see from above, they have the greenest forests, and we have them for breathing – and Cēsis will simply be alive, owing to the fact that there will be people from other places – many of those who have gone out in the world will have returned and the population of the municipality will have grown – both in Cēsis and outside of Cēsis, all houses will be inhabited, all yards will be tidy, flowers will bloom, and everyone will be happy – everyone will want to live in Cēsis, and there will be love and friendship everywhere – and as a result, there will be fewer cases of prostate or breast cancer – instead of taking pills we will simply breathe in our fresh air and live in a clean environment, and that will be the reason why we are healthy and free of such disease – and it will all happen in Cēsis because it just has to happen, and, as we think in 2027 how it all started, we will remember March 10, 2021 during the pandemic, the day when we got together and wrote the future – dreamt together – thought together – got to know one another – listened to one another – met virtually and, albeit just a little, we also created –

and we reminded one another that even though it is difficult we should walk on this path together!