**International conference**

**„Museums bridging Baltic Past and Future”**

**Tukums/Riga, Latvia, 3-4 October, 2011**

Museum professionals from the Cities of the Union of the Baltic Cities are invited to the conference “Museums bridging Baltic Past and Future” organized by the Commission on Culture of the Union the Baltic Cities (UBC) in cooperation with the International Committee of Museums (ICOM) National Committee of Latvia as well as the Tukums museum and the Art Museum „Riga Bourse”.

There are 10 countries and more than 110 cities presented in the Union of the Baltic Cities. There is a big variety of museums in the Baltic Sea region and there are many changes constantly going on in the field of the museums. The conference will give time for presentations, discussions and reflections.

Participants are invited to discuss both theoretical issues and share practical experiences from all over the Baltic Sea region. Museum objects and stories, ideas and concepts, contents and forms of artistic expressions, the architecture and exhibition design, new built and renovated museums as well as new projects are in focus.

The conference participants are invited to deal questions like: What is a role of museum in society? In what way does museum benefit the society of today? How does the museum deal with changes in the society? What objects does museum choose as important? What objects are they collect and what stories they create? What new ideas and concepts are used in Baltic museums?

The conference program is divided in two parts. The first conference day – October 3 - participants are going to visit the Art Museum „Riga Bourse”, which is moved into recently renovated house in the heart of Old Riga designed by the German-born St Petersburg architect Harald Julius von Bosse (1812–1894) between 1852 and 1855.

The Art Museum „Riga Bourse” is a listed architectural landmark of national significance. Architecturally, the building is dominated by the Venetian Renaissance palazzo style, symbolising wealth and abundance. For the first time in the history of the building the opulent interior, rich in gilding and faux marble will be fully open to the public.

With the opening of a new type of museum, 2011 marks a turning point in the cultural life of Latvia. Although visitors will recognise the collections of the former Museum of Foreign Art in the displays, the working style has a new attitude to specialisation. The museum is positioned as a point of cultural exchange where excellence is more important. The museum wants to be a point of contact between East and West as well as for dialogue between the classical and the contemporary in the sense of both exhibits and form of perception. Another aspect of the new museum is harmony between the acquisition of knowledge and recreation as well as the breaking down of barriers between various forms of culture.

The second conference day– October 4 - will take place in Durbe Manor House in Tukums - a branch of the Tukums museum. The Durbe manor house is the only example of an early baronial mansion in Latvia where the late 19th and early 20th century interior has been fully restored to create the sense of Baltic German culture. During this day the participants are going to examine cases of good practise presented from all over the Baltic Sea region.

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The conference is supported by the Commission on Culture of the UBC and ICOM. There is no any conference fee for participants.

The conference organisers are inviting museums professionals, architects and designers as well as project managers to register for the conference and submit their papers until September 5, 2011

Participants are suggested to choose hotels in Riga. The bus transfer from Riga to Tukums will be provided October 4, 2011. For those who are going to participate in the General Conference of UBC in Liepāja the bus transfer will be provided as well.

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