



WELCOME TO THE 23rd ANNUAL GATHERING OF THE FRIENDS OF SCOUTING IN EUROPE Riga, Latvia - 6th through 9th October 2022

This year, we shall really visit a Nordic capital. At a first glance, people living their daily lives in Sweden, Norway or Finland will feel at home right away at this very tidy and organized place by the Baltic coast. And yet ... soon everybody will notice that we have come to a country of its own. Amidst the busy boulevards, the vast multitude of cafes full of guests sipping their lattes, the picturesque Old Town, and inevitable souvenir shops, you will find a distinct feel of joy by the proud population really appreciating their independence gained in 1991 - at the same time as neighbouring Estonia and Lithuania. Freedom is the absolute keyword here. This attitude also brings Latvia in the fore front regarding support to refugees in the present very turbulent time.

History has evidently also had its impact on Latvian scouting. Out of the roughly 2 million Latvians, around a thousand kids have presently chosen to be scouts. This means that FOSE travellers will this year actually physically meet and greet an impressive 3-4% of a country's scouts.

The present programme has been prepared and pressure tested in late April. Whereas Covid-19 is hardly an issue this year (masks are still required on Latvian public transportation, but that's more or less it), rising prices resulting from war and general uncertainty in the big World around us may also affect this arrangement. Developments in the energy, cost and travel situation may make changes necessary until the very last moment. It goes without saying that your organizers will struggle to avoid any such annoyance.

Who can participate in the event?

All Friends of Scouting in Europe and their adult family members are welcome, and so are their friends. Availability of accommodation as well as catering and transportation may force organizers to limit the number of participants, therefore be sure to book as early as possible. First come first served.

Registrations for the event

Please fill in & submit the attached form as soon as possible, and no later than **15th August 2022**. Payment info will be sent out upon registration. Please note that we can neither guarantee hotel accommodation nor the price of rooms for later registrations. Registrations will, for the same reason, be considered final and binding.

Please observe that organizers have no access to data on separate, national arrangements in connection to the FOSE meeting, and that you must therefore register your participation in the FOSE meeting separately, even if you are taking part in such other, additional programme.

Duration of the FOSE event

The official programme will start on Thursday, 6th October early afternoon, and end on Sunday, 9th October after lunch. Please check out the details below. Realizing that air travel is not yet fully back to normal following the Covid-19, please advise if your travel arrangements necessitate early or late arrivals or departures.

Be prepared ... notes on travelling to Latvia

Latvia is a member of the EU, including the Schengen Treaty. If you travel by air, restrictions including Covid-19 tests may still apply. Our departure information, dispensed after your registration, will provide possible updates. It is however your own responsibility to observe and to fulfil possible entry formalities. Visitors from non-EU countries are especially encouraged to check for possible visa requirements and entry restrictions with official information web sites, and local consular services prior to departure.

Riga has an international airport just off the city limits. There are daily direct flights to and from numerous European destinations; also low-cost airlines operate in and out of Riga. Please be aware that international train services to and from Latvia are still suspended following the pandemic. Alternatives to flying would thus be international coach lines - or driving your own car (for the time being, Kaliningrad is, in practice, no-go which gives traffic from the south a detour in Poland).

Be prepared ... notes on insurance

Everybody should check their insurance cover for expenses (medical as well as repatriation) related to possible illness and accidents that may occur during your stay in Latvia. EU citizens should bring their blue EU healthcare certificate. A travel cancellation policy might also prove a good idea - our programme is bound up on contracts with hotels, caterers and logistics providers, and therefore we cannot offer any refunds in case of your cancellation.

Please note, on the other hand, that a cancellation of the tour as such due to sudden travelling restrictions, is considered a highly unlikely event. Should this however be made necessary, we shall of course do our utmost to remunerate registered participants, depending on possible refunds to us.

Be prepared ... notes on climate and clothing

October will definitely mean autumn in Latvia. Generally expect chilly weather (10-15 C), and BE PREPARED for autumn showers and even chillier nights. Luckily, nicer weather may also occur... Please also be prepared that local transportation within city centres has, in the 21st century, focus on pedestrians. Do bring comfortable shoes

Costs

a) Programme

As everybody will be aware, prices in general, and energy prices in particular are unstable at the moment, to say the least. The cost for participants is, however expected at the level of previous years of

€ 299

Opposite to green grocers and other good people, we have chosen NOT to announce any “preventive price rise” at this moment. If things worsen considerably under way, we shall advise.

The programme will, as usually, be arranged on an **all inclusive basis**, so the programme fee will cover all common transportation throughout the prolonged week end, all excursions, guides, entrance fees, customary tips, and (not forgetting) catering inclusive of drinks during meals from Thursday afternoon until farewell time Sunday early afternoon.

It has become a tradition to use any financial surplus from the gathering, should it occur, to sponsor a Scout project, with priority given to a project in the host country.

b) Accommodation

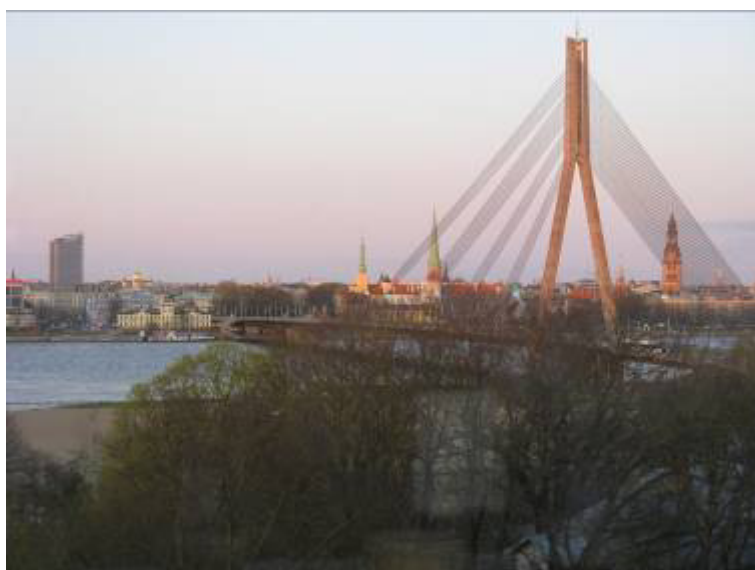
The group will stay at the **Hestia Hotel Draugi** right in the heart of the historical Old Town of Riga, and less than 10 minutes walk from the bus station from where international coach lines as well as bus 22 from the airport operate.

All rooms are equipped with en suite toilet/shower, cable TV as well as free WiFi. Room sizes may vary.

Accommodation for all 3 nights will cost € 135 per person in single rooms, and € 75 per person sharing a double room. Quoted prices include all fees and taxes. Safe private parking may be enjoyed against a supplementary fee. The hotel is entirely no smoking. Please observe that all city centres, and also that of Riga, may be lively during week ends - however, triple glazing in the windows will help secure quiet nights also in rooms facing the street.



If you want to extend your stay, additional nights at your hotel may be booked together with your registration for the FOSE tour in the enclosed form. Such extra nights will be charged at the group rate. Only such reservations made together with your tour booking will be charged at our favourable rate. Later (or individual) bookings should expect to pay the normal rate charged by the hotel, and are subject to vacancies.



Programme

Thursday 6th October Living in Latvia

We meet in the hotel lobby, and together with local scouts, we shall learn what it is like to be a Latvian, and about the life, the dreams and hopes of the new generation. At the same time, we shall find our bearings in the Old Town Riga. Dinner will be served at the Ala Pagrabs restaurant, some 5-7 minutes walk away from the hotel.



Friday 7th October Freedom and dreams

Today we shall learn about some highlights of Latvian history, Latvian Society, and Latvian Scouting. Some of the experiences will be -

- **The Singing Revolution.** Actually, Latvian independence was gained through a song. Stories and artefacts will show you how.
- **Latvian Library.** A huge collection of books, music and art. Your guide is of course also a scout.
- **Lunch at the National Library**
- **Riga Castle.** We shall learn about the governing of Latvia, and the presidency of Latvian Scouts - and the connection between the two.
- **Investing in the future.** Did you ever follow "Dragon's Den" or "Shark Tank" on telly? The reality TV shows where investors encourage more or less adventurous projects? Well, a scout parent is actually encouraging Latvian entrepreneurs, and we shall learn about future and growth.

Restaurant Stargorod will serve dinner.



Saturday 8th October Outside of Riga

This will be an excursion day. Highlights will be -

- Jūrmala and the Sea Scouts.

Half an hour's ride west of Riga, we find the seaside resort of Jūrmala with spa hotels, fancy holiday homes, and other holiday homes not being quite so posh any more. A lot of the buildings are still wooden. Here we also find Latvia's one and only sea scout group, lead by Valdis and his wife Iveta.

- **Wetlands.** The north-western part of the country holds large areas of wetlands - a paradise for nature-lovers and ornithologists.

- **Tukums.** A quite small scout organization doesn't really flash a scout centre ... or does it? Inga and her family live in a large forest - and a corner of that forest is dedicated to scouting purposes. Not only Tukums' own scouts go there for adventurous camps. We'll have a camp lunch at that place.

Back in Riga, it's time for the Annual Gathering.

The farewell dinner will be held at the Garage restaurant - some 10-15 minutes' walk from the hotel.



Sunday 9th October City scouting

We shall go underground to-day ... into the basement under the old St Gertrūdes Church which is the home of one of the Riga Scout Troops. Marcis tells about his group and their activities and shows around.

Under way, we shall enjoy and learn about the massive (and superbly well-kept) Art Nouveau buildings which are a distinctive pride of Riga.

We shall end the Tour having a tasteful lunch at the **Kolonāde Restaurant.**



This programme is valid as per the date of issue, May 2022. We reserve the right to amendments made necessary by circumstances beyond our control.

Registration form

To register for the 23rd annual gathering of the FRIENDS OF SCOUTING IN EUROPE, please fill in the below form, and send it as attachment to a mail to FOSEtours@live.dk. Snail mail to Johansen&Stephansen, Boegevej 5, DK-4070 Kirke Hyllinge is less efficient, less reliable, more expensive, but of course fully acceptable! You may fill in the form by hand (or even by typewriter if such a device is still available) and send us a scan.

Please fill in & return the form as soon as possible, but no later than **15th August 2022**. **Payment info (including the final participation fee) will be sent out upon registration. Prompt action will be appreciated as suppliers are waiting for a deposit!**

YES, cannot wait to go to Latvia on this year's **FOSE-tour**.

Name _____

Street/City/Country _____

Phone _____

Email _____

I/we shall **need hotel accommodation**

arrival (date)_____ departure(date)_____ (a total of _____ nights)

____ I shall bring family/friends along, and we will be ____ people, including myself

____ I hereby book ____ (number) of **double rooms** in the name of _____

____ (number) of **single rooms** in the name of _____

____ I am travelling on my own, but I would not mind sharing a double room with somebody else

I have the following special dietary requirement (e.g. vegan, vegetarian, vegetarian +fish/poultry, kosher, halal, allergies etc. ... or something that you just don't eat!):

Any further information or comments: _____

WAIVER AND RELEASE with respect to the 23rd annual gathering of the Friends of Scouting in Europe (FOSE):

I/we _____ desire to participate voluntarily in the 23rd annual gathering of the Friends of Scouting in Europe ("Event"). I assume voluntarily all of the risks associated with the participation in the Event. I confirm that I have sufficient insurance coverage to cover the consequences, should a risk associated with the Event materialize.

My attendance and participation is absolutely and entirely at my own risk without any exception, and I agree that neither the European Scout Foundation, Geneva, nor any of the members of the board of this Foundation, has any responsibility for my participation in the Event. I forever waive, release and discharge the Foundation and its board members from any and all claims, liabilities or expenses, whether such claim, liability or expense is in contract, statute, tort or otherwise, relating in any way to my participation in the Event. This waiver and release may not be modified orally. This waiver and release shall be governed by, and constituted in accordance with, the substantive laws of Switzerland.

Date: _____ Signature: _____