

Cultural Cities Commission Meeting, 6th-7th June 2024 in Espoo, Finland

Theme of the meeting: Participation, co-creation and meaningful life through art and culture

The Baltic Sea Culture Summer Meeting 2024, held on June 6-7 in Espoo, Finland, brought together cultural leaders from various UBC network cities.

On the first day, participants visited **Lippulaiva Library**, an example of sustainable development and community inclusion. Recycled furniture, durable materials, original interior design, and services such as an open community kitchen make the library an inviting and homely communal living room. **Philosopher Frank Martela's** keynote speech explored the question of a meaningful life, followed by fruitful discussions among participants.

The second day started with the **Commission Meeting**. Participants presented their cities and discussed future plans for the Cultural Cities Commission. Part of discussion was about the **Summer Summit Choral Festival 2024** held in Espoo, June 7-9, with the theme "Baltic Sea." This year invited guests for the festival included Riga Cathedral School's Girl's Choir TIARA and the Lithuanian boy's choir VARPELIS from Kaunas.

The study visits took participants to **EMMA Espoo Museum of Modern Art** and **Akseli Gallen- Kallela museum**. As the conclusion of the official program, guests attended the choir concert of the **Children's International Summer Summit Choral Festival**, where 100 young singers from various school choirs performed together on stage.

Cultural Cities Commission meeting

- Needs and hopes of the Cities
- Cultural Cities Commission work plan 2024 and year 2025.
- Co-operation with Ukrainian cities in culture & arts: Few examples from Espoo and of other cities about the art projects with Ukrainians

Espoo has many ideas for Cultural Cities Commission to share and welcomes any suggestions or ideas from other cities for discussion.

The Cultural Cities Commission Working Plan 2024-2025 aims to renew cooperation within the Union of the Baltic Cities. Espoo, the Chair of the Cultural Cities Commission, along with the Vice Chair Kaunas, has planned various activities, including online and offline meetings, for the coming year.

Espoo suggested organising a joint meeting with other commissions (Learning Cities, Safe Cities) to engage with active members from different cities and discuss the initiatives of the Cultural Commission.

Agreed: All cities support the idea of cooperation with other Commissions (Learning Cities, Safe Cities), Espoo will plan the dates and the theme.

At the meeting all cities presented their ideas, hopes and needs.

Meeting in Espoo was a first of-line meeting, fresh start of Cultural Cities Commission within the Union of the Baltic Cities network.

Subjects to share knowledge in the future:

- Laws directing municipal culture work.
- Culture policies and strategies in member cities
- Communication
- Data-based decision making (Kaunas is willing to share knowledge and examples of cultural monitoring in a webinar)
- Artist exchange between Ukrainian artists living in the UBC member cities.

Work plan autumn 2024:

We encourage you to join next online and offline meetings.

Please save the dates for the next Cultural Cities Commission meetings:

- **On-site meeting**, in Tartu, Estonia, Capital of Culture 2024, 12.-14th September.

Themes: Identity of the City, safer & better cities, resilience, finances and co-operation, legacy of European Capitals of Culture Cities (Tartu, Kaunas, Turku...)

- **Webinar 2**, October. Culturability Cultural Tourism workshop. City of Gdansk organizes.
- **Online meeting 4**, November “ Wrapping up 2024 and work plan of 2025”

Ideas for 2025

Co-operation with other commissions (Learning Cities, Safe Cities)

Exploring safety and security through culture.

We all hope to see more colleagues from Finland and other regions joining the Cultural Cities Commission activities in future and Espoo is working on establishing new contacts.

Participants:

- **Tiina Kasvi**, Chair of Cultural Cities Commission, Cultural Unit, Partnerships and Promoting culture, Espoo
- **Taiju Kiesilä**, Cultural Unit, Cultural Partnerships and Promoting Culture, Espoo
- **Sofiia Yakovyshyna**, Cultural Unit, Cultural Partnerships and Promoting Culture, Espoo
- **Simona Savickaite**, Kaunas Artists' House, Kaunas
- **Gailė Partikaitė**, Foreign Relations, Kaunas
- **Linda Pukite**, Department of Education, Culture and Sports, Riga
- **Krzysztof Adamczyk**, Mayors Office for Culture, Gdańsk
- **Barbara Frydrych**, Mayors Office for Culture, Gdańsk
- **Niina Niemi-Nagy**, Department of Cultural Promotion, Turku.
- **Staffan Beijar**, Cultural Unit, Mariehamn