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COME TO THE 16TH ANNUAL GATHERING OF THE FRIENDS OF SCOUTING IN EUROPE

Lithuania, 9th through 12th October 2014



This year, we shall go to the Baltic Region, to Lithuania. A country with a rich history - from 1253 when the Grand Duke Mindaugas founded Lithuania as an independent State, and through a Lithuanian-Polish union stretching as far as to the Black Sea. Lithuania was included in the Russian empire in 1795 - and up to modern times. In 1918, Lithuania once again became independent. However, recent history also encompasses numerous occupations - by Poland, by the Third Reich - and a period as a Socialist Soviet Republic until 1990, where a year before formal break-up of the Soviet Union, Lithuania became the first Soviet republic to declare the restoration of independent State of Lithuania. As of 2004, Lithuania is a member of the NATO as well as of the European Union.

During your four days in Lithuania, you will really meet a bit of all this, accompanied by nice Lithuanian scouts, nice food and drink, and - not least - the unbeatable company of other Friends of Scouting.

Who can participate?

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

Travel arrangements

Our base will be the capitol of Vilnius. Vilnius' international airport is served by several international airlines, including some of the cheap ones.

Lithuania is a member of the Schengen treaty. Entering the country from other EU countries therefore implies no specific formalities. If you plan to enter Lithuania from a non-EU country, please check for possible visa requirements with local consular services in your own country prior to departure.

What to bring

Bring casual clothing for early autumn temperatures – and a scout uniform, if you have got one.

Programme

The official programme will start on Thursday, 9th October mid-afternoon, and end Sunday 12th October after lunch. Please check out the details below. Like in previous years, however, you can opt for participating in a week end only-programme i.e. Saturday late afternoon through Sunday lunchtime.

Costs

a) Full programme, 9th through 12th October

The cost for participation in the full programme (accommodation not included) will be **€ 299**.

The programme will, as usually, be arranged on an *all inclusive basis*, and so the programme fee will cover transportation throughout the week end, all excursions, guides, entrance fees, 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 Domus Maria Hotel***, Ausros Vartu Street 12, LT-01303 Vilnius. The hotel is set in a former monastery, located in the very heart of the Old Town pedestrian street area.

All rooms are equipped with private toilet/shower, cable TV and free WiFi access. Any use of mini bars will be at own expense, however...



Accommodation for **all 3 nights** will cost € 171 per person in single rooms, and € 118.50 per person sharing double rooms.

Programme

Thursday 9th October Vilnius

We meet in the hotel lobby (or in front of the hotel in the event of sunshine...) at 15:15 for a guided walk through the walking streets of old town Vilnius. We shall visit the Gediminas Hill with its beautiful view over Vilnius, and also see the Royal Palace, which has just been beautifully restored thanks to a grant from the EU.

The cultural experience will be followed by a culinary one - a welcome dinner in town. The old town being quite compact, everything will be within comfortable walking distance.



Friday 10th October History and countryside

Friday, a coach will take us through a typical Lithuanian landscape of vast forests, little villages where time stood still, and open farm land. We shall visit the *Gruto Parkas* - with a stunning collection of memorabilia from the Soviet period, including literally hundreds of obsolete statues, as well as paintings and other artworks of the notabilities of the time. The museum also shows rebuilt locations such as a library, a polling station and a cinema.

We shall have lunch by the beautiful lake Druskonis, just a few miles off the Belarus border. After a stroll in the picturesque town of Druskininkai, the coach will take us to Trakai - the home of the remaining Turkic Karaite population, brought in around 1400 a.d. as bodyguards for the Royals at Trakai, thence being the capital of the country. We shall end the day with a typical Karaite dinner, and shall be back at the hotel for a night cap.



Saturday 11th October Geography, Cold War and Scouts

Who would imagine that the geographical centre of Europe should actually be found east of the Baltic Sea? Actually this *is* the case, and on our way Saturday morning, we shall of course make a photo stop on the site.

Later, we shall drive into the forest to have a look at the remains of a well hidden nuclear missile base from where numerous warheads were ready for launch 24/7/365 during the cold war.

We shall have a picnic lunch in the town of Ukmerge - on the site where an important military control centre was, in the days of the cold war, hidden in the basement under a kindergarten in the middle of a residential area. The premises now function as a youth centre where we shall meet and greet with local scouts, and have a presentation of their ideas for *small projects*. You are invited to put on your scout uniform for the event, if you have got one.

We shall be back in Vilnius in the afternoon in good time to wash off the dust, and to get yourselves prepared for the *annual meeting of the Friends of Scouting*, and for the *traditional Saturday Night Dinner*: nice food, nice environment, welcoming of new friends, and other *official words*.



Sunday 12th October Genocide and Uproar

We shall start the day at the Vilnius Museum of Genocide Victims, also known as the KGB museum. Besides showing an exhibition of the more sinister sides of Lithuanian history, the museum building is the former KGB headquarters, and the prison cells and wiretap facilities are still in place.

Afterwards, we shall go to the Vilnius TV tower. Besides being an impressive landmark, this was also the site of the decisive uproar leading to independency from the Soviet Union in 1990.

We shall visit the tower - and a final farewell lunch will mark the end of this year's gathering.



What you don't see during the gathering...

Well, Lithuania has so much to offer, and we cannot possibly see it all in just a prolonged week end. For those having the possibility to do so, take the chance. Roads are excellent, and facilities for tourists are fully up to European standards. Guide books and tourist agencies will happily lead your way.



Ignalina power plant -
Built according to roughly the same design as the Tjernobyl plant in Ukraine. The power plant is being decommissioned as part of the EU membership agreement. There is a small visitor centre with ITV monitoring of the reactors.



Visaginas -
The town next to the power plant. Probably the most Soviet town outside of Russia.



Kernavès -
The site of the foundation of the first Lithuanian State. The site also holds a nice museum and a replica of a medieval township.



Countryside -
You will really find peaceful places where time stood still. Stop your engine and enjoy!



Kaunas -
The second largest city in Lithuania, being the capital 1920-1939 during Polish occupation



Baltic coastline -
Admittedly, distance to Vilnius may be a hindrance, and the season may be wrong, however the Baltic coast national park boasts sights and seaside galore.

Registration form

To register for the 16th 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, more expensive, but of course fully acceptable! You may fill out this form by hand and send us a scan - or you may write in the WORD document which is also enclosed with the invitation.

Please fill in & return the form as soon as possible, but no later than **17th August 2014**. **Payment info will be sent out upon registration.**

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

Name _____

Street/City/Country _____

Phone _____

Email _____

I/we shall **arrive** Vilnius

on (date)_____ at (time)_____ by air___ / rail___ / road___ (tick as appropriate)

I/we shall **leave** Vilnius

on (date)_____ at (time)_____ by air___ / rail___ / road___ (tick as appropriate)

____ I shall bring family/friends along, and there 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. vegetarian, kosher, halal, allergies etc.):

Any further information or comments: _____

WAIVER AND RELEASE with respect to the 16th annual gathering of the Friends of Scouting in Europe (FOSE):

I/we _____ desire to participate voluntarily in the 16th 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: _____

Friends of Scouting in Europe, Annual Gathering
Vilnius, Lithuania, 9th through 12th October, 2014