

## **Development of Tourism Information Provider Network in Latvia**

History of the tourism information providers in Latvia is only slightly longer than 10 years . The chronology of events summarized by LATTŪRINFO gives the best insight in elaboration of and alterations in tourism information system.

### **Year 1994**

The first TICs begin their operations in Latvia – in Salacgrīva, Tukums, Jūrmala, and Limbaži. The first professionally prepared Tourism Information Centre employees graduate from Riga Tourism School.

### **Year 1995**

More TICs are established in Latvia

### **Year 1996**

Association of Latvian Tourism Information Organizations "LATTŪRINFO" is established, which on January 26, 2006 obtains a status of an association.

### **Year 1997**

Arrangement of annual seminars for improving professional qualification of employees of Tourism Information Centres has been initiated in cooperation with the Tourism State Development Agency.

The Association begins publishing the annual issue "LATTŪRINFO NEWS" (*LATTŪRINFO ZIŅAS*).

### **Year 1998**

The Law on Tourism legally establishes the status of tourism information centres, which is specified in further amendments to the law.

### **Year 1999**

Not only new tourism information providers originate in Latvia, but the existing are improved in accordance with the standards and for the needs of tourists.

### **Year 2000**

The first Latvian/Baltic tourism information offices are open abroad - in Helsinki and Munster.

### **Year 2001**

The Latvian State Standard for tourism information providers is elaborated and approved, establishing the following division: Tourism information bureau, Tourism information centre, Tourism information station, and Tourism information stand.

The Association begins collection of statistical data about work of Latvian TICs.

### **2001-2002**

The state investment project "Development of Latvian tourism information centre network" is implemented, as a result of which the majority of Latvian TICs are equipped with the necessary office equipment – computers, fax machines, printers.

### **Year 2002**

In Riga, in cooperation with the tourism institutions of the relevant countries, the first conference for employees of tourism information centres of the Baltic States (Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania) takes place.

LATTŪRINFO becomes a member of European Tourism Officer Association (EUTO) and the members from the Association for the first time participate in the EUTO annual conference in Scotland.

### **2003-2006**

The Association LATTŪRINFO, in a capacity of a partner is participating in the *PHARE CBC* 2001 and 2003 project "Bauska - Southern Gate of Latvia to Via Baltica Nordica", implementation of phase I and II.

### **Year 2004**

Latvian tourism information bureau of Tourism Development State Agency (TDSA) in Riga is established.

A profession standard of tourism information consultant is elaborated. In the Latvian profession classifier, a profession "Tourism information consultant" is introduced.

### **Year 2005**

Standardisation of tourism information providers is planned to be initiated.

Upon request by the Ministry for Economics of the Republic of Latvia, a research is conducted on "Elaboration of economic efficiency and optimal functionality model of the tourism information centres".

The Association LATTŪRINFO obtains support in EU projects as a project applicant. Within framework of the EC programme *Leonardo da Vinci*, the Association along with foreign cooperation partners from Estonia, Scotland, and EUTO implements the project "Role of culture and art in sustainable tourism development - good experience exchange".

#### **Year 2006**

Certification of tourism information centres is initiated by SIA "Latvijas kvalitātes institūts". Certificates of conformance with the Latvian State Standard LVS 200-7:2002 "Tourism information providers" are awarded to Kuldīga TIC, Kandava TIC, Tukums district TIC, and others.

Amendments are implemented in Law on Tourism, expanding and specifying the status of tourism information providers.

The project "Sustainable tourism development: embodied past for the future – good experience exchange" is supported and along with partners from Scotland and Malta is implemented in the *Leonardo da Vinci* programme in October of year 2006 in Malta.

#### **Year 2007**

The Association LATTŪRINFO, in a capacity of a partner, participates in the *ESF* project "Mastering English professional lexicon in tourism sphere - elaboration and implementation of continuing education programmes for tourism specialists".

Representatives of the Association LATTŪRINFO take part in the work group of the Ministry for Economics of the Republic of Latvia in preparation of normative enactments for implementation of the European Regional Development Fund activity "Tourism information system development".

The project submitted by the association LATTŪRINFO for the *Leonardo da Vinci* programme "Improvement of knowledge and skills of employees of Latvian TICs in the United Kingdom" in year 2008 has been approved.

For the first time, Latvia hosts the EUTO annual conference and experience exchange event.