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## ABSTRACT OF THE PRESENTATION

### **The Results of Preservation and Development Planning of the World Heritage Site in Riga** Municipal level experience

The Historic Centre of Riga was inscribed in the UNESCO's World Heritage List in December 1997 (site No.852), comprising an area of 438 hectares with the buffer zone of 1574 hectares and covering 5.13 % of the total city area. It's Outstanding Universal Value representing a living illustration of European history. Through centuries, Riga has been the centre of many historic events, a meeting point for European nations and multicultural environment from its origin. It has managed to preserve evidence of European influence on its historical development, borders between the West and the East, and intersection of trading and cultural routes. Riga has always been a modern city keeping up with the current trends in architecture and urban planning, and at the same time, preserving the city's integrity in the course of development.

Riga has given many pearls to the culture of Europe and the world – the most important architectural includes the Old Riga, *Art Nouveau/Jugendstil*, and neoclassical style architecture in wood. The Historic Centre of Riga has the finest concentration of Art Nouveau architecture in the world.

The Historic Centre is comprised of three different urban landscapes – the relatively well-preserved medieval core, the 19<sup>th</sup> century semi-circle of boulevards with a green belt on both sides of the City Canal, and the former suburban quarters surrounding the boulevards with dense built-up areas with a rectangular network of streets and wooden architecture of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Each of these parts has its characteristic relationship of buildings and public outdoor spaces.

According to the Latvian *Law on Preservation and Protection of the Historic Centre of Riga*, municipality – Riga City Council is responsible for elaboration and implementation of plan for preservation and development of the Historic Centre of Riga and its protection zone territory - document, which is a part of preservation and management system for World Heritage Site. Such document belongs also to the Latvian *spatial development planning system* and is the basic statutory plan with main provisions and detailed by-laws for land-use and construction specific for this territory, sharing the aims of preservation and development of the cultural heritage.

The first plan called *The Territorial Plan for the Historic Centre of Riga and its Protection Zone* was adopted by the Riga City Council in 2006 and targeted on 12 year perspective. It was amended in 2013. Regulations demand the evaluation of every intended change related to heritage or the original structure, based on an assessment of certain cultural and historical values, open architectural competition in every case, when a new construction is planned, bordering with public outdoor space, as well as open discussion in inter-institutional Council. These initiatives are being enhanced by changing attitudes towards heritage values in the society thanks to public discussions

organized by municipal institutions, state NGOs and extensive campaigns for tourist attraction managed by municipal Tourist Development Bureau.

The preservation and development framework for the Historic Centre of Riga is constantly being elaborated e.g. by data base improvement, further elaboration of detailed plans and local plans for certain areas, overall visual impact studies and their requirements, procedures for heritage impact assessment as well as diversification of local community involvement. The new long-term Development Strategy *Rīga 2030* and mid-term Development Programme was approved recently.

In recent years City Development Department with its special purpose Historic Centre Planning Division is working on monitoring the results, success and problematic issues in implementation of the Plan. The aim is to conclude on necessity for further improvements or elaboration a set of new planning documents for better management of the World Heritage in Riga. These activities include various professional studies for thematic planning and management purposes, like Public Outdoor Space Improvements' Thematic Plan and Housing Thematic Plan etc., which will be started in 2015. The results of targeted Residents' Questionnaire about Living Environment Quality in Historic Centre, its situation and needs will serve as a good discussion base for further development planning activities.

In 2013 were performed studies for *Assessment of Pedestrian and Bicycle Traffic Flows in Historic Centre* and streets' segments inventory, as well as study of *Effectiveness of Real Estate Tax Reductions' Support for Building Owners*. The *Local Plan for Skanste Neighbourhood* – a priority new development area of 228 hectares in the Historic Centre buffer zone is given to public consultation on 20<sup>th</sup> December. Recently was finished the study *Proposals for Basic Provisions for the Development of Public Outdoor Space Structure of Central Part of Riga* and elaboration of original methodology for *Qualitative Evaluation of Impact of Modifications of Buildings Happened in the Period From 2006 to 2014 on Outstanding Universal Value* and study based on it. Evaluation of 8 year results of Historic Centre Housing Policy is in process.

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Riga is already a venue for cultural events on an international scale, but in 2014 it is the cultural epicentre of Europe 365 days a year. During its year as *European Capital of Culture*, hundreds of special events are taking place in the very broadest sense of culture, providing new understanding of culture as a positive force of change in people's lives.

There is still some time left to visit the Capital, which will become the seat of Presidency of the Council of the European Union on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2015. Welcome to Riga!

RIGA CITY COUNCIL

CITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT, BOARD OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT