

Application form for listing under the “European Heritage Label” scheme

Country	Latvia
Region/province	Kurzeme region, Kuldiga city
Name of the cultural property ¹ , monument, natural or urban site ² , or site that has played a key role in European history.	Kuldiga
Owner the cultural property, monument, natural or urban site, or site that has played a key role in European history	Kuldiga Municipality
Public or private authorities responsible for the site or property (delegated management)	Kuldiga Town Council
Postal address	
Geographic coordinates	<i>Geographical location:</i> Latitude 56°58'03''; Longitude 21°58'14'' The property is located in the western part of Latvia, in Kuldiga district, 150 km from Riga, the capital of Latvia. See attached map – appendix nr. 1.
Reasons for listing	<p>Kuldiga is a little unique old town, which is significant for Preserved town planning of middle age style; Preserved splendid wooden buildings of 17-19 centuries; There is the widest waterfall in all the Europe situated (the width is 249 - 275 m depending from season); The coasts of the riversides are linked with old, one of the longest brick bridges; Since 1368 Kuldiga has been a member of the Hanseatic League; It is the native town of the duke Jacob; In 1595-1618, has been a capital of Kurland.</p> <p>Kuldiga is a province town of the Baltic region where number of unique values is concentrated at one place. There is specific town environment with unrepeatabe social life where dominates throw centuries unchanged romantic and intimate spirit.</p> <p>Kuldiga old town fulfils following criteria – site of cultural and historical interest that have particular European significance for Member States in general and urban and natural area, riverside archaeological site. The deep valley of the river Venta, Venta falls, changing riverbed and the red brick bridge together have made very harmonic scenery which proves that humans are able to make a harmony of their objects and natural scenery. So old wooden buildings as from 17 century in other parts</p>

¹ The term “cultural property” refers to an object that is emblematic of European history

²A “site” can be a place, building or structure, or a landscape, etc., including any non-physical heritage associated with the site

	<p>of the North of Europe have not remained. The wooden buildings of Kuldīga are created in particularly other style than well known Scandinavian wooden building style. This specific style can be characterised as a result of interaction between historical styles of Europe and local craft traditions.</p>
<p>Description of the cultural property, monument, natural or urban site, or site that has played a key role in European history</p>	<p>Material and immaterial heritage of Kuldīga has developed in harmonic interaction between national traditions and west Europe culture habits that can be experienced by passing through Kuldīga old town. Kuldīga is one of the most beautiful historical towns of Latvia that has preserved its authenticity on the very high level that is value of the Europe scale. Political, economical and culture relations with Germans and other nations have left evidences to cultural heritage of Kuldīga and district. Foreigners that lived and worked in town have historically had important role in creation of the Kuldīga cultural heritage. Baltic Germans have the most significant influence on Latvian culture.</p> <p>The real Europe level value heritage is represented with authenticity of Kuldīga historical centre and buildings that has remained on a high level. The authenticity of the town planning is obvious. With exceptions of some small changes (for example – correction of streets in the area of Venta Bridge in 1874) the plan had maintained the historical structure since the 13th century. See attached maps and Kuldīga development phases created by architect Aldis Ornins. There is no deforming breach of streets, there are only vacant and planted with greenery vanished building places which may be built up in future.</p> <p>The greatest value of Kuldīga historical centre is the unitary and harmonic planning structure. The wooden buildings are built at the end of the 17th, 18th or in the 19th century. In the circumstances of a restricted economical development they have preserved the historical planning with spacious rooms, chimneys in the centre and traditional sizes. The buildings have tile roofs sometimes with downcast endings. Doors are rich in ornaments, with carved pivots and handles, above the doors - glass windows for lanterns.</p> <p>Historically the river Venta and Venta falls had been significant factors in developing Kuldīga town. The following heritage objects are geographically connected with the valley of the river Venta: Old Kuldīga castle mound, Kuldīga Castle, Venta channel.</p> <p><i>Old Kuldīga castle mound</i> is located on the left bank of the river Venta below Venta falls by the estuary of Old Kuldīga nullah in the river Venta. The natural watercourses protected the biggest castle mound of Latvia from three sides. The castle mound and the ancient town</p>

occupied in total more than 1 ha big area. There was Old Kuldiga town with an area of about 10 ha behind the southwest wall and ditch. In 1355 the citizens of the ancient town had to move closer to the newly built stone castle built by the knights in the territory of the present town. There are several legends (about underground passages, copper pendants) and tales about the castle mound. This castle mound is a heritage monument of national importance.

Venta waterway has also been one of the factors determining that in the middle of the 13th century the Livonian Order started to build a *stone castle* by the very Venta falls. The natural barriers – the valley of the river Venta and the river Aleksupite ensured protection of the castle but the dolomites forming the valley of the river were used as a building material for the castle. In the 13th century a settlement which was the foundation of the development of Kuldiga town started to develop around the Order's castle. In 1701, during the Nordic war Swedish troops invaded Kuldiga castle which became uninhabitable in 1709 but in the beginning of the 19th century the ruins of the castle were removed.

Venta channel on the right bank of the river is also connected with Venta falls. Venta channel was started to dig in the 17th century during the reign of the Duke Jacob of Kurzeme to provide a shipping bypass round the falls. In the 19th century the government of tsarist Russia continued digging thus implementing a magnificent project of joining the Baltic, the White, the Black and the Caspian Seas as a result of which Russian inland-waters would be interconnected. Thus, the channel is a historical testimony of man's grand plans of changing the nature, which failed due to political reasons.

The historical centre of Kuldiga town had started developing already in the 13th century and it had preserved the planning elements, which arose in the 13th-19th centuries. Kuldiga was a significant political, administrative, economical and cultural centre, a country of the Livonian Order during the time of Kurzeme – Zemgale Duchy and Kurzeme Province of Russian Empire. In 1368 Kuldiga joined the Hanseatic League. The lack of modern roads and railways prevented the changes in town planning and building in the last centuries therefore Kuldiga has preserved characteristics of a provincial town, which confers a special heritage value to it.

The Medieval historical centre near the river Aleksupite is unique; it is the only extant town building ensemble of the 17th-18th century in the Baltic States. The historical centre of Kuldiga is a cultural monument of national importance. In the historical centre the narrow streets, and mainly peculiar one-storied buildings with a chimney in

	<p>the middle and roof with red tiles, often in the centre of the model facades frontons, are preserved. These houses are proud of their architecture, luxurious doors, bay windows and door-handles rich in ornaments. Such harmony of background buildings is unique both in winding and in upward streets. There are three junction points in its plan – three market places; interconnecting them with lines the borders and the centres of gravity of the Old town are clearly marked. These include the Old town and the castle hamlet round the ancient market place by the St.Catherin’s Church, posterior market place with Town Hall by the Catholic Church and the newly established market place in 1930.</p> <p>The river Venta forms up to 58 m deep valley in the vicinity of Kuldiga. Venta falls is a significant geologic-geomorphologic object in the valley of the river Venta. The fall had developed as a result of geological processes by water falling from the hard dolomites of Plavinas series down on dolomites with sandstone and clay layers and eroding them. The height of it varies from 1, 8 m to 2, 2 m. The width of the fall reaches 249 m in summer time. In time of fish migration inhabitants of town and tourists can observe the migrating fish surmounting the fall. As a natural barrier in fish migration Venta falls has facilitated from the heritage point of view development of interesting fishing styles of salmon and vimba by using specially construed weirs. For the purpose of installing weirs and fishing there are gutters cut in the dolomites of falls.</p> <p>The ancient brick bridge across the river Venta built in 1874 and designed by an engineer Friedrich Stapppany (born in 1837) is one of the longest brick bridges in Europe, constructed according to the standards of the 19th century - 500 feet (153m) long and 26 feet wide (8, 0 m), appropriate for two carriages going in opposite directions. It is an architectural monument of national importance. In 2007 was started work on project “Restoration of the old bridge and implementation of the attractive tourism territory”. Within the project there will be reconstructed old bridge and organized territory to ensure well organized infrastructure.</p>
<p>History of the cultural property, monument, natural or urban site, or site that has played a key role in European history</p>	<p>Nature and history have created Kuldiga as one of the most beautiful towns of Latvia. The echoes of Livonian chronicles narrate that the castle of the Order was built in Kuldiga during the reign of Dietrich Von Grüningen, the grand master of Livonian Order (1242-1245). At the beginning the castle was called Jesusburg later Goldingen. This name can be read in the documents written before the free state was formed and it still exists in the lexis of the ancient Baltic - German emigrants.</p> <p>Since 1368 Kuldiga has been a member of the Hanseatic League. Since 1991, when the independence was restored</p>

in Latvia, Kuldiga has taken part in modern Hanseatic days.

After collapsing of Livonian Order in 1561 Kuldiga became the residence of Duke Jacob and from 1587 till 1671 it was the capital of Courland. Duke Jacob Ketler, who was born in Kuldiga, had the old castle of the Order rebuilt considering his demands; it was modern according to the understanding of those times. During the reign of Duke Jacob the Duchy of Courland and Kuldiga experienced the economic boom – a ships building factory, a saltpetre mill and brick-kilns, etc. were opened. Kuldiga had trade connections with many countries.

During the time of the Duchy of Courland Kuldiga suffered both from wars and plundering. From 1653 till 1667 there was the Polish – Swedish War and from 1700 till 1721 there was the Great Northern war. Kuldiga suffered severely during the Great Plague, too, and it did not regain its former prosperity.

In 1795 the Duchy of Courland was incorporated into Russian Empire and Kuldiga became a provincial centre. In the closing decades of the 19th century crafts and manufacturing started to flourish. The biggest factories were *Meteors*, a needle factory, a leather factory and *Vulkāns*, a safety matches factory. The number of inhabitants increased.

In 1886 the Baltic Teachers Seminary was moved from Riga to Kuldiga, and in 1896 the first social democratic group was formed. In the days of the revolution in 1905 the students of the Baltic Teachers Seminary were the first to start the strike, later they were joined by workers of the town and the peasants from surrounding estates. The revolutionaries were punished by punitive expeditions.

Already during the time of the Order Kuldiga had its own seal featuring the figure of St Catherine holding a torture wheel with six spikes in one hand and a sword in the other one. In the medieval time St Catherine was considered to be a theologyst, a philosopher, a lawyer and the defender of students. Kuldiga has been able to retain its Saint patroness in the Coat-of-Arms throughout the years until now.

Kuldiga is famous for the fascinating Waterfall Rumba – the widest waterfall in Europe (240m). The highest waterfall in Latvia on the River Aleksupite (4,5 m) is also situated here. One of the widest brick bridges in Europe has always attracted the visitors of Kuldiga. It was built in 1874 over the River Venta.

<p>System of protection of the cultural property, monument, natural or urban site, or site that has played a key role in European history, if appropriate Legislative status</p>	<p>The legislative and regulatory system in Latvia in the field of cultural heritage protection is based on the law “On Protection of Cultural Monuments” adopted in February 12, 1992 (amended till November 6, 2003). Historic centre of Kuldiga is a Town Planning Monument of National importance nr. 7435. Castle Mound of Old Kuldiga and the Ancient Town of Kuldiga is Archaeological Monument of National importance nr. 1231. Totally there are 78 objects of art, architecture, archeological and town planning monuments of National importance situated within the complex “Kuldiga Old Town as Alive Museum Complex”. These objects are protected according to the above mentioned law “On Protection of Cultural Monuments”. Kuldiga Town Territory Plan, Rules of the Utilisation and Construction within the Territory, 30.08.2007, Kuldiga Town Council, prot. Nr. 10, 57. Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers “On Individual Protection and Use of the Nature Reserve “Venta Valley nr. 140, (prot. Nr.9 48.§), 2006.02.14. Rīga. The Nature Reserve “Venta Valley” is Nature 2000 territory. The mentioned nature reserve and heritage status, mentioned laws and restrictions are fundamental to protect and preserve object. This is an extra value that gives possibility to rise up competitiveness of the separate architectural objects and landscape areas of the territory and gives chance to attract EU regional funding for particular objects.</p>
<p>State of preservation of the site/object</p>	<p>Authenticity of Kuldiga historical centre and buildings has remained on a high level. However Kuldiga has lost its most significant medieval building – stone castle of Livonian Order, later Kurzeme – Zemgale dukes, the territory of the castle is not built up. The territory is protected as an archaeological monument; it is available for research with modern methods, including partial exposure in the future. The authenticity of the town planning is obvious. With exceptions of some small changes (for example – correction of streets in the area of Venta Bridge in 1874) the plan had maintained the historical structure since the 13th century. There is no deforming breach of streets, there are only vacant and planted with greenery vanished building places which may be built up in future. St.Catherin’s Lutheran and St.Trinity Catholic Churches built in the 17th century have a considerable level of authenticity. Apart from their original gothic and mannerism features they also contain precious elements of baroque, rococo and classicism (altars, pulpits, organ prospects, etc.). The Old Town Hall built in the 18th</p>

	<p>century has also been preserved and reconstructed in 1984. The New Town Hall built in 1860 and designed by the architect O. Dietze represents a dominant of the square. The greatest value of Kuldīga historical centre is the unitary and harmonic streets' planning structure. One-storied stone buildings prevail over the wooden buildings, which are built at the end of the 18th or in the 19th century. In the circumstances of a restricted economical development they have preserved the historical planning with spacious rooms, chimneys in the centre and traditional sizes. The buildings have tile roofs sometimes with downcast endings. Doors are rich in ornaments, with carved pivots and handles, above the doors - glass windows for lanterns. The houses built on the banks of the river Alekšupīte are peculiar with their stone foundations built on the slope. These authentic houses of craftsmen, workers and rarely merchants testify the level of culture of inhabitants of Kuldīga – they have remained unchanged throughout the centuries.</p> <p>The road surface with round stones is also genuine. It can be found also in backyards and characteristic inside area with woodsheds and fences.</p> <p>In 2002, during radiolocation thumper in the territory of Kuldīga castle ruins a special interest was caused by radiation from the object which is located deep in the ground and expands over the whole research territory from south to north. It is possible that this object is an underground passage</p>
<p>Policy to promote and enhance the appreciation of the site/property (detail actions already performed and required) ?</p>	<p>Cultural tourism development is considered as one of the most important town development priorities. There are number of information and marketing activities implemented to promote object as representation books, publicity in newspapers, broadcasts at regional radio station, presentation DVD, booklets and tourism information, information on internet at municipalities' web site www.kuldiga.lv; participation at international conferences and tourism exhibitions.</p> <p>There are number of everyday activities run through Tourism Information centre as information of customers and guided tours in 5 languages.</p> <p>There are developed planning documents on national, regional and local level as: Kurzeme Region Development Strategy and Plan, Kurzeme Region Tourism Development Plan 2002-2012; Kuldīga Town Development Program with special Action Plan for Tourism; Kuldīga Town Territory Planning.</p> <p>Since 2004, there have been 4 conferences organized with participation of experts from all around Europe to introduce good project samples in field of heritage preservation, restoration and communication with citizens. International conference “Kuldīga old town today, tomorrow – in Latvia, in Europe” (12.03.2004.);</p>

	<p>(23.11.2004.). International conference “Times changing, bridges stay” (02.09.2005.); International conference “Bridge for Kuldiga – bridge to the world” (12.09-14.09.2007).</p> <p>During the last two years city emphasizes cooperation with citizens with aim to strengthen citizens’ understanding of, and respect and support for, European heritage. There are number of cross-disciplinary cultural activities run to make better understanding of importance to preserve authenticity of the cultural heritage as art days with art exhibitions in stairs rooms and entrance halls of the buildings. In 2008 there will be published information materials describing the historical importance and building rules within territory. In 2008 there will be organized city game with orientation elements for school children and families with kids and Cultural heritage laboratories with aim to introduce citizens with good restoration samples of wooden architectonic details with following seminars.</p>
Cultural exchanges and networking	<p>Kuldiga has Town Twinning agreements with towns in Europe as follows: Geesthacht in Germany; Hanzaestad Ommen in Netherlands; Kurshenai in Lithuania and Bengsforsh in Sweden. There are also town twinning agreements between Geesthacht in Germany and Plaisir in France. During the last years that has resulted with common projects in field of culture, tourism, economy, social field as so as common interests of local citizens. Since June 2007, Kuldiga is official member of Walled Towns Friendship Circle Network.</p> <p>In 2007 Kuldiga was granted award of EC project “European Destinations of Excellence” (EDEN).</p> <p>There is developed cooperation between Rotary club Kuldiga and Rotary International Lidkoping (Sweden) that has resulted with projects in field of culture and heritage preservation, as so as developing participation of local citizens.</p> <p>There is highly developed cooperation between municipality, parish, regional, non-governmental and national organizations in field of preservation of the cultural and natural heritage.</p>
Heritage and creative activities	<p>The history, legends and historical environment of the old town are thematic focus for the number of cultural events that attracts diverse audience. City Festival or Feast of the Duke Jacob has one of the oldest town festivals in Latvia history started in 1992, that creates different forms of historical interpretation using town centre as alive stage for performances, shows and exhibitions. This festival has several times been granted as best cultural event in Latvia in 2005 and 2007 and has been awarded price Big Jacob from State Tourism Agency. The number of festival visitors is still increasing, in 2007 during the 4 days it</p>

	<p>hosted 60 000 visitors.</p> <p>Already 300 years ago during the reign of Duke Jacob local citizens created amazing way of fishing - they placed wooden baskets on the waterfall so the seeding fishes coming up to the stream for prawn were jumping in the baskets. From this tradition there was raising legend that citizens of Kuldiga are <i>catching fishes on the air</i>. This unique phenomenon is really visible each year in April when thousands of fishes are jumping up to waterfall and following the way of ancestors' custom are creating view of shining thalers. To emphasize this fact in April citizens organize spring festival "art prawn" and invite together artists from Europe to participate in the process of prawn by creating new artistic ideas. Artists are invited to be seeding fishes that create new art forms, contacts and cooperation to enhance the life quality of little historical town of Latvia.</p> <p>In winter there is organized festival "Believe in wonders" that invites artists and local citizens to organize concerts n churches, to perform outdoors on the streets, to play ancient and folk music and dance, to perform street theatre performances linking past and contemporary art in an innovative way.</p> <p>There have been 4 conferences organized with participation of experts from all around Europe to introduce good project samples in field of heritage preservation, restoration and town marketing.</p> <p>Since 2006, there is organized sport event half-marathon of Kuldiga where route is organized with aim to cross labyrinth of little bridges of Kuldiga.</p> <p>The regular tradition is organization of the sacral music concerts in churches of Kuldiga therefore promoting churches as spiritual centre during the centuries, with participation of local musicians and musicians from Latvia and abroad.</p> <p>Kuldiga Social Sciences and Art Secondary School students and teachers are actively participating in biggest cultural events organized in the town. They create student's art works presentations at the city environment, they organize fashion shows at the backyards of the historical houses, create art performances at the narrow streets of Kuldiga therefore creating interpretation of the town's cultural heritage.</p>
<p>Sources and level of finance Budget and sources of finance for the conservation of the cultural properties, monuments, natural and urban sites, or sites that have played a key role in European history, and for the promotion</p>	<p>Conservation of the natural and urban site is financed using different available finance sources – partly from municipality budget, partly from state budget, partly from private investors and on the competitive base from Europe Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and EEA and Norwegian Financial Instrument.</p> <p>Since 2006 Kuldiga Town Council in cooperation with</p>

<p>strategy.</p>	<p>Kuldiga District Council and Netherlands Fund KNHM is organizing competition “Let’s do ourselves” with aim to activate local citizens to benefit local environment practically. Each year there are supported 15-20 projects. Local NGO-s, municipality and local entrepreneurs regularly apply for projects in field of preservation of the heritage from State Culture Capital Foundation and its target programs.</p> <p>There are supported following projects from ERDF as “Eco tourism infrastructure development in nature reserve “Venta Valley”; “Velo tourism infrastructure development in Kurzeme” enabled to create info signs in 3 languages, booklets with plans and schemes, GPS; “Restoration of the old bridge and implementation of the attractive tourism territory” within the project there will be restored old bridge and organized territory to ensure well organized infrastructure. Project “Regional products in Hansaetic region has enabled use of GPS for tourism needs in Kuldiga and district, exchange of tourism specialists and printing of information papers for tourists about Kuldiga and Venta valley.</p>
<p>Activities taken/planned to heighten the profile and representativeness of the site</p>	<p>Tourism information centre of Kuldiga is regularly participating in international tourism exhibitions abroad - Netherlands (Vakantiebeurs 2008); Finland (MATKA 2008); Estonia (TUOREST 2008); Lithuania (VIVATTUR 2008); Germany (ITB 2008); Russia (MITT 2008); Sweden (TUR 2008); London (WTM 2008.)</p> <p>Since 2004, there have been 4 conferences organized with participation of experts from all around Europe to introduce good project samples in field of heritage preservation, restoration and communication with citizens. International conference “Kuldiga old town today, tomorrow – in Latvia, in Europe” (12.03.2004.); (23.11.2004.). International conference “Times changing, bridges stay” (02.09.2005.); International conference “Bridge for Kuldiga – bridge to the world” (12.09-14.09.2007). In 2009, there is planed to organize conference together with Riga and Cesis with aim to heighten the role of the first three cities that historically have been first defined as national importance heritage monuments as town planning objects. This process was implemented already in <i>Soviet</i> times and in 2009 it will have the 40-th anniversary since fact.</p> <p>There are regularly published presentation materials, actualities are presented on town official web site www.kuldiga.lv, radio broadcasts, mass media publishing. There is created Kuldiga Old Town and Environment Commission that consists from politicians and specialists that meet once a month and discuss questions related to the preservation and protection of the object. There is created working group that works on development of the</p>

“Kuldīgas Old Town Preservation and Development Program 2009 - 2013” that will be finished at the end of 2008.

In 2008, Kuldīga Town Council has planned number of activities to heighten the profile of the site as organizing City Game with orientation in 2 stages – one for local people in May and one for people from all the Latvia in September. Aim of the City Game is to use attractive methods how to involve youth, school children and families with kids and to make interested about cultural heritage sites and historical processes. There will be also organized International Cultural Heritage Laboratories with aim to give owners of the historical houses, maintenance companies of the buildings, handicraft artists to present good restoration samples in Kuldīga, to share experience and to learn how to prevent threats to the sites. There are established cooperation contacts with specialists from Heritage Restoration Centre in Rauma (Finland) that will ensure consultancy how to make citizens responsible for the preservation of the authenticity of the town.

In 2007 there was started work on project “Restoration of the Kuldīga and district museum wooden building and development of wooden restoration workshop” with support of local municipality and EEZ and Norwegian Finance Instrument.

In 2008, there is started work to develop artist-in-residence scheme in Kuldīga in cooperation with French Culture Centre in Riga, Nordic Council of Ministers Office in Riga and Ministry of Culture. Aim of development of the scheme is to ensure artistic communication on the historical site and make heritage tell the stories in contemporary aspect.

APPENDIX Nr. 1

SITUATION OF KULDĪGA

