

Press release

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THE LONDON BOOK FAIR: BALTICS CULTURAL PROGRAMME WRITERS REVEALED

**Leading writers from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania announced
for The London Book Fair Market Focus 2018.**

The British Council, in partnership with the London Book Fair, the Estonian Literature Centre, Writers' and Translators' House, Latvia and the Lithuanian Culture Institute, announce today the Baltic Countries Market Focus Cultural Programme for The London Book Fair 2018, taking place 10–12 April.

This year's author delegation brings twelve prominent and engaging writers from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, representing the very best of contemporary literature. The London Book Fair Cultural Programme will give a rare opportunity to meet and hear from Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian writers, who will be in discussion with counterpart UK authors in front of an international literary audience.

The delegation includes Authors of the Day:

- Writer and columnist **Mihkel Mutt**, one of the most provocative Estonian authors. He has published close to 40 books in genres as diverse as novels, memoirs and children's books.
- **Nora Ikstena**, one of the most influential prose writers and essayists in Latvia. Her book *Soviet Milk* comes out in the UK in March 2018 with Peirene Press.
- Writer and art historian **Kristina Sabaliauskaitė**, the most widely read contemporary Lithuanian author. Her *Silva Rerum* saga is considered to be the most important Lithuanian literary event of the last decade.

The delegation will be completed by **Maarja Kangro**, **Andrei Ivanov** and **Rein Raud** from Estonia; **Kārlis Vērdiņš**, **Luīze Pastore** and **Inga Ābele** from Latvia; **Tomas Venclova**, **Undinė Radzevičiūtė** and **Alvydas Šlepikas** from Lithuania. Together they represent a wide variety of literary genres, including: poetry, children's literature, playwriting, reportage and prose.

The Cultural Programme will include events at the British Library and the National Poetry Library where readers can meet writers and take part in discussions.

Cortina Butler, Director Literature, British Council said: *"The UK and the three Baltic countries have close historic ties and there are important Lithuanian, Estonian and Latvian communities in the UK. We anticipate that the Baltic Countries Market Focus Cultural Programme will do much to strengthen these relationships – as well as having a lasting impact on appreciation in this country of the strength and depth of contemporary literature in the three countries. We are delighted to be working with The London Book Fair and our*

partners in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania on this programme, especially in their centenary year of independence, and believe that it creates a unique opportunity for the writing, publishing and reading communities in all four countries to build understanding and make connections and for the people of the UK to find out more about the literary heritage of our Baltic neighbours.”

Jacks Thomas, Director of The London Book Fair said: *“It is a privilege to welcome such a talented group of authors to LBF 2018 from the Market Focus Baltic Countries. We greatly appreciate British Council and all our partners in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania for bringing together such a diverse and interesting group of authors, representing children’s literature and poetry to history and unputdownable novels. We know the programme will be inspiring and generate interest in literature and writing from the Baltics for years to come.”*

Indrek Saar, the Minister of Culture of the Republic of Estonia said: *“Books and stories expand our consciousness and our world. They can entertain and excite us. Estonian identity is strongly rooted in language and culture. I am proud to say that today, Estonian literature is as varied and dynamic as ever. The cornerstone of a vivid literary life are, of course, the writers. Also, we are most grateful to the brilliant translators who mediate our written word and thought to other cultures, other readers – who can make a foreign culture more understandable, come to life and to be loved. We are really happy that in 2018, when Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are celebrating centenaries of our independent statehoods, our rich and multifaceted literature will be in the focus at the London Book Fair.”*

Dace Melbārde, the Minister for Culture of the Republic of Latvia said: *“Active cooperation between Latvia and the United Kingdom is symbolic and perfectly natural at a time when the Latvian state is celebrating its centenary, because the United Kingdom was the first country to recognise Latvia de facto, as early as 11 November, 1918. Participation in the London Book Fair is one of Latvia's most important and massive international culture initiatives for the 100-year-anniversary of the state in 2018, together with the other Baltic countries. I would like to express the hope that professional cooperation in literature and publishing will acquire a long-term character and deepen the cultural relations between Baltic countries and the United Kingdom.”*

Liana Ruokytė-Jonsson, the Minister of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania said: *“We are delighted to be able to present Lithuanian literature at the London Book Fair. The ties between our countries are strong already, especially in trade and defence. I hope that the possibility to highlight our literature will further increase the collaboration between Lithuania and the United Kingdom. It is especially apt that this opportunity arises on the occasion of the centenary of the restoration of the state of Lithuania.”*

NOTES TO EDITORS

Full programme details, biographical and publishing information about the writers and events, available via <https://literature.britishcouncil.org>

For more information about the British Council and to speak to writers please contact Karolina Szlasa, Senior Press Officer on +44 (0)20 3285 3659, +44 7769 285079 or email karolina.szlasa@britishcouncil.org

For more information about The London Book Fair please contact Nicola Green, Director at Midas Public Relations on +44 (0)20 7361 7860.

Event details: The London Book Fair, Olympia London, Hammersmith Road, London, W14 8UX
Tues 10 and Weds 11 April: 09.00–18.30
Thurs 12 April: 09.00–17.00

About the British Council

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We work with over 100 countries in the fields of arts and culture, English language, education and civil society. Last year we reached over 65 million people directly and 731 million people overall including online, broadcasts and publications. We make a positive contribution to the countries we work with – changing lives by creating opportunities, building connections and engendering trust. Founded in 1934, we are a UK charity governed by Royal Charter and a UK public body. We receive 15 per cent core funding grant from the UK government. www.britishcouncil.org

About The London Book Fair

The London Book Fair (LBF) is the global marketplace for rights negotiation and the sale and distribution of content across print, audio, TV, film and digital channels. Taking place every spring in the world's premier publishing and cultural capital, it is a unique opportunity to explore, understand and capitalise on the innovations shaping the publishing world of the future. LBF brings you direct access to customers, content and emerging markets. LBF 2018, the 47th Fair, will take place from 10-12 April 2018, Olympia London. www.londonbookfair.co.uk

About the Estonian Literature Centre

The Estonian Literature Centre (ELIC) exists to generate interest in Estonian literature abroad. As well as being closely involved with translators, writers and publishers, ELIC also works in close partnership with embassies, cultural and academic institutes, other literature centres, libraries and universities both in Estonia and abroad. ELIC organizes literature events, translation seminars and workshops. ELIC is present at international book fairs in Frankfurt, London and Gothenburg.

About the Latvian Literature

The "Latvian Literature" platform was established by the International Writers and Translators House in Latvia in order to promote recognition of Latvian literature and its distribution abroad, thus ensuring international cooperation among publishers, literary agents, writers, translators, and organisations working in the fields of literature and publishing. We are here to provide you with diverse information about Latvian authors, books, our publishing industry and innovations within the industry.

About the Lithuanian Culture Institute

Lithuanian Culture Institute organizes and coordinates Lithuanian cultural and art presentation programmes in cooperation with Lithuanian cultural attaches, Lithuanian diplomatic representations and other institutions. It also implements bilateral and multi-lateral cultural cooperation agreements and programmes in Lithuania and abroad. www.lithuanianculture.lt



About the Publishers Association

The Publishers Association (the PA) is the leading trade organisation serving book, journal, audio and electronic publishers in the UK, spanning fiction and non-fiction, academic and educational publishing. Our members represent over 80% of the UK publishing industry including global companies such as Elsevier, Wiley, Pearson, Penguin Random House, Hachette and the University presses, as well as many independent publishing houses. <https://publishers.org.uk>