



MAY 26-28 | JŪRMALA

LINC Latvia 2026



Welcome to the Baltics. Welcome to Latvia.

It is a privilege to host LINC 2026 and to welcome so many LAGs and rural development practitioners from across Europe. Those who imagine rural development as a slow-moving field may wish to note that LINC 2026 was nearly full within the first ten days.

You are arriving in a country where LEADER has become part of how rural development is understood, organised and defended. That matters, because rural areas in Europe are still approached with a contradiction: praised for resilience, but not always trusted with influence. They are expected to adapt, often with fewer services, longer distances and less political visibility, while too rarely treated as places of strategic importance.

This imbalance does not correct itself. That is why LEADER has mattered so much in Latvia.

When Latvia joined the European Union, LEADER came at the right moment. Rural communities did not only need investment. They needed recognition that local people are capable of judging what matters in their place, organising around it and carrying responsibility for it over time. LEADER

gave local action legitimacy. It treated rural territories as places with competence, not only with needs.

Once people enter LEADER, many find it difficult to leave. Not because it asks little, but because it creates trust, responsibility and a habit of getting things done together.

Sometimes the most important result begins before a project is even written — when someone is noticed and encouraged to act. Yes, there is bureaucracy. But somewhere between forms and deadlines, someone still finds time to help an idea move forward. That is the difference between a system that processes applications and one that develops places.

That matters because one of the deepest challenges in democracy is whether people believe their effort can lead anywhere at all. LEADER has mattered because it has made local action believable. It changes expectations and confidence.

Latvia may be small, but in the LEADER/CLLD world it feels dense with commitment, stubbornness and just enough dark humour to keep going when common sense might have advised otherwise.



This is why LEADER should be understood not only as a rural development instrument, but as part of Europe's democratic and territorial resilience. In times of uncertainty, the ability of people to organise, cooperate and act without waiting for perfect conditions is strategic. If Europe is serious about resilience, it must be serious about local capacity.

This year's theme, ***Time to Remember***, matters to us.

What you will see in Latvia is not the work of one institution or one project. It is the work of a LEADER/CLLD family that has learned how to keep building together.

So we do not invite you to observe LEADER in Latvia from a distance. We

invite you to experience it with us — and to help build what comes next.

Time to remember what begins when local needs and local people are taken seriously.

Time to remember that rural Europe is not waiting to be saved.

And, perhaps, time to admit that many of us fell into LEADER years ago and never quite recovered.

Welcome to Latvia.

Sincerely,
LINC Latvia Org Team





TUESDAY, 26 MAY

09:00–15:00	Pre-programme (optional)	
8:30 or 9:00	Departure depending on Tour	JŪRMALA SPA HOTEL
15:35 & 15:45	Departure to Dzintari Beach	Main Lobby
16:00	Meeting point for Parade	Dzintari Beach
16:20	Opening Parade via Jomas Street	
17:00	Opening Ceremony, Welcome Speeches, Linc2026 Group photo	Horn Garden, Majori
18:00	European Buffet	JŪRMALA SPA HOTEL
19:30	Opening Dinner	JŪRMALA SPA HOTEL

WEDNESDAY, 27 MAY

08:00 – 9:30	Departure to Study Tours depending on Tour	Meeting point: JŪRMALA SPA HOTEL or Majori Parking Lienes Street 5
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THURSDAY, 28 MAY

9:00–11:00	Cooperation Corner with EU CAP Network	11th FLOOR, JŪRMALA SPA HOTEL
11:30	Transfer to European Games from Majori Parking, Lienes Street 5	
12:30	Lunch	Milzkalns
13:30	European Games	Milzkalns
17:00	Transfer to JŪRMALA SPA HOTEL	
19:30	Open end Closing Event & Gala Dinner	JŪRMALA SPA HOTEL

More detailed programme: [LINC-CONGRESS.EU](https://linc-congress.eu)

Agenda



A day of flavours and river breeze – Aizkraukle region

Aizkraukle region | “Ragares farm” organic herbs, vegetables, and berries | clothing design at “Radada” | lunch and tasting at “Skrīveru” ice-cream | river cruise pontoon boat “Baltā Kaza” | Aizkraukle Tourist Information Center | dinner at “Ola-la!” / “Cornelius”

🕒 **departure: 8:30 / arrival 20:30**

📍 **meeting point: Majori Parking,
Lienes Street 5**

Experience an unforgettable journey through the heart of **Aizkraukle region** – a region where nature, creativity, and authentic Latvian flavours come alive.

Begin your adventure at **Farm Ragāres** – a magical spot where over 100 kinds of herbs, medicinal plants, and decorative greenery flourish. Their organic farming tradition goes back decades, and you can feel it in every corner – from the hand-picked teas to the hand-harvested berries.

Continue to **Radada**, a vibrant creative space that celebrates local design, playful ideas, and modern Latvian style. It's the perfect place to discover unique souvenirs and feel the pulse of contemporary countryside creativity.

Next, treat yourself to a delicious stop at **Skrīveri Home-Made Ice-Cream**, a beloved family business known for its unforgettable flavours – from traditional classics to beautifully

unexpected taste adventures. Every scoop is a story of craftsmanship and love.

Then set out on the Daugava aboard the charming boat **“Balta kaza”**. Glide along peaceful river landscapes, enjoy the fresh air, and experience the region from a completely new and magical perspective.

Visit the **Koknese Tourism Information Centre** to uncover even more hidden gems and pick up local treasures before ending your day with a warm and cosy dinner at **Olalā!** – a lively spot where great food, friendly atmosphere, and beautiful memories come together.



Skrīveri home-made ice-cream



Radada



Radada



Farm **Ragāres**



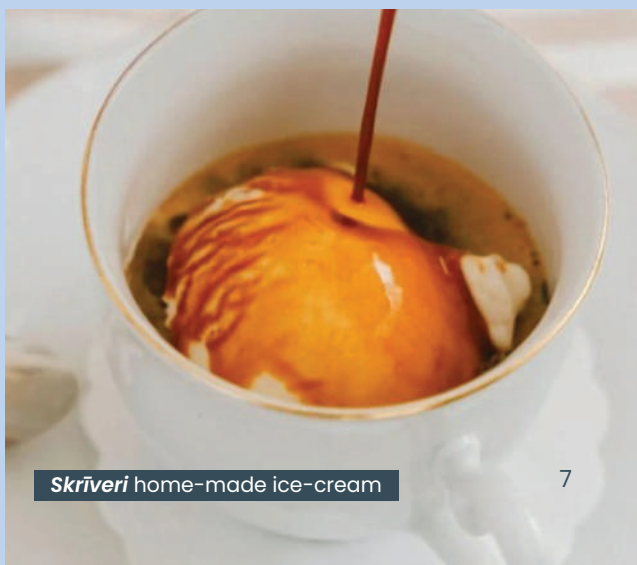
Farm **Ragāres**



Boat "**Balta kaza**"



Restaurant **Olalā! / Cornelius**



Skrīveri home-made ice-cream

Chocolate, wine and life in the UNESCO old town – Kuldīga and Tukums regions

Creative master class and tasting at the “Pure” chocolate factory | guided tour of the UNESCO World Heritage Old Town of Kuldīga | Europe’s widest waterfall, Ventas rumba | picnic lunch in one of Kuldīga’s historic courtyards with regional flavors | “Aleksūpītes Expedition” – along the riverbed in long rubber boots | visit to a vineyard, tour of the farm and wine tasting at “Mazburkas” | dinner in a peaceful rural setting

🕒 **departure: 8:00 / arrival 20:00**

📍 **meeting point: Majori Parking, Lienes Street 5**

This experience exchange trip offers an opportunity to discover Latvia through local initiatives, entrepreneurship, and rural life, where ideas are brought to life with the support of the LEADER approach.

The experience exchange trip begins in **“Pure”**, at a local **chocolate production facility**, where participants learn about the production process—from raw materials to the finished product. This visit demonstrates how a small, regionally based enterprise can become a well-recognised brand by combining quality, creativity, and local resources.

The experience then continues in **Kuldīga**, one of the most authentic historical towns in the Baltics and a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**. A guided walk allows participants to explore the well-preserved old town, the **Venta Rapid**—one of the widest waterfalls in Europe—, the historic brick bridge, and an urban environment where nature is

an integral part of everyday life.

In Kuldīga, participants also enjoy a meal made from local products in a **historic courtyard setting**. This experience highlights the importance of short supply chains, local food, and cooperation in rural development.

An unusual perspective on the town is offered by the **Aleksūpe expedition**—an active experience that allows participants to explore the river’s role in Kuldīga’s history and urban landscape by moving along the riverbed.

The experience exchange trip concludes at the **rural farm “Mazburkas”**, where participants learn about grape growing and wine production in Latvia’s climatic conditions. The visit includes a tour of the **vineyard**, a tasting of local wine, and a shared dinner in a peaceful rural setting, emphasising the potential of rural entrepreneurship and the added value of local products.



Kuldīga Old town



Venta waterfall



Picnic in Kuldīga



"Pure" chocolate museum



"Pure" chocolate museum



"Mazburkas" vineyard and farm



"Aleksūpe expedition"

Along the Gauja River to the Sea – traditions and cultural heritage – Ādaži and Saulkrasti regions

The revival of “Blusu krogs” tavern | walk along the Vecgauja River | recount of the Gauja river ecosystem and its interaction with human economic activity | opportunity to view the river from a SUP board | lamprey fishing traditions at the Carnikava local history center | lunch at the restaurant “SaltWater” | boat trip in Skulte port and Zvejniekciems village | Sunset trail | dinner at the beach cafe “Mare”

🕒 **departure: 8:00 / arrival 21:00**

📍 **meeting point: Majori Parking,
Lienes Street 5**

The experience exchange tour begins in **Carnikava parish** at **“Blusu Krogs”**, a historic riverside site with strong ties to local life along the Gauja.

A short introductory presentation will give a broader picture of the lower **Gauja area**, highlighting its natural value, cultural heritage and current development directions.

Afterwards, participants will take a relaxed **walk along the Vecgauja**. The programme also offers the opportunity to experience the river from the water on stand-up paddleboards (SUP), providing an additional perspective on how rivers have supported local livelihoods, transport and small-scale economic activities, and how these connections continue today.

The visit to the **Carnikava Local History Centre** will focus on the **Gauja River** ecosystem and the unique lamprey fishing traditions that are closely linked

to Carnikava’s identity. Participants will learn how traditional fishing practices have been maintained and adapted over time, and how they still contribute to the local economy.

Lunch will take place at the **“SaltWater” restaurant**.

In the afternoon, the group will travel to **Skulte Port**, where attention will shift to the coastal area and its modern uses. **A short boat trip** will give participants the chance to experience the river from the water and see the landscape from a different perspective.

Participants will explore how the port functions today, including fishing activities, yachting, recreational services and future development plans.

The study visit will conclude with dinner at **“Mare”, a seaside restaurant in Saulkrasti**.



Baltic coast in Ādaži region



Carnikava Local History Centre



Lamprey



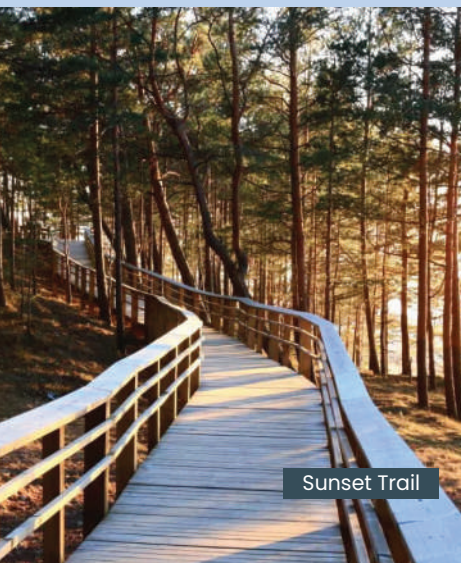
historical lamprey fishing



Gauja River



Skulte Port



Sunset Trail



Sailing at Skulte Port

A taste adventure and a breath of antiquity – Kandava and Jaunpils

Chocolate masterclass and tour at the “Pure” Chocolate Museum | escargot and fruit snack tasting at the “Kangari” farmstead | lunch at the family restaurant “Nāriņa” | “Kaimiņmuiža” wine tasting at the Kandava Old Town Wine House | picturesque Abava Valley | tour of the medieval Jaunpils Castle | visit to the Jaunpils Crafts House with demonstrations and dinner

🕒 **departure: 8:00 / arrival 20:30**

📍 **meeting point: Majori Parking,
Lienes Street 5**

The tour will begin with a visit to the **“Pure” Chocolate Museum**, where we will learn about the story behind Pure Chocolate, enjoy hot chocolate and take part in a workshop to make our own chocolate sweets.

At the rural **homestead “Kangari”**, **edible snails** are farmed alongside traditional berries and fruits. Here, participants will have the opportunity to taste edible snails as well as dried berries and fruits.

Next, we will visit the local **Wine House** in the **Kandava Old Town**, where a new generation of winemakers will share their experience in growing grapes and producing wine in Latvia. A wine tasting will follow, featuring wines produced by the **family-run winery “Kaimiņmuiža”**.

Lunch is planned at the **family restaurant “Nāriņa”**.

After lunch, we will travel along a scenic stretch of the ancient **Abava Valley**, enjoying the natural landscapes on our way to **Jaunpils Castle**, where we will learn about the history of this medieval castle.

At the end of the day, we will visit the **Jaunpils Crafts House**, home to active groups of weavers, ceramicists, seamstresses, knitters and other small-scale craft practitioners.

The visit will conclude with dinner prepared by skilled local artisans.



"Pure" Chocolate Museum



Kandava Old Town



Jaunpils Crafts House



Kandava Wine House



"Kaimiņmuiža" winery



Jaunpils Castle



Jaunpils Castle

Innovative products, creative manor and smart village – Jelgava region

Ceramics and candle workshop “Kur Guni” | tasting of pine cone edible products at “Mītavas čiekurs” | lunch at the locals’ favorite “Svētes klubs” | Honey tasting and sustainable farming at “Jaunparkas” | success story of the Zaļenieki smart village | excellent flavors and creative atmosphere at dinner at Abgunste manor

🕒 **departure: 8:30 / arrival 19:30**

📍 **meeting point: Majori Parking,
Lienes Street 5**

We will start the tour with a visit to the **ceramic's shop/workshop “Kur Guni”**, where unique ceramic dishes are made.

Then we will go to **“Mītavas čiekurs”**, where we will discover how ordinary pine cones are turned into unique Latvian products — **pine cone syrup, candied pine cones**, and other natural delicacies. The owner will give an engaging talk about his journey from idea to recognisable brand and will let us sample his products.

The route will then take us to the **Svēte Club**, a renovated old building that now hosts various events and has a cosy café. Here we will enjoy lunch and hear a story about how enthusiastic owners can create a new, vibrant place in a rural setting.

After lunch, we will visit the **“Jaunparkas” honey farm**, where the owners will introduce us to the life of bees, honey production, and everyday

life on a farm. We will have the opportunity to taste different types of honey and learn how beekeeping intertwines with the surrounding environment.

The trip will continue with the story of the **smart village of Zaļenieki**, where residents are actively involved in social and business projects. We will learn about several examples and projects of the LEADER initiative.

We will end the day with a visit to **Abgunste Manor**, which is recognised as one of the most creative manors in Latvia.

At the manor, you'll be able to enjoy its creative atmosphere, stories about restoration and celebrations, as well as dinner made from seasonal local products, which'll be served in a particularly aesthetic and creative way.



"Mītavas čiekurs"



pinecone syrup



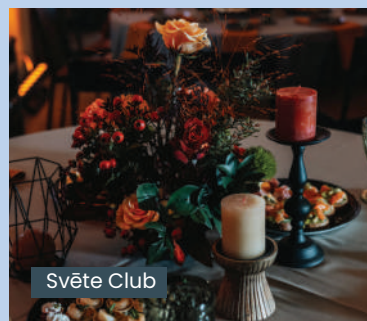
"Kur Guni" candles



Zaļenieki smart village



"Jaunparkas" honey farm



Svēte Club



Abgunste Manor



Abgunste Manor

Second life of historical buildings and nature tourism – Ērgļi surroundings

Hike with Ērgļi guard dogs | Ērgļi market square, “Kazas Bonijas” cheeses, SIA “Angus” meat products | Pump track cycling park | lunch at “Ērgļu stacija” restaurant (former train station) | historical architecture characteristic of Vidzeme region at Brakī rija | “Mailīšu” weaving workshop | Briežkalns ski slope and Vidzeme central highlands | dinner at “Ērgļu stacija” – a stylish nature tourist hub and restaurant

🕒 **departure: 8:00 / arrival 20:00**

📍 **meeting point: Majori Parking,
Lienes Street 5**

We will begin the visit with a **walking tour in Ērgļi**, including a stop at the site of the **former medieval Ērgļi Castle** – a nationally protected archaeological monument located next to the historic manor complex.

Next, we will visit the **Ērgļi market square**, a public space developed with active recreation infrastructure, including a **cycling pump track**. This stop illustrates how municipal investments support active lifestyles, youth engagement, and improve the overall quality of life in a small rural settlement.

The programme continues with a meeting with the association **“Lai viegli satikties!”** and an introduction to the development of the place known as **“Kravas Perons”**.

Lunch will be enjoyed at **“Ērgļu stacija”** – former railway station restaurant.

Afterwards, we will visit **Brakī**, a culturally significant site that has been restored with the support of LEADER and the municipality. The visit highlights the preservation of traditional Vidzeme rural architecture, including a historic threshing barn.

The programme then continues with a visit to the **weaving workshop “Mailīšu Fabrika”**, located in a LEADER-supported building.

Later, we will stop at **Briežkalns**, one of Ērgļi's main tourism destinations. The site offers panoramic views of the Vidzeme Central Highlands.

The day will conclude with dinner at the **“Ērgļu stacija”** (former Ērgļi railway station), a historic building adapted for modern use as a restaurant and community meeting place.



Ērgļi Watchdogs sculpture



Cycling pump track



Local cheeses at Ērgļi market square



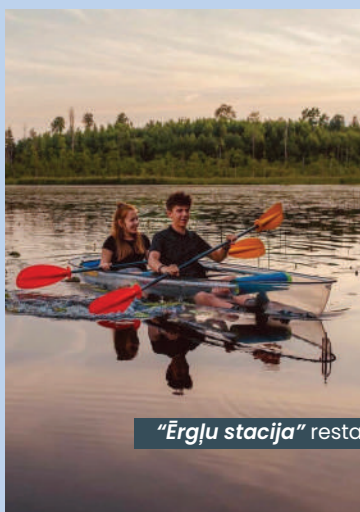
"Mailīšu Fabrika" textiles



Brakī Rija



Briežkalns ski slope



"Ērgļu stacija" restaurant and nature tours



Manor transformations, Lake Burtnieks and horses – Valmiera region

Export-capable entrepreneurship at SIA “WoodHeart” | lunch at Valmiermuiža beer kitchen | Valmiermuiža brewery and restaurant | Valmiermuiža stables and riding school | organic meat production “Bauņu bullītis” | boat cruise on Latvia’s largest lake, Burtnieks | Valmiera municipality’s rural development experience | dinner on the lakeshore

🕒 **departure: 8:00 / arrival 20:30**

📍 **meeting point: Majori Parking,
Lienes Street 5**

The experience exchange day will begin in Kocēni with a visit to the wood and design manufacturing company **SIA “WoodHeart”** – an export-oriented enterprise specialising in the production of windows, doors and design furniture, as well as offering complete interior solutions for investor-developed private residential villages.

Next, we will travel to **Valmiermuiža**, where lunch at the **local brewery kitchen** will be complemented by a story about the unique transformation of the manor – from a historical centre to an innovative brewery and a contemporary hub for culture, entrepreneurship and community life.

In the second part of the day, we will briefly visit the nearby **Valmiermuiža stables and equestrian school**, where equestrian sport is developed both as a professional discipline and as a platform for education and public engagement.

Afterwards, we will proceed to the organic meat production facility **“Bauņu bullītis”**, where we will be offered a guided tour with tasting.

To conclude the programme, in the surroundings of **Lake Burtnieks**, we will explore Valmiera municipality’s rural development practices, including participatory budgeting and support for entrepreneurship.

This will be followed by an educational cruise on the uniquely designed **pontoon boat “Made Marija”**, organised together with the association **“Fishing and Tourism School”**, across one of Latvia’s largest and most legendary lakes – Burtnieks.

The day will end with dinner on the lakeshore.



Valmiermuiža manor



Brewery kitchen



"Valmiermuižas" beer



"Made Marija"



"Bauņu bullītis"



Community hub



"WoodHeart" furniture



Valmiermuiža stables

Innovative approach to using natural products – Pierīga rural area

“Annas koku skola” – tree and environmental design | natural teas for women’s well-being “Femme Eco” | human and horse well-being center “Dabas zirgi” | different national cuisines for lunch | Mārupe municipality business and tourism center | organic farm “Dabas gardumi” | dinner at the family restaurant “Irbēni”

🕒 **departure: 9:30 / arrival 20:00**

📍 **meeting point: Jūrmala Hotel SPA**

The experience exchange trip will begin with a visit to **Anna’s Tree School** in Babīte parish. During the visit, we’ll learn about tree shaping (topiary), craftsmanship and educational initiatives, as well as how a tree can harmoniously coexist with people and architecture.

Next, we will travel to **SIA “Pro Natura” (Femme.eco)** in Ķekava municipality. The visit will introduce the production of natural teas and health products dedicated to supporting women’s well-being and health.

Lunch and the following visit will take place at the **“Dabas zirgi”** (Nature Horses) human and horse well-being centre. Here, we will explore a social entrepreneurship approach and activities aimed at animal welfare and human well-being.

Lunch will be provided by **SIA “Aluna”**, offering a various national cuisines and

sharing an intercultural culinary experience.

In the afternoon, we will visit the **Mārupe Municipality Entrepreneurship and Tourism Centre**. Here, we will learn about the local tourism attractions and local producers.

Later in the day, we will visit the **organic farm IK “Dabas gardumi”** in Jaunmārupe, which has recently become one of the founders of the cooperative KS Vidzemes āboli un ogas (Vidzeme apples and berries).

During the visit, we will learn about berry cultivation, processing and the range of organic products.

The experience trip will conclude with dinner at the **family restaurant “Irbēni”**, enjoying local hospitality and cuisine.



Anna's Tree School



Anna's Tree School



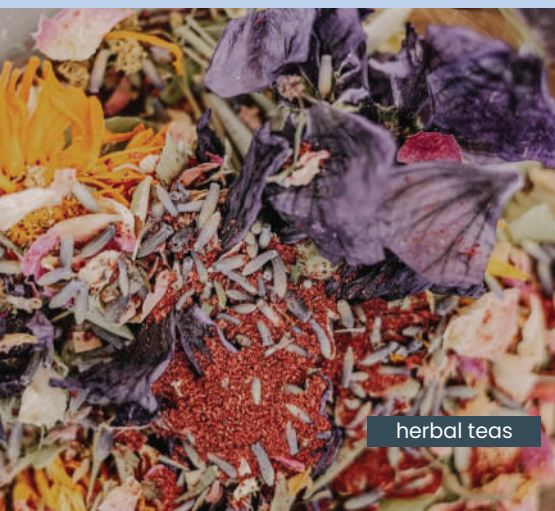
"Dabas zirgi"



organic berries



"Dabas gardumi" produce



herbal teas



Femme.eco

Where the two seas meet – Cape Kolka and nature tourism – North Kurzeme

Fresh bread at “Maize un Māksla” in Engure | SUP board adventure organizer “Spura” in the seaside village of Roja | guided walk along the sea shore to the unique natural site of Cape Kolka, where the two seas meet | lunch at the seaside café “Divjūriņas” | Irbene parabolic radio telescope | Safari trips and archery at “Daba laba” | dinner made with local produce at the restaurant in the forest “#Mežā”

🕒 **departure: 8:30 / arrival 21:30**

📍 **meeting point: Majori Parking,
Lienes Street 5**

The journey will begin in the historic **fishing village of Engure** with a visit to the unique **concept store “Maize & Māksla”**, where three businesses come together under one roof – a bakery, a shop featuring local crafts, and a small brewery. Here we will enjoy freshly baked pastries accompanied by good coffee or herbal tea.

Next, we will travel to the coastal village of Roja to visit the small **tourism company “Spura”**, which rents SUP boards and organises exciting paddleboard adventures.

Cape Kolka is the most pronounced headland along Latvia's coastline. Located within Slītere National Park, it is the **meeting point of two “seas”** – the open Baltic Sea and the Gulf of Riga – where crossing waves can be observed, especially when looking towards the lighthouse, built on an artificial island offshore. We will take an engaging walk along the beach to the very tip of Cape Kolka.

Lunch will be enjoyed at the Cape Kolka **summer café “Divjūriņas”**.

In the afternoon, we will continue to the enterprise “Daba Laba”. On the way, we will stop at the **Ventspils International Radio Astronomy Centre in Irbene**, a former Soviet military town now home to the Engineering Research Centre of Ventspils University of Applied Sciences.

The enterprise **“Daba Laba”** is located in the least densely populated parish in Latvia, surrounded by vast forests with a high density of wildlife, clean rivers and beautiful forest lakes.

Participants will enjoy an unforgettable safari ride and the opportunity to try archery.

The day concludes with an adventurous dinner at the **restaurant “Mežā”** (In the Forest), where the hosts prepare delicious meals from local products over an open fire.



"Spura" tourism company



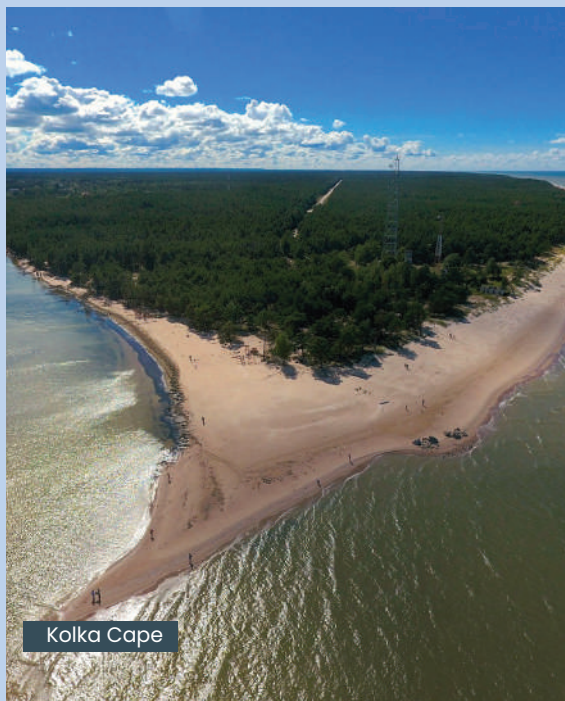
archery at "Laba Daba"



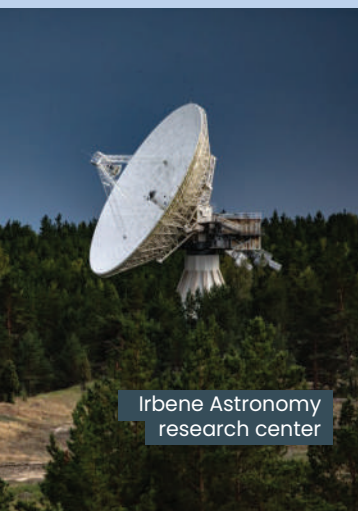
"Maize un Māksla" in Engure



"Spura"



Kolka Cape



Irbene Astronomy
research center



"Laba Daba" safari



"#Mežā" restaurant

Life and work in the protected territory of Ķemeri National Park – Tukums region

Ancient coastal fishing traditions and life in the smart village of Lapmežciems | smoked fish tasting | guided tour of the Ķaņieris Lake reed plankway observation tower | "The Upside Down House" | lunch at a rural restaurant in the middle of the forest | bare-foot trail and the open-air photo exhibition at "Valguma pasaulē" | sunset seashore walk to the restaurant | dinner at the fish restaurant "Bermudas"

🕒 **departure: 8:45 / arrival 20:00**

📍 **meeting point: Jūrmala Hotel SPA**

We'll begin our tour with a visit to the cosy **seaside village Lapmežciems or "Jūrciemī" (Seavillages)**, which is has gained Smart Village recognition. Their slogan says it all: "Jūrciemī – the real deal!"

Next we'll peek into a cozy family **fish-smoking workshop**, hear local secrets, and taste their irresistibly smoky goodies.

Then it's off to **Lake Ķaņieris**, a lagoon full of magic and more than 200 bird species. Wander along the floating boardwalk and climb the **bird tower** for views that feel straight out of a nature film.

Next stop: a countryside world turned upside down – literally! The **Upside-Down House (and garage!)** promises laughter, quirky photos, and fun for all ages.

Lunch awaits deep in the forest by **Lake Valgums**, where you can stroll through an outdoor photo gallery or tiptoe along the **barefoot trail**. It's nature-loving creativity at its best – no matter the season.

We'll wrap up the day at the Baltic sea high shore called **"Gausā jūdze" or "Slow mile"** a coastal place historically known as a mile of thieves and pirates. Today it is a well known hiking place embraced in green pine tree forest at the wide white sand beach. A genuine nature pearl.

And to finish on a delicious note: dinner at **"Bermudas", a warm, family-run fish restaurant** serving top-notch dishes in stylish seaside comfort.



fish-smoking workshop



Baltic sea high shore



traditional fish-smoking



The Upside Down House



Lake Kaņieris



"Valguma pasaulē"



smart sea villages "Jurciemi"



The Upside Down House

Community and health in action – Saldus region

A living story about places where the change is happening for real | local initiative driven major changes in the small village of Blīdene | visit to Solveiga Dzene's garden | "ZEZER" boat ride on Lake Ciecere | lunch at the family restaurant "Eat&Chill" | new family doctor's practice "Eikalipts" | modern dental clinic "EGADent" | physiotherapy center | dinner at the "Laipa SPA" restaurant "Brasērija"

🕒 **departure: 8:30 / arrival 21:00**

📍 **meeting point: Majori Parking,
Lienes Street 5**

The day will begin in **Blīdene**, a small yet strong village with 612 residents, where the community, school, parish and local associations have proven that local initiative can drive real change.

Next we will visit the **Solveiga Dzene's ornamental garden**, where landscape design, tranquillity and entrepreneurship merge into a single concept.

During the visit, we will also meet **Iļze Tomanoviča-Barone**, whose work inspires others to believe in the power of small businesses and community initiative.

Later we will enjoy a boat ride on Lake Ciecere aboard the **"Zezer" boat**, offering scenic views of the surroundings, including the 18-metre-high **Lake Ciecere** observation tower.

Lunch will be enjoyed at **"Eat&Chill"**, a family-friendly venue with a warm, welcoming atmosphere.

In the afternoon, we will explore the latest **healthcare developments in Saldus municipality** – initiatives that have significantly improved access to healthcare services for residents in recent years.

We will visit the **"Eikalipts" family doctors' joint practice**, which provides a full range of primary healthcare services in one location.

We will also visit **"EGADent", a modern dental clinic** offering both preventive care and specialised treatments.

At the **"Madara Dzalbe-Ķenava Health Centre"**, we will meet entrepreneurs working in physiotherapy and traumatology / orthopaedics, expanding local access to rehabilitation services and specialist care.

The day will conclude with dinner at the **"Laipa Spa" restaurant "Brasērija"**, accompanied by the panoramic viewpoint "The Edge of the World".



Lake Ciecere observation tower



Solveiġa Dzene's garden



"Zezer" lake cruise boat



"Laipa Spa" restaurant



physiotherapy centre



"EGADent" dental clinic

Stories of nature, flavors, flowers and people – Ogre region

Honey tasting with homemade bread and candle-making master class at the beekeeping farm “Lūšu Drava” | lunch and visit to the farm “Gardi Ziedi”, where an entrepreneuring family grows decorative edible flowers and herbs | visit to the “AB parks” amusement park | gluten-free and lactose-free cake tasting from “Break Cake” at “Suntažu pasts” | dinner and tasting of beers brewed at Turkalne manor

🕒 **departure: 9:00 / arrival 20:00**

📍 **meeting point: Jūrmala Hotel SPA**

The day will begin at **“Lūšu Drava”**, where the story of a **beekeeping farm** reveals a small ecosystem that teaches symmetry and cooperation.

Participants will enjoy a honey-tasting session accompanied by home-baked bread and warm tea, along with the opportunity to make beeswax candles and fill their own jar of honey.

Next, we will visit **“Gardi Ziedi”**, entering a world of **edible flowers** and aromas. This farm represents one of Latvia’s rare stories where food begins not in the kitchen, but in a blooming field. Here, culinary herbs and flowers are grown for some of Riga’s finest restaurants, supplying chefs who are shaping Latvia’s contemporary gastronomy.

“AB Park” is a clear example of how LEADER support can serve as a springboard for ambitious ideas and a reminder that big achievements often begin with small concepts.

The visit to **Suntaži Post Office** and the gluten-free cake production facility highlights a story of health, quality and social responsibility.

In Suntaži, LEADER-supported initiatives demonstrate how fundamental gluten-free products are for everyday well-being, offering freedom from pain, allergies and dietary restrictions, and restoring quality of life for many people. A tasting will be provided to show that **gluten-free and lactose-free products** can be both healthy and delicious, along with a small surprise from Suntaži Post Office.

The day will conclude at **Turkalne Manor**. A visit to the **brewery and a beer tasting** provide a fitting end to the programme, combining knowledge transfer, the transformative power of LEADER support and a convivial atmosphere at dinner and shared conversations.



"Lūšu Drava" beekeeping



Local cheeses at Ērgļi market square



"Gardi Ziedi" edible flowers



"Cake Break" gluten-free cakes



"AB Park"



gluten-free cakes



Turkalne Manor



Turkalne Manor brewery

Study tour geography



- | | | | |
|----|------------------------------|----|-----------------------------|
| 01 | Aizkraukle region | 07 | Valmiera region |
| 02 | Kuldīga and Tukums regions | 08 | Pierīga |
| 03 | Ādaži and Saulkrasti regions | 09 | North Kurzeme region |
| 04 | Kandava and Jaunpils | 10 | Ķemeri National park region |
| 05 | Jelgava region | 11 | Saldus region |
| 06 | Ērgļi and surroundings | 12 | Ogre region |

Our 12 studytours at LINC 2026

The Latvian LINC 2026 programme is shaped by the cooperation of 14 Local Action Groups, covering different parts of Latvia and a wide variety of local contexts. Built on many years of experience with LEADER and cooperation projects, Latvian LAGs are particularly strong in working together across territories, sharing responsibility and learning from one another.



LEADER / CLLD in Latvia

Overview

LEADER/CLLD in Latvia has been shaping rural territories for more than 20 years by turning local ideas into real, tangible results. It enables people to take an active role in developing their own communities and to create solutions based on local needs, local knowledge and local opportunities. Introduced through pilot projects and international cooperation in the late 1990s, LEADER/CLLD has become one of Latvia's most consistent instruments for rural and coastal development since accession to the European Union.

Over 20 years, more than **237 million EUR** has been invested through LEADER/CLLD in Latvia. Across previous planning periods, **10,107 projects** have been implemented: **433 projects** in 2004–2006, **4,884 projects** in 2007–2013, and **4,790 projects** in 2014–2022, with new projects already underway in the current period.

Today, **33 Local Action Groups (LAGs)** operate across Latvia; six of them also perform the functions of Fishery Local Action Groups. Of the 33 LAGs, 15 have been implementing local development strategies across four planning periods, 17 across three planning periods, and one LAG is implementing its first strategy. Around **47%** of Latvia's population lives within rural LAG territories, reflecting the broad reach of community-led development across the country.

Latvia's LAG territories range from peri-urban areas to remote rural and coastal territories, from depopulating areas to tourism destinations, from agricultural landscapes to active village communities. The closest LAG territory is only 18 km from Riga, while the farthest is 232 km away. The **average LAG has 27,168 inhabitants**, with the largest reaching 57,718 and the smallest 11,768. Territories range from 444 km² to 3,591 km².

The average funding for one local development strategy is around 1.8 million EUR, calculated according to population, territory size, depopulation and distance from Riga; while for FLAGs the allocation also takes into account the number of people employed in fishing and the length of the sea coastline. A typical LEADER/CLLD project receives around 35,000 EUR, though support ranges from larger investments to small but locally meaningful initiatives, sometimes below a thousand euros.

How it works

LEADER/CLLD in Latvia is based on participation and shared responsibility. Local people identify priorities, make decisions and implement projects through local development strategies.

LAGs coordinate this process, connecting sectors, supporting project development and helping people shape ideas, prepare applications and build partnerships. In Latvia, LAGs are legal



entities — associations or foundations — and decision-making is shared between the LAG and the Paying Agency – Rural Support Service. LAGs assess projects according to local strategies, while the Rural Support Service carries out administrative and eligibility checks.

A distinctive feature of Latvia's LEADER/CLLD system is its working culture. For many years, LAGs, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Rural Support Service, the Latvian Rural Advisory and Training Centre and the Latvian Rural Forum as well as other stakeholders have worked closely together through regular meetings, capacity-building events, exchanges and field visits.

Latvia is also proud of its digital project application and monitoring system managed by the Rural Support Service. In spring 2026, it was agreed that also all LEADER/CLLD project selection documents would become fully electronic, with electronically signed originals replacing paper documents.

Simplified cost options are widely used for LAG administration, projects up to 15 000 EUR, youth initiatives and cooperation projects. In the current planning period, a new simplified-cost initiative has already supported 42 LEADER youth projects with 251,000 EUR in public funding, helping rural children and young people develop practical life skills.



Impact on rural and coastal areas

Over time, LEADER/CLLD has made a visible contribution to rural and coastal development in Latvia. It has supported thousands of projects and contributed to the creation or maintenance of more than 1,600 jobs within a five-year period.

In previous planning periods, NGOs implemented 4,543 projects, entrepreneurs and coastal fishermen implemented 2,989 projects, and state and municipal institutions 2573.

LEADER / CLLD IN LATVIA

The impact is visible across Latvia: new businesses, improved services, community spaces, cultural and sports infrastructure, the preservation of fishing and maritime cultural heritage, tourism, local food initiatives, social services, small-scale production, environmental resource management and local identity.

In the previous programming period, projects have supported unique tourism, recreation and leisure services (26%), health and social services (3%), innovative products and services (17%), added value for agricultural and fisheries products (19%), start-ups and new entrepreneurship (26%), and wood products and furniture production (11%). Local potential development initiatives included improvements to public spaces (26%), culture (24%), and sports and active recreation (18%). Projects included beaches, coastal infrastructure and environmental accessibility, walking trails, parks, community buildings, playgrounds, dog walking and training areas, sports facilities, village meeting places and public areas. Beyond infrastructure, these projects strengthen local confidence, identity and reasons to stay or return.

Examples and inspiration

The impact of LEADER/CLLD is best understood through concrete examples. Across Latvia, local initiatives have grown into sustainable businesses, long-term community services, cultural landmarks and new forms of cooperation.

Since 2009, the Latvian Rural Forum has organised *Dižprojekts* (Projects of Excellence), highlighting more than 300 projects from across Latvia.



In 2025, 24 projects were nominated, covering cultural heritage, rural entrepreneurship, youth and education, sports, tourism, local services, innovation, digital solutions, accessibility, coastal livelihoods and food production.

Recent examples include the A. Burovs animation puppet exhibition in Vestiena, a thermal-imaging drone service in Limbaži; Smart Village skills training in Zaļenieki; a modern dental clinic in Saldus and the ReMaize community bakery in Upesciems, combining local food, education and a new meeting place for residents. Other examples include the Association "Cēriņu Spārni" accessibility project in Sigulda, rural tourism in Aglona, mobile food services in Augšdaugava, Pitraga Pietura on the Livonian coast, a physiotherapy centre in Madona, and the open kitchen in Gulbene, where the business also sells products from other LEADER project implementers. Together, these projects show that LEADER/CLLD in Latvia supports both practical needs and imaginative ideas.



Cooperation and networks

Cooperation is an important part of LEADER/CLLD in Latvia. In the previous planning period, LAGs implemented 65 cooperation projects: 33 transnational and 32 inter-territorial.

Latvia's Smart Villages movement is one of examples of cooperation in practice – what began through international cooperation has grown into a national movement involving more than 120 communities across Latvia. LAGs have played an important role in mobilising communities, helping them define a development vision, identify internal resources and start practical innovation.

Cooperation is also central to LINC 2026 itself. It is organised as a shared effort of the Latvian LEADER/CLLD family, with a wide range of stakeholders involved in experience visit routes, communication, logistics, volunteer coordination, participant materials and many practical details. Even the Latvian LEADER/CLLD logo – originally developed by LAGs – was later adopted more widely, including by managing structures, showing how bottom-up ideas can become part of the wider system.

Looking ahead

LEADER/CLLD in Latvia continues to evolve. Many LAGs already work beyond LEADER through Interreg, Erasmus, Horizon Europe and other private and public funding programmes. LINC 2026 therefore includes a Cooperation Corner, co-organised with the EU CAP Network, focused on wider European partnership opportunities. The LINC pre-programme brings together representatives of the Committee of the Regions, the European Economic and Social Committee, the European Commission, ELARD and others.

Looking ahead, Latvia needs a clear vision for rural and coastal areas. Policies and investments should be rural proofed, while place-based instruments – including LEADER/CLLD and Smart Villages – should play a stronger role in economic development, quality of life, innovation and the right to stay.

LAGs should be recognised as central partners in this work, with a clear role in partnership structures and funding decisions. After 20 years, LEADER/CLLD in Latvia is not only a record of implemented projects, but a foundation for the future development potential of rural and coastal areas.

Greetings from the EU CAP Network!

We are pleased to join LINC2026 by the Baltic Sea in Latvia. For us it will be the 10th LINC where we can help facilitate cooperation – since 2016 this annual gathering of LEADER LAGs has had a special spot reserved in our work calendar every year. We wish all 'LINCers' a fruitful event and lots of inspiration and information to help them on their path to cooperation, and ultimately, better development of their home territories. We hope that the Cooperation Corner on 28 May will also contribute to this.

About the EU CAP Network

The EU CAP Network is a forum through which National CAP Networks, organisations, administrations, researchers, entrepreneurs and practitioners can share knowledge and information about agriculture and rural policy. The European Commission set up the EU CAP Network to support the design and implementation of CAP Strategic Plans, innovation and knowledge exchange, including EIP-AGRI, and evaluation and monitoring of the CAP.

LAGs may be especially interested in content within our good practice database, and the **LEADER section** of our website. The content is available in all 24 EU languages through auto translation on the website.

Our **LAG Directory** at the end of April 2026 featured basic data from 2 356 LAGs in 25 EU Member States, and we hope LAGs all over Europe will take

ownership of their LAG profiles and enrich them with additional data and project ideas.

LINC participants do not need to be taught about transnational cooperation (TNC), but our **Practical Guide for TNC** and the **TNC Factsheets** may prove to be useful even for 'seasoned' practitioners.



*LEADER in the EU
CAP NETWORK*

We encourage LEADER TNC through a dedicate **TNC Partner search tool**. Browse TNC offers and find both current and expired cooperation offers published by LAGs.

Discover our **LEADER Newsletter** You can subscribe to receive the quarterly editions of the newsletter in English, German or French as well as access it in 24 languages on the website.

We invite you to follow-up on the outcomes of our upcoming event – **Workshop on LEADER and Social Resilience** – to be held in two weeks' time on 16-17 June 2026 in neighbouring Lithuania.



Subscribe to our newsletters, including the LEADER Newsletter

Join the 'Cooperation Corner' workshop on 28th of May, 8.30-11.am

Join us at the Cooperation Corner during LINC Latvia 2026 to connect, exchange ideas, and build new partnerships.

Discover inspiring examples from the host region and the EU CAP Network, share experiences across TNC, INTERREG, ERASMUS+, and HORIZON, and take part in interactive discussions on the future of LEADER/CLLD and cooperation opportunities.

Explore fresh project ideas at the speed-dating, find potential partners, and grow your network in a LEADER magic atmosphere. Keep up the LEADER spirit, and feel free to contact us at leader@eucapnetwork.eu.



LINC Latvia 2026 European Games



LINC Latvia 2026 European Games is an international team activity programme combining movement, cooperation, trust and creativity. The games are designed as a shared experience where participants from 24 countries connect with each other, discover Latvia's local spirit and celebrate LEADER values.

Game Stations at a Glance — 11 challenges. One shared memory.

No.	Station name	Keyword	Short line
01	LEADER Team Kick	Coordination	Move as one team.
02	Riga Towers Challenge	Balance	Build it. Carry it. Keep it steady.
03	Flow	Precision	Aim, focus and let it flow.
04	LEADER Cooperation Code	Communication	Find the words. Build the message.
05	Freedom Stars Challenge	Cooperation	One team. One star.
06	Latvian Riddle Rush	Mind & Speed	Think fast. Play smart.
07	Gaiziņš Climb	Summit	Together to the top.
08	Time in Our Hands	Memory	Our future in our hands.
09	LINC Trust Challenge	Trust	Listen. Trust. Build together.
10	Amber Wine Yoga	Moment	Pause. Breathe. See the sea.
11	Baltic Sand Storm	Reaction	Catch the wind. Score the point.

How it works

Each team should visit and complete all 11 stations during the games. Skipping a station results in a penalty of 18 points per missed station. Follow your route, support your team and collect memories at every station.

Overall Ranking Note

If two or more teams have the same total score in the overall ranking, the higher place goes to the team with the better result in station 07 "Gaiziņš Climb".

Event values

Cooperation. Trust. Creativity. Local spirit. Shared memories.

Today is not only about winning. It is about moving, trusting, laughing and creating memories together.

Time to remember!



! Be safe, have fun!

Stay with your team, follow instructions and respect the nature around you.



LINC Latvia congress agenda
for May 26–28, 2026



Local Action Groups in Latvia:
laukuforums.lv

LINC Latvia team contact: **+371 22064447**

Emergencies: 113 medical, 112 fire, 110 police

Official hashtag: #LINCLatvia2026

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