

# Upgrade!

A Pursuit of Status.

[www.drom.fi](http://www.drom.fi)  
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INVITATION

Cultural Counsellor **Veijo Baltzar (Finland)** has the pleasure to invite You to participate the **International Network Meeting “Upgrade 2018!” in Riga, House of European Union 28-29 May.**

Cultural Counsellor **Veijo Baltzar** and Creative Association for Arts and Culture **Drom (Finland)** are delighted to announce **“Upgrade 2018!” international cooperation initiative** for the purpose of **promoting Intercultural Dialogue** in the Baltic region. In the frames of this project, cofounded by Nordic Cultural Point, **Mr Veijo Baltzar and Drom** will organize the **1<sup>st</sup> international 2-day network meeting “Upgrade 2018!” in Riga, Latvia on Mon 28<sup>th</sup> - Tue 29<sup>th</sup> May 2018** at the **House of European Union (Aspazijas bulvāris 28, Riga)**. The event takes place under the auspices of Ambassador of Finland to Latvia **H.E. Olli Kantanen**.

**“Upgrade2018!” promotes networking of cultural professionals of the Baltic region.** The pursuit of the cooperation initiative is to identify a common basis for **international long-term cultural collaboration** for the purpose of promoting Intercultural Dialogue and sustainable future of multicultural Europe. The cooperation strategy of the Baltic region will be built on the basis of **20 cross-disciplinary law initiatives** by Cultural Counsellor Veijo Baltzar for **renewing European Union’s policies of multiculturalism**, introduced and discussed at the conference. The international meeting will bring together representatives of cultural and societal sectors to discuss building of sustainable multicultural Europe. International participants of the meeting will represent leading professionals in arts and culture from following countries: Estonia, Finland, Russia, Latvia, Poland and Lithuania. The 2nd day of the seminar is dedicated to cultural exchange and building future collaboration.

Cultural Counsellor Veijo Baltzar, a travelling Roma by his roots, is a world-leading Roma author and all-rounder in culture. He pursued his life’s work for the Roma people through his artistic, cultural and social activity. Since starting his literary career in 1960s, Baltzar has discussed Roma culture and its relationship with the majority culture in more than 72 literary works including novels, plays, prose and poetry collections, librettos and film manuscripts. He has directed numerous plays, served as teacher at the Theatre Academy Helsinki, and is also actively involved in the visual arts.

In April 2014 Mr Veijo Baltzar organized a 2-day minister-level conference “The Conscience of Europe” at the Finnish Parliament, Helsinki. The conference was attended by e.g. former Prime Minister **Paavo Lipponen (FIN)**, former President **Tarja Halonen (FIN)**, Minister of Education **Jaak Aaviksoo (EST)**, Minister of Education **Krista Kiuru (FIN)**, Minister of Development **Pekka Haavisto (FIN)**, Minister of Interior **Päivi Räsänen (FIN)**, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs **Petr Drulák (Czech Republic)**, Minister of State for Social Inclusion **Zoltán Kovács (HUN)** and State Secretary of the Ministry of Education **Stefan Chudoba (SLO)**.



*Photos: The Conscience of Europe conference, Finnish Parliament Annex 18-19 March 2018*

On the right: Former Primer Minister of Finland **Paavo Lipponen** and Minister of State for Social Inclusion **Zoltán Kovács** (Hungary) at the front

Conference issued Veijo Baltzar's **24-item set of proposals for reforming European policies of multiculturalism** and sent to European Commission. *"Baltzar's recommendations and initiatives are most useful contribution to reflections currently under way within the European Commission."* - Mr **Walter Zampieri**, Head of Cultural Diversity and Innovation of European Commission

The seminar in Riga will issue renewed and updated law initiatives by Veijo Baltzar in 2018.

*"We need political initiativeness and fights on various fronts to build sustainable European future. Therefore Veijo Baltzar's law initiatives to renew policies of multiculturalism in Europe were a crucial turning point. Currently they are topical and of utmost importance."* Finland's former Prime Minister **Paavo Lipponen** at Veijo Baltzar's 50-year artistic career's anniversary celebration 6 April 2018

Please find a following outlining thesis by Mr Veijo Baltzar, as a theme to be discussed at the seminar:

*The leaders of our world have chosen multicultural way of life; the world is becoming increasingly international and multicultural simply because of its economic fabric. To the Baltic states this is especially important. Finland has been international for decades and it is one of the reasons why it has kept its independence. Correctly applied multiculturality is a choice that prevents small countries from being swallowed by bigger ones.*

*Why does the mainstream population have only formal goals regarding national minorities, as recorded in some articles of human rights, laws and social policies? Why do the minority policies of the majority often follow their own isolated course, as a result of which the minorities are kept in precarious situations and in the margins?*

***The working language of the conference will be English, with simultaneous interpretation Eng-Latvian-Eng.***

Coordinator of the "UPGRADE! NETWORK":

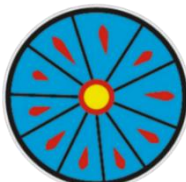
Creative Association for Arts and Culture Drom ([www.drom.fi](http://www.drom.fi))

**CONTACT PERSON:** Director for Communications,

Ms Nina Castén [nina.casten@drom.fi](mailto:nina.casten@drom.fi), tel. +358 445090683



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