

PRESS RELEASE

For 3rd June 2026

UNESCO CITIES OF LITERATURE ATTEND ANNUAL UNESCO CITIES OF LITERATURE CONFERENCE IN TARTU, ESTONIA 11-15TH MAY 2026



The 2026 Annual Cities of Literature Conference was hosted by Tartu, Estonia between 11-15 May. This was the largest conference to date: 57 delegates from 40 cities. This included representatives from new Cities who joined the network in October 2025: Aberystwyth (Cymru), Celje (Slovenia), Conakry (Guinea), Gdańsk (Poland), Kahramanmaraş (Türkiye), Lund (Sweden) and San Luis Potosí (Mexico).

The Annual Conference is intended to strengthen understanding and connections between Cities to build greater future collaboration and to explore the literary life of the host city.

In a packed itinerary over the course of five days, delegates got to visit many important venues such as the Tartu Literature House, the Estonian Literary Museum, Tartu Public Library and Aparaadithas culture factory and meet programmers, writers, booksellers, archivists and librarians.

The Conference included a showcase of contemporary Estonian writers presented by the literary magazine EstLit alongside many other talks, poetry readings and cabaret performances. Also launched during the conference were Bus Poetry, displaying poems from

32 Cities of Literature in Tartu public buses, and Toponymy, an outdoor exhibition produced by Québec City in 2023, now shown in Tartu, that tells the stories behind city names across the network.

In addition delegates met Kerli Gutman-Normak, Head of the Estonian National Commission for UNESCO to learn more about the UNESCO sites in the country (<https://kaart.unesco.ee/en/>) and to visit Viljanidi, City of Crafts and Folk Art in Southern Estonia.

The next Cities of Literature Annual Conference will take place in Okayama 2027, Manchester 2028.

ENDS

Additional Information

Contact for more information or interviews:

UNESCO Creative Cities of Literature Network Lead

Kjartan Omarsson, Director of Reykjavík UNESCO City of Literature

Kjartan.Mar.Omarsson@reykjavik.is

For more information on the UCCN, please visit:

<https://en.unesco.org/creative-cities/home>

To learn more about the UNESCO Creative Cities of Literature Network and our values:

<https://www.citiesoflit.com/>

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UNESCO Cities of Literature

About the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN): Established in 2004, the UCCN aims to foster collaboration among cities that recognize creativity as a crucial element in achieving sustainable urban development. Worldwide, 408 cities are part of this network, united in their pursuit of a shared goal: integrating creativity and cultural industries into their local development strategies while actively cooperating on the global stage. The Network encompasses eight diverse creative fields: Architecture, Crafts and Folk Art, Design, Film, Gastronomy, **Literature**, Media Arts, and Music. Sixty-three UNESCO Creative Cities of Literature from 46 countries are currently members of the Network, diligently working together to harness the transformative power of literature in fostering sustainable and inclusive societies.