

ISHA WINTER SEMINAR 2025

Multiple Baltics:

REIMAGINING SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND
SPATIAL DIMENSIONS OF HISTORY



WEDNESDAY & SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3-7

University of Latvia Centre for Humanities
and Social Sciences (Oskara Kalpaka
bulvāris 4)

03

Accomodation & Stay in Riga

05-11

Program Overview

11

Small guide: explore Riga

12

Read more about keynote speakers!

14

What to expect in workshops and thematic sessions?

25

First look to Bibliotheca Rigensis

27

If something serious happens..

28

Seminar organisers & supporters



TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACCOMODATION

The seminar participants will be welcomed in a special building that is not only home to history but was also created by it: the **Benjamiņš House**.

The elegant house on Barona Street, then called the **Pfaff House**, was built in 1876 during the golden age of Riga's construction. It belonged to the merchant family Pfaff. It was designed by architects Hermanis Ende, Vilhelms Bekmanis, and later Eižens Laube, who also worked on the renovation of Riga Castle and several Art Nouveau buildings in Riga.



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DAY 1

Wednesday, December 3,



ARRIVALS & REGISTRATION

3 pm - 6.30 pm

Benjaminu nams (Krisjana Barona iela 12), for
international guests



WELCOME TO RIGA!

7 pm - 10 pm

For participants & workshop leaders

DAY 2

Thursday, December 4



REGISTRATION & CONFERENCE OPENING

9.30 pm - 12 pm

University of Latvia Centre for Humanities and
Social Sciences (Oskara Kalpaka bulvaris 4)



KEYNOTE: MĀRTINŠ MINTAURS (UNIVERSITY OF LATVIA)

THE BALTIC WORLD IN HISTORY AND
HERITAGE REPRESENTATIONS:
LOOKING BACK AT THE 20TH
CENTURY

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DAY 2

Thursday, December 4,



DIGITAL HISTORY: SOCIAL AND SPATIAL ASPECTS OF BALTIC HISTORY

1.30 pm - 3.30 pm

Haralds Matulis (University of Latvia)

Digital Approach in History Research –
Visualization, Computational Methods, and
Artificial Tools



CRITICAL CULTURAL HERITAGE - NARRATIVES, CONFLICTS, AND TRANSFORMATIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE BALTICS

1.30 pm - 3.30 pm

Kristina van Kuyck (Dublin City University)

Reading Monuments: Semiotics, Power, and
Memory in the Public Space



PHD WORKSHOP

1.30 pm - 3.30 pm

Viktória Švigárová (Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice, Slovakia), **Konrad Gergely** (European University Institute, Italy)

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SPATIAL DIMENSIONS OF HISTORY

DAY 2

Thursday, December 4,



DIGITAL HISTORY: SOCIAL AND SPATIAL ASPECTS OF HISTORY

4.00 pm - 6.00 pm

Anna Pečerska (Riga Technical University), **Elīza Dāldere** (Helsinki University)

Linking Socio-cultural Data with Historical Memory
in the Baltic Urban Streetscapes



CRITICAL CULTURAL HERITAGE - NARRATIVES, CONFLICTS, AND TRANSFORMATIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE BALTICS

4.00 pm - 6.00 pm

Kristina van Kuyck (Dublin City University)
Reading Monuments: Semiotics, Power, and
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SPATIAL DIMENSIONS OF HISTORY

DAY 2

Thursday December 4



BOARD GAMES NIGHT

7.00 pm - 9.00pm

Akmenīlauzis (Daugavpils iela 58)

DAY 3

Friday December 4



REGISTRATION & COFFEE

8.30 am - 9.00 am

University of Latvia Centre for Humanities and
Social Sciences (Oskara Kalpaka bulvaris 4)

CRITICAL CULTURAL HERITAGE - NARRATIVES, CONFLICTS, AND TRANSFORMATIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE BALTI CS

9.00 am - 10.30 am

Elina Ziehm (Leipzig University) **Anika Olbrisch**
(University of Greifswald)



PHD WORKSHOP

9.00 am - 10.30 am

Viktória Švígárová (Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice, Slovakia), **Konrad Gergely** (European University Institute, Italy)

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SPATIAL DIMENSIONS OF HISTORY

DAY 3

Friday December 5



DIGITAL HISTORY - SOCIAL AND SPATIAL ASPECTS OF BALTIC HISTORY

9.00 am - 10.30 am

Rūta Bruževica (Tallinn University)

Digital Livonia: a digital approach to medieval sources



BREAK

10.30 am - 11.00 am



CRITICAL CULTURAL HERITAGE - NARRATIVES, CONFLICTS, AND TRANSFORMATIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE BALTICS

11.00 - 12.30 am

Elina Ziehm (Leipzig University) **Anika Olbrisch** (University of Greifswald)



PHD WORKSHOP

11.00 am - 12.30 am

Viktória Švigárová (Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice, Slovakia), **Konrad Gergely** (European University Institute, Italy)

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Friday December 5



DIGITAL HISTORY - SOCIAL AND SPATIAL ASPECTS OF BALTIC HISTORY

11.00 am - 12.30 pm

Rūta Bruževica (Tallinn University)

Digital Livonia: a digital approach to medieval sources



STUDY VISIT TO THE LIBRARY OF RARE EDITIONS AND MANUSCRIPTS "BIBLIOTHECA RIGENSIS"

2.00 pm - 3.30 pm

University of Latvia Library, Rūpniecības iela 10



KEYNOTE: GUSTAVS STRENGA

4.00 pm - 5.30 pm

Eternal Struggles for Freedom: Long Life of the Baltic Medieval Heroes between Crusades and Nation States

Oskara Kalpaka bulvāris 4, Sapere aude, 2nd floor



ROUNDTABLE HOW TO ISHA?

7.00 pm - 8.30 pm

Moderator: Gabrijel Bradič (University of Zagreb, ISHA President)

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DAY 4

Saturday, December 6

BOXES, BARRIERS AND EMBARRASSMENT: THE NOT SO ATTRACTIVE SIDE OF INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH

10.00 am - 12.00 am

Alise Akermane Pokšāne, Jānis Ķimsis (Latvian Biomedical Research and Study Centre)

Oskara Kalpaka bulvāris 4, Sapere aude, 2nd floor



STUDY VISIT TO RIGA HISTORICAL CENTRE

1.00 pm - 2.30 pm



ISHA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

3.00-5.00 pm

Oskara Kalpaka bulvāris 4, Sapere aude, 2nd floor



NFPD

7.00 pm - 10.00 pm

RSU Studentu māja (Palasta iela 3)

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DAY 5

Sunday December 7

DEPARTURES & OPTIONAL RIGA VISITS



RIGA CHRISTMAS MARKET

Doma laukums

RIGA ART NOUVEAU CENTRE

Alberta iela 13



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[Explore locations](#)

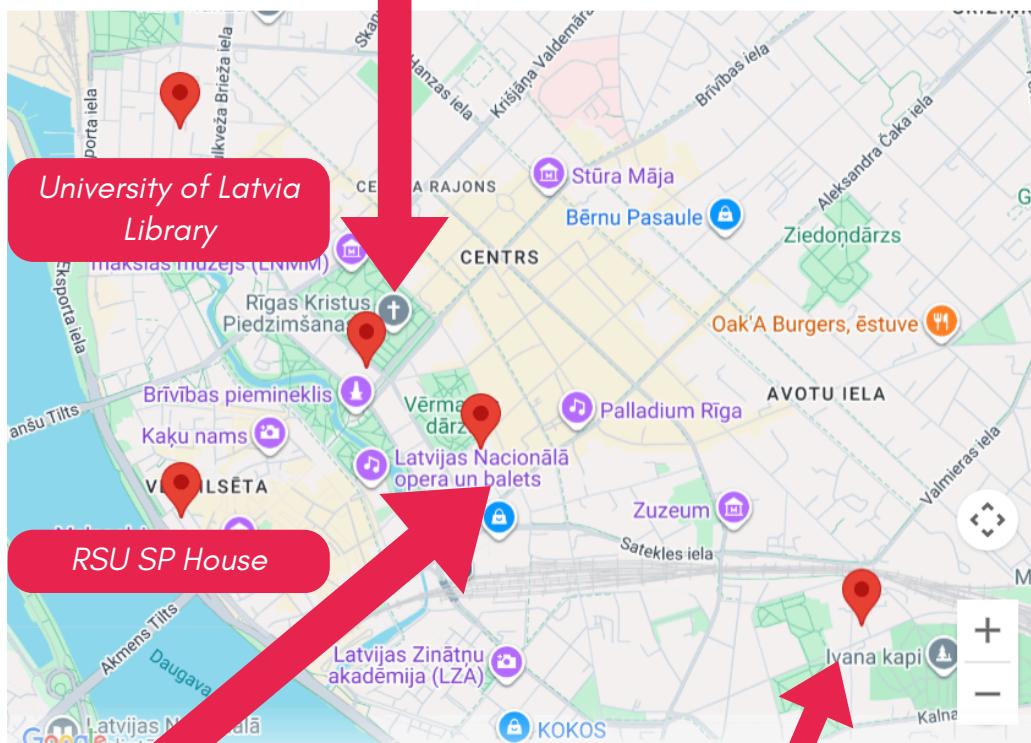
Conference venue

University of Latvia
Library

RSU SP House

Accomodation

Akmenlauzis



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MĀRTIŅŠ MINTAURS

Keynote speakers:



Dr. hist., historian, assistant professor at the Faculty of Humanities, University of Latvia. Studied history at the University of Latvia from 1997 to 2008. Author of a monograph "Arhitektūras mantojuma aizsardzības vēsture Latvijā/A History of Architectural Heritage Protection in Latvia" (2016, in Latvian) and ca 30 academic publications on the cultural and intellectual history of Latvia in the 19th and 20th centuries. Scientific interests related to the theory of cultural heritage, cultural history and methodology of history, as represented in publications and academic study courses.

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GUSTAVS STRENGA

Keynote speakers:



Associate Professor at the Latvian Academy of Culture. He defended his PhD Thesis, "Remembering the Dead: Collective Memoria in Late Medieval Livonia," at Queen Mary University of London (2014). Gustavs held research fellowships at the University of Freiburg, Tallinn University and Greifswald University. Gustavs' main research interests include the history of medieval Livonia, memory studies, gift-giving as a historical phenomenon, and book history. Recently, Gustavs Strengā, as co-editor, has worked on the collective monograph "Doing Memory: Medieval Saints and Heroes and Their Afterlives in the Baltic Sea Region (19th–20th centuries)" (De Gruyter, 2024) together with Cordelia Heß.

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SPATIAL DIMENSIONS OF HISTORY

KRISTINA VAN KUYCK

Explore each workshop:



PhD candidate at Dublin City University. She graduated from Central European University with a Master's in Comparative History. She is recipient of Irish Research Council and Lithuanian Foundation Scholarships. Her PhD research focuses on contested public spaces and the changing meaning of Soviet heritage in the Baltic States.

Workshop: Reading Monuments: Semiotics, Power, and Memory in the Public Space

Participants are invited to critically examine monuments and memorials as texts that communicate political, cultural, and ideological messages. Using tools from semiotic theory and critical heritage studies, participants will learn to "read" the visual and spatial language of public heritage – analyzing what is shown, what is silenced, and how meanings change over time. In small groups, students will dissect contested monuments from the Baltic region and beyond, then design creative strategies of *re-signification* that move beyond demolition versus preservation.

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SPATIAL DIMENSIONS OF HISTORY

HARALDS MATULIS

Explore each workshop:



Digital Humanities (DH) researcher at Institute of Literature, Folklore and Art of the University of Latvia (ILFA) and a PhD student at the University of Latvia. He is working with computational methods and their application to humanities and culture domain data – data analysis, visualization, natural language processing. He also runs a DH podcast as well.

Digital Approach in History Research – Visualization, Computational Methods, and Artificial Tools

In this workshop we will take a brief tour of different digital methods suited for history research. Then we will follow up with some ready-made digital tools and show how they can be suitable in your research. In the closing part, we will look at how you can enhance your regular humanities digital skills with a gentle touch of programming (Python and Google Colab) and use artificial intelligence tools, namely chat assistants, like ChatGPT, Gemini, or others.

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SPATIAL DIMENSIONS OF HISTORY

KONRAD GERGELY

Explore each workshop:



Previously studied at Babeş-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca (Romania) focusing on modern history and social anthropology. His main areas of research include social-military history, Habsburg studies, and military material culture and medicine. Currently, a second-year PhD candidate at the Department of History of the European University Institute in Florence.

VICTORIA ŠVIGÁROVÁ



PhD student at Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice. Her research focuses on the discourse of leading figures of the Slovak state, such as Jozef Tiso and Alexander Mach, analyzing their understanding of Slovak statehood through language, ideology, and power. Her PhD thesis explores the relationship between language and history, uncovering how discourse was employed to influence public opinion.

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SPATIAL DIMENSIONS OF HISTORY

PhD workshop

Explore each workshop:

Iveta Berga-Muižniece (PhD candidate, University of Latvia)

The Image of the Virgin Mary in Livonia: Archaeological and Visual Material (13th–16th centuries).

Matthieu Accary (MA, Lycée International Jules Verne de Riga/Sorbonne Université)

The civil war during the fourteenth century in Byzantium: historiography and new approaches.

Renata Deshlieva (MA, University of Primorska/Koper)

In the labyrinth of History: A journey through the Wars of the Roses.

Vasile Alexandru-Marian (PhD candidate, University of Bucharest)

Transformation and modernization in Ottoman Dobruja (1856–1878)

Denis Smetanin (PhD candidate, Nordost-Institut, Hamburg University)

Uncertainty at the Imperial Borderland? Local Politics and Public Sphere in Riga and Reval in Late Tsarist Russia

Mihajlo Srđanović (MA, University of Belgrade)

The main causes of the rebellion in Pilsen (1953) and the influence of the geography on the outbreak of the rebellion

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ANNA PEČERSKA

Explore each workshop:



Master's student and research assistant in digital humanities at Riga Technical University (Latvia), previously graduated with a degree in semiotics from the University of Tartu (Estonia) and Eastern European studies from the University of Bath (United Kingdom). In her spare time she is a freelance translator for Netflix TV series.

ELĪZA DĀLDERE



Master's student and research assistant at the University of Helsinki (Finland), previously graduated master's degree in History from the University of Latvia (Latvia). Her main research interests are symbolic communication, decision-making culture and social history. She has recently begun researching how the interaction between history and digital humanities can open up new research perspectives through historical data modelling.

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SPATIAL DIMENSIONS OF HISTORY

Explore each workshop:

Linking Socio-cultural Data with Historical Memory in the Baltic Urban Streetscapes

Street renaming has a close link to historical memory, and the renaming process has a two-fold effect on a city's streetscape. First, it eradicates the old name, thereby aiming to de-commemorate the historical event and region. Second, it establishes a new commemorative place. It is common practice in Europe to change street names when a regime change necessitates a new historiography, and societies re-evaluate, rewrite, and erase history in a sense. In this workshop, participants will be invited to learn what is considered data in digital humanities and how to integrate spatial humanities as another approach in your research

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ELINA ZIEHM

Explore each workshop:



Master's student in history at Leipzig University (Germany). Currently involved as a researcher in the project "Critical History Tours" with partners including the International Students of History Association (ISHA), EuroClio, Uncomfortable Oxford, The Liberation Route Europe (ELB), the Balkan Region Museum Network, and ATRIUM.

ANIKA OLBRISCH



Master's student at the University of Greifswald (Germany), has studied Jewish Studies at the Central European University (Austria). She is involved in developing an audioguide on the local history of Jonava, a former shtetl in Lithuania, in collaboration with the Department for Public History at Hagen University. The audioguide was developed specifically for members of the German Bundeswehr stationed in the Jonava area in the context of NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence.

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Explore each workshop:

COMPLEX CULTURAL HERITAGE IN URBAN ENVIRONMENTS: CRITICAL CITY TOURS

Participants will be introduced to newly developed educational materials by researchers from the Critical History Tours project (research consortium: ISHA, EuroClio, Uncomfortable Oxford, The Liberation Route Europe (ELB), Balkan Region Museum Network, ATRIUM) on how to create multifaceted and thematic guides to complex and sometimes uncomfortable cultural heritage in urban environments. During the four-hour workshop, participants will learn about the methodology and discuss how to develop a critical view of urban cultural heritage. Divided into smaller groups, participants will either create a completely new city tour or improve an existing tour of their hometown or university. At the end, participants will present their newly created or improved critical city tours and reflect on each other's results.



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RŪTA BRUŽEVICA

Explore each workshop:



PhD student at Tallinn University (Estonia). As a junior research fellow, she is part of the "Digital Livonia" project team and contributes with her work of comprehensively digitalising and transcribing the medieval craft statutes of Riga and Tallinn. Rūta implements digital history tools in her work to enrich source analysis through corpus analysis and text encoding. She is training a handwritten text recognition model for texts of Medieval Livonia as well.

Digital Livonia: a digital approach to medieval sources

The workshop will provide participants with beginner-level skills in using the Transkribus handwriting recognition platform, which can complement existing source research capabilities by analysing text corpora and large language models. In collaboration with the National Archives of Latvia and the Latvian State Historical Archive, students will also have the opportunity to transcribe Hanseatic documents from the archive collection, which were included in the UNESCO Memory of the World Register in 2023.

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ALISE AKERMANE POKŠĀNE

Explore each workshop:



Her academic background is relatively unique among geneticists and historians, as she began her undergraduate studies in History (*cum laude*) and continued her graduate studies in Biology. She has recently become a PhD candidate. Currently, she is exploring current ancient DNA data in research paper manuscripts.

JĀNIS KIMSSIS



PhD candidate; already has a set of publications and is working on the thesis. His main focus is the bioinformatic analysis of ancient DNA data and the methodology of both wet-lab and dry-lab ancient DNA analyses.

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Explore each workshop:

Boxes, Barriers and Embarrassment: the not so Attractive Side of Interdisciplinary research

The workshop aims to challenge participants to confront three core issues related to cross-disciplinary collaboration: Thinking Inside the Box, Scientific Language Barriers, and Inherently Human Shortcomings (related to disciplinary expertise). Participants will bring pre-prepared examples, which small groups will use to collaboratively identify priorities and devise concise, minute-long solutions. This interactive session is designed to deepen critical engagement with interdisciplinary analysis and build essential soft skills in precise, structured problem-solving.

The workshop is based on research experience, conducting the project “Viking Age in Latvia: an interdisciplinary study” (funded by the Research Council of Latvia), which focuses on the Viking Age (7th–11th c. CE) in the modern territory of Latvia and on how this turbulent period can be characterized using ancient genomic data.

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SPATIAL DIMENSIONS OF HISTORY

FIRST LOOK AT BIBLIOTHECA RIGENSIS COLLECTIONS, WHICH ARE HOLD BY UNIVERSITY OF LATVIA LIBRARY

The **Bibliotheca Rigensis (1524)** is historically significant as **one of the oldest public libraries in the Baltic Sea** and German cultural regions. Its founding is linked to a 1524 donation of five religious books by the Riga City Council to Pastor Nikolaus Ramme, intended for the common good (*salus communis*). The library's core collection today comprises medieval manuscripts and printed works that represent knowledge production and preservation within the region. Of particular cultural and historical value are the medieval Latin parchment manuscripts, which were primarily sourced from former monasteries and churches in Riga. Highlights of the manuscript collection include the 13th-century French-transcribed works **Psalterium Davidis** (Psalms of David) and **Parabolae Salomonis** (Parables of Solomon), a 15th-century **Book of Hours** decorated with ornate miniatures. An exceptionally important historical source is **Missale Rigense** (mid-15th century).



Amen p̄ea fuit dñe se sali dñe
 Vnde invisibilis tuūtator ouc
 ecce deus benedic hoc lac
 tuū tuū tuo p̄au p̄p̄m dñ
 mū ame. **M**un te al altar z vñ
 Sūlpe sc̄a tūtias hac obla
 tone quā rūi officiū mea
 na p̄allōm i curremō
 i aeternōm om̄i uti xp̄i
 māne s̄q̄ mānē t̄i gētā
 ut iāl p̄iūt i om̄i s̄tūtū
 nob̄ ame ad honorem
 digner̄ p̄ nob̄ mēlēt i illi
 quōr̄ mēmōia agan̄ s̄tās
 & vñs i ignas c̄ p̄ oia s̄tā
 s̄tōr̄ ame p̄oſen c̄ p̄ oia s̄tā
 O mēt p̄o uue p̄hā bñc
 p̄emōr̄ s̄tēs i s̄tōr̄s vñ
 mēl vñq̄ s̄amfūt accep
 tū s̄t̄i q̄p̄otēt cro dēmēt or
 mēt s̄t̄i quo dñto i p̄ip̄t
Der oia s̄tā s̄tōr̄ ame
 Dñs vñbñ Et ai q̄ntu
 mō p̄t̄l s̄t̄i da Nebenmō
 ad om̄i Gr̄at̄s agant̄ dñs
 cro mō Digna i vñl̄t̄i est
Ḡ i nūtūm e fortio
 m̄ q̄t̄g i vñq̄ ḡas eḡt̄
 O s̄t̄i s̄aint̄ p̄ om̄p̄ot̄



nicht op
 w zu dem boten. Ech
 etzen. Das h̄et er. und wolt ir die t̄e
 ammen haben. da h̄eilt die Frau daß en zu
 Jen hin end her als lang biß Sie Kertzen entz
 zwoy brach. und behb̄ dem boten. das ein teyl
 vnd der Frauen das ander teyl inn der hand.
Gon sant
Hnt Blasius w̄ ein
 Christen. und her got lieb vnd diene
 im mit oleyß tag vnd nacht mit vil
 Guterbung. und fleß sich aller tugent gege
 Gott vnd seinem nechsten daun hetten in spe
 cristen lieb. Nun was iß Dem land Capado

CALENDAR REGIOMONTA
 May 1375.
 Norimbergae c. 1475.

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IN URGENT SITUATIONS:

Organisator's will be reachable through email:
riga@isha.international or directly through
WhatsApp (**+371 20228889**)

Emergency number (universal) - **112**

Emergency Ambulance - **113**

If you experience the situation, which requires doctor's attention, citizen's of EU, who holds EU Health card, could receive medical attention as Latvians. 24/7 consultation phone - **+371 660 16 0 0 1.**

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