

## FOREWORD

Vilnius is the city of museums. Such an image has been constructed for around two and a half centuries. The former and current museums of Vilnius are reflections of the various aspects of the city's history and culture, which are related to the life of the whole country. Yet the wide network of museums in Vilnius does not include a city museum. Vilnius City Museum and Vilnius Historical Museum, founded in the 1930s, have been transformed into museums devoted to the history, culture and art of the entire country (currently the National Art Museum of Lithuania and the Lithuanian National Museum).

Vilnius is probably the only among Europe's capital cities not to have a specialist city museum. The designation of Vilnius as European Capital of Culture in 2009 has encouraged discussion of the establishment of the city museum. As time is pressing, the organizers of the programme for the event began setting up a virtual museum of Vilnius history. But a virtual museum does not eliminate the need for a real one, the establishment of which requires a considerably greater amount of resources and time.

Seeking to establish a city museum in Vilnius it is necessary to get acquainted with the planning and operation of city museums abroad (especially those in capital cities) and to follow the discussions within the International Committee for the Collections and Activities of Museums of Cities (CAMOC) under the International Council of Museums (ICOM) on the issues faced by such museums. The practice of city museum establishment elsewhere in the world suggest of an inadequate understanding of the concept and mission for this type of museums.

The international conference titled *The museological contexts of Vilnius history*, which was held on 27 September 2007 in Vilnius, discussed the need and opportunities for the establishment of the city museum in Vilnius and, along with paradigms of the conception and operation of city museums abroad, examined other museological contexts of Vilnius history.

The conference material and other essays included in this publication provide indications for the feasibility study for the Vilnius City Museum highlighting the necessity to have contemporary and constructive patterns as well as alternative solutions developed that would supplement and extend the current museological contexts of Vilnius history to include new strands of the city's life.

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