

## The Oviši Lighthouse to be Illuminated in the Colours of the Liv Flag



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On Sunday, 26 March, when the first ever Liv Heritage Day will be celebrated, the Oviši Lighthouse will also symbolically tell the world about the life of a numerically small but spirit-rich people by the Baltic Sea. The Lighthouse will be open all day for visitors to enjoy the spring views, and will light up in green, white and blue as dusk falls.

The Institute of Livs of the University of Latvia in cooperation with the Latvian National Commission for UNESCO and the Latvian National Centre for Culture has announced 2023 as the Year of Liv Heritage. It aims to draw attention to Latvia's Liv roots. On the first Sunday after the Spring Solstice, which this year will be 26 March, the first ever Liv Heritage Day will be celebrated in the regions once inhabited by the Livs.

Oviši is the first village in the territory of the Liv coast, looking from Ventspils towards Kolka. The origin of the name is not really clear, but one of the versions says that the place name Oviši is derived from the Liv word "ovist" (coniferous). The Livs themselves call Oviši *Pačikmā*.

Opposite Oviši in the sea is a dangerous area of shoals, only about 10 metres deep, where many ships have perished over the centuries. In the 19th century, a lighthouse was built in Oviši to warn sailors of shoals. Construction of the Lighthouse began in 1809, but was interrupted by the War of 1812 with Napoleon's troops. It is known that between 1814 and 1844, the Lighthouse burned sporadically. In 1844, the Lighthouse was completed and took the shape that we still see today. 1844. gadā pabeigta bākas celtniecība un tā ieguvusi veidolu, ko redzam vēl šobaltdien.

Today, the Oviši lighthouse is the oldest lighthouse in Latvia that is still in operation. It is included in the State List of Protected Cultural Monuments. The lighthouse complex houses an exhibition on the history of Latvian lighthouses. The tower of the Lighthouse with a lantern reaches a height of 37 metres.

The Freeport of Ventspils Authority manages the Oviši Lighthouse, taking care not only of its technical operation for maritime purposes, but also of the preservation and promotion of its historical heritage.