

## **Welcome EFFORTS Kaunas Congress**

### **6 October 2022**

Distinguished guests, dear colleagues,

With pride and honor and in close cooperation with the Kaunas Fortress Park, the City of Kaunas and the Kaunas European Capital 2022 organization, we feel very privileged to organize this seventh EFFORTS congress.

Now this annual event will bring us in contact with the Baltic region; a region with many fortifications, dating back from the Viking era to the more recently Cold War. During this conference we will talk about communities in and around fortifications and about new possibilities to connect people and institutions, in conjunction with our military heritage.

EFFORTS is stronger than ever before. Today EFFORTS is active in 23 countries, with over 200 member sites. In close cooperation with Forte Cultura, in 2022 we have launched our Joint Scientific Committee. This organisation will encourage to incorporate its members and sites in European projects. Together with the EFFORTS Knowledge Center on Fortification Heritage in Venice, we will be able to set a pace for the use of knowledge in favour of further development.

Furthermore we witness that the EFFORTS European Fortress Summer is taking root and will even enlarge its scope to fortress nights.

EFFORTS is serving her members and the military heritage sites within her member base. The members make this cooperation platform work and the experts within the network add value to EFFORTS.

Kaunas Fortress Park is a member from the very beginning. Kaunas has a keen and rich history of fortresses and has – throughout the past - known many reasons to build fortifications.

With great interest and satisfaction we see the implication of art, innovative expressions, environment, education, community work and wellbeing being used at the heart of these stone rooms and walls.

Thanks to Fort 9 and its holocaust memorial, this year we were able to generate a group of European sites into reflection on education of the horrors of war. It was about the difficult history of these forts that has relevance upto today.

Therefore this year we will direct the EFFORTS Award to these members that are on the frontline of heritage preservation. More on this tomorrow !

We will continue on this path and other ways – as regions, cities, sites, universities, museums and individuals. I hope you join us on this fascinating journey.

I wish you a very fruitful congress in Kaunas European Cultural Capital.

Thanks for your attention.

Frank Petter

President of EFFORTS

Mayor of Bergen op Zoom