

Press release August 22, 2014

## Keđja succeeds in building a stronger and more sustainable dance scene in the Nordic and Baltic countries

A status event for the seven-year old Nordic–Baltic cooperation project keđja gathered 240 dance professionals from 18 countries on the self-governing Åland Islands between Sweden and Finland. The most remote guests came from Singapore, Canada and Australia. The majority of participants were active dance professionals between 30 and 40 years of age.

During the four days of keđjaMariehamn 2014 encounter 14 performances were shown from Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway and Sweden. Many of them were premieres and some were previews or demos. The program included a screening of Nordic dance films and lots of workshops and panel discussions.

Keđja collaborated with Åland dance schools on organizing the ÅIDance Festival that showed local performances by young dancers and also elder amateurs. One of the objectives of the keđja cooperation has been to reach new audiences and new locations to present contemporary dance.

– Keđja has been helping to develop co-operation within dance in Northern Europe since 2007. Networks have been created and numerous performances presented. New audiences have encountered dance, and skills and capacities have been developed– in short the art form has developed and standards have been raised. Overall, through keđja, the Nordic and Baltic countries have built a stronger and more sustainable contemporary dance scene, says **Per Voetmann**, director of the Nordic Culture Point.

For a long time there has been a demand for more active touring of performances in the Nordic and Baltic regions. Now keđja is giving birth to a touring network that will be tested next year with an international pilot tour.

An important part of the keđja project is Wilderness Dance, residency stays for 10 dance artist groups on the edge of the Nordic–Baltic region. A genuine cooperation between local communities and visiting artists is now established and new performances have been created. The residency programme is planned to continue.

Keđja is an open community, born in 2008 out of necessity to develop the professional dance field in the region and to increase mobilization and working opportunities for dancers in the Nordic and Baltic countries. Now, towards the end of the second phase of the project (2012-2015), the community is stronger than ever. So the networking needs to go on.

The dance chain will not be broken: on the final day in Mariehamn the ball was passed on to dance professionals from Dansearena nord in the very North of Norway – the next Nordic-Baltic dance Encounter will take place beyond the Arctic circle, in Hammerfest in 2015.

### For more information and press images:

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**Please visit:**

[www.kedja.net](http://www.kedja.net)

[facebook.com/kedjamariehamn2014](https://facebook.com/kedjamariehamn2014)

**Keđja 2012–2015 in short:**

- 2 Think tanks: Sustainability Think Tank and Touring Network Think Tank
- 3 Encounters: keđjaMariehamn 2014 (FI), keđjaKlaipeda 2013 (LT), keđjaTallinn 2012 (ES)
- 10 Residencies for artists: Wilderness Dance
- Mentoring Scheme for managers, producers and self-organizing artists working within dance
- Writing Movement workshops and seminars about the critical discourse on and around dance
- The keđja 2012–2015 cycle has already involved more than 1000 artists and dance professionals in its activities and reached audiences of more than 5000 people in 8 countries.
- keđja 2012–2015 is the follow-up of the first keđja project in 2008–2010
- “keđja” means “chain” in Icelandic

**The keđja 2012–2015 partners are:**

- Dansehallerne (Copenhagen), main project coordinator
- Dance Info Finland (Helsinki)
- Dance Information Norway (Oslo)
- Independent Theatres Association (Reykjavik)
- Union of Estonian Dance Artists (Tallinn)
- Fish eye (Klaipeda)
- Bora Bora (Arhus)
- Danseareana Nord (Hammerfest)
- MAD Production (Helsinki)
- New Theatre Institute of Latvia (Riga)
- SITE (Stockholm)
- associated partner: Kultur I Väst (Göteborg)

**The keđjaMariehamn 2014 Encounter** was organized by Dance Info Finland in collaboration with the keđja partners.

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