

FÜRSTLICH UND GRÄFLICH FUGGERSCHE
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press announcement

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A special birthday present: New Fuggerei settlements planned in two countries

500 guests celebrate 500 years of Fuggerei / Bavarian Minister-President Söder praises foundation's commitment / New Fuggerei settlements planned in Lithuania and Sierra Leone

Augsburg, Aug. 25th, 2021 - On the 500th birthday of the world's oldest social settlement, the idea of the Fuggerei is going global. New settlements are planned in Lithuania and Sierra Leone, as announced during the ceremony. Inspired by the 500-year-old Augsburg original, founder Gintaras Grachauskas from Lithuania and Stella Rothenberger together with Rugiatu Neneh Turay from Sierra Leone are planning to set up a 'Fuggerei of the future' with new and individual foundation purposes in their countries.

In Kurtuva in Lithuania, for example, a 'Fuggerei of the future' is planned with a focus on generational justice, providing living space for the elderly and those who are in need of nursing care. In Sierra Leone, a 'Fuggerei of the future' is to be built in the remote fishing village of Tumba to protect young women and girls, who will also be provided with a secure access to education and healthcare.

A 500-year-old idea inspires the world

Symbolized by an illuminated globe that appeared above the main stage at the ceremony, the anniversary year was opened under the motto 'Fuggerei Next 500'. Besides the new settlements in Lithuania and Sierra Leone, there are also ideas for a 'Fuggerei of the future' in Augsburg with a focus on education.

"The 500-year-old Fuggerei in Augsburg is a great example of humanity, compassion and philanthropy," emphasized Bavarian Minister-President Dr. Markus Söder, "It is a very strong statement for the present and the future. Therefore, a big thank you to the Fugger family", he states. In her speech Augsburg's Mayor Eva Weber put an emphasis on the exemplary action of the Fugger family and the lessons learned:

"Every step, no matter how small, contributes to making the world worth living, for us and for future generations. I wish the Fugger family and its inhabitants' courage and confidence for the next 500 years."

That same evening, Jacob von Rijs, founding partner of the renowned architecture and urban planning firm MVRDV, presented the design for the Fuggerei Anniversary Exhibition Pavilion, which will be set up in front of Augsburg City Hall starting May 6, 2022, as part of a five-week international program festival. The pavilion itself is a long, narrow gabled building, its form inspired by the long-terraced houses of the Fuggerei itself. However, rather than a single straight shape, one end of the pavilion is curved, pointing towards the Fuggerei from its location on the town square, and raised to form an 8.5-metre cantilever that provides a lookout point to view the town hall itself. All built from wood from the Fuggerei's foundation forests.

Starting into a week of celebration

What began in 1521 on the initiative of Jakob Fugger is being condignly celebrated 500 years later. Residents and guests of honor from politics, civil society, business, art and culture came together, sitting at long tables in the alleys of the Fuggerei, to celebrate the anniversary of the world's oldest social settlement.

"The Fuggerei has been a role model and has proven over and over again to be able to withstand the adversities and challenges of the times and to offer people a home and togetherness. The most important thing for us is continue this journey of success and dignity in the next 500 years," said Alexander Graf Fugger of the Family Senate that evening.

The anniversary celebration also marks the start of the festival week. Until August 29, visitors are cordially invited to come to Augsburg to the Fuggerei and take part in the festive program. In addition to various thematic tours of the social settlement, panel discussions, dance performances and a jazz brunch are planned.

More information on the anniversary year "Fuggerei Next 500" and on the festive program can be found here: <https://www.fuggerei-next500.de/programm>

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