

# ESTONIAN MILITARY SITES WILL SERVE TOURISTS



Some of Estonia's ex-Soviet military sites are going to be retained in their original condition so as to serve as tourist attractions. These abandoned sites have a deep connection with the country's history, and thus they will be put to good use if they are utilized as tourist attractions since one would be able to get a better idea of what the Soviet era was like.

Cultural experts gathered together in a meeting at the Museum of Estonian Architecture to discuss these military sites, their historical value and how they can be used as tourist attractions. This meeting was also intended to discuss the possibility of creating a database which would list and categorize these ex-Soviet military sites.

Reactions about this proposal vary, since there are a number of people who showed their disapproval, since according to them, it would be better to eradicate all types of traces that have a connection with the Soviet era. However, according to Leele Välja's, the director of the Museum of Estonian Architecture, it is better to try to widen our historical views. After all it does not make sense to pretend that the Soviet era did not exist, as in reality, it had a significant impact on the country's past and its people.

The cultural experts who participated in the meeting also outlined the fact that some of the facilities in these sites, such as storages for nuclear warheads and missile bases, could be interesting attractions for tourists after they were repaired.

The post-World War II period remains subject to considerable debate for Estonians, since it formed part of the Soviet Union at the time. To date, this has an effect on Russian-Estonian relations.

The Russian government continues to insist that the incorporation of the Baltic States was not against international law. For them, everything was in order according to the Helsinki Accords, and in the agreements that were made at that time in the Yalta and Potsdam conferences. This is debatable as Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were occupied by the Soviet Union between 1945 and 1991, according to Estonian authorities.

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