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PRESS RELEASE

**Ostrava announces an international architectural and urbanistic competition for a concert hall**

On Wednesday, August 22nd, the City of Ostrava launched one of the most important architectural competitions in the city's history. The international architectural and urbanistic competition for a concert hall is going to have two rounds and should be completed next June. So far, three internationally recognized architectural studios with experience in designing concert halls have decided to participate. However, any number of candidates may submit an application for participation if they must demonstrate their experience with a similar type of project. The cost is estimated at CZK 1.5 billion excluding VAT.

For decades, Ostrava has dreamt of a concert hall with perfect acoustics, sufficient space for listeners and facilities for the Janáček Philharmonic Orchestra. Built in 1956–1961 in the modern classicist style, the House of Culture is not fit for this purpose, and has for many years struggled to become meaningfully involved in the city's contemporary cultural life.

“*We have made a crucial step towards that dream – the construction of a concert hall in Ostrava. After more than a year of preparations, we have managed to announce an international architectural competition and we cannot wait to see how many interesting designs we will eventually receive. The architects will design a completely new concert hall, but also renovation of the existing House of Culture and the connection between the two buildings. Experience from other cities shows that a concert hall combining cutting-edge architecture and acoustics is always an impulse not only for the development of culture and education in a given place but also a magnet for tourists*”, said Mayor of Ostrava Tomáš Macura.

Three foreign studios will be invited directly to participate in the competition: *Steven Holl Architects + Architecture Acts; Konior Studio and Henning Larsen Architects.* Other candidates for participation in the competition will be selected on the basis of submitted portfolios demonstrating their experience with such type of project and adequate staffing of the design team. The deadline for the competition applications is 21 September. The maximum number of participants who will prepare their design proposals is six. The competition will have two phases because of the size and complexity of the project. This allows gradual refinement of the selected proposals in the first round and their completion on the basis of additional competition conditions in the second round. The winner of the competition is scheduled to be known in June 2019. After that, a contract for project documentation will be concluded with the winner.

The City Council has already approved the composition of the jury, which will be made up of the Mayor Tomáš Macura, Deputy Mayor Zbyněk Pražák and the Mayor of Moravská Ostrava and Přívoz Petra Bernfeldová as the regular dependent members. The independent members of the jury are architects Krzysztof Ingarden (Ingarden&Ewy / Krakow), Rafi Segal (RSAU / Princeton / MIT Architecture / Cambridge), Valerie Mulvin (mccullough mulvin architects / Dublin), Jakub Szczęsny (SZCZ / Warszawa) and substitutes Adam Rujbr (Adam Rujbr Architects / Brno) and Tadeáš Goryczka (Cabinet of Architecture / Ostrava). The following invited experts have also been approved – Michal Zezula, the director of the National Technical Institute in Ostrava, Martin Strakoš, historian of the NPU Ostrava, Jindřich Jansa, budget director, Cyril Vltavský, Head of Department of Chief Architect of the Ostrava City Authority, Jan Žemla, Director of JFO, Martin Vondrášek, acoustics expert and Jan Košulič, sound master and operations specialist.

In order to finance the preparation and implementation of this cost-intensive project, the city has already established a special-purpose fund. So far it has allocated CZK 100 million from the city budget, with more funds to follow. This April, Ostrava signed a Memorandum of Cooperation with the Czech Government, represented by the Ministry of Culture, which provided CZK 600 million to support the project, and with the Moravian-Silesian Region, whose contribution is CZK 300 million.

It is assumed that the actual construction of the concert hall will commence by 2022, and should be completed one year later.

Link to the competition terms and competition documents:

<https://verejnezakazky.ostrava.cz/detail/11973>