

Evelin Ilves presented the organisers of the Bocuse d'Or competition, the 'Cooking Olympics', in Lyon, France, with an invitation from Enterprise Estonia to organise the European qualification round of the contest in Estonia in 2018.

The finals of the Bocuse d'Or World Cooking Contest are taking place today and yesterday in Lyon, France. Representatives from 24 countries, including the Chef de Cuisine of Egoist Restaurant, Heidy Pinnak, are taking part in the contest. Evelin Ilves met with Raymonde Bocuse, the wife of the grand old man of French gourmet cuisine, Paul Bocuse, and presented her, on behalf of the Republic of Estonia, with an invitation from Enterprise Estonia to organise the European qualification round of the world-renowned contest in Tallinn in 2018.

"Organisation of the Bocuse d'Or contest in Estonia would be a great honour for our chefs and our cuisine," told Evelin Ilves, when handing over the invitation. She added that 2018 is an important year for Estonia for a number of reasons: we will be celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Republic of Estonia and Estonia will also hold the Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

Estonia's representative, Heidy Pinnak, is also the only female candidate in this year's Bocuse d'Or finals. "I am pleased that a woman from Estonia has made it to the tough, masculine competition of master chefs of the world, and we can introduce, through her culinary creations, the characteristic ingredients of the Nordic countries in general as well as those particular to Estonia," told Evelin Ilves.

Evelin Ilves also visited the Paul Bocuse Institute yesterday, where one can study culinary art, and academic research is conducted in different food-related spheres. 450 students from 40 different countries attend the institute; studies last from 3 to 5 years.

"It is worth acknowledging an institute that provides world-class culinary education and the teaching skills required to run a catering establishment, as well as full school chef training. Therefore, master chefs for restaurants and other catering establishments as well as educational institutions qualify from the same institute," added Evelin Ilves.

Background information:

Bocuse d'Or, which was first launched 25 years ago, is the most prestigious cooking contest in the world, born out of Paul Bocuse's idea to convene the best chefs in the world and get them to compete in front of an audience. The biennial global finals in Lyon are preceded by European qualification rounds, which are held in a different place every time. Estonia is competing in the Bocuse d'Or contest for the third time. It first participated in the contest in 2008, ranking 7th in the European qualification rounds and taking the 15th place in the global finals the next year. In 2010, Estonia was placed 14th in the European qualification round.

Estonian chef, Heidi Pinnak, has been trained by the Icelandic master chef, Ragnar Ormarsson. The candidate's preparation team consists of eight people in all, including the President of Bocuse d'Or Academy of the Republic of Estonia, Dimitri Demjanov, who also represents Estonia in the panel of judges. The finalists will be required to cook meat dishes within five hours and 30 minutes, using Irish beef loin, and a fish menu with turbot and lobster. Inspired by a Danish film of the same name, Estonia's contest menu is called "Babette's Feast". As the contestants have a free hand in terms of sauces and accompanying dishes, ingredients characteristic of the Nordic countries are used in the Estonian menu. Jõgeva Yellow potatoes, Old Tallinn liqueur, quail eggs, vegetables and rye bread are some of the examples of Estonian products that have found their way to the Estonia's competition platter. Juniper berries are used to season the meat while the smoky flavour of fish is achieved using young pine shoots.

Articles in the local newspaper Le Progrès: [1](#) , [2](#) (PDF).

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