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"Cultural identities and the regional level."

Culture makes you a human being

Without culture we might belong among animals. It is important to keep this idea in mind when fighting to preserve the national cultural heritage on all fronts – theaters, galleries, folk crafts both on professional and amateur basis.

The national or regional / local governaments, when starting to save money, they always start with culture. If it had been our ancestors to think in this way nothing would have been preserved for us. An important role in history had been taken by benefactors. But due to 40 years of communism they disappeared. Even the Czech president Václav Klaus means that the culture is just a big black hole for money. Czech people are usually not real patriots.

20 years of changes are not enough to change the whole way of thinking of our (Czech) nation especially in the area of culture. However, culture is giving people another dimension – the moral one. Can you imagine that a person on his/her way from the theatre goes and commit a crime (e.g. bank robbery)? A part of our culture is surely represented by religious monuments. Contemporary national debate on return of former church possessions back to the church does not support the efforts on preservation of the national cultural heritage.

Democracy – it is also an expression of people´s behaviour, their respect to each other

Liberec region has three museums and supports the amateur culture annually with 16-32 kEUR, where the whole budget of the Liberec regional council is 88 mio EUR. 5 p.c. of the budget goes to the culture (5,5 mio EUR). So it should not be surprising that the culture has problems. Children at schools do not know theater because nobody takes them there – no funds. And theatres do not produce any plays for children because there are no funds for that. How do we get them to the theatre when they become adult?

The Liberec regional fund for renovation of national cultural monuments is 200-250 kEUR a year but there are over 3000 cultural monuments. Annually there are 100 to 150 requests for financial support but not all can be accepted due to the limited funds.

We are not aware of any EU grants on culture and historic monuments. Even the Norwegian or Swiss Funds are not supporting the preservation of cultural monuments. From this point of view we consider the culture is not that important for Brussels. Let us go and remind Brussels that the culture heritage is of a very high importance.

It is very important to constantly speak about the culture and the cultural heritage so that all politicians – not only in Brussels – know how essential it is for our future. EU should be the one who unifies nations and support their uniqenesses and diversity.

Lidie Vajnerová