



June 2021

# NEWSLETTER

Czech-Liechtenstein Society

Member of Europa Nostra



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## New Chairman's Address

June 9 is the International Day of Archives. To celebrate this day, I was going through archive documents after my grandparents and I fell upon this small newspaper clipping. It is small in size, rather yellowish in colour, but still great in its message, in the story behind. As most of archive documents are.

For all those who have problems to read the small script, here is the transcript of the text:  
**"Naše Slezsko" daily, June 1937: Prince of Liechtenstein against all provocateurs.**  
**"A ban to wear white stockings and dirndls was imposed by the Prince of Liechtenstein at his estate in South Moravia. Also, none of the princely employees is allowed to become a member of SdP (Sudeten German Party).**

*New contracts have been made with all employees which allow to dismiss them immediately in case they breached the rules. This measure taken by the Prince of Liechtenstein was motivated by his words "first you are the citizens of the Czechoslovak state and second my employees", and can be only praised..."*

It is the objective of the Czech-Liechtenstein Society to help the relations between the Czech Republic and Liechtenstein. The As-





Petr Svoboda

sociation tries to promote the extensive heritage in the area of culture, architecture, landscaping, forestry, agriculture and also science and education, which the House of Liechtenstein left to this country. The International Day of Archives reminds us all that we should also concern ourselves with this heritage in terms of society, values and ideology, which may be hidden, and think about it in a wider context. I do not mean the unfortunate lawsuits between the Czech state and the Prince of Liechtenstein Foundation, respectively the international complaint filed by the Principality of Liechtenstein against the Czech Republic. I mean something more profound: for example, the historic role of the monarchs of Liechtenstein in the social area, their pioneering in the area of employees' insurance, or their visionary achievements in the field of science, applied science and implementation of research results into business operation. Or their strategic support for education. It is not a coincidence that the Liechtenstein family supported such figures like Gregor Mendel, Josef Hardmuth and Michael Thonet already at times where they were not famous. Members of this Association, including the members of its Board, are asked from time to time in which way the Association is engaged in the ongoing lawsuits. A black-and-white answer is: in no way. However, what we would like to achieve is the understanding of historical context not only on the black-and-white scale, or in ones and zeros. The historical heritage of the House of Liechtenstein is not only the existence of the highlighted Lednice-Valtice Complex, or the complicated figure of Karl I, or the mother tongue of the members of the House. After all, as this archive clipping shows, although Franz I did not speak Czech, he, at his time, acted in a much more "Czech" way than many other people who spoke Czech as their mother tongue. And that is what is our Association and its programme also about. We discover what we have had in front of our eyes for a long time but for different reasons we could not, or rather were supposed not to have seen it.

*With best wishes for a beautiful summer to you all!*



## ■ General Assembly of the Czech-Liechtenstein Society elected new board members

**The election General Assembly of the Czech-Liechtenstein Society was held on Thursday, April 22, in the Rott Hotel near the Old Town Square in Prague. The members of the Association, following all anti-epidemic measures, met in person after more than six months.**

The meeting was presided by Petr Svoboda, the Vice-Chairman of the Association, who first presented the Annual Report of the Association for 2020, including the Accounts. The General Assembly approved both the documents without any comments. Because of the pandemic, the activities of the Association were significantly impaired for the whole year 2020 and many events could not have taken place. As the Board is aware of the fact that all the frozen activities did not need any expenditures of the Association's funds, they proposed the General Assembly to approve zero membership fee for 2021 for all current members. After the General Assembly approved the proposal, Petr Svoboda



From left: Daniel Herman, Board member; Jiří Balašík, Honorary Chairman; Petr Svoboda, Chairman; Jana Tepperová, Board member; Richard Svoboda, Board member





introduced the plan of activities (see the table) and the budget draft for this year. All events are planned with the condition that their realization depends on the current epidemiologic situation.

The election of the new Board was the main item of the agenda of the meeting. The three-year-long term of the first ever Board of the Czech-Liechtenstein Society ended in February and pursuant to the statutes it was prolonged until the new election took place. All six candidates briefly introduced themselves before the election. Pavel Juřík and Zuzana Holendová were introduced by proxy, Jana Tepperová, Richard Svoboda, Petr Svoboda and Daniel Herman presented themselves in person. All these candidates received enough votes and therefore could, after the General Assembly was ended, elect Petr Svoboda the new Chairman of the Czech-Liechtenstein Society at the first new Board's meeting which followed. Petr Svoboda replaced Jiří Balašík in the position. Jiří Balašík, who is a co-founder the Association, was recently elected the new Honorary Chairman of the Association. Zuzana Holendová was elected the new Vice-Chairwoman.

"I highly appreciate the trust given to me by the members of the Czech-Liechtenstein Society in this election. The Czech Republic and the Principality of Liechtenstein have been connected through 800 years of common history and we must not forget this cultural heritage. As most

members know, I, myself, have another personal connection with the Liechtenstein theme: my grandfather František Svoboda worked for the princely family for over 20 years, in 1937, HSH Franz I appointed him the managing director of the Liechtenstein Administration seated in Olomouc. Therefore, I am really pleased that as the new Chairman of the Czech-Liechtenstein Society I can devote my energy to build and develop the Association and the mutual relations between our countries and to build on my grandfather's legacy," the new Chairman Petr Svoboda commented his election. In the discussion, Petr Svoboda informed about news related to the Europa Nostra organization which he represents in the Czech Republic and which the Czech-Liechtenstein Society joined last year. Europa Nostra is a pan-European federation for cultural heritage, protecting tangible as well as intangible cultural heritage in Europe. The organization annually awards the European Heritage Awards/Europa Nostra Awards in four categories. Within "The 7 Most Endangered" programme, it selects the most endangered heritage sites in Europe and tries to mobilize resources for their recovery. More information about Europa Nostra is available on [www.europanostra.org](http://www.europanostra.org). At the end of the meeting, the new Chairman Petr Svoboda expressed his thanks to Jiří Balašík for the outstanding work he did for the Association as the Chairman in the past term. ■

## Plan of activities of the Association

### SEPTEMBER

**Thursday, 23 September** - Prologue of the Lednice-Valtice Music Festival, concert in the Garden Palace in Vienna, Collegium 1704 & Collegium Vocale 1704, conducted by Václav Luks

### OCTOBER

**Friday, 15 October** - visit to Vienna and a guided tour of the exposition of art pieces from the Liechtenstein Princely Art Collections in the Garden Palace, organized on the occasion of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of LGT

**15-16 October** - concerts of the Lednice-Valtice Music Festival

- **Friday, 15 October, 7 pm** - Farnace - modern premiere of the opera, Chateau Valtice Theatre, Musica Florea (Czech Republic), conducted by Marek Štryncl, Andrea Mittnerová

- **Friday, 15 October** - a party for the Association's members after the opera at the Valtice castle

- **Saturday, 16 October, 2021, 7 pm** - the final concert Fabio Biondi and Europa Galante, Riding Hall, Valtice Castle, Europa Galante (Italy) Fabio Biondi (violin)

### NOVEMBER

Pre-Christmas party of the members of the Association in Prague



The members of the Czech-Liechtenstein Society will have the opportunity see the Golden Chariot in the Liechtenstein Garden Palace during their visit to the exhibition on 15 October.



## ■ Former minister Herman as a consul: Liechtenstein has historic ties to Czech lands. We should capitalise on this

**Liechtenstein has opened its first-ever honorary consulate in the Czech Republic. It will be based in Brno and the government of the principality has chosen former Czech culture minister, Mgr. Daniel Herman, as the first honorary consul. “I am very happy that we have managed to find such a skilled and respected personality for this important job,” says Liechtenstein Foreign Minister Dominique Hasler.**

### **Mr Herman, how did Liechtenstein actually find you and how did you find Liechtenstein?**

I adhere to the Judeo-Christian concept of the world. I believe that if a man is open to God, to himself and the world, he will get to the right places. If you look back at my activities in the church, politics and public administration, you will see that this journey towards the Liechtenstein topic makes sense in the context of my public efforts. Whether I was dealing with human rights, Nazi and Communist crimes, reconciliation between the Czechs and Germans, the Roma issue or reconciliation with the past as such, I always tried to achieve one thing: to prevent historic prejudice from diverting us from the truth, justice, and hence from a successful future. I have always understood the culture of remembering in the context of the general cultural life of our country as one of the top priorities of my work. It is the same when it comes to relations between the Liechtensteins, the principality and the Czech lands: we must not close the door to a cooperative and prosperous future because of ignorance, a black-and-white view of the world, or demagoguery. That is: I am immensely honoured by the fact that Liechtenstein has found me on my way and that we have met.

### **What will be your chief task?**

One of the main tasks of the new honorary consulate is boosting the rich ties between both countries, especially in southern Moravia where the Liechtensteins were already invited by Czech King Přemysl Otakar II in 1249. Brno as the seat of the honorary consulate has not been chosen at random. Numerous traces of the Liechtensteins' intensive activities are still visible in southern Moravia in particular, not only in culture, but also in the economy, science and education. Of course, the most visible evidence is offered by the Lednice and Val-tice

areas, which are part of the UNESCO world cultural and natural heritage.

As culture minister, I often encountered this unique phenomenon of a cultural landscape that we can be



Daniel Herman, member of the Czech-Liechtenstein Society





deservedly proud of. In general, my goal will be to help create a basis for a deeper cooperation, which could overcome the problems of the past. Liechtenstein is a modern country which has a lot to offer to the Czech Republic in education, the economy and innovations.

### **Is there already a Czech honorary consulate in Vaduz?**

Yes, the Czech Republic already opened its honorary consulate in Liechtenstein in 2018, and Dr Thomas Zwiefelhofer, former deputy prime minister of the country, was appointed the honorary consul.

### **Many people may find it hard to imagine the possibilities of cooperation between the Czech Republic and a state that has fewer than 40,000 inhabitants.**

I can understand this, and so I would like to point out that about 20,000 people from Switzerland, Austria and Germany come to work in the principality every day. The local economy is based on knowledge and innovations and the industry makes up the largest part of GDP of all economic sectors. Liechtenstein and the Czech Republic are already closely linked in terms of the

**Daniel Herman** before working as director at the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes in 2010–2013, Daniel Herman held different posts in the church and government administration. After being elected a lawmaker for the Christian and Democratic Union – Czechoslovak People’s Party in 2013, he was appointed the minister of culture in 2014. He is a member of the Government Council for Human Rights. ■

economy owing to their membership of the European Economic Area (EEA) and by means of an agreement preventing double taxation, as well as owing to Liechtenstein companies active in the Czech Republic. Cooperation in education is based on a student exchange between the Liechtenstein Grammar School and the Matyáš Lerch Grammar School in Brno and on a cooperation agreement at the university level. And, finally, many bilateral projects in the Czech Republic are financed from EEA funds. ■

*Michal Dvořák*

## Do you know that....

### **The Classicist summerhouse of Belvedere in Valtice will be open after many years at a ceremony on 12 June 2021.**

The Belvedere was built in 1804–1806; the construction was initiated by the reigning Prince of Liechtenstein, Alois I (1759–1805). It was designed by Josef Hardmuth (1758–1816). Besides its decorative and representative function, the Belveder summerhouse also had a practical role, it was the seat of a pheasantry.

The land plot at Liščí vrch, necessary for the construction, was bought by the princely administration already in 1802. The construction was probably managed by Josef Poppelack, a chief bricklayer and architect, who already built the Minaret in Lednice in 1800 and later participated in constructions of virtually all voluptuous buildings in the Lednice-Valtice Complex. In 1806, the main octagonal hall of the Belvedere was decorated by the Viennese painter Johann Joseph Langenhöfel with an illusory painting consisting of pilasters and decorations in the then very popular “Pompeian style”. During the reign of Jan I, Prince of Liechtenstein (1760–1836), the summerhouse

was renovated, and it was also renovated and modified after a fire in 1894 after which rare Chinese silk wallpaper were placed there. Prince Alois I acquired the wallpapers from the estate of Marie Antoinette, the beheaded Queen of France. ■





## ■ Encounters exhibition to mark 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of LGT Bank

**This autumn, Vienna will offer a unique experience to classical art lovers. LGT Bank, owned by the Liechtenstein Group, has prepared a large exhibition of works of art from the Princely Art Collection to celebrate one hundred years since its founding. The combination of a unique display and an unusual concept, accompanied by modern technologies - all of that incorporated into one exhibition. The Encounters exhibition will be open in the Garden Palace from October 11.**

### **The exhibition will introduce the best of the Princely Art Collection**

There will be a lot to see. The exhibition is called Encounters and it offers a surprising view of the works of art from the 16th to 19th centuries. The principal standard of this exhibition is thematic rather than chronological grouping. Thanks to this, you can see works of different artistic styles and eras in groups, which enables the visitors to fully perceive the portrayals of the chosen topics in different times.

To illustrate this: the Portrait of Archduke Maximilian of Austria at two years of age by Bartel Beham from 1529 will be opposing the Portrait of the future emperor Franz Joseph of Austria by Ferdinand George Waldmüller from 1832. Another interesting couple will be a Baroque portrait by Peter Paul Rubens of his daughter Clara Serena with the portrait of Marie Franziska of Liechtenstein, the daughter of prince Alois II of Liechtenstein - a living portrait of a child in high Biedermeier style. There will be similar oppositions between the portraits of royals, aristocrats and people from the middle classes.

The magnificent Decius Mus Cycle by Peter Paul Rubens, which ranks among the greatest masterpieces of the Princely Collection, will take the central place



Peter Paul Rubens, 1616, Portrait of Clara Serena Rubens  
© LIECHTENSTEIN,  
The Princely Collections, Vaduz – Vienna

within the display. It will be surrounded by newly arranged paintings, sculptures and other works of art connected by the theme of mythology. The idea of the artistic progress of the 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries will be given by an infinite number of landscapes, topographic portrayals, interior portraits, genres, flower paintings or still lives.

Recent works of art, newly added to the collection, deserve special attention; they will be on display in former Ladies' apartments on the ground floor. Many of them have rarely been on display in Vienna and some will be presented for the first time.

### **A mobile application amplifies the perfect experience of the exhibition**

Visitors to the exhibition can use a mobile application,





about the layout of the exhibition and each work of art. The visitors will find in-depth links to the history of the chosen works of art, their importance in the career of the artist, the context of the era and, last but not least, their relationship to the present day. The combination of actual and extended reality will definitely draw the visitor to the fascinating world of art.

What is more, the application can be comfortably downloaded to your phone or tablet at home and you may get to know the exhibition before actually visiting it.

**Start of the exhibition:** October 11

**Venue:** Garden Palace, Vienna (Rossau) – the State rooms on the first floor, the former Ladies' apartments on the ground floor ■

Friedrich Amerling, 1836, Portrait of Princess Marie Franziska von Liechtenstein © LIECHTENSTEIN, The Princely Collections, Vaduz – Vienna

which is based on augmented reality. LGT Bank and ETH Zurich have worked on its development intensively for several years, closely cooperating with the Liechtenstein Group.

The application will contain important information

## ■ Summer Rhapsody in the Garden Palace has attracted attention

Prince Constantin, the youngest son of Hans Adam II, had a great idea in between the Covid waves last year: to organize a summer festival in the garden of one of the family palaces in Vienna and donate the profit to the suffering Viennese artists who were prevented from performing by the epidemic. The series of concerts was successful and therefore there will be another one this summer. It will open on 19 July, in style, with a concert by jazz musicians from Liechtenstein.

Programme and tickets available from [www.sommerrhapsodie.at](http://www.sommerrhapsodie.at)



**Opening concert: Monday, 19 July, from 7.30 pm**

**RHAPSODIE - LIECHTENSTEIN ZU GAST**

TRIMOLON jazzscapes and Cross Connection;  
*Contemporary Jazz und Funk'n'Soul*

**Final concert: Wednesday, 18 August, from 7.30 pm**

**RHAPSODIE - SOUL; Count Basic Sweet Spot**

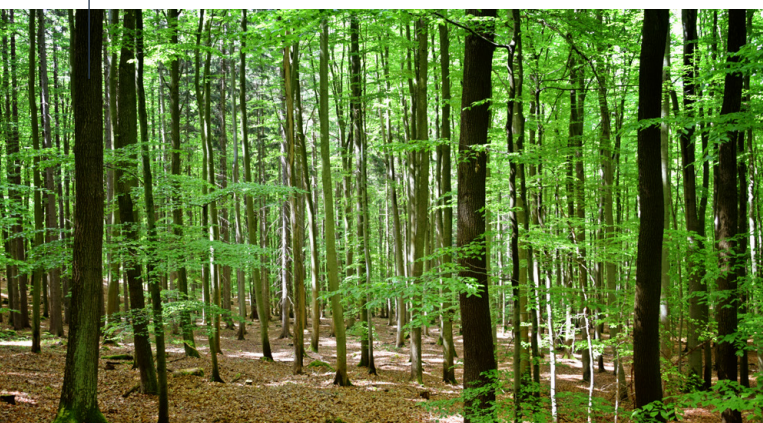




# ... take a look at our Instagram account @czechliechtensteinsociety

We continue our Instagram activities! Join us and follow @czechliechtensteinsociety!

27 February 2021 - Voděradské bučiny, one of the few natural forests around Prague, lies about 30 kilometers east of Prague. The foundations of a large complex of mostly deciduous trees were laid by the Liechtenstein family, to which the forests around Kostelec nad Černými Lesy belonged from the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Liechtenstein held the forests and the people who cared for them in high esteem. The testimony to that is the memorial stones along the trails, which are dedicated to Liechtenstein foresters. The most famous memorial stone stands above the well by the road that rises into the woods from the dam of the Jevanský pond. It is reminiscent of the Liechtenstein forester Václav Eliáš Lenhart, who joined the Liechtensteins in 1788 and laid the foundations for systematic forest care. ■



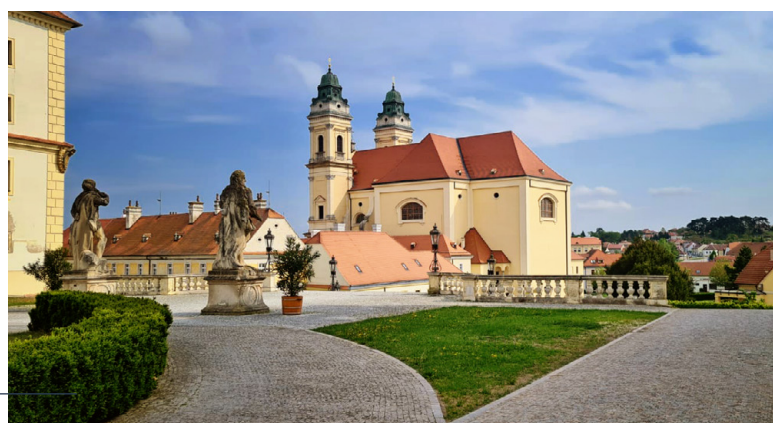
24 April 2021 - We found ourselves right in the middle of the popular TV series Maria Theresa, which is now being shot at Valtice Castle. Thanks to the castellan @zamekvaltice, Mr. Richard Svoboda for the photo straight from the scene. ■



19 March 2021 - Do you recognize this spa town under the mountains (in the Czech Republic)? In 1802, this estate became property of the Liechtenstein family. The local castle was rebuilt into a romantic summer residence surrounded by a park in English style. ■



27 May 2021 - The monumental Baroque Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary in Valtice was built by Prince Karel Eusebius of Liechtenstein in the years 1631-1671 on the site of the original church burned down during the Hussite invasions. In local terms, it is a magnificent building, built by Liechtensteins based on the model of Italian sacral buildings. The interior is richly decorated with stucco and sculptures by Bernard Bianchi and Giovanni Tencalla, the main altarpiece is decorated by Vincenzo Fanti is a copy of Rubens' painting. A massive Latin inscription across the entire facade of the church in translation reads „Karel Eusebius, duke of Liechtenstein, Duke of Mikulov, Opava; and Krnov.“ ■







Remembrance of the first LVHF concert in Vienna, which took place in the Liechtenstein City Palace in 2019



## ■ Lednice-Valtice Music Festival 2021 will offer A. Vivaldi's music in princely scenery

**After the long period of lockdown, we all look for authentic cultural experience with hope. No doubt that the 6th Lednice-Valtice Music Festival, held from 2 October to 16 October 2021, and reminding the 280<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Antonio Vivaldi's death, will be one of them.**

The programme of the festival, which was co-designed by García Sala, a Spanish violinist and musicologist, is intended to introduce A. Vivaldi's rich music legacy not only in instrumental concerts but also in chamber and sacred music and in opera. Jiří Partyka, the artistic director and founder of the festival as well as a member of the Czech-Liechtenstein Society, invites the audience to the biggest European show from A. Vivaldi's works in last twenty years: „The Festival will feature several modern premieres, including the Pavia version of Vivaldi's opera Farnace, twelve Czech premieres and many recent Vivaldian discoveries, e.g. sonatas from the Pisendel Collection from Dresden.“ The festival was originally intended to interconnect the classical music with Liechtenstein architectural gems of the Lednice-Valtice Complex which celebrates the 25th anniversary of the UNESCO World Heritage listing. The programme will take the

audience to the most famous monuments: the Riding Hall in Valtice, the Valtice Castle Theatre, gazebos around Lednice and Valtice, the church of the Visitation of the Virgin Mary in Břeclav-Poštorná or the newly renovated Belvedere in Valtice. Ensembles from Italy, France, Spain and the Czech Republic, specialized in Vivaldi's work, will perform at the festival: Ensemble Matheus, Accademia Bizantina, Gli Incogniti and Europa Galante with Fabio Biondi. Jakub Józef Orliński, a Polish countertenor and a break-dancer, one of the most sought-after performers of classical music, will make his Czech debut at the festival. The whole programme is interwoven with reminiscences of Vivaldi's famous cycle, The Four Seasons, dedicated to Count Václav Morzin, Vivaldi's Czech patron. It will be reminded by quotations, for example in the opera Farnace, or by a chamber version of The Spring, arranged by Nicolas Chédeville, which will be performed by Concerto Aventio, a Czech ensemble. Traditionally, the programme does not miss a reference to the House of Liechtenstein, the builders of the Lednice-Valtice Complex. The Liechtenstein trace is represented in the programme by the figure of Josef Jan Adam Liechtenstein. Around 1731, Antonio Vivaldi used to work at his court as „Maestro di cappella“, as documented by the title page of the score for the opera Farnace. The opera will be performed as one of the highlights of the Lednice-Valtice Music Festival 2021. This year, the Festival will be opened by a concert performed in the Liechtenstein Garden Palace in Vienna on Thursday, 23 September 2021. Collegium 1704 and Collegium Vocale 1704, conducted by Václav Luks, will perform works by Antonio Vivaldi and Johann Melchior Pichler. On the occasion of the concert, the audience will also have the chance to see the art collections in the palace, including Rubens' cycle Decius Mus, or the famous Golden Chariot in which Josef Václav, Prince of Liechtenstein, ceremonially entered Paris on 21 December 1738, as the newly appointed imperial ambassador to France. The programme of concerts will be traditionally supplemented with educative projects for schools, lectures given by prominent Vivaldian researchers from the Czech Republic and Italy and an exhibition of contemporary photographs from the Lednice-Valtice Complex done with historical equipment by photographer Honza Sakař. ■

**More about festival at [www.lvhf.cz](http://www.lvhf.cz)**



The government of the Principality of Liechtenstein emerged from this year's elections (from left): Manuel Frick, Sabine Monauni, Daniel Risch, Dominique Hasler, Graziella Marok-Wachter

## ■ The new Liechtenstein Government after the elections 2021

**The Government of the Principality of Liechtenstein is Liechtenstein's highest executive body and organized by constitution as a collegial body comprising the Prime Minister and four Ministers. The Government is in the same time responsible to the Parliament, who represents the people as one of the two sovereigns, and to the Prince (respectively the Prince Regnant), who is the formal head of state and the second sovereign. The Prince based on a recommendation by the Parliament appoints the Government for a period of four years. He has by constitution the right to dismiss the Government as a whole or a single Minister at any time and without explanation.**

All Liechtenstein citizens are eligible to be elected to Government provided they fulfil the criteria to become a Member of Parliament. Each of Liechtenstein's two electoral regions, the Oberland (southern part of Liechtenstein) and the Unterland (northern part of Liechtenstein), has the right to send at least two members into the Government. Deputy Ministers must come from the same electoral region as their

respective Minister, but they do not have political rights and are only guaranteeing the political vote count in the Government in the case of the absence of the Minister. The Parliament elections of 2021 took place on 7 February and brought the tightest result in Liechtenstein's history: between the two traditional parties in Liechtenstein, the Patriotic Union (VU) and the

Progressive Citizens' Party (FBP), was only a difference of 42 party votes in favor of the VU, but both parties gained 10 seats each in Parliament. In the last election period, FBP had 9 seats in the Parliament which meant a lead by 1 seat to the 8 seats of the VU, therefore the last Government was led by a FBP Prime Minister. The tight result of 2021 led to a weeklong debate who had really won the election and who shall have the right on the posts of the Prime Minister and the President of the Parliament. After some weeks of negotiations, the two major parties, the Patriotic Union (VU) and the Progressive Citizens' Party (FBP), agreed again on a coalition as it was the case most of the time in the past 100 years. While the FBP has been granted the position of the President of the Parliament, Daniel Risch (VU) was agreed to become the Prime Minister. The other members of the Government are Deputy Prime Minister Sabine Monauni (FBP, new) and Ministers Graziella Marok-Wachter (VU, new), Dominique Hasler (VU) and Manuel Frick (FBP, new), which means that the VU after 8 years has won back the majority in the Government. The Prince has sworn in the new Government on 25 March 2021, on the same day on which the new Parliament opened its sessions of the new legislation period with the proposal of the Government to the Prince and other electoral businesses.

While the Prime Minister, Daniel Risch (VU), by law is also the Finance Minister, the other dossiers have been newly distributed to the four remaining Ministers, as follows: Deputy Prime Minister Sabine Monauni (FBP, new) is Minister for Home Affairs, Economy and Environment. Minister Dominique Hasler (VU) is Minister of Foreign Affairs, Education and Sports. Minister Manuel Frick (FBP, new) has been appointed as Minister of Social Affairs and Cultural Affairs, while Minister Graziella Marok-Wachter (VU, new) is the new Minister for Infrastructure and Justice. ■

*Dr. Thomas Zwiefelhofer*





## ■ Media Roundup

**“A masterpiece” of the Hradec museum. Its historic exhibition boasts Emperor Rudolph II’s portrait.**

When the 13<sup>th</sup> hour approached today, the foyer of the Museum of Eastern Bohemia in Hradec Králové filled with journalists and photographers. They soon moved a storey higher, to the gallery hall, where a truly exceptional event was expected. The museum was due to ceremonially unveil and install a large painting, the portrait of Rudolph II by the painter Lucas van Valckenborch from before 1585. The painting was purchased for the princely Liechtenstein collections in Vienna/Vaduz in 2012.

It has now been loaned to the Hradec museum as its only loan abroad, and it will become the pride of an exhibition called “Rudolph II. Art for the Emperor”, which will open on May 28 and last until November 7. It will undoubtedly be a crucial display of this summer’s exhibition season of the museum, enriched with dozens of works from the Rudolphine era from collectors across the Czech Republic. Before the installation, the painting was stored in a white transport box. After it was taken out, it was scanned by restorers to make sure it had not been damaged during transport. Only then did it rest on the wall of the gallery hall to be presented to the visitors in full beauty. The installation was also attended by Eliška Fučíková, the author of the exhibition, an art historian and an expert on the art of the Rudolphine era, who played a major role in the loan.

“The interest in Rudolphine art is a relatively recent thing, so new works still keep popping up here and there. Only a few years ago, we watched with sadness as works of art that were once the part of the Rudolphine collections were being sold in auctions worldwide, while the public Czech cultural institutions did not have the money to buy them. The situation has started to change in the past ten years. Enlightened private collectors have appeared, and it is owing to them that some works have already returned from abroad to the country of their origin,” she said. Besides the said painting from Vienna, the exhibition comprises typically inaccessible works by Bartholomeus Spranger, Hans von Aachen, Joseph Heintz Sr., Roelant

Savery, Pieter Stevens, Dirk de Quade van Ravesteyn, Matthias Gundelach, Adriaen de Vries and Aegidius Sadeler. These are completed with graphic sheets and drawings, armorial privileges, maps and other objects related to the Rudolphine era, including several Rudolphine works that have been anonymous up to now. As the exhibition curator Stanislav Hrbatý told Salonky, exhibitions of such importance usually take place in Prague, which is only natural. “We wanted to make this collection accessible and to show that we can organise an exhibition like this in Hradec too. Besides, owing to the initiative of Mrs Eliška Fučíková, we managed to address private collectors including the Vienna museum, and they were willing to share these paintings with us,” said the curator.

He said the two years of preparatory work on the exhibition were extremely demanding, because the works are subject to very strict rules on humidity, temperature, lighting, security and other aspects. “We have met all requirements and now we can present the exhibition to the public in full,” said Hrbatý. Today’s unveiling of Rudolph II’s portrait was also attended by Johann Kräftner, director of the Vienna-based Liechtenstein Museum which had loaned the precious work to Hradec.

“We are pleased to have the opportunity to loan this painting to a museum based in the royal city of Hradec Králové. We are also happy that it will become a part of this really unique exhibition mapping the Rudolphine era,” director Kräftner told Salonky. The author of the exhibition, who is an expert on the said era, added she was happy the works were now accessible to the public as a substantial enrichment of our cultural heritage. “Therefore, the exhibition could be an inspiration for other collectors to allow public institutions to present their collections,” she said.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a small curiosity cabinet in a shape common at noble seats in the Rudolphine era. It will comprise for instance the skulls of exotic animals, primeval fossils, the shells of large sea mussels, reproductions of the most precious paintings from the Rudolphine collections, and copies of parts of Mattioli’s Herbarium. It will also include an alchemy workshop.

“It will be a bit of a school cabinet. If the circumstances permit, we would like to organise an alchemy museum night in September and to show all aspects of thinking and the perception of the world in the Rudolphine era. We would definitely like schools to come over, and we can also organise for instance creative theme workshops for children,” added the curator of the most important seasonal exhibition in the Museum of Eastern Bohemia. ■