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NEWS LETTER

Czech-Liechtenstein Society

Member of Europa Nostra



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Association Chairman Petr Svoboda at an exhibition opening in the Belvedere in Valtice. Photo: Vendula Mičová

A word from the chairman

Author: Petr Svoboda

Dear all,

I feel that our Association needs to take a breath and decide how best to move forward. I have several reasons for this feeling:

1. Most Association events are attended by the same members, with the active group representing about a third of the entire membership.
2. When we discuss things, whether at Board meetings or at different gatherings or events, I often hear that we should promote the 'association' character of the Association. In other words, members know little about each other.
3. The world around us has changed, and some of our partners and supporters have changed.

The Association Board is trying to respond to and get ready for all outlined issues. For example, in April this year, we organised a working meeting with our honorary chairwoman, Her Serene Highness Maria-Pia Kothbauer Liechtenstein, on how to move forward. We agreed on several pillars: the Board must overcome the pitfalls of the GDPR law as fast as possible and regularly enable an exchange of information among members that would allow them to get to know each other better, to plan their participation in events together, and to offer membership to people from outside the Association based on a solid knowledge of the membership base. Furthermore, we agreed in April that the Board should be expanded to seven members at the next annual meeting as one position has been vacant for a long time and another has been vacated by Pavel Juřík, who resigned due to personal work commitments. We also agreed that individual Board members should be put in charge of specific areas.

For example, Zbyněk Šolc offered to take care of communication with and between members, Zuzana Holendová is responsible for identifying new potential members, and so on. Finally, the Board also addressed the sustainability of the Association budget as the Stance agency, which used to do all administrative work for the association, stopped working for the Prince of Liechtenstein Foundation at the end of last year, and the synergism has ceased to exist.

The Board continued its programme discussions and, prior to the annual meeting held on June 14 in Křtiny, it invited Dagmar Vránová and Michal Růžička to join the Board. Dagmar Vránová was chosen because she has long been one of the most active members, has had local ties to the Liechtenstein family since childhood, and in her work, whether at the Moravian Gallery in Brno or now as a teacher at a secondary school in Brno, she has always actively sought opportunities to cooperate with the Association or its members. We approached Michal Růžička because he has helped us with the programme ever since the Association was established, as well as with contacts with Liechtenstein and the princely family and with financing

the necessary activities. We knew that in his new role as a Special Envoy of the Prince of Liechtenstein Foundation for the Czech Republic, he could help the association more actively than before. Both took some time to ponder the offer and, after saying yes, they were elected to the Board at the meeting in Křtiny. Michal Růžička immediately agreed to take on responsibility for the Czech-Liechtenstein Society's programme as a Board member. After all, we have a trip to Styria coming up in October, which he has been working on for almost a year with three Liechtenstein princes – Emanuel, Alfred and Johannes.

Regarding the topics I have raised here, several members suggested in Křtiny that a joint WhatsApp account would be useful for communication within the Association. Please believe me that it is also in the Board's interest to resolve these practical issues as soon as possible, and we will inform you about this shortly. At the same time, both I and the entire Board are open to any suggestions from all of you. ■

I wish you a beautiful, peaceful and blessed summer!
Petr Svoboda, Chairman

Principality's ambassador to end her mission in the Czech Republic at the end of August

Author: Newsletter staff

Her Serene Highness Princess Maria-Pia will end her diplomatic service on August 31 after many years of hard work for the Principality. The government in Vaduz will therefore appoint a new representative of Liechtenstein to Austria, the Czech Republic and the United Nations in Vienna, as well as to several other international organisations, with effect from September.

A farewell reception held on June 13 at the Liechtenstein Garden Palace in Vienna demonstrated the prestige that Princess Maria-Pia has earned in the world of diplomacy. The Austrian vice-chancellor arrived to pay her respect, just like several ministers, a large group of members of the diplomatic corps of many countries, representatives of prominent families and also Liechtenstein's Hereditary Prince Alois, accompanied by his wife, Her Royal Highness Princess Sophie. Prince Alois, acting as head of state, thanked Princess Maria-Pia for her many years of

service in an informal speech, while the guests honoured the ambassador with an ovation lasting several minutes. The farewell event was also attended by the Special Envoy of the Prince of Liechtenstein Foundation in the Czech Republic, Michal Růžička, and several members of the Czech-Liechtenstein Society: Petr Svoboda, Zuzana Holendová, Daniel Herman, Richard Svoboda and Jiří Partyka. Her Serene Highness Princess Maria-Pia, who serves as honorary chairwoman of the Czech-Liechtenstein Society, promised to take an active part in the Association's activities and life in the future. "I am definitely not leaving the Czech Republic for good," she declared. ■



Maria-Pia Kothbauer
Liechtenstein in Hrušky in
May. Photo: Radek Miča

General Assembly under Santini's watch

Author: Newsletter staff

Once a chateau with a future, today the University Forest Enterprise in Křtiny, managed by Mendel University as a conference centre, had a brief princely past: Johann II bought the chateau with the intention of building a retirement home here, serving not only the village but also the wider region, but the Křtiny councillors stood up against it. The project seemed too ambitious for such a small village, so the prince gave up on Křtiny a few years later. At that time, the first land reform was already under way... What still looks majestic today, though, is Church of the Name of the Virgin Mary by Jan Blažej Santini, which completely fills up the little valley. The temple in such a small place is breathtaking. Those who did not come to the General Assembly definitely missed out.

The agenda of every association meeting has its legal principles, so the programme was quite clear: approval of the agenda, approval of the activity report, financial report, and programme for next year. Most of the discussion took place at an informal gathering in one of the chateau lounges the evening before the General Assembly, while the event itself focused on voting rather than talking.

The most serious items on the agenda thus included one voter dilemma and the election of two new Board members.

The voter dilemma concerned our Association's autumn trip to Styria in Austria to visit the Liechtenstein castles of Riegersburg, Hollenegg and Frauenthal. The Czech president announced October 3-4 as the general election date, and two members who were planning to go to Styria

proposed a change of date and a vote on it. In the end, the General Assembly decided that the programme, which had been in preparation for almost a year, would only be cancelled if the majority of registered members withdrew individually to exercise their civil right to vote and stay in the Czech Republic for this reason. The Association therefore did not formulate a single position.

The election of two Board members to raise their number to seven has been described by Chairman Petr Svoboda in the editorial of this issue. Dagmar Vránová from Brno would like to focus on potential cooperation with schools and public cultural institutions, while Michal Růžička will continue connecting the Association with the princely family and the Liechtenstein family by drafting the Association's programme. In his speech before the election, he promised to contribute his energy to the speedy resolution of smoother communication between members so that the "members' lack of knowledge of other members" does not hinder the life of the association. ■



Before departure, the local priest gave the Association members a tour of Santini's church. Photo: ZuB



Křtiny in the gentle surroundings of forests under the canopy of magnificent architecture. Photo: RuM



The school company's lounge served as a venue for an evening gathering of members and a morning meeting. Photo: ZuB

Travelling exhibition “The Liechtensteins: 800 Years of Sustainability” does not stop. Where can you see it?

Author: Newsletter staff

A panel exhibition on sustainable management, the relationship to the landscape, people, education, art and historic residences, which form the basis of the Liechtenstein family's success, has been touring Moravia, Silesia and Bohemia since April. Compared to last year, the story has been expanded by four panels and has been

attracting curiosity everywhere it goes. Have you seen the exhibition yet? Here is a schedule for the coming months so you don't miss it. ■



Olomouc, Dolní náměstí, May. Photo: Galerie VENKU



Ostrava, Husův sad, April. Photo: Galerie VENKU

Where can you see the panel exhibition during the holidays?

UHERSKÝ OSTROH	23. 6.–13. 7.
VELKÉ LOSINY	13. 7. – 4. 8.
MORAVSKÝ BEROUN	4. 8.–17. 8.
BRNO – Špilberk	30. 6.–10. 8.
ÚSOV	10. 8.–24. 8.
RUDA NAD MORAVOU	17. 8.–31. 8.
OBEC ZAHRÁDKY	31. 8.–15. 9.
RUMBURK	15. 9.–30. 9.
MĚSTYS KOUNICE	30. 9.–14. 10.

Sovereignty and neutrality: Liechtenstein in 1933–1945

Author: Newsletter staff

“Six weeks before Austria's annexation by Nazi Germany, Austrian Nazis attacked the Prince of Liechtenstein. On January 27, 1938, the official paper of the NSDAP in Austria, Österreichischer Beobachter, announced on its front page that there was a ‘Habsburg conspiracy against

world peace’. According to this Nazi newspaper, the Pope, the Jews, the Habsburgs and the Liechtenstein family had joined forces to encircle Germany, and against this backdrop, anti-German conspirators allegedly gathered in Liechtenstein to prepare their sinister plan...”

We present an excerpt from the book *'Sovereignty and Neutrality,'* published by the Liechtenstein Historical Society in Vaduz in German (print), Czech (print) and English (online). The book is a collection of essays by three historians, Richard Bassett from the University of Cambridge, Ulrich Schlie from the University of Bonn and Thomas Weber from the University of Aberdeen. The essays by these three historians, who come from areas outside the Czech-Liechtenstein context, provide an emotionally unbiased picture of the years 1933–1945, when Liechtenstein faced a mortal threat from Hitler's Germany. We have selected parts of Thomas Weber's text.



Book cover of the publication *Sovereignty and Neutrality* by Professor Ulrich Schlie

"In the context of these Nazi activities, which sought to undermine the independence and sovereignty of the Principality of Liechtenstein, it is not surprising that the Liechtenstein princes regarded Nazi Germany as an existential threat, especially after it had annexed Austria in March 1938 and, as 'Greater Germany', became Liechtenstein's immediate neighbour... From the first day of his reign, Franz Joseph II made it clear that he did not see Liechtenstein's future in becoming a part of Germany. He was therefore facing the painful decision of how to maximise his principality's chances of surviving as an independent state...

By moving his principal seat to Liechtenstein, Franz Joseph II completed a process that had been going on for decades, namely a transformation of the Princely House of Liechtenstein from the ruling dynasty of the principality into a family whose members hold the office of heads of a modern nation state... The princes and their officials therefore emphasised that their own origins in the German-speaking region did not make them Germans in the modern, i.e. national sense...

At the end of 1908, to the dismay of German nationalists in Moravia, the Liechtensteins actively defended themselves against attempts to label members of the family as Germans. The *Mitteilungen des Vereins Südmark*, a paper in the spirit of German nationalism, then accused the Princely House of Liechtenstein of 'lacking an ethnic character'... When the Liechtenstein officials insisted in 1908 that they should not be considered German, but that they should

instead represent the ideals of Liechtenstein princes, their statement defined the ethos of Liechtenstein identity in the first half of the 20th century, which was to become the basis of Liechtenstein's national security for the coming decades... According to the *Kärntner Zeitung*, this was one of the reasons why the Liechtenstein princely family did everything in its power to fight and restrict German nationalism after Hitler came to power in January 1933...

When Nazi Germany annexed Austria in 1938 and there was a threat of invasion from abroad or an internal coup, the Princely House of Liechtenstein strengthened its anti-Nazi policy... As reported by *Time Magazine*, Franz Joseph II said: *'The population is satisfied with life in a small independent state and wishes to remain closely linked to Switzerland.'*

In the weeks, months and years that followed, Prince Franz Joseph II sought to secure Liechtenstein's sovereignty through a two-pronged strategy: on the one hand, he tried to suppress Nazism within his own country, and on the other, he used diplomatic tools to fight for Liechtenstein's independence abroad without provoking Nazi Germany.

The fact that Germany did not invade Liechtenstein during the Second World War and that Hitler advocated for Liechtenstein's independence and sovereignty did not stem from any real respect for Liechtenstein and its ruling dynasty, as we can see from what Hitler said about Liechtenstein in private in 1944 (*'Mr Himmler..., the Prince of Liechtenstein has assured me of his gracious neutrality. A real idiot. A typical monarch.'*). It seems that Hitler's public attitude towards Liechtenstein was determined primarily by three factors. First, it appears that Liechtenstein never figured as a priority in Hitler's programme. Planning an invasion and annexation of Liechtenstein would have required time and resources at a time when they were in short supply. Moreover, the German Reich would have benefited from the annexation of Liechtenstein only to a limited extent, while the strategic costs of such a move would have been considerable in relation to Switzerland and Great Britain.

... The combination of Liechtenstein's national security strategy and Hitler's tactical considerations explains why Liechtenstein survived the Third Reich as an independent and sovereign country. The basis for the actions of both the princely Liechtenstein family and Hitler between 1933 and 1945 was the same awareness: namely that the princely Liechtenstein family did not consider itself German in the modern national sense, but that it saw itself as a sovereign princely family of an independent state. ■

Story of Bauer brothers from Valtice springs to life.

Four students depict story of famous illustrators

Author: Iva Haghofer

On Wednesday, June 25, the Belveder summer palace in Valtice was filled with illustrations by Anastasia and Maria Komarova and Klára and Veronika Kružíková. The detailed images, created with a variety of techniques, became the basis for a book called *Bratři Bauerovi: příběh tří chlapců z Valtic* (The Bauer Brothers: The Story of Three Boys from Valtice), which the Valtice and Lednice students ceremoniously presented to more than fifty guests that day.

Two and two sisters have come to discover three brothers. With these words, Michal Růžička, a Special Envoy of the Prince of Liechtenstein Foundation in the Czech Republic, opened the festive afternoon at the Belveder summer palace in Valtice in the Břeclav district. It was a symbolic act. It was the Liechtenstein family, specifically its Philanthropic Foundation, that contributed to the publication of the book written by four authors, Anastasia and Maria Komarova and Klára and Veronika Kružíková, under the guidance of their mentor Zdeňka Žďárská Benešová.

The girls spent about two years working on the nearly 100-page book about Joseph, Franz and Ferdinand Bauer, who were born in Valtice to the family of the foremost Liechtenstein painter Lucas Bauer and who wrote the history of global botanical illustration in the 18th century.

Their patient efforts yielded the first book ever written in Czech about the talented brothers in this country. It contains many original drawings by the girls and is written in a popular, light and entertaining comic book



The book has now been published in Czech, with German and English editions due to follow in the autumn.
Photo: Vendula Mičová



The work of authors Maria and Anastasia Komarova, Klára and Veronika Kružíková and Zdeňka Žďárská Benešová was presented by Michal Růžička and Hans Walter Lack. Photo: Vendula Mičová

style, making it more suitable for young people and the general public.

“When I first heard about the book two years ago, I was really looking forward to seeing the outcome. In the meantime, I attended a lecture in Brno by Hans Walter Lack, a Berlin-based professor of botany, who is one of the leading experts on the Bauer brothers. However, his work is highly academic and has never been published in Czech – only in English and German. Perhaps this is why the Bauer brothers have so far been neglected in the Czech Republic. But I believe that thanks to the girls’ book, they will become better known. They deserve it, both the brothers and the place they came from, and the authors of the book. And finally, the Liechtensteins,” said Michal Růžička.

He said the story of the Bauer brothers showed how interesting and inspiring the era in which the siblings lived was. “They were in an environment that functioned socially, economically and humanly. This allowed them to develop their talent. They were lucky to receive a lot of support. And I am glad that, like the Liechtensteins in the 18th century, we were able to support the girls in their work more than 250 years later,” said the Special Envoy of the Prince of Liechtenstein Foundation.

The ideas that led to the creation of the book were explained by the girls’ mentor, the artist and teacher Zdeňka Žďárská Benešová. “I first learnt about the brothers and their work more than ten years ago. They influenced me and I began to introduce them to my students, both children and adults. Together with Suzanna Halsey from the Czech Greenways foundation in New York, we thought about what we could do to ensure



Daniel Herman and Petr Svoboda presented flowers to the authors.
Photo: Vendula Mičová

that the legacy of the Bauer brothers is not restricted to expert books," she said.

She continued: „We talked about how to make them known to people and how to engrave them in their hearts. So I approached the energetic, skilled and talented girls. They were my students, and I knew that they are the ones who would be able to introduce Joseph, Franz and Ferdinand to their generation. The girls agreed, and now here is the book,” smiled the artist.

While Anastasia, Maria and Veronika drew, Klára took care of most of the text. “But it was a collective effort. We consulted each other on every step, whether written or drawn,” Klára Kružiková said modestly.

“It was a difficult period, with school-leaving exams and university entrance exams coming up. But we made it.



You already know the team of authors. Graphic designer Kateřina Šemberová is on the far right. Photo: Vendula Mičová

Thanks in part to Zdenička’s tremendous support. She motivated and praised us. If it weren’t for her, the book would probably never have been written,” said Anastasia Komarova with a smile.

Owing to their work on the book, the girls followed in the footsteps of the Bauer brothers to London, Vienna and Vaduz. Which of the places influenced and affected them the most? “A month ago, we had the opportunity to see the Hortus Botanicus herbarium, known as the Codex Liechtenstein, at the Liechtenstein City Palace in Vienna. That was definitely the greatest experience. It’s incredible to see such perfect and detailed drawings in real life. We had been longing for this for about two years, so it was like the icing on the cake,” said Maria Komarova.

The publication of the book was also supported by the Valtice city hall. The mayor, Aleš Hofman, attended the ceremonial presentation. “The Bauer brothers were great personalities in Valtice, but very little is known about them here. For me as a patriot, it is a challenge to change that. I would like to thank the girls for the wonderful book and I hope I will be able to order as many copies as possible!” he said, winking at the girls.

Richard Svoboda, the curator of the Valtice Castle and member of the Czech-Liechtenstein Society, attributes the lack of awareness of the brothers’ work within the Czech Republic to postwar events. “They were a part of the German-speaking community, that is, of a world that, together with the Liechtensteins, disappeared from our history to a certain extent after 1945. And only now do we have the opportunity to rediscover it,” he said. ■



You already know the team of authors. Graphic designer Kateřina Šemberová is on the far right. Photo: Vendula Mičová

A symbolic view. Princely family's Special Envoy for Czech Republic opens Prague office

Author: Iva Haghofer

Just take off. Just like Princess Karoline of Liechtenstein did in the timeless painting by French portrait artist Elisabeth Vigée-Lebrun with her slippers. Let yourself be dazzled by the fascinating view of Prague with its hundred spires. This is exactly how elated those hundred distinguished guests felt on the roof of the ten-storey building on the evening of Wednesday, June 18, at the grand opening of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Prince of Liechtenstein Foundation.



The invitation card with the portrait floated above the Prague skyline together with Princess Karoline of Liechtenstein.

People came from Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia, as well as from abroad, to toast the success of the office, which opened in January, with Special Envoy Michal Růžička. The invited guests included politicians, entrepreneurs, top representatives of municipalities and cities, representatives of universities, state organisations and associations, representatives of major noble families and owners of former Liechtenstein residences.



Filip Vurm, Lukáš Pavlík and Martin Hamšík, members of the Order of St. George. Photo: Dominika Melcer



Michal Růžička also welcomed Senator Pavel Fischer and Ladislav Špaček, former spokesman for Václav Havel, among the guests. Photo: Dominika Melcer

“The grand opening of the office of the Special Envoy of the Prince of Liechtenstein Foundation, symbolically named ‘Výhled’ (The View), was symbolic not only in its name, but also in the fact that after an 80-year vacuum, the princely family once again has a direct representative in the Czech lands. The large number of participants from various segments of society at the opening ceremony is proof that the 800-year history of the princely family in our country is still a relevant topic for many of us. And that’s a good thing!” said Petr Svoboda, chairman of the Czech-Liechtenstein Society.

The ladies radiated elegance in delicate summer dresses, much like the mythical goddess Iris incarnated as Princess Karoline, whose portrait was the leitmotif of the stylish invitation card for the gala evening. The choice of this particular portrait, drawn by one of the most popular artists of



Sister Adalberta, Mother Superior of the Franciscan Order, Zuzana Holendová and Daniel Herman. Photo: Dominika Melcer



"It is dangerous to execute a prince and replace him with a principle," Michal Růžička, Special Envoy of the Prince of Liechtenstein Foundation for the Czech Republic, said at the beginning of his speech. Photo: Dominika Melcer



The deputy mayor of Moravská Nová Ves, Jiří Fila (left), the owner of the Nový dvůr estate, David Mikulecký, and the deputy director of the Valtice Wine School, Adam Jan Polášek listen to the mayor of Hrušky, Jana Filipovičová. Photo: Dominika Melcer

the aristocracy at the time, was no coincidence. The wise and just Iris was responsible for communication between people and the outside world. She is said to have descended from Mount Olympus to Earth on a rainbow, dressed in a garment woven from dewdrops.

Communication between the Liechtenstein family, represented by the Foundation, and the people of the Czech Republic, justice and cooperation beneficial to both sides are among the main missions of the Office of the Special



With their backs to the photographer, they listen intently, savouring the view: Adam Pezold, Pavel Fischer, Czech Hydrometeorological Institute director Mark Rieder, journalist Robert Břešťan, Vienna-based interpreter Hana Scheider and others... Photo: Dominika Melcer



The tasting of princely wines was steered by Christina Fritz, manager of the Liechtenstein winery in Wilfersdorf. Photo: Dominika Melcer

Envoy. The main host of the evening, Michal Růžička, spoke about these and other goals in his speech. “For the past ten years, I have served as spokesman for the Prince of Liechtenstein Foundation and the Princely Family in the Czech Republic, primarily in connection

with the legal dispute. However, it has become clear that this model of the Foundation’s presence in the Czech Republic is no longer sufficient,” said the Special Envoy of the Prince of Liechtenstein Foundation.

He then defined the office of the special envoy as a point of reference and information for all political, social, cultural and media stakeholders in the Czech Republic. “We live in a period characterised by dialogue, a search for common ground and the examination of information in new contexts. The proposal submitted by His Serene Highness Hereditary Prince Alois to the Czech president two years ago at the UN made a significant contribution to this. The proposal is still valid: we should not wait for someone to win at Strasbourg and someone else to lose. We can all lose there. However, in order for such an agreement to be accepted, which will benefit us all, everyone must come out of their shell and look far and wide,” said Michal Růžička.

In his opening speech, he also recalled the historical development and formation of relations between the Czech Republic and Liechtenstein, but also between the Czech and Liechtenstein peoples. In this context, he particularly highlighted the activities of the members of the Czech-Liechtenstein Society which helps develop relations between the two countries and regularly provides information and education about what the two nations have in



Association chairman Petr Svoboda with Franz Phillip Podstatzky Lichtenstein. On the far right, Iva Haghofer in conversation with Markéta Šulová and Jan Votava, the CEO of Mangan Chvaletice.

Photo: Dominika Melcer

common, but also about the opportunities that lie in their mutual relations for the future.

In addition to the honorary and executive chairmen, Jiří Balašík and Petr Svoboda, and committee members Zuzana Holendová and Daniel Herman, the event was also attended by Renata Sabongui, Aleš Zídek, Hana Balašíková and Josef Pluhař.

“The ceremonial opening of the office of the Special Envoy of the Prince of Liechtenstein Foundation in Prague was an amazing and deeply moving event. I particularly appreciated the speech by Michal Růžička, in which he clearly and concisely summarised the history of Czech-Liechtenstein relations and, with an optimistic view, emphasised the importance of this new chapter in ties between the Princely House of Liechtenstein and the Czech Republic,” said Jiří Balašík, honorary chairman of the Association.



Neurologist Martin Jan Stránský, the publisher of the Přítomnost (Presence) magazine, Michal Růžička and writer Karel Hvíždala.

Photo: Dominika Melcer



Elegance with a view. Pavel Fischer with Ladislav Špaček.
Photo: Dominika Melcer

The event, which was attended by dozens of prominent figures from public and social life, was also a welcome opportunity to meet for many members of the Czech-Liechtenstein Society, said Balašík. “The excellent atmosphere was enhanced by outstanding wine from Liechtenstein cellars and a magnificent view of Prague. I wish Michal every success in his commendable work as Special Envoy,” said the honorary chairman.

Zuzana Holendová, a member of the Association Board, also spoke about the significance of the evening. “It was a lovely and inspiring evening among people for whom justice and truth are not just empty words, but traditional values and a mission. I would like to thank you for the invitation and wish the Special Envoy success, joy and progress in his effort to achieve reconciliation,” she said. The Liechtenstein government was represented by Daniel Herman, honorary consul of the Principality in the Czech Republic. He de-



Johannes Kräftner, former long-time director of the Liechtenstein Princely Art Collections, brought a gift to the office of the Special Envoy. Natálie Mužíková looks forward to having it framed.
Photo: Dominika Melcer



Zuzana Pavlík Šimonková of Lobeč, Stránov and Houska in conversation with Johannes Podstatsky Lichtenstein. In the middle at the back, the honorary chairman of the association, Jiří Balašík, towers into the sky. Photo: Dominika Melcer

scribed the establishment of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Prince of Liechtenstein Foundation as another stone in the mosaic of Czech-Liechtenstein relations.

“More than a hundred guests at the grand opening of the new office in Prague’s Pankrác district on Wednesday, June 18, 2025, are proof that the Principality of Liechtenstein is increasingly perceived as an important partner in our country. Not only the important work of the princely foundation, but also the unique view of Prague with its hundred spires stretching as far as the historic Mount Říp, the interesting discussions, the excellent hospitality and the overall atmosphere of the meeting give us hope that perhaps even here positive energy will prevail over legal disputes and that our 800 years of shared history will enter a new phase of mutually enriching cooperation,” said Daniel Herman. ■



How far can they see? Petra Stoklasová from the Endors law firm and Richard Jahoda from Grinex. Photo: Dominika Melcer

Liechtenstein's footprint in northern Bohemia:

Conference highlights family's importance in Rumburk region

Author: Iva Haghofer

On Thursday, May 29, the Municipal Library in Rumburk hosted a very interesting conference entitled Rumburk and the Liechtensteins – History on the Border. The reason for this was simple and clear: to draw attention to the somewhat forgotten fact that this family stood behind the boom and expansion of the Šluknov region.

The Liechtensteins first came to Rumburk in northern Bohemia in 1681, when the future Prince Anton Florian bought the local estate. He even turned the local castle into his residence for a period of several years.

Shortly afterwards, in 1683, he had the Capuchin monastery of St. Lawrence built according to plans drawn by the famous architect Johann Lucas Hildebrandt. Several years later, in 1704, construction began inside the monastery of the Loreto Chapel, which is still one of the most important and popular monuments in this town of more than ten thousand inhabitants in the Šluknov area. The complex of Baroque buildings is complemented with the Church of St. Lawrence, whose construction by Anton Florian also started in Rumburk in 1683.

Historians say it was the Liechtenstein family that should be credited with the unprecedented development of

industry (especially textile), the prosperity of the region, and an increase in the number of inhabitants and their standard of living (note: in 1830, Rumburk had a population of 26,000 living in about 26 villages. Most of them worked in the textile industry).



The Capuchin Loreto in model and life size with Mayor Martin Hýbl. Photo: Petr Číla



Rumburk Mayor Martin Hýbl (left) with Varnsdorf Museum curator Josef Rybánský. Photo: Petr Číla

The Rumburk estate gradually began to lose its importance after 1719, following the establishment of the Principality of Liechtenstein. The first land reform in the 1920s dealt another blow to a further development of the estate. The major change naturally also had an impact on the condition of local monuments.

The conference entitled Rumburk and the Liechtensteins – History on the Border was the first ever to be held in this town of ten thousand inhabitants in connection with the Liechtenstein family. It confirmed what was repeated several times by Mayor Martin Hýbl, archivist Otto Chmelík and Vlastimil Pažourek, director of the Děčín Museum. Namely, the enormous hunger for information on the part of the local people, the vast majority of whom were resettled there. It was a stroke of luck for this area that even after the expulsion of the German population, the local museum retained one conscientious curator from the 1930s. Owing to him, items of historic value were saved here, while elsewhere similar items were thrown away, stolen, burnt or destroyed in another way.

The speakers also repeatedly emphasised the importance of the area after Prince Anton Florian arrived. First, it was director Pažourek who said that the local industry bore a significant princely trace, but that they were not yet able to define it properly.

Matthias Donath (Centre for Culture/History in Niederjähna) followed up by saying that when Anton Florian bought Rumburk, there were not many places where you could freely cross the border from one side to the other,

regardless of your religion. Rumburk's location was therefore strategically advantageous, he added. Industry, especially the textile industry, played a major role here, particularly in the 17th and 18th centuries. According to archivist Chmelík, Prince Anton Florian was well aware of this strength of the region and wanted to utilise it - he simply did not intend to farm here.

At the time when the Liechtenstein family managed the estate, there was a huge increase in population and living standard (which was confirmed in lectures by both Donath and later Chmelík).

In 1830, Rumburk had a population of 26,000 people living in about 26 villages. Most of them worked in the textile industry. Chmelík said historians were facing the challenge of showing how important the estate was within the entire Liechtenstein domain. He added that the composition of the estates and their ownership by aristocratic families in the 19th century (they were managed by families such as the Salm-Reifferscheidts, Thun-Hohensteins, Kinskys, Harrachs and Habsburgs) show that this was not an unimportant region.

Historian Donath agreed, and he once again used figures to demonstrate this. Anton Florian sold Rumburk to his nephew in 1718 for 270,000 gold coins. In contrast, he paid only 115,000 gold coins for Schellenberg in 1699. Donath therefore concluded that the value of the estate clearly grew significantly at that time.

This is also evident from research by Michael Goldberg from Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg, who



The conference featuring both domestic and international speakers attracted a lot of interest. Photo: Petr Číla



Vlastimil Pažourek, director of the Děčín Museum. Photo: Petr Číla

in his work dealt with a genealogical analysis of the Goldberg families from northern Bohemia and Upper Lusatia between 1500 and 2000. He cited a significant industrial growth as one of the main reasons behind the sharp increase in population in the 18th century. "It was more than anywhere else. There were more people with this surname on the Czech side than on the German side. There were no differences in child mortality or birth rates... It was really only down to the industry. If the Liechtensteins had not come to this region, my book *Die Mandau flussabwärts* would probably never have been written." ■

The programme of the Rumburk conference was more than packed. In the next issue of the Czech-Liechtenstein Society newsletter, we would therefore like to return to at least two fascinating lectures: a lecture by Professor Václav Horčíčka entitled 'Czechoslovak Land Reform on the Estates of the Liechtenstein Primogeniture, 1918–1939' and a lecture presented by Associate Professor Ondřej Horák from Palacký University in Olomouc. His topic was the Liechtensteins in Czechoslovakia and Central European legal science.

Invitation: members' tour of Liechtenstein castles and palaces in Styria

Author: Newsletter staff

Styria is an important region for the history and presence of the Liechtenstein family. While the ruling branch owns beautiful forests, a forest company and the successful Lieco firm focused on professional tree planting in Kalwang through the Prince of Liechtenstein Foundation, the grandchildren of Alfred Geza of Liechtenstein and his wife Ludmila, née Lobkowicz, take care of the family castles and palaces such as Riegersburg, Hollenegg, and Frauenthal. This is why Association members interested in a sightseeing trip will be travelling here on October 3–5.

Princes Emanuel, Alfred and Lucas of Liechtenstein are busy men: Emanuel is a doctor with a practice in the town below the “volcanic” castle of Riegersburg, which he looks after as the rightful heir; Alfred, in addition to caring for the charming Hollenegg Castle and his important role as chairman of the Family Council, owns forests, a sawmill with a wood processing plant, and he also does business in wind energy; Lucas and his wife Nathalie both graduated in physics, but they ultimately abandoned their academic careers to take care of the large Frauenthal castle, which was expected to provide a home to about fifty people around the year 1900. It took some effort to find a date for the Association to visit these three Liechtenstein “households” and their surroundings so that we could fit everything into a long weekend. So when Czech President Pavel announced that the general election would be held on the same date, we were faced with a dilemma: to go or not to go? The next free weekend could quite well only be available next year...



Riegersburg. A Liechtenstein castle on an extinct volcano. Photo: RuM

Those who have for once decided to sacrifice their civil right to vote will undoubtedly exhale with joy – when they first see Riegersburg Castle through the windscreen. The castle on an extinct volcano looks monumental. When the Turks marched with their army

deeper into Europe, they always preferred to bypass it. Tourists have a choice: climb up the winding path on foot, take a lift or climb up a rope like a mountaineer; the hooks are ready in the rock. Hollenegg is a Renaissance gem. However, Princess Alice has been giving it something extra for the past ten years.

A former design student in Milan, she has founded the excellent “Design in Hollenegg” project, which is already attracting

attention overseas. Every year, young designers work on a selected theme here, and the results of their work are on display at the castle in May. Some things, however, remain forever... Frauenthal does everything it can to stay in good shape. Its park has a popular golf course, and it used to be home to a secondary school for years. At that time, Prince Lucas and his wife were still devoted to science. When the school left, the couple chose a different strategy: since 2023, apartments of various sizes have been available for rent in the castle, and this venture is already proving successful.

Styria is known as the garden of Austria. It is a place where people always like to return: the nearby peaks of the Alps can be explored, the area around Deutschlandsberg is home to romantic vineyards. Apart from the Deutschlandsberg castle, once owned by the Liechtenstein family but now owned by the municipality, which runs a museum and hotel there, our Association will visit the so-called Buschenschank. This is a Styrian invention: it is a bar, often consisting only of wooden benches and tables in a vineyard, where only local products are served. If the owners adhere to the rule of serving only local products, they do not pay taxes. Prince Alfred has chosen a ‘Buschenschank’ in a house with a roof for us, but a real one! So you will not get coke or coffee here. But the local cheese, sausages, vegetables, wine or water are well worth the experience.

If anyone else would like to sign up, there are undoubtedly a few places left. After all, the parliamentary election has already led several members to cancel. ■



Prince Alfred of Liechtenstein with his wife, Princess Alice.
Photo: Design in Hollenegg