

Cultural Village of Europe

Opening Conference in Kilingi Nõmme 20 – 24 may 2005



Contribution from B y s t r é



The State and local municipalities

Dear hosts, kind colleagues, friends near our's heart!

On behalf of me and citizens of the town of Bystre I would like to thank you for your invitation and hospitality.

The topic of the conference is the state and local municipalities. As for local authorities, there have been lots of meaningful changes in the Czech Republic for the past flfty years. After 1989, districts, towns and villages, which were ruled by the centre, were given autonomy. The overwhelming majority of the institutions had a district field of action. The public administration have gone through a very important reform in our country after 2000 which had as a foremost task reduction of the system and approaching of the administration to citizens. The country was divided into 14 self-governing territorial units and 205 competent towns. These competent towns are responsible for the administration of the corresponding areas. As our village is near the border of the region, we have experienced the counter-effect of the transformation -we have to travel to Pardubice -our administrative centre, which is as far as 90 km.

The power of the state can be divided into two branches -legislative power and executive power. The legislative power is in hands of the Parliament (with two houses). The executive power is performed by the Government and Ministeries. The Government is formed according to the results of the election, and can comprise of one or more political parties. Ministeries hand over some of the competences to regional and local authorities.

Municipality is the basic authority and its field of competence is limited by its territory . Municipalities are administered by municipal councils. Municipalities can merge on the base of the decisions of their councils. Municipalities can cooperate in two ways: they can sign a contract on a concrete activity or cooperate in a voluntary alliance. For instance, our town is a member of several alliances, one of them was founded to be able to run a hospital and a retirement home.

The number of the members of the mtinicipal council depends on the number of the inhabitants. It has to be at least five members. The particular members are elected and as winners they have to take the pledge. In the towns where there are more than fifteen members of the municipal council, the members vote for a town council between them. It has to be at least five members too. The town council is always composed by a mayor, vice-mayor and other elected members of the municipal council. The powers of the town council are strictly determined by law. The municipal council votes for the mayor and vice-mayor from their members. The mayor is a head of the town and the office.

There are fifteen members of the municipal council looking after our town who have been voted in election 2002. The municipal council have voted for the mayor, vice-mayor and five members of the town council. Our office has six employees. Besides our own administration we provide services of a registry office and a building control office for about five thousand inhabitants of our subregion.

Our citizens can get the overwhelming majority of the office matters in so-called accredited town which is usually cca 10-30 kilometres far from their home. Some offices, e. g. courts, revenue offices or land offices are still in ex-district towns, which might confuse our citizens and make them distrust the reform.

Most citizens, including me, think that there are still too many competences in hands of central ministeries. The rate of a redistribution of our common finances from the centre is very high too, the system is complicated and miss the feedback. Then it leads to the increase of the office work and low efficiency. Definitely I cannot say that in our country the state would be like a good father of his children and takes care of them. It is rather true, that the towns would like to take over the responsibility like adult children, which would correspond to their age and position, but they are not enabled to. It is a fundamental challenge for future years.