

CULTURAL VILLAGE of EUROPE

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A night to remember

WIJK AAN ZEE – The Night of Europe has passed. But it will continue in the minds of many people. An uncommon and gripping event like this needs time to be processed, so all positive elements can be listed and the less positive ones can serve as a learning experience.

It looked beautiful, last Friday. All of a sudden something was happening on the village meadow of Wijk aan Zee. The tents were there, people took to their posts and the delegations arrived. The reception committee grew larger and larger and one by one the flags of the countries were hoisted to the top of the flagpoles.

Fiday night generally meant that host families and their guests talked to each other. Many took a joint walk to our beautiful beach. The day of the night will be remembered as a highlight by many. Food has a beautiful quality to it. Eating together is a wonderful experience and the way in which the village took care of the food for its guests is exceptional. There was enough food, it looked good and tasted good as well. The cultural programme was diverse and knew many highlights, though it was a pity that you had to make choices. You cannot visit everything.

That also went for the evening programme. It was nearly impossible to visit all ‘embassies’. Those who did try witnessed the most beautiful music and dancing, and would notice that the way in which hospitality was expressed by restaurant owners was quite diverse. Some cherished their guests, others hardly made the effort. Because of this many musicians and dancers must have

experienced the Night of Europe in a special own way. The Sunday started as it should: with a oecumenic meeting in the tent. After that the Jutterspad once again showed how surprising a village can be, that offers visitors a view of its creative treasures. And after that? A lot more happened, but time doesn’t allow us to put it in this report.

During the past days I learned of a metaphor that has been used by the local elementary school to bring the opportunities of Europe under the attention of the pupils. The teachers played that they were laborers, building the House of Europe. The job became difficult, because everyone spoke a different language. However, a translating device offered the solution to this problem. I see this manifestation as a succesful attempt to provide such a translation. The house is nowhere near finished. But the ten new employees make me look forward to the next workers meeting.

Attention, reader! This text was written very late, after a heavy night, by a body still glowing from excessive alcohol consumption, in a room filled with the scents of old beer and cigarette smoke. Cheers, to the health Europe!



Dorothea from Poland talking to local politicians



Standing ovation after ‘Alle menschen werden brüder’

Hubert Martin wants a new covenant of villages

WIJK AAN ZEE – While the public on the village meadow is breathlessly enjoying what is happening on stage, one man is feverishly running around. And even when he stops, his eyes stroll the field. Hubert Martin has given himself an assignment today. He is looking to contact villagers to make a new covenant of villages.

Saturday afternoon, Wijk aan Zee. There is a multitude of colours and sounds on the village meadow. Something beautiful is happening, when Europe comes together for a day on a windy spot at the coast. Hubert Martin also knows that all this beauty comes from the spirit of Cultural Village. That is exactly what he intends to bring to his village in France.

He himself has already been touched by the virus, ever since he visited Mellionec (then the Cultural Village of Europe) in June of 2000. „I live in the village Le Caylar”, he tells us. „In the region Lazrac, in the south of France. But my family originally comes from the west of the country, where I still regularly go..”

On one of those visits he saw a Britton newspaper, in which was an article about the covenant of villages. „That interested me, because in our village we are also thinking about the future and how to develop ourselves..” Martin contacted other Brittons and was invited.

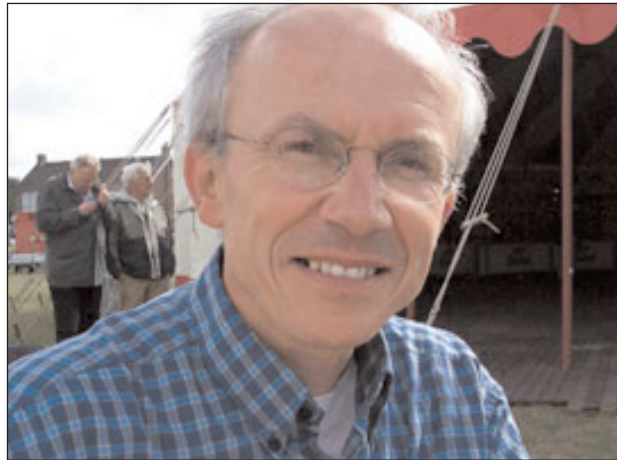
„What I like about it is that a Europe is being formed from the bottom, not from the top like in Brussels. That Europe is known as something negative, but this Europe is the real Europe”, Martin says. „I also like the way they deal with issues. Serious business is often handled in a relativising way.”

It is Martin’s dream to form a new circle, a new covenant of villages. The circle of Cultural Village around Wijk aan Zee does not want to grow any larger, but it stimula-

tes other villages to do the same. „It is a plan, something I would really like to do”, says Martin. „But it is so much work, I dare not yet say that I will make it happen.”

The first step may be signing the Charter of the Villages. „I like the contents, but they are very utopian. I will talk about them with Bert Kisjes.”

What Martin did form is a circle of villages in his own region, Lazrac, the least populated region of France. „Twelve villages are cooperating and once a year we celebrate a European day”, he says. „It’s a start..”



Hubert Martin from France, starting a new circle of villages

Ditjes and Datjes

* The night of Europ got a lot of attention from the media. Not only in Holland, in almost all the participating countries the news was spread. The station Radio Noord-Holland covered a part of the event live. In three hours they did a lot of interviews and they broadcasted live music. The televisionstation Noord-Holland was also present.

* However it was not a real surprise, but all participants were extremely enthusiastic about the oecumenical ser-

vice in the tent. Everybody left the tent inspired after more than one hour of prayens, songs and speeches.

‘Alle Menschen’

The hymn of Europe echoes through the tent and is carried by the joy of the singers and musicians. Tears are rolling down my cheeks: I was deeply moved. Now we are Europeans and no longer citizens in Europe, I thought while another tear sought a way down my face. The hymn was the impressive finale of a performance I will always remember. Months and months of preparation have preceded it and this was exactly how it was supposed to be. A strong and convincing feeling of connection to the people of Europe, to the visitors from the ten new member states of the European Union. Because they were willing to make a long journey to this headstrong village on the coast of Holland. Here they wanted to celebrate unity and friendship.

The tone of the evening was set by the representative of the Polish embassy. In her speech the personal became politics and politics became personal. “In my youth I could not imagine what freedom was, I also could not imagine ever to live in freedom. And look, now we are free and part of a free Europe. I am so grateful for that, that I want to address the people of Wijk aan Zee in their own language.” And when I heard the grateful words, of a young woman from a country that until recently was hidden behind an Iron Curtain, spoken in perfect Dutch, I understood what it was that moved her.

It has been a long time since I myself did not know what freedom was. I knew of danger, of barking guns, of roaring planes and raiding soldiers. That danger existed as an eternal trouble to me and those around me. From dusk till dawn. I have long thought that the time after the war was boring and monotonous, not exciting. Only when I got older, I understood that the quiet of the peace settled on Europe. The peace that exists for so long now, for increasingly many peoples in Europe. ‘Alle Menschen...’



The feast started with dancing



Everyone agreed: the food was lovely



Two girls from Poland



Homemade food on the Villagefield



Celebrating a wedding Slovenian style



The mayor of Beverwijk enters



Even the children celebrated Europe



A local musician meets a polish dancer



Cultures mix while dancing on the villagefield



Artists from all over Europe working hard



Dancers from Latvia



Locals meet the new Europeans



Also the artists from Wijk aan Zee en Beverwijk

* This special newspaper was made in one day for all the guests of the Night of Europe.
Credits: Carla Seelemeijer, Ab Winkel, Jacky de Vries, Peter Neijenhoff, Jan Budding, Douwe Hania en Iwan Kisjes.

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www.cultural-village.com
www.nightofeurope.net



A gate to Europe



Adults drink and talk, the children play