

Grusswort des rumänischen Botschafters in Ljubljana, Anton Niculescu, zu der Pflanzung des 1. Apfelbäumchens, Rasica, 9.10.2016

Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentleman, Dober dan!

We are standing nearby the place where Primož Trubar was born in 1508. A Protestant clergyman, Trubar elevated Slovenian into a literary language. His deed is one of the many accomplishments spawned out of the positive powers accumulated through Reformation. Its energy has pulled people together, helping them out of the Dark Ages. The writings of Martin Luther have spread humanistic spirit and brought into being an emancipated state of mind. All these have stirred a binding social tissue, which undoubtedly contributed to the development of our laggard medieval cities.

Ladies and gentleman, *Europa mit und ohne Grenzen* is a title encompassing a whole array of sensitive questions and difficult tasks our continent is currently confronted with. While it celebrates 500 years of Reformation, the Evangelic Church is assembling its treasures, adding up creative projects. Following Luther's belief, *Zwölf Apfelbäumchen für ein klares Wort* offers an example of constructive approach and optimistic attitude. Just in time, dear I say.

For Europe is in desperate need of both clear words, and fresh planting. A new start, in a new light should guide us on our bumpy road to solidarity. Our quest for European team spirit might be inspired by the Religious Tolerance Act endorsed by the Transylvanian Assembly in 1568.

Ladies and Gentleman, I have evoked in the beginning the positive role played in Slovenia's history by Primož Trubar. I am closing my remarks adding a few words about his religious aid, Paul Wiener. Born in Ljubljana, Wiener was persecuted and jailed as a supporter of Trubar. After a trial in Vienna, he was banished to Sibiu (Hermannstadt) where Wiener became the first bishop of the Evangelical Church from Transylvania in 1553.

I may conclude therefore that it is not by accident that the representatives of the Evangelical Church in Romania have invited us to Rašica from all over Europe: Austria, Germany, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Romania and Switzerland. I am honoured to be part of this group planting the first of twelve apple trees. Twelve is a symbolic number linking our Christian tradition with the stars on the European flag in hope of love and a better future.

Thank you. Vielen Dank. Hvala lepa!