

Honorary Flag of the Council of Europe

On December the 6th 2001 Toruń joined the elite group of European cities, which includes several other Polish cities that have the Honorary Flag of the Council of Europe. Our city was given this unique distinction for international activity and for contribution in promoting the idea of European unity.



From the hands of Wilfried Böhm, honorary member of the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly, the blue flag was accepted by the then president of Toruń Wojciech Grochowski and by the Chief Councillor Bogdan Major.

Wilfried Böhm came to Toruń together with his wife, Hildegarda. During the special session in the Artus Mansion many well known citizens of Toruń gathered together with members of parliament of the present and previous terms, presidents of higher education institutions, members of the council, former and present members of the Municipal Government, as well as students from schools of Toruń. The musical setting was provided by a young talented pianist from Toruń Julia Stetkiewicz, who was playing compositions by Chopin. The European anthem sounded as well - Ode to Joy by Beethoven.

- You bring the dream of Europe united in peace and liberty into the present day and you make this dream come true one step after another at the basis of the human coexistence.- **said Wilfried Böhm.** - The number of your undertakings is so great that I am not able to enumerate all of them. The cooperation in association of cities and partnership with Göttingen, Hämeelina, Leiden, and Čadca is great proof of this (...). The issue is that we should get together everywhere in Europe, and not to separate. Borders will be relatively quickly overcome by economy, but we should also overcome those barriers that have not been built from the barbed wire, but from mutual stereotypes and prejudices.

The Flag of Europe - blending symbolism of clear blue sky and "perfect" number of twelve golden stars, symbolising union of European nations - is the second prize from the four given by the Council of Europe. The first one is a diploma, the third one - honorary plaque, and the fourth and the most important one is - the main prize Prix de l'Europe.

President Grochowski handed the flag over to the children from the "Small Revue" to emphasise the role of the youngest citizens in the future European contacts of Toruń. After the ending of the ceremony the flag was presented to inhabitants from the balcony of the Artus Mansion, and then given to the youth, which in formal parade went to the Old Town Hall to the session "Common Europe" organized by the European Centre for Youth Cooperation and Mobility.

The flag will be used during important city celebrations, normally it may be found in a special cabinet located in front of the council chamber of the City Council of Toruń.

