



## **Award Ceremony of the European Entente Florale 2017 in Podčetrtek - Slovenia**

Friday 15th of September 2017.

Speech by Mr. Dirk Vandromme, President of the A.E.F.P.

### **For a green and united Europe**

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Ladies and gentlemen,  
Dear Mister Peter Misja, Mayor of Podčetrtek ,  
Dear deputies and delegates of towns and villages of all participating  
countries all over Europe,  
Distinguished guests and friends of Entente Florale Europe,

#### **Welcome all**

On behalf of the organisation A.E.F.P., namely the *Association Européenne pour le Fleurissement et le Paysage*, I would like to bid you all a warm welcome to the 2017 Award Ceremony of Entente Florale Europe, here in the wonderful, green and healthy destination of Podčetrtek.

I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to the city council of our host city Podčetrtek and to the organising committee of the Award Ceremony.

We are grateful for your kind hospitality and pleased with the nice organisation.

Special thanks goes to the members of the association of Entente Florale of the Republic of Slovenia.

I am sure, the Award Ceremony 2017 will be a delightful and happy event.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am assured: Tonight we are all together in the green and united spirit of Entente Florale Europe.

#### **Everyone is a winner**

First of all, I would like to congratulate all participants in this important European competition. Your presence here tonight and the fact that your community was able to take part in Entente Florale Europe, proves your city or municipality belongs to the European cream of the crop in green planning, maintenance and promotion. Perhaps a number of participants will be somewhat disappointed by the results that will be announced shortly by the chairman of our international jury.

However, I believe that the great honour of having being nominated by your home country to participate in one of the oldest and most prestigious European competitions for towns and villages, makes every one of you a winner here tonight.

What matters most, ladies and gentlemen, is the team spirit that was gradually built up in every participating municipality during the preparations over the last months. This spirit resulted in a very tight cooperation between city departments, persons and organisations.

### **Entente florale for a better quality of live in Europe**

The European Entente Florale competition was first held in 1975 and has been an annual event ever since.

In more than 40 years, the competition itself has grown into an important tool to put an European focus on green urban elements. Over all these years the competition has been developed from a flower contest into a modern and general audit for European towns and villages, focused on green spaces in urban areas and environmental issues.

At present, there are nine European member states direct involved in the competition of Entente Florale Europe. More than 700 towns and villages in fourteen European countries have taken part in the competition since 1975. Also Podčetrtek has already 2 times successfully participated in this European contest, namely in 2004 and in 2009.

### **Entente between people and nations**

Ladies and gentlemen, people sometimes ask me:  
what is meaning of '*Entente Florale*'?

The French word '*Entente*' has different meanings such as:

- agreement, alliance or federation,
- unity, friendship.

But '*Entente*' also means:

- confederation of peoples,
- relationship between countries.

Our contest seeks a relationship between citizens of different European states with the help of flowers and plants, green and nature.

Religion, race, nation or political beliefs are not important for our green planning.

Green unites people in an united Europe!

Our main goal is a green Europe with green and healthy cities and villages.

With Entente Florale Europe you can measure if your own city or town is taking enough actions to achieve this noble goal.

### **Ambition, vision and management**

Ladies and gentlemen, the participation of your city or town in the competition of Entente Florale Europe demonstrates your concern and active commitment to improve the quality of life in your community.

More and more people live in urban areas. Therefore, the presence of green spaces, large parks and natural elements is of great interest to the modern townplanning. Furthermore, the relationship between city and countryside is growing ever more important.

Today and in the future, our cities need plenty of space for green elements. Green cities are not only beautiful and colorful but also create opportunities for recreation and tourism, and provide space for social contacts, integration of nature and biodiversity in our living areas. Green cities improve the quality of our environment.

To achieve all this, there is a need for ambition, with a clear vision for the future but also with strong management. Your participation in Entente Florale Europe is proof of the ambition of your city or village: congratulations!

### **Thanks to everyone**

As the President of the A.E.F.P., I would like to thank the panel of judges for their great efforts. I would especially like to thank the chairman of the jury, Mr. Rudi Geerardyn from Belgium and the Vice-Chairmen of the jury, Mr. Martin Wagner from Austria and Mr Rüdiger Kirsten from Germany.

Furthermore, I would like to express my gratitude to all board members of our organization A.E.F.P.

In addition, I would like to thank the Vice Presidents of A.E.F.P., namely Mr. Herbert Titz from Austria and Ms. Inka Truxova from the Czech Republic.

And last but not least, special mention goes to our Secretary General, Mr. János Prutkay from Hungary, who has worked tirelessly for our international association.

Ladies and gentlemen, thanks for your participation, conviction and commitment to realize more and better green and nature in our European towns and cities.

I thank you all for your attention.

Vandromme Dirk,  
President of A.E.F.P. | Entente Florale Europe