

LAUDATION

in praise of Éva Mayer

on the occasion of delivering the JUSTITIA REGNORUM FUNDAMENTUM award

We would like to greet journalist Éva Mayer as this year's winner of the Justitia Regnorum Fundamentum award. This award is an acknowledgement of her outstanding achievements as a journalist, editor and organizer of cultural events, since she has been facilitating the enforcement of the cultural rights of the nationalities living in Hungary with unceasing efforts, outstanding expertise and empathy for as many as fifty-five years. The award also means the recognition of the past decades of German language journalism and audiovisual media in Hungary, of which the award winner was an active participant and initiator in countless ways.

Éva Mayer was born in Bátorfő in a German family living in Hungary. Her pride in her nationality and her constant desire to work for her community have determined her life since her early years.

She graduated from the German nationality department of the Budapest Eötvös József Grammar School. She found a very colorful community both at the school and at the dormitory, it was here that she met some of her later colleagues too. She started to study law at the Faculty of Law of the Pécs University of Sciences in 1962 but she ended up in the field of journalism and communication, and she got involved in working for her national community.

Her career as a journalist began 55 years ago. She joined the nationality weekly *Neue Zeitung*, which was founded in 1957 and which has ever since been regarded as the central element of the German media in Hungary, in 1963. In this newspaper, she reported on the everyday life and festivities of the Germans living in Hungary, and she conducted interviews with outstanding personalities for nearly 28 years. Her editor-in-chief of that time said that she had always been highly committed and she had a very empathetic approach to many different subjects. She produced materials for *Unser Bildschirm*, which was a weekly television magazine for the Germans living in Hungary on subjects of public interest launched by the Pécs District Studio of the Hungarian Television in 1978; she mostly produced documentary films on German artists living in Hungary in the 1990s.

She established the journal *Barátság* ('Friendship') with Mária Ember in 1994, with a view to facilitating understanding and tolerance between the different groups of nationalities living in Hungary through conveying information on the history, traditions and culture of the individual national communities. The journal is the only publication in Hungary, issued six times a year, which reports on the main holidays and events of all the nationalities living in the country, besides publishing selections from works of fine arts and literature, contemporary comprehensive arts and scientific achievements. In addition to this, she plays an important role in shaping minority policies as well, since she conducts interviews with politicians, public officials and nationality experts on the state measures concerning the nationalities, especially on the issuance of laws and decrees, thus also providing help to those who practice law. The journal regularly reaches the members of the nationalities living in Hungary, as well

as the majority communities and the Hungarians beyond the borders, thus contributing to the realization of the recommendation of the European Union on building an inclusive society and developing intercultural competences.

The journal *Barátság* has become a brand name during the twenty-four years of its existence, we may regard it as a European standard nationality newspaper and creative center. The editors of the paper were awarded the Prize for A Multicultural Society from the Open Society Foundation in 1995, while they got the Prize For Minorities in 2003.

“We should never forget where we come from”, this is the motto of Éva Mayer, which she has always kept in mind during her career: for her, the most noble and most important goal has been to support and represent nationalities. Due to this, in addition to her work as a journalist, she took on an active role in the public life of the Germans living in Hungary all her life. Between 1994 and 2010, she was a representative of the Újbuda German National Minority Self- Government, from 1995 to 2010, she was a member and chairperson of the Budapest German National Minority Self- Government, and also from 1995, she was a member of the General Meeting of the National Self- Government of Germans living in Hungary for seven years. As part of her manifold activities, she initiated a high number of events and associations, thus she was the founding member of the Association of German Writers and Artists in Hungary, and she was the chairperson of the Budapest Association of German Kindergartens and Schools.

She is currently the editor-in-chief of the journal *Barátság*, while she has been the executive director of the Neue Zeitung Foundation since 2017.

She could always count on her husband László Bajtai both in her tireless work and in her private life.

She received many prestigious awards for her high quality work in journalism, culture and her activities supporting the German community living in Hungary. In 2011, she received an award called ‘For the Germans of Budapest’, in 2012, she got the Golden Pen life achievement award granted by the National Association of Hungarian Journalists, while in 2013, she was granted the German Media Award of Hungary. In 2014, she received the highest acknowledgement of the Germans in Hungary, i.e. the “Golden Pin for the Germans Living in Hungary” (Ehrendadel in Gold für das Ungarndeutschtum), in a gala show on the Day of German Minority Governments in Hungary.

Besides their personal respect for the journalist’s activity, the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights and the Deputy Commissioner for the Rights of National Minorities in Hungary would also like to appreciate Éva Mayer’s efforts of several decades for the national communities living in Hungary, with special regard to the German nationality, as well as the outstanding professional activities pursued in the enforcement of the cultural rights of nationalities by granting her the Justitia Regnorum Fundamentum award. This acknowledgment is also due to all those colleagues who have taken unceasing efforts to report on the life of the national minorities in Hungary and to make mutual recognition and acceptance possible.

Congratulations on the award, we wish you all success with your work.

Budapest, June 29, 2018