

Mottagelse for Europeiske fylkesmenn. 06.06.2013.
Ordfører Trude Drevland.

Dear guests! On behalf of the City Council of Bergen it is a pleasure and honor to welcome you to the city of Bergen.

As you may know, Bergen has for centuries been the Norwegian centre of business and cultural exchange with Europe. The contact with Europe and the long coast of Norway was possible because the main road was the sea.

Therefore – our region have had much closer connections with our neighbors around the North Sea and Baltic than with East and inner part of Norway. That is one of the reasons of the saying we have here: “I am not from Norway – I’m from Bergen”

Well, today we are a well integrated part of the modern, Norwegian society – with our specialties, of course.

And I just want to focus on a few of them.

We are in a city with traditions still living and where the heritage of the past surrounds us all the time.
The Harbour – where the Hanseatic office was established around 1360 and ruled the whole area until 1754 - continued to be the centre of fish and lobster trade. Today we can see some of the very old buildings, and they are still in use, - not for the fish industry, but a lot of artistic, creative business and good places for dining, wining and music. There is also an extensive restoration work going on all the time to take care and save this important World Heritage Site.

The harbor goes out to the castle where we find the Guildhall, Håkonshallen – the King’s hall built by king Håkon in 1261 for the wedding of his son Magnus who became the “Lawmaker” king of Norway.

If you take a walk through the city – from The Håkonshall up to the University hill, you’ll have a very good impression of our city. You’ll stroll along the historic sites, see the typical

architecture of the small, wooden houses, cross the many beautiful squares and experience that in this historic city also is a modern city.

Having long cultural traditions, we do have an activity on the cultural field which is quite extensive. Since 1765 we have had our music society "Harmonien", and the orchestra is today one of two national orchestras in Norway – highly awarded internationally.

Being a melting pot for European and Norwegian culture for centuries, some exceptional musicians grew out of this melting pot. The "Paganini of the North", Ole Bull, started his career here, and some years later Edvard Grieg became the most significant and best known Norwegian composer – not only for his time, but still performed worldwide. The Museums after these two giants are the diamonds in our pearl row of museums. You'll also find the second largest collection of Edvard Munch in our art museum, KODE.

I sincerely hope you'll enjoy your stay here in Bergen, and we are very interested in the development of regionalization going on. In medieval time, Bergen was a part of the hanseatic region. In the times of changes and challenges we have today, we have to have our attention on how we are organizing our societies. I wish you all the best in your important work, and in addition I wish you wonderful days in our beloved city, Bergen.