

Brussels, 28 August 2013

Dear Mr Bauer,

I would like to thank you for your letter of August 20th regarding my recent exchange with the Mayor of Košice.

I have carefully taken note of your explanations for the new wall recently erected in Košice-Západ. Of course, it is not the role of the European Commission to comment on municipal decision-making or local political relations. The Commission respects at all times the limits of its competence.

Nevertheless, as the European Commissioner responsible for the European Capitals of Culture, I would take this opportunity to repeat the message I have already conveyed to the Mayor of Košice in a letter that I have copied to your office: we all share the responsibility to protect the fundamental values of the European Union such as respect for human dignity, non-discrimination and tolerance. It is precisely these values that allow citizens to live peacefully together irrespective of their cultural differences. As the European Capital of Culture for 2013, the city of Košice has a special duty to uphold these values and set a positive example.

Today the city of Košice, in all its parts, has an opportunity to break with an extremely worrying trend whereby walls are being built to segregate Roma communities from their fellow citizens. I am confident that you and your colleagues will seize this opportunity, and ensure that Košice does justice to its title as European Capital of Culture.

Yours sincerely,



Mr Rudolf Bauer
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