



Welcome Address to Chancellor Angela Merkel at the Pan-European Picnic
by **Dr. Tamás Fodor** Mayor of the City and County of Sopron
Pan-European Picnic in Memorial park, Sopronpuszta, 19 August 2009

At the 20th anniversary of 1989 Pan-European Picnic and border breakthrough in the name of Sopron, Town of County Rank allow me to give a warm welcome to Angela Merkel, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, here at the very scene of the border breakthrough.

We are standing on the spot where your German compatriots chose freedom in place of inhuman dictatorship – thanks to the organizers from Debrecen and Sopron twenty years ago. We all know well, there is nothing harder than not being free in one's own home country.

The border breakthrough is an outstanding occurrence in Hungarian history of the late 20th century. Only 1956 Revolution is comparable to it. That event is part of the fall of the Berlin Wall and the reunion of Europe. Former German Chancellor Kohl said that the event here was the first brick hammered out of the wall. We are proud of the fact that the Pan-European Picnic and the breakthrough happened in the vicinity of Sopron, town of fidelity and liberty.

Dear Madam Chancellor! You probably feel the same way as we Hungarian do, that this site should be a pilgrimage place not only for our nations, but also for all of Europe. We are not remembering tragedies of national destinies here, but the celebration of freedom and our joy in it. It is the feeling of delight in the courage of a nation without freedom that let another nation to flee to liberty. It is the most precious present a nation can give to another nation.

These noble thoughts are embodied in the breakthrough statue by Miklós Melocco, for this 20th anniversary of the event. We thank the German government for its financial and moral support for the creation of the statue, received from the civic organizations of Berlin.

Distinguished Chancellor! Thank you for having accepted the invitation of the city of Sopron, and the civic organizations, and for taking part in the celebrations on the occasion the 20th anniversary of the breakthrough.

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