



Kaleidoscope of cultures on Shooter's island

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Summer sunshine, bright smiles and a cocktail of colors - that was Shooter's island on the 2nd of June when there were nations from all over the world dancing, singing and showing themselves as a part of the multicultural festival RefuFest organized by InBáze.

This beautiful event has been running for seven years and giving foreigners living in Czech Republic not only the possibility to show the most beautiful features of their cultures and traditions but also to focus on urgent problems of the immigrants.

Right at the entrance the visitors were welcomed by exhibition of photographs by Jindřich Štrejt called „We are from the same planet“. Thoughtful, smiling and surprised faces from different countries looking from the pictures and telling their stories below each photo... Someone left his homeland for love, another one was driven by war or poverty, and another wanted to get to know the world and himself.

Stalls located in a pleasant shade of green trees attracted visitors by demonstrations of folk arts, products and symbols that best represented each country.

Aromatic oils from Morocco, African corals, straw hats from Vietnam, known all over the world, Moldavian wines, colorful shirts and dresses from Pakistan, embroidery, costumes, traditional toys, decorations... At request visitors had the possibility to get made an Egyptian cartouche with their own name. For the youngest were prepared interesting workshops including competitions in the art of using chopsticks.

Many stalls aimed to draw attention to social issues and problems that plague foreigners in the Czech Republic and also people from distant countries. Here was particularly introduced the situation in Syria, oppressed by shootings and convulsions. Czech non-profit organizations offered information and support to foreigners on how to become part of the Czech society.

There was a very interesting test submitted by the Association for Integration and Migration by which each Czech had the opportunity to try if he would meet the requirements for obtaining the Czech citizenship under the newly suggested more restricted law - or if he would lose it.

An important part of the festival was the empire of taste that invited to try dozens of dishes of different nations of the world. Caucasian lavash, oriental baklava, Belarus pie, simple African sweets, pies, donuts, buns and of course beer – which is by far not everything that could have made visitor's tummy happy.

Traditional music and hot dancers in folk costumes created a positive mood of the whole event. Music and singing was heard beyond the Vltava embankment from where new visitors could head for the island.

It is gratifying that different people who live in the Czech Republic have the opportunity to meet at multicultural events facilitating interconnection of mentalities, elimination of prejudices and the search for mutual understanding.

(Translated by: Kamila Kaucká)