

Speech at the unveiling of the bronze portrait head of Alfred Mozer

Huis der Provincie, 16 February 2018

Dear President Mr. Paasch, First Vice-President Ms. Backgren, Vice-Presidents, members of the Executive Committee,

Once again, welcome to our provincial building Huis der Provincie Gelderland, here in Arnhem.

Last night and today you talked about the problems, opportunities and activities of the European Border Regions.

Today's programme includes an interlude to reflect on the life of Alfred Mozer and his significance for Europe.

And we do so, as I am about to have the honour to unveil a bronze portrait head of him - sculptured by Princess Beatrix.

In 1985, Prince Claus and Queen Beatrix opened the first own building of the EUREGIO secretariat on the Enschede-Gronau border crossing. On that occasion, Queen Beatrix offered a bronze portrait head of Alfred Mozer sculptured by herself.

It is one of the few sculptures created by our then Queen, that is not in the private collection of the Royal House.

Most of her works remain behind 'closed doors', so to speak.

In 1994, Alfred Mozer's widow donated a second cast of the portrait head to the Province of Gelderland.

We agreed that the sculpture would remain in the home of Miss Ali Mozer-Ebbinghe for the rest of her life.

And that we would find a wonderful spot for it in our Huis der Provincie after her death.

Quite an honour, for Alfred Mozer was a remarkable man.

Born in 1905 (*nineteen 'o' five*), he led an eventful life until his death in Arnhem in 1979 (*nineteen seventy-nine*).

In his lifetime he had no less than three different nationalities.

For the first fifteen years of his life, he was a citizen of Hungary, and a German national for the next fifteen years.

In 1936 (*nineteen thirty-six*), the German authorities deprived him of his citizenship and he was stateless for fourteen years.

Mozer became a Dutch citizen in 1950 (*nineteen fifty*).

He would remain a Dutchman for the final 29 years of his life.

In the post-World War II years, Alfred Mozer played an important role in the normalization of Dutch-German relations.

He was convinced that European unification could never succeed with a Germany in ruins.

That's why he set out to give countless lectures, both in the Netherlands and in Germany, to increase understanding for each other's feelings on both sides of the border.

In 1965 (*nineteen sixty-five*), the engagement between Princess Beatrix and Claus von Amsberg was announced.

You can imagine what a sensitive issue this was at the time: the engagement between the Dutch Crown Princess and a German.

Mozer asked some German friends to look into the background of Claus, and sent the positive report to Prime Minister Cals.

This formed the basis for a long friendship between Mozer, Prince Claus and Princess Beatrix.

Alfred Mozer's work is characterized by two main themes:

1. the European cooperation with the special role of Germany.
Essential to survive in the shadow of the new powers America and Russia;
2. his vision on the position and the development of a modern social-democratic party.
Mozer felt that a social-democratic party should be a widely-supported people's movement.
Based on a social view of society and not on the basis of a Marxist world-view.

After his retirement, Mozer moved from Brussels to the Achterhoek. There he worked proactively for the Euregio, the partnership between Twente and the Gelderland Achterhoek on the Dutch side, and the Rhein-Ems Region on the German side of the border.

Allow me to end on a short anecdote about the opening of the Euregio building.

When word came out in Gronau that Queen Beatrix would be present, this created quite a turmoil.

Because when the Queen of the Netherlands sets foot on German soil, protocol requires a list of measures.

In that case, President Von Weizsäcker would have to be present, military escorts had to be arranged and lots of other measures were to be taken.

To circumvent all the fuss, they came up with the following solution:

The official announcement was adjusted.

Prince Claus was to perform the opening, and he would be accompanied by the artist who had sculptured Mozer's portrait head.

So the person who appeared, was not Queen Beatrix... but Beatrix the sculptor.

For those of us who have not yet seen the portrait head of Alfred Mozer, it is high time to unveil it.

So we can see with our own eyes the man to whom the border regions and Europe owe so much.