

Interview with Her Excellency Souriya Otmani, ambassador of the Kingdom of Morocco in Prague:

What do you see as the biggest contribution of Arabfest?

Arabfest in Pilsen is the only annual cultural event dedicated to the Arab world throughout Czech territory. We warmly salute and appreciate the faith and total commitment demonstrated by the organizer, Mrs. Tereza Svášková the Director of the Festival and her team, who, despite the material and moral difficulties that she has encountered from the opponents of this festival, have persisted and persevered to offer us a rich and varied festival that gets improved and enriched year after year.

Why do you (alongside the Moroccan embassy) support this festival?

Nowadays and within the midst of national, regional and international political ambiances, which is known as the rise of isolationism that feeds on the exploitation of conflicts in some Arab and Islamic countries in particular, to spread fear that could even reach some time "hysteria" in their people and incite hatred and intolerance and rejection of the other, this Festival came to smooth down all those challenges and highlight Arab cultural diversity and raise the right questions about its cultural composition and thus contribute to its understanding and promote it among the Czech society.

What do you consider characteristic for Arab culture?

Language, literature, gastronomy, art, architecture, music, spirituality, philosophy, mysticism (etc.) are all part of the cultural heritage of the pan-Arab world and has its own characteristics and unique taste.

Do you think Arabfest can help to change some of the stereotypes about the Arab World?

I am confident that the effectiveness of the Arab festival for this year and the previous successful years was very rich in useful topics that enable visitors and Czech people to share views and exchange dialogue about our cultures, which will lead to the fight against prejudices, exclusion and further could possibly fight against many stereotypes.

What is your opinion on the impact of social media on our lives and our society?

No one can deny the global impact of social media (Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Instagram ... etc) that have impacted and caused a political, economic and social revolution in the peoples of the whole world, including the Arab and Islamic countries of course, all social media are of great value, since they manage to make our planet be as a „small village“, they manage to let people get closer, erasing the huge distances between countries, they manage to make voices of all people and persons be heard, etc.....

This is very positive, but in the same time, we should be very cautious because they could be also very dangerous in the opposite way

It is absolutely necessary also to get protected and to protect ourselves from all kinds of abuses and distortion the social medias could generate. We therefore have to impose to ourselves some red limits that should prevent us from addiction and misuse of social media.

**Your Excellency, thank You for sharing Your thoughts with us and for Your time.
Michaela Vaňková, ARABFEST**

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