

# CZECH CASTLE WINS EUROPE NOSTRA PRIZE



A unique conservation project of a Czech medieval castle was awarded the Europa Nostra Prize for conservation. The prize should help to gain funds for further reconstruction of the valuable complex.

The conservation project of Horni Hrad (or Upper Castle) in the premises of a Czech castle and chateaux in Becov recently won the EU's award of cultural heritage - Europa Nostra 2009. The prizes will be awarded on 10th of July in Istanbul, Turkey.

**Horni Hrad was given the award, the so called Oscar for conservation, in the category of projects and researches.** Basically it describes the conservation of a medieval castle. "It is the first overview of the unique results of a research about the castle," explained the castle manager Tomas Wizovsky, quoted by Czech Press Agency.

The gothic castle comprises a chapel tower, a donjon and a connecting wing. The castle was built prior the first half of 14th century but it has lost its representative function during the Thirty Years' War in the 17th century. Despite that the castle was preserved until today.

Its reconstruction, nevertheless, progresses very slowly. "We have already conserved the plasters and the roof was repaired last year. A unique water reservoir and a 10 million crowns fire extinguishing system were also finished last year," noted Wizovsky.

**The local authorities hope that the Europa Nostra award might lure more visitors and draw the attention of institutions and sponsors,** which would naturally help to speed up the reconstruction works.

The castle represents approximately two thirds of the Becov castle and chateaux complex, whose reconstruction would cost around €8 million. Today only part of the complex is accessible to the visitors. The tourists can however admire one of the most monuments in the country - the St. Maurus' reliquary.

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