



Mission:

“Ready to serve the cause of democracy, human rights and civil society whenever and wherever the need arises.”

Annual Report 2009

Ladies and gentlemen,

What you are reading right now is the first annual report of DEMAS – Association for Democracy Assistance and Human Rights. Member organizations of DEMAS are active both in countries which do not have a generally accepted democratic system and countries which are in the process of transformation. DEMAS was established with the idea to create a platform for cooperation, coordination, exchange of information and experience of the member organizations. Another goal of DEMAS is to raise public awareness of the issues of democracy and human rights support, and to lead a constructive dialogue about those issues with Czech state and foreign partners. DEMAS builds upon practical experience and specific know-how of the transition to democracy as well as upon the feeling of co-responsibility for the development of democracy in countries who share with the Czech Republic the same experience of a period of missing freedom.

Although DEMAS is a young body, within its first year of existence the basic organizational structure and key contacts were established. For this, we need to thank, first of all, Igor Blažević, the first Chairman of the Board of Directors and the main driver of the foundation and design of strategy of the platform, and Sabina Dvořáková, the Executive Director who is bringing the goals of DEMAS into life successfully.

In the next phase, DEMAS will be focused mainly on retaining its key position in the field of democracy assistance and the support of human rights in Czech foreign policy. It will also help to improve the quality and efficiency of work of its members by implementing educational projects and exchange of information. And last but not least, it will enhance its role of a platform for joint activities abroad.

*Jakub Klepal,
Chairman of the Board of Directors*

Establishment of the organization

In 2008, Czech non-governmental non-for-profit organizations (hereinafter referred to as NGOs) focused on the support of democracy, human rights and civil society felt the need to join their efforts in a joint platform. The idea to create a platform for similarly focused organizations had already been born before and followed the general trends in the EU countries where uniting within platforms is relatively common. The examples were e.g. FoRS – the Forum for Development Cooperation in the Czech Republic or the Polish platform Grupa Zagranica. The effort of eleven Czech NGOs working in the field of democratization brought about the establishment of an organization called DEMAS – the Association for Democracy Assistance and Human Rights which was registered by the Municipality of Prague on 24th November 2008.¹

The following organizations became the founding members of DEMAS: Agora Central Europe, Association for International Affairs (AMO), YES for Europe (ANO pro Evropu), Democracy and Culture Studies Centre (CDK), People in Need, the Institute for European Policy EUROPEUM, the International Association Civic Belarus, Forum 2000 Foundation, Respekt Institut, Policy Association for an Open Society – PASOS and Transitions Online. DEMAS was founded as an open and inclusive association that will expand the number of its members to NGOs with a similar focus and interested in membership.

In the autumn of 2008, the Board of Directors of DEMAS was elected in accordance with the Statute and its members for the first two-year term became Vladimír Bartovic (Deputy Chairman 2008/2009 and 2009/2010, Europeum), Igor Blažević (Chairman 2008/2009, People in Need), Jakub Klepal (Chairman 2009/2010, Forum 2000), Monika MacDonagh – Pajerová (YES for Europe), František Mikš (CDK) and Alice Savovová (AMO).

Activities in the first year

In October and November 2008, a selection procedure for the position of the Director of the Secretariat was performed and Sabina Dvořáková was selected. The prerequisite for the work of the Association was to establish its Secretariat which began its work on 1st December 2008. The Secretariat is the place where the interests and some of the activities of all member organizations meet. Thus, the Secretariat can coordinate joint activities efficiently and assist the cooperation of individual member organizations and the exchange of information. One of the first activities was to perform all necessary registrations and file a grant application to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic (hereinafter the MFA). In December, the Czech and English versions of the website were launched² and bilingual brochures introducing Demas and its member organizations were created.

From the beginning of January, the professional shaping of the association began. Within Demas, working groups appeared naturally uniting those members who specialize on different areas of democratization processes and human rights. The activities of the groups had a positive impact on participation in the democratization conference in March or the workshop during the Eastern Partnership conference in May or Forum 2000 in autumn, as well as in smaller events e.g. dedicated to the NGO sector in Ukraine. The most active group is the one focused on the issues of today's society in Russia.

A total of ten editions of the Newsletter were published during the whole year; the objective of the Newsletter is to inform about the news in the field both professionals and the general public. The first eight editions were dedicated to recent activities of the Secretariat and the member organizations. The remaining two editions were each dedicated to one topic only – the first one to the participation of

¹ Registration No. 21/08

² www.demas.cz



Václav Havel, Karel Schwarzenberg and Gabriela Dlouhá are attending the conference.

Demas and its member organizations in the international conference Forum 2000, while the topic of the second one was the third sector in Russia. The Newsletter is published electronically and is available on the website of the Association free of charge.

Conferences, seminars and lectures

On 9th and 10th March 2009, a successful and long awaited international conference [Building Consensus about EU Policies on Democracy Support](#) took place featuring over 150 experts mainly from abroad; the topic of the conference was the EU and democracy support. The conference was organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the European Commission in cooperation with the European Partnership for Democracy and DEMAS; it became one of the official complementary events of the Czech presidency in the EU. The whole event was held under the auspices of the former Czech President Václav Havel and Karel Schwarzenberg who was the Minister of Foreign Affairs at the moment. The Monday panels were dedicated to general democracy-related issues: Why democracy? Are democratic values still important? What is the experience and recommendations of EU member states to other countries? The last speaker on Monday and also a special guest of the whole conference was the former Prime Minister of Canada Kim Campbell. The Tuesday panels had a practical focus on supporting democracy, its implementation in target areas or the role of EIDHR and EU member states in this process. In order to

make sure that the view of things is not one-sided, representatives of the target countries such as e.g. Zimbabwe, Armenia, Malawi, Ukraine and Lebanon were invited.

On 6th April, a meeting took place with the working title *Round table for Ukraine* aimed at coordinating efforts of Czech NGOs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic and the European Union in Ukraine. The goal of the meeting was to introduce Czech NGOs to each other whether they are already working in Ukraine or they would like to work there, to explain the political philosophy of Czech activities in Ukraine, and to establish contacts with relevant experts from the MFA, as well as to explain European Union strategies in Ukraine and the possibilities of applying for grant funding from EU sources.

The Association participated in the 10th anniversary [NGO Market](#) traditionally organized by Forum 2000 on 24th April. As a part of the presentation of the platform was a public debate with the topic of "The Role of the Czech Republic in the Democratization Process" whose guests were Jan Ruml (Respekt Institut and Civic Belarus) and Jiří Schneider (Prague Security Studies Institute). The public was briefed on the involvement of the Czech Republic in the democratization process, transformation of civil society and human rights endorsement in the Czech Republic and abroad; the debate was moderated by Václav Někavil.

On 15th September, the [International Democracy Day](#), a seminar entitled Lessons in Democratic Transformation for the Eastern Neighbours: Sharing Two Decades of Czech and Polish Experience was co-organized by DEMAS and its member organization PASOS in the Polish Institute in Prague. The first part of the seminar was dedicated to the Eastern Partnership from the Czech and Polish point of view, while the second part was about Czech and Polish transformation policy in the past twenty years and its future development.

Within the framework of the 13th international Forum 2000 and in cooperation with Forum 2000 Foundation, PASOS and People in Need, Demas organized a complementary panel with the topic [The state of Russian civil society today](#). The participants of the panel responding to the current problems of Russian civil society were Yegor Gaidar, a renowned economist and former Russian Prime Minister, Ella Kesaeva, the Chairwoman of the Russian NGO The Voice of Beslan, Anna Sevortjan from the Moscow Centre for the Development of Democracy and Human Rights, Sergey Lukashvskiy, the Director of the Museum and



Jan Pieklo, Gabriela Dlouhá, Šimon Pánek and Jeff Lovitt.



Sergey Lukashovsky and Yegor Gaidar.



Anna Sevortyan and Pavel Chikov.

Centre of Andrey Sakharov in Moscow and Pavel Tchikov, a lawyer from a human rights organization Agora from Kazan. Libor Dvořák from Czech Radio 6 moderated the debate. The association also participated in the preparation and organization of the conference panel entitled *Russia in Global Politics*. The Association for International Affairs, People in Need and Respekt Institut organized individual complementary panels.

On Monday, 2nd November, the Association together with its member organization the Institute for European Policy EUROPEUM organized an afternoon debate with Members of the European Parliament Jan Zahradil (ODS) and Libor Rouček (ČSSD) entitled *The Czech Republic and the EU – (Paper) Tigers in Democracy Promotion in the World?* The debate was moderated by Vladimír Bartovic – research worker of EUROPEUM. Thanks to the Information Office of the European Parliament in the Czech Republic the debate took place on the premises of the European House in Jungmannova Street in Prague and it was dedicated to the role of the Czech Republic and the EU in promoting democracy and human rights. Both MEPs explained the EU mechanisms supporting the transformation policy and development cooperation because the EU is one of the largest donors in terms of development assistance. In response to a question from the audience, which countries should be prioritized in terms of promoting democracy and human rights, both MEPs agreed on Eastern Partnership countries but also Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa.

Three days later, on 5th November, there was a screening of *Between Heaven and Earth*, a movie by Masha Novikova and Frank Van den Engel (the Netherlands, 2007), followed by a debate on social, culture and political situation

of today's Uzbekistan; Věra Veselá, an expert on Central Asia, and Tomáš Vlach, a reporter for Czech Television, participated in the debate moderated by Libor Dvořák from Czech Radio 6. The aim of the screening and the debate was to attract attention to human rights and the political situation in Uzbekistan in general; with the same aim an international action to support this Central Asian republic was jointly organized by Press Now, Amnesty International, Alfred Mozer Stichting (AMS), Hivos and Environmental Justice Foundation (EJF) in several European cities on Saturday, 7th November.

During the international conference entitled *Return to Europe* organized by PASOS Demas reminded about the *International Human Rights Day* by screening a documentary entitled *The Power of the Powerless* (directed by Cory Taylor, USA, 2009) which was followed by a discussion with Monika MacDonagh-Pajerová who took part in the Velvet Revolution and Robert Latypov who works for Memorial, a Russian centre for human rights protection which won this year's Sakcharov's Prize for the freedom of thought. The debate was moderated by one of the participants of the post-November developments, himself featuring in the above mentioned documentary, the journalist Jan Urban.

Joint declarations and opinions

Member organizations of Demas sent an [open letter](#) to Mirek Topolánek, who was Prime Minister at that time, to Deputy Prime Minister for European Affairs Alexandr Vondra and Minister of Foreign Affairs Karel Schwarzenberg in which they appealed to give a second thought to potentially inviting President of Belarus Alexandr Lukashenko to Prague to the opening EU summit for Eastern Partnership. The organizations

reminded about the illegitimacy of the elections keeping Mr. Lukashenko in office and the repressions used to suppress any independent initiatives and freedom of the country. Although the Belarussian regime has recently undertaken liberalization steps, the signatories to the letter noted that such steps are only on the surface and that they do not guarantee any real changes in the country.

On 20th May, Czech NGOs sent an [open letter](#) to European politicians with a request to call on their Russian partners to liberalize the restrictive law on Russian NGOs at the upcoming EU-Russia summit (21st–22nd May). Member organizations of DEMAS directed the request also to Czech President Václav Klaus, who was enacting the role of the President of the European Council at this summit, as well as the President of the European Commission José Manuel Barroso, the Commissioner for External Relations Benita Ferrero-Waldner and other European politicians to call on the Russian representatives to carry on the process of liberalization.

Projects

Projects awarded from the resources of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were aimed at supporting the establishment of the association and the creating of basic organizational and administrative structures of Demas in the first phase; in the second phase, they were aimed at approaching the general public and professionals, establishing contacts with relevant ministries and legislators. An important element in the mosaics of the activities is formed by relations with other international organizations with similar focus, as well as with the structures in Brussels.

On the other hand, the project supported by the National Endowment for Democracy was aimed specifically at establishing relations with Russian NGOs. The project included several study trips of Czech experts into Russia and vice versa. On the basis of personal meetings a broad network of contacts was established to become a springboard for future projects.

Funding

In the period of December 2008–December 2009, Demas was awarded three grants. There were two sources of financing during that period: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic (MFA CR) – namely, the Transition Promotion Program, and the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) from the United States of America; the project funded by NED continued until May 2010. By the end of December 2009, the total amount of CZK 1,498,083.01 was drawn in the following structure:

2008: MFA CR: CZK 289,375
 2009: MFA CR: CZK 817,116.82
 2009: NED: CZK 391,591.19

All expenses were not investment-related and divided into personnel and travel costs, assistance to target groups, services and overhead costs in accordance with grant rules:

Personnel costs: CZK 425,500
 Travel costs: CZK 255,500
 Services: CZK 301,000
 Property: CZK 49,000
 Assistance to target groups: CZK 395,000
 Overhead costs: CZK 72,000

For 2008 and 2009, annual membership fees in the amount of CZK 5,000 were collected in accordance with the Statutes of Demas. The total amount of membership fees was CZK 104,112. For operational reasons, it was agreed that one of the member organizations pays the membership fee decreased by CZK 888.



Libor Rouček, Vladimír Bartovic and Jan Zahradil during the debate about the trends in Czech transformation policy and development cooperation.

Imprint

The activities of DEMAS are determined independently and exclusively by the member organizations. DEMAS is politically non-partisan, and its actions reflect neither any political or ideological positions nor the interests of any other institution.

DEMAS
 Association for Democracy Assistance
 and Human Rights
 Pohořelec 6
 118 00 Prague 1
 Czech Republic
info@demas.cz / www.demas.cz
 ID Nr.: 75156539 / VAT Nr.: CZ75156539

Board:
 Vladimír Bartovic (vice-chairman),
 Igor Blažević, Jakub Klepal (chairman),
 Monika MacDonagh-Pajerová,
 František Mikš, Alice Savovová

Executive Director:
 Sabina Dvořáková

Member Organizations:
 Agora Central Europe
 Ano pro Evropu
 Asociace pro mezinárodní otázky
 Centrum pro studium demokracie a kultury
 Člověk v tísni
 Europeum
 Nadace Forum 2000
 Občanské Bělorusko
 PASOS
 Respekt institut
 Transitions

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 and Human Rights

TRANSITION
 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic

NED
 National Endowment
 for Democracy
 Supporting freedom around the world

CZECH REPUBLIC
 DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION