



Mission:

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

## Annual Report 2011

Ladies and gentlemen,

You are reading the third annual report of DEMAS – Association for Democracy Assistance and Human Rights. In this annual report, you will find an overview of activities of the platform and its Secretariat in 2011.

The exponentially growing number of activities and their quality show that DEMAS plays a significant part in the human rights segment of the NGO sector. Over just a few years the efforts of active member organizations and the platform’s management turned DEMAS into an operational platform which is considered an example of cooperation of institutions united by a shared goal. Besides capacity building and providing easy access to relevant information for its member organizations, the Association is currently actively lobbying in legislative and executive bodies such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the European Commission. For these institutions, DEMAS has become one of the major partners for consultations as it expresses the opinion of relevant Czech NGOs. This allows DEMAS members to participate in the broad process of formulating the human rights and democracy agenda both in the Czech Republic and in the European institutions.

Our platform has become an example of “good cooperation” – for instance, it took an active part in the establishment of the Secretariat of the EU – Russia Civil Society Forum; it has also hosted its headquarters. DEMAS members inspired the establishment of a similar association in Kazakhstan. This helps visualize the not always tangible results of exchange of expertise provided by the Secretariat and members of the Association to its partners in the regions of interest.

We should also emphasize the part DEMAS plays in reminding about the importance of democracy assistance both to the general public and to Czech politicians and civil servants. The advocacy and public activities of the Association remind about consequences of providing (no) support to democratic values in the European neighbourhood; by participating in public consultations, the Association strives to show how allocated public resources could be used in a more rational way.

Finally, we would like to thank all our donors, partners and active members of the Association, without whom our activities would not be successful.

*Maria Staszkievicz,  
Chair of the Board of Directors*

*Sabina Dvořáková,  
Executive Director*

### Activities in the third year of existence

Our activities in 2011 were focused on three major areas: capacity building of member organizations, establishment of new and development of the existing contacts (networking) and lobbying for democracy assistance and human rights (advocacy). From the geographical perspective, our activities were focused on the post-Soviet space, namely on Russia, West Balkans and the Eastern Partnership states, as well as on Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Egypt (since 2011). We also worked in the Czech Republic but our activities here were concentrated mainly in the area of advocacy and the need to constantly remind about the necessity to support democracy, human rights and civil society.

Our activities were performed in a comprehensive way based on pre-defined criteria agreed by the platform during its regular meetings. Engaging a new police officer and project manager in DEMAS Secretariat allowed expanding the array of topics; experts from member organizations have contributed to the projects significantly by providing their expertise. The unique expertise of individual member organizations has allowed the platform to implement joint projects and activities which would have otherwise remained isolated. Purposeful combination of specific know-how allows the platform to implement unique projects which can only be implemented by an Association.

From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011, two new organizations joined the platform. Previously, they had the “trial” observer status. Centre for Community Organizing (Central Moravia) and Open Society brought the member count to thirteen.

The General Meeting of DEMAS taking place on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2011 brought an organizational change. Besides the mid-term evaluation of the platform’s activities in 2011, complementary elections to the Board of Directors took place at the meeting. Kateřina Hloušková and Kateřina Špáčová who stepped down were replaced by Ondřej Krutílek from CDK and Jeff Lovitt from PASOS at the following meeting of the Board of Directors. A new Chair was elected too. The new members of the Board of Directors are: Vladimír Bartovic, Jakub Klepal, Ondřej Krutílek, Jeff Lovitt, Maria Staszkievicz (Chair), Marek Svoboda (Deputy Chair).

### Conferences, seminars and lectures

The most important – and the most demanding – activity in this area was the establishment of the [EU-Russia Civil Society Forum](#) which took place in March with a significant contribution by DEMAS. On 28-29<sup>th</sup> March 2011, nearly sixty participants of NGOs and civil initiatives from the EU and Russia met in Prague and established a joint EU-Russia Civil Society Forum. The goal of this new platform is to provide assistance to cooperation, lobby for joint interests and impact the dialogue between the EU and Russia. The conference which took place in the Czernin Palace of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was opened by Minister Schwarzenberg together with Heidi Hautala who at the time chaired the Subcommittee for Human Rights of the European Parliament, and Mikhail Fedotov, advisor to President of Russian Federation and Chairman of the Council for Civil Society and Human Rights.

The participants established four sector working groups in order to identify common topics implement projects and formulate standpoints on shared topics: 1) human rights and the rule of law, 2) environmental protection, 3) social affairs and citizen participation, 4) democratic structures and processes. The Forum elected its new Steering Committee for the next two years; the Czech Republic and People in Need and DEMAS are represented by Rostislav Valvoda. DEMAS and People in Need

also represented the Czech Republic in organizing the founding conference.

The establishment of the EU-Russia Civil Society Forum was supported by Open Society Fund (OSF) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic.



Voting on the charter. Photographer: Irena Perničková/Jan Šafář, [www.livephotography.net](http://www.livephotography.net)

Another similar event was the expert workshop entitled [How Can Central European Civil Society Assist The Egyptian Transition?](#), which was organized by DEMAS Secretariat together with member organizations EUROPEUM and Forum 2000 Foundation. The goal of the meeting which took place in Prague on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2011 was to discuss the current state of civil society in Egypt and relevance of the Central European transformation experience for Egypt.

The workshop was mainly targeted at the non-governmental sector and comprised three parts. The first part was focused on analysis of the current situation in Egypt in terms of civil society and especially the needs of the third sector. In this part, the participants from Egypt presented their view of the situation as well as their ideas about the nature and scope of cooperation. The second part of the workshop included mapping of the transformation experience of Visegrád countries and the subsequent offer of assistance in transition to democracy. The last part of the workshop was dedicated to concretization of ideas in the form of joint projects, standpoints and possibilities to support democratization efforts in Egypt. Egyptian partners showed great interest in Czech and Central European transformation experience. A [briefing note](#) was produced at the workshop. Support for the workshop provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs allowed Czech NGOs to respond to the demand for assistance for democratization of Egyptian society during the exposed period.

As a part of the annual conference entitled Forum 2000, which was focused on [the role of democracy and the rule of law](#) in 2011, DEMAS took part in organizing two expert debates. The first one was organized by DEMAS in cooperation with the Institute for European Policy EUROPEUM and it was focused on the

Balkan states and (un)successful European conditionality in the region. The second debate was centered on Belarusian trading with freedom of opposition members; the debate was organized in cooperation with People in Need. Representatives of leading Balkan think tanks Sandra Bencic, Director of the Centre for Peace Studies from Zagreb, Tija Memisevic, Director of the European Research Centre from Sarajevo from Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Jelena Milic, Director of the Center for Euro-Atlantic Studies from Belgrade, Serbia, participated in the panel called *The Rule of Law in West Balkans: Success of Failure of EU Conditionality?* The debate was facilitated by David Král from the Institute for European Policy EUROPEUM. The topics of the debate were determined by the current situation in West Balkans. They included successful completion of accession talks by Croatia, situation in Macedonia (FYROM), which – although is it a candidate state – hasn't opened a single chapter yet, Serbia, and the recommendation to award Serbia the status of a candidate state by Brussels. The anomaly of Bosnia and Herzegovina system and its implications for citizens were also discussed. The discussions were very lively and questions from the audience proved that the topics were interesting.

The speakers of the panel entitled *Belarus: Traiding Human Rights for Economic Support?* were Ales Michalevic, politician and former Presidential candidate; Tatsiana Reviaka, human rights activist from Belarus, and Alexander Lukashuk, head of the Belarusian bureau of Radio Free Europe. The discussion was facilitated by Lída Vacková from People in Need. The debate was focused largely on the connection between the impact of the economic crisis on Belarus and the decision of the authoritarian President of Belarus to release political prisoners in return for a promise of economic aid. The panelists declared such dirty negotiations and “human trafficking” as unacceptable. They discussed the roles of both the EU and Russia who created a customs union together with Belarus

and Kazakhstan. The audience contributed by asking numerous questions about the state of civil society following the post-elections repressions and the possibility of uniting the opposition and beginning open confrontation with the regime.

In cooperation with the Association for International Affairs, representation of the European Commission in the Czech Republic, information office of the European Parliament and the Institute for International Relations, DEMAS Secretariat organized a discussion on EU enlargement on Friday, 21<sup>st</sup> October. The introduction was made by Štefan Füle, Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy. The participants of the debate were: Libor Rouček, Vice-Chair of the European Parliament, Frane Krnic, Ambassador of Croatia, Maja Mitrovic, Ambassador of Serbia, Ivana Hlavsová from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, Maria Staszkiwicz, Chairman of the Board of Directors of DEMAS and Director of the Association for International Affairs, and Ivan Voleš from the Chamber of Commerce of the Czech Republic. The main contribution was made by Commissioner Štefan Füle who made an overview of the Neighbourhood Policy and its revision, progress made by individual candidate states and recommendations of the European Commission for further steps. He also mentioned



Maria Staszkiwicz presents the human rights and democracy aspects of the European Neighbourhood Policy



Panelists during the debate (from the left: Ales Michalevic, Lída Vacková, Tatsiana Reviaka and Alexander Lukashuk)

how important the year 2010 was for West Balkan states and especially for Croatia whose progress offers a positive signal for the whole region. Panelists also provided their expertise on the issue. Chairman of the Board of Directors of DEMAS and Director of the Association for International Affairs Maria Staszkiwicz evaluated the new enlargement policy from the point of view of human rights, democracy and support of civil society. She also reminded about the Czech non-paper from 2011 proposing a tool for transfer of transformation experience. The initial contributions were followed by a debate.

## Declarations and standpoints

In September, DEMAS and its member organizations joined the call to respond to the visa-free Europe and became a member of the [Visa-free Coalition](#). The goal of the coalition was to approach representatives of the EU member states and Eastern Partnership countries before their meeting at the summit in Warsaw. The coalition wanted to remind these states about their promise to enable visa-free movement between EU and Eastern Partnership states as soon as technical barriers are removed. The full text of the appeal can be found [here](#).

Another declaration supported by DEMAS was related to the draft of the future financial framework. In a document produced for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic as well as Brussels institutions, especially the European External Action Service, the importance and complexity of transformation cooperation was emphasized, as well as prioritization of financial tools of external aid of the EU. The full text of the declaration can be found [here](#).

## Projects

A total number of seven grant projects were implemented in 2011; five of them began and were completed during the year – two continued in 2012. DEMAS Secretariat coordinated joint projects in which workers of the Secretariat were engaged in expert cooperation with workers from individual member organizations. Topics and activities of the projects were always generated in accordance with the main objectives of the platform. Projects with a geographical focus were usually implemented by experts in the relevant area who are divided into four working groups meeting regularly (EU-Brussels, Russia, Eastern Partnership, West Balkans) and one ad hoc working group (Middle East and North Africa). DEMAS informed about its project activities throughout the whole year

on its [website](#) and in the newsletter which was published four times in 2011.

The Secretariat traditionally implemented a project with the objective of capacity building for the whole platform. The project received support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic from its Transformation Cooperation Program. Projects with a geographical focus, namely Egypt and Eastern Partnership, were supported from the same source. Other projects with a geographical focus were financed by Open Society Fund (Kazakhstan and Russia) and the International Visegrád Fund (Georgia). Advocacy in post-Soviet countries was supported by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED).

The largest funds provided for one project came from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic in a project with the objective of enabling functioning of DEMAS and supporting development of its member organizations, and a project supported by NED. The objectives and activities of both projects were compatible and interconnected. Individual activities were divided into three areas: capacity building, advocacy and networking. The capacity building effort involved three seminars organized by DEMAS and covering Internet security, log-frame and its use in project applications, capacity building in the areas of advocacy and communication skills of NGOs with regard to the EU structures. As for external capacity building, DEMAS as a platform helped build capacity of NGOs in priority countries of Czech foreign policy, as well as in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

The category of democracy and human rights support included various activities both at the national and the international level. With regard to the high number of subjects at which the advocacy activities are targeted, this category was divided into several subcategories. The general public was targeted by a series of lectures at the Faculty of Humanities, Charles University, Prague entitled *Introduction to Democracy and Human Rights (Úvod do problematiky demokracie a lidských práv)*. The lectures were attended by thirty participants. Another activity for the public was a presentation at the NGO Market (see below).

DEMAS also organized meetings with legislators from the key Parliament committees. The majority of the meetings with Czech MPs from all democratic parties (namely ODS, ČSSD, TOP 09, VV and KDU-ČSL) took place in the second half of the year. Besides presentation of the platform, DEMAS offered the MPs its expertise in the relevant topics. Some MPs and Senators have already solicited specific analyses from DEMAS. DEMAS also produced standpoints of financial instruments of external aid and the future of transformation cooperation in these

financial instruments. In the human rights domain, DEMAS was involved in Venezuela not acquiring a seat in the Human Rights Council. The majority of activities were targeted at the EU level (working group in Brussels) and third countries (geographical working groups). As for individual ministries, DEMAS mainly cooperated with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Industry and Trade.

DEMAS actively uses its membership in the [Human Rights and Democracy Network \(HRDN\)](#) in its advocacy efforts and in establishing new contacts. This network is an informal association of NGOs who carry out advocacy efforts at the EU level. For example, DEMAS participated in the debate on the future EU concept of human rights and sent its recommendations to the European diplomacy (EEAS) via HRDN. The main message was the universal nature of human rights and indivisibility of democracy and human rights.

DEMAS as a platform participated in numerous interesting events, for instance, it became an active member of the civil society forum cooperating with Eastern Partnership countries and Russia: a regular annual meeting [Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum](#) (EaP CSF) was organized as an official accompanying event of the Polish Presidency in Poznan in late November. The goal of the meeting was to discuss relevant topics such as further strategy for civil society in Eastern Partnership countries, transformation policy or European integration. The new [Executive Board](#) was elected at the Forum, and Jeff Lovitt, Executive Director of PASOS and Member of the Board of Directors of DEMAS was reelected. Member organizations of DEMAS, including its Secretariat, actively participated in meetings of the [working groups](#) and in accompanying events. [EU-Russia Civil Society Forum](#) followed the Eastern Partnership Forum in Warsaw on [1<sup>st</sup>–2<sup>nd</sup> December in Warsaw](#). Although this was only the second official meeting of representatives of European and Russian NGOs, the Forum proved its viability and ability to work hard. Similarly to EaP CSF, the EU-Russia CSF is also organized in four [working groups](#) which presented their vision in [expert essays](#). Both forums reflected on the political situation



Plenary session. Photographer: Irena Perničková/  
Jan Šafář, [www.livephotography.net](http://www.livephotography.net)

in their relevant regions, including the sentencing of Ales Bialiaty and [Parliamentary elections in Russia](#).

As for projects with a geographical focus, an interesting and largely a pioneer project was called Strengthening Civil Society Development through Czech and Kazakh NGO cooperation. The project was focused on establishing contacts with NGOs in Kazakhstan. It involved mutual visits of NGOs workers in the Czech Republic and Kazakhstan. The visit of representatives of Kazakhstan to Prague was focused mainly on communication within the third sector and with the general public. For the same purpose they also visited the [NGO Market](#), which is a great example of how NGOs can work with the general public. The visit of DEMAS workers evolved mainly around NGOs and donors in Almaty and Shymkent, where NGOs are the most active. Several workshops were organized during the visit with the objective to share experience and prepare joint projects. The project was supported by Open Society Fund in East East Beyond Borders Program. Click [here](#) for an article about the Czech-Kazakh project.

Two more projects focused on the Eastern Partnership countries. The first one, with the title *Support of DEMAS Activities in Eastern Partnership States (Podpora aktivit platformy*



Representatives of NGOs from Kazakhstan, DEMAS and Forum 2000 and Senator Petr Bratský at this year's NGO Market

*DEMAS v zemích Východního partnerství*) received support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic. It was an analytical project related to contacts between people, which corresponds with the focus of the fourth working group of the East European Forum (EaP CSF). The second project entitled *Sharing V4 Experience of the EU Integration: Technical Assistance in the Areas of Legislation Reform and Cooperation with Non-Governmental Organizations* was financed by the International Visegrád Fund. It was a purely practical project with the objective to build capacities of NGOs in Georgia. In this project, DEMAS cooperated with Pontis Foundation (Slovakia), Education for Democracy Foundation (Poland), DemNet (Hungary) and CIVITAS Georgica (Georgia). At several workshops, experts from individual member organizations provided information

about new media and their use in the third sector, EU integration, law for NGOs, project and financial management to workers of Georgian NGOs and local public administration. For more information click [here](#).

The last project with a geographical focus entitled *Transfer of Transformation Experience to Egypt* was described in detail above.

All activities presented here (especially networking) can lead to joint projects in the future. A number of activities have two dimensions – not only networking but also advocacy.

## Funding

As we mentioned in the chapter with the title Projects, DEMAS received a total of seven grant projects in 2011, from which five projects began and were completed during the year while two projects continue in 2012. Funding came from the following sources (in CZK): Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic (MFA CR) – Transformation Cooperation Program, National Endowment for Democracy (NED), Open Society Fund (OSF) and the International Visegrád Fund (IVF).

MFA CR: 1,155 thous.

OSF: 627 thous.

IVF: 217 thous.

NED: 405 thous.

All costs were of non-investment nature classified in accordance with the budgets of individual grants mainly as labour costs and travel expenses, target group support, services and overhead costs.

**Total purchased consumed: 39 thous.**

Material consumption: 39 thous.

**Total services: 1,622 thous.**

Travel expenses: 325 thous.

Costs of representation: 16 thous.

Other services: 1,218 thous.

**Total labour costs: 63 thous.**

Labour costs: 62 thous.

**Total other costs: 16 thous.**

Other fees and penalties: 1 thous.

Exchange rate loss: 2 thous.

Other costs: 14 thous.

**Total provided contributions: 748 thous.**

**Total earnings from services and goods: 7 thous.**

Sale of services: 7 thous.

**Total other earnings: 47 thous.**

Profit from exchange rate changes: 8 thous.

Other earnings: 39 thous.

**Total contributions received: 75 thous.**

Received contributions: 10 thous.

Membership fees received: 65 thous.

**Total operating subsidies: 2,404 thous.**

**Total earnings: 2,532 thous.**

**Profit before and after tax: 44 thous.**

## 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](mailto:info@demas.cz) / [www.demas.cz](http://www.demas.cz)

ID Nr.: 75156539 / VAT Nr.: CZ75156539

**Board:**

Vladimír Bartovic, Jakub Klepal,

Ondřej Krutílek, Jeff Lovitt,

Maria Staszkiwicz (chairman),

Marek Svoboda (vice-chairman)

**Executive Director:**

Sabina Dvořáková

**Member Organizations:**

Agora Central Europe

Ano pro Evropu

Asociace pro mezinárodní otázky

Centrum pro komunitní práci

Centrum pro studium demokracie a kultury

Člověk v tísni

EUROPEUM

Nadace Forum 2000

Občanské Bělorusko

Otevřená společnost

Respekt institut

PASOS

Transitions

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**TRANSITION**

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic

**NADACE  
OPEN SOCIETY FUND  
PRAHA**

**NED** National Endowment  
for Democracy  
*Supporting freedom around the world*

**Visegrad Fund**  
[www.visegradfund.org](http://www.visegradfund.org)