



Mission:

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

Annual Report 2012

Ladies and gentlemen,

this is the fourth annual report of DEMAS - Association for Democracy Assistance and Human Rights; in this report, you will learn about our activities in 2012 both within the platform itself and the activities implemented in target countries of Czech foreign policy and the EU.

Joining into platforms is a general European trend. Platforms have a stronger voice than individual non-governmental non-profit organizations (NGOs), and they can present their needs together as one body. If we talk about platforms in the context of DEMAS, on the one hand, we mean its member organizations and their cooperation within DEMAS, and on the other – the association itself, as a collective member of other platforms, such as Human Rights and Democracy Network in Brussels, EU-Russia Civil Society Forum or the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum (see below for details). DEMAS as a whole has been very active in all three platforms with their strong focus on transition policy; therefore, it is obvious that it continued its work in the post-Soviet space during 2012, especially advocacy activities in line with the program focus of its member organizations.

Platforms are constituted by their member organizations. Where the legitimacy of a platform is based upon joint work and the platform works through its Secretariat for the benefit of its members, positive results and achieving set goals is practically guaranteed. DEMAS has a relatively low number of members compared to other platforms. However, this proves to be an advantage because its members implement activities in cooperation with the Secretariat. Therefore, cooperation is strong and it is carried out on the high expert level.

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

*Jeff Lovitt, Chair of the Board of Directors
Sabina Dvořáková, Executive Director*

Platform in its fifth year of existence

In 2012, DEMAS traditionally grouped its activities into three basic chapters: capacity building of member organizations and organizations from target countries (capacity building), establishing new contacts and maintaining the existing ones (networking) and endorsement of democracy and human rights (advocacy). With regard to the platform's own priorities and the priorities of Czech foreign policy, DEMAS activities were focused, mainly, on the post-Soviet space, namely Russia, West Balkans, especially Serbia, and all six Eastern Partnership countries, as well as, marginally, on Egypt.

The activities of the platform were determined exclusively by the needs of member organizations which are traditionally presented at a meeting at the beginning of each year. The same was done at the beginning of 2012. A new Board was elected at the General Meeting; the Board makes sure the organization follows its selected direction. Its members are: Jeff Lovitt (Chairman), Ondřej Krutílek (Deputy Chairman), Vladimír Bartovic, Jakub Klepal and Marek Svoboda.

Otevřená společnost (Open Society) left DEMAS in March this year, as it did not wish to engage in supporting transition policy any longer. In April, Respekt Institut decided to suspend its membership for reasons of restructuring and search for new goals; Respekt Institut also had not focus on endorsement of democracy and human rights in third countries for a long time. The situation regarding Respekt Institut was also connected to the person of its main donor/owner who wished to regroup his non-profit activities. [Respekt Institut wound up its activities](#) by the end of 2012, and, as the result, its membership in DEMAS terminated also. Caritas of the Archdiocese of Prague applied for membership in March, as it runs a growing number of projects which correspond with the mission and activities of the platform. DEMAS member organizations approved its observer status for the period of one year. As of the last day of the year, the platform had eleven active members plus one observer.

For the purpose of systematization, the platform remained divided into four working groups for Eastern Partnership, Russia, West Balkans and the EU. An ad hoc working group focused on Middle East was also relatively active.

Unique know-how of eleven member organizations plus one observer organization enable the platform to realize a number of exclusive activities which could hardly be implemented by individual organizations alone. This applies mainly to activities regarding joint advocacy efforts and highly specialized trainings for NGOs from third countries.

Conferences, seminars and lectures

At the beginning of the year, on January, 24th, DEMAS Secretariat organized a panel discussion in Tbilisi with the topic *Current Strategies of Donors in Georgia*. This discussion was organized within the framework of a donor conference, and among its participants were leading Georgian NGOs and donors. The conference was called *V4 – Georgia Cooperation: Lessons Learned and Future Steps, Engagement and Collaboration with Non-state Actors*, and it was supported by the International Visegrad Fund. Representatives of the most active donors, such as Open Society Georgia Foundation, Eurasia Partnership Foundation or representatives of the Czech, Slovak and Dutch Embassies presented their interests in the region.

The working group focused on Eastern Partnership countries in cooperation with the Association for International Affairs, a DEMAS member organization, organized a meeting of the fourth working group – [Contacts Among People](#) – Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum on Friday, March, 2nd, 2012. The meeting took place on the eve of the summit of ministers of foreign affairs of V4, Baltic, Eastern Partnership states and the Danish Presidency on Monday, March, 5th. The main topic of the Friday meeting was the barriers and challenges in contacts among people, and possible ways of addressing them. Four working groups (youth, education, research and culture; goals

and programs of the Eastern Partnership in the new financial framework of the EU after 2014; legal framework of cooperation between the EU and the Eastern Partnership; barriers to mobility and visa liberalization) produced their

recommendations. These [recommendations](#) were officially presented to the ministers during their Monday meeting.

In May, DEMAS participated in the traditional fair of non-profit organizations (NGO-

Market) organized by Forum 2000 Foundation, a DEMAS member organization. The NGO Market took place in its traditional venue, the National Technical Library in Prague 6 - Dejvice. DEMAS was represented by its Secretariat and its member organizations. On the stand and on the table in front of it, visitors could find information about the platform's activities and activities of all its members. Visitors interested in the support of democracy and human rights could discuss this topic or take some materials home, such as publications, flyers or other print materials free of charge. As a part of this event, DEMAS invited representatives of the civil society sector of Russia ([NGO Development Centre](#)) and Armenia to an advocacy meeting in Prague ([Civic Development and Partnership Foundation](#)); the guests also held a meeting with officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, donors and representatives of Czech civil society. Opposition activists and students from Burma who were on a study visit in Prague at the time also accepted the invitation.



Donors Forum, Tbilisi.



Representatives of CDPF, CRNO and DEMAS at the NGO Market.



Study visit participants from Burma at NGO Market.

As a part of the project called [EU-Russia Civil Society Forum](#) coordinated by DEMAS Secretariat, the General Meeting of the platform's members from the EU and Russia took place in St Petersburg on October 9th-10th. The official [program](#) of the General Meeting was launched by the Head of EU Delegation in Russia, Mr. Fernando M. Valenzuela, EU's Special Representative for Human Rights [Stavros Lambrinidis](#) and Mr. Mikhail Fedotov, Chairman of the Presidential Council for Civil Society and Human Rights. The following panels were dedicated to the outlook of development of EU-Russian relations and the current challenges that civil society in Russia is facing, as well as to evaluation of the present development of the Forum. The afternoon of day one and the morning of day two were dedicated to work of [working groups](#) on the current and planned projects on the focus themes of individual working groups. The working groups also spent time on preparing [policy papers](#) to be presented at the December EU-Russia summit in Brussels. Three [declarations](#) on topical issues such as the new law regulating activities of Russian NGOs or endorsing cooperation between Russia and the EU.

As a part of the international [conference Forum 2000](#) with the title *Media and democracy* a discussion with the title *The Role of Civil Society in EU External Relations* with the goal of introducing mechanisms available to civil society for shaping EU foreign policy to the expert participants took place. The guests of the discussion were trying to find answers to the question, how significant and successful are advocacy activities of NGOs, and whether it is more efficient to carry out such activities for each



Activities of the General Meeting of the EU-Russia Civil Society Forum in St Petersburg.

NGO individually or as a part of a platform uniting several NGOs. The debate resulted in the conclusion that such professional associations are very important because they have a higher chance of endorsing their interests at the EU level, whereas the crucial role of civil society lies in active participation in decision making processes, especially concerning human rights.

In November, the Secretariat in cooperation with experts from member organizations organized a week-long training for regional NGOs from Georgia. This training was a follow-up for the July training led by Sabina Dvořáková for a group of approx. 60 people in Georgia. DEMAS experts were selected in such a way that the workshops were tailored to participants' needs and provided an opportunity to learn the mechanism of the platform's work, which led to the idea of establishing a similar body in Georgia. Networking was also a big plus,

because DEMAS organizations used this opportunity to choose partners for cooperation in Georgia. The workshops were financed by Open Society Georgia Foundation (see below).

On 13–15th November in Kragujevac, DEMAS Secretariat organized a seminar with the title *European Union Integration and Financial Tools: Experience of the Czech Republic and Possibilities for Serbian Civil Society* in cooperation with its member organizations; the seminar was organized as a part of a capacity building project for Serbian NGOs. The goal of the seminar was to introduce European integration processes, European institutions, possibilities of EU funding for Serbian organizations, a case study of an EU project management and the Czech transformation experience with regard to civil society to NGO participants from Central and South Serbia. Three dozens of NGO staff and civil servants from Central Serbia

(Kragujevac, Kraljevo, Lapovo) and South Serbia (Vranje) were trained.

During summer and winter term, DEMAS organized a [certified course](#) taught at the Department of International Relations and European Studies at the Faculty of Social Studies of Masaryk University in Brno. A total number of 78 students during the spring term and 54 students during the fall term attended a series of eleven lectures focused at specific forms of Czech transition cooperation. The course was very successful, and DEMAS was requested to repeat the course in 2013.

Advocacy activities

The goal of advocacy activities is to endorse democracy and human rights in third countries, in the Czech Republic and abroad. The advocacy efforts are focused on continuous informing of actors with decision making power in this area of interest. DEMAS Secretariat together with representatives of member organizations held regular meetings with relevant departments of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Industry and Trade, and representatives of political parties and donors. The meetings which were held during the reported period had the following focus: the current situation in Russian NGO sector including human rights issues and work of the EU-Russia Civil Society Forum; current developments in South Caucasus; activities of Czech NGOs as a part of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum; involvement of Czech NGOs in consultations regarding the Universal Period Review; EU support of human rights in third countries and the EU financial mechanisms.

As our goal is to raise awareness of the issue of democracy and human rights support among experts and the general public, DEMAS was presented at the NGO Market and established regular contacts with university environment by launching a certified course at the Faculty of Social Studies of the Masaryk University in Brno (for both, see above). Advocacy activities targeted at EU structures are usually implemented in cooperation with the Human Rights and Democracy Network, where DEMAS is an active member, as this respected collective organization has an easier access to EU structures. Through HRDN, DEMAS had an opportunity to meet Stavros Lambrinidis, the EU Special Representative for Human Rights; at a repeated number of meetings, DEMAS presented to him its activities, principles of Czech transition cooperation and, especially, the activities of the EU-Russia Civil Society Forum.



The role of civil society in the European Union's external relations.

Declarations and Opinions

In September, some members of DEMAS decided to react to the statement by the then Prime Minister Petr Nečas regarding human rights support and exports to countries such as Russia or China during the International Engineering Fair in Brno. The letter is available [here](#).

The Platform still publishes its Newsletter; during the reported period, four issues were published. This Newsletter is one of the tools DEMAS uses for communicating with the outside world. All issues are available at www.demas.cz under Newsletter.

Projects

A total number of seven grant projects were implemented in 2012 with the support of five different donors: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic - Transition promotion program, European Commission, National Endowment for Democracy, International Visegrad Fund and Open Society Fund Prague/Georgia.

The first of the projects funded from the Transition Promotion Program by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs helped increase the capacity and independence of Czech NGOs working in the area of transition promotion and united in DEMAS, and gave them an opportunity to find new partners and create new projects in order to carry on the agenda of individual member organizations including DEMAS Secretariat. This project had the following goals: 1. Capacity building, 2. Endorsing the organizations' interests – advocacy, and 3. Networking. The broader intention of the project was to support the work of the platform as a whole, and as such, to contribute to capacity building of individual member organizations.

EU-Russia Civil Society Forum, a project supported by the European Commission and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, Transition Promotion Program: Since May, 1st, DEMAS Secretariat has hosted the Secretariat of the EU-Russia Civil Society Forum. The subsidies were aimed at capacity building and support of activities of this Forum which is a platform for cooperation and coordination of civil society organizations from Russia and the EU established on 28–29th March 2011 in Prague. In 2012, the platform implemented a number of projects pursuing these three goals: 1) consolidation of the Forum, 2) increasing the intensity of information exchange between representatives of the third sector in the EU and in Russia, 3) increasing institutional capacities of the participating non-governmental organizations.

The following results were reached in 2012:

1) In October 2012, the Forum organized its third [General Meeting](#) in St Petersburg, with over 100 participants and observers, including high ranking representatives of the EU and Russia. Among other significant events which contributed to external promotion of the platform were the first [European Youth Forum "Pilorama Lab"](#) organized in Perm, Russia, and the international conference [FINROFORUM](#) which took place on the premises of Finnish Parliament in Helsinki.

2) As a part of its communication activities, the Forum updates its [website](#) and [Facebook](#) regularly, published [quarterly newsletters](#) and informed about news via its email account. The Forum also reacted to the worsening of the situation for NGOs in Russia by issuing a number of [declarations](#) and organizing two [advocacy visits](#) to Prague and to Brussels. The platform also launched projects aimed at [supporting NGOs at the session of the European Court for Human Rights](#), fight against xenophobia and better protection of human rights defenders.

3) The Forum carried out regular monitoring of various aspects of the EU-Russia dialog discussed in the [program documents](#) and public debates in [Tomsk](#) and [Brussels](#). Together with another international platform called [Visa-Free Europe Coalition](#) (as a part of the twin platform called the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum), the Forum coordinated its [efforts](#) aimed at simplifying and liberalization of visa procedures. [The workshop](#) on elections monitoring which took place on August 16-17th in Prague and the [program document](#) that followed contributed to establishing the [European Platform of Election Observers](#).

In 2012, DEMAS continued to cooperate with [Open Society Georgia Foundation](#) on the

project aimed at institutional development of regional Georgian NGOs. DEMAS participated through its experts from individual member organizations or from the Secretariat, and took part in several trainings. Capacity building of small regional NGOs was carried out mainly in the form of workshops and study tours with such topics as work in platforms, fundraising, work with youth and volunteers, mobilization of civil society and efficient communication in the civil sector. In total, approx. 50 workers of local NGOs were trained in working with internally displaced persons, socially disadvantaged and handicapped persons, women, elderly people and orphans. The first round of seminars took place in Georgia in the summer; the second round took place in the fall in the Czech Republic.

In the second half of 2012, DEMAS began implementing a project in Serbia aimed at capacity building for NGOs. The project was supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic and the American National Endowment for Democracy; the project will continue into 2013. The project was targeted mainly at NGOs from the Šumadija District in Serbia, the official partner of the South Moravian Region of the Czech Republic. The main goals of the project was capacity building of Serbian NGOs in such areas as citizen participation and communication with local public administration, using new media in practice and raising awareness of Serbian NGOs about the European integration process and the work of European institutions, possibilities of funding of Serbian NGOs and advocacy activities at the EU level. As one of the 2012 projects, a three-day training was organized in Kragujevac for 29 representatives of Serbian organizations, followed by a study trip to Brussels for seven representatives of regional Serbian NGOs.



Fundraising seminar in Georgia, summer 2012.

In January 2012, the project aimed at building capacity of regional Georgian NGOs supported by the International Visegrad Fund (IVF). In January, the last project activity was implemented in Tbilisi – a round table with donors working in the region (see above).

Funding

As we mentioned under Projects, DEMAS received a total of seven grant projects in 2012 with the following structure:

MFA CR: 1,100 thous.

OSF: 214 thous.

IVF: 82 thous.

NED: 726 thous.

EU: 3,430 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: 49 thous.

Material consumption: 48 thous.

Consumption of other non-storable supplies: 1 thous.

Total services: 1,402 thous.

Travel expenses: 422 thous.

Costs of representation: 6 thous.

Other services: 974 thous.

Total staff costs: 577 thous.

Wages: 450 thous.

Social security tax: 126 thous.

Cost related to statutory social security: 2 thous.

Other costs total: 26 thous.

Loss from exchange rate: 8 thous.

Misc. other costs: 18 thous.

Total contributions provided: 3,519 thous.

Total costs: 5,573 thous.

Total earnings from services and goods: 5 thous.

Revenue from sale of services: 5 thous.

Other revenue total: 61 thous.

Interest: 1 thous.

Profit from exchange rate: 51 thous.

Misc. other revenues: 9 thous.

Total contributions received: 3,731 thous.

Contributions received: 3,681 thous.

Membership fees collected: 50 thous.

Total operational subsidies: 1,871 thous.

Total earnings: 5,667 thous.

Profit before and after tax: 95 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.

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TRANSITION

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic



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