



Mission:

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

Annual Report 2017

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

This is the ninth annual report of DEMAS. Just like in the previous period, advocacy remained in the centre of our joint efforts in 2017. We believe that a favourable environment for the support of political human rights and democratization can only be created if all foreign policy actors, from politicians, state authorities and self-governance to experts and voters are adequately informed. Recent developments in Eastern Europe have shown that there is work to be done: increasing pressure on civil society in Visegrád states linked with attempts to discredit CSOs and their agenda often receives public support, although civil society is formed by the members of the public who use it to endorse their interests which cannot or are not efficiently implemented by political actors. This is the reason why DEMAS seeks to contribute to better understanding by the public and looking for political support to make sure values and principles on which our society is built on remain its cornerstone, so that society is not manipulated by forces undermining Western democracy.

*Pavel Pšejja, Chair of the Board of Directors
Sabina Malcová, Executive Director*

Platform in its ninth year of existence

At the end of 2017, DEMAS was a platform of twelve regular members, two members with standing and one member with temporary observer status and one organization with suspended membership status. [Transparency International](#), whose work is focused especially on fight against corruption, became a new observer in mid-2017.

Two meetings of the whole platform and four meetings of the Board of Directors took place during 2017; the agenda of the meetings featured both internal affairs and program discussions on joint activities of the platform. The Secretariat is, by definition, the driving force behind joint efforts of the platform. Activities were overseen by the Board of Directors: Sylva Horáková, Jakub Klepal, Pavel Pšejja (Chair), Marek Svoboda (Vice Chair) and Vladka Vota-

vová. Individual member organizations set up their meetings according to their needs and topics of their activities. Like in the previous years, the platform's activities were split into several working groups covering both geographical areas, primarily, the post-Soviet region, and topics, primarily advocacy. A live discussion on the topic of priority countries of Czech foreign policy took place across the platform and an opinion with supporting documents was issued for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic. All year round, there were meetings with government officials, political parties, experts and citizens with the purpose of raising awareness about transformation policy.

Traditionally, DEMAS has been actively involved in the [Human Rights and Democracy Network](#) (HRDN); the platform participated in its meetings in Brussels and took part in sharing materials and minutes among its members, including participation in joint declarations and HRDN research (see below), including, for instance, participation in the [EU – NGO Human Rights Forum](#) in Brussels. [Měj se k světu](#) initiative was another informal professional group joined by DEMAS in 2017.

The Secretariat is also in charge of providing a steady flow of new information to its members. In our regular weekly newsletter, we provided information on the developments in different regions, on grant calls, on invitations to important events and on new publications.

Networking was another element of joint activities, aimed both at searching for new contacts and presenting both the Platform's work and that of its individual members, and advocacy, or promoting the principles of transformation policy and democratization. In connection with this, more than two dozen meetings with members of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate and state and local officials were conducted.

DEMAS Secretariat supported its members' capacity building by providing travel grants. Their purpose was, for example, participation in conferences & making contributions there, research- or advocacy-related trips which were focused solely institutions in Brussels.

Conferences, seminars and lectures

On April 12th, 2016, DEMAS participated in the NGO Market which took place in Karlín Forum, Prague. NGO Market presented 220 NGOs working in a variety of areas ranging from social services to democracy and human rights support, education, training and environmental protection, to culture and leisure activities. NGO Market offered its visitors a rich program packed with workshops, seminars and practical demonstrations of NGO work. An article on this activity was published in [the second edition of the Newsletter](#).



Photo: NGO Market



Photo: Debate at Forum 2000

One of the main topics of Czech foreign policy, transformation cooperation and democratization, remain largely unknown to the public. This is the reason why DEMAS, together with experts from its member organizations, organized a series of debates on Czech foreign policy. Interactive debates took place at [Masaryk University in Brno](#) and at Palacký University in Olomouc and were open to students from bachelor programs.

DEMAS traditionally organized a facilitated debate with representatives of political parties during Forum 2000 conference. A panel discussion with the title [What Should the Human Face of Czech Foreign Policy Look Like?](#) took place on October, 10th, in the European House. Shortly before the panel was scheduled to begin, Ivana Dobešová (ANO) and Karel Schwarzenberg (TOP 09) cancelled their participation for health reasons. Ivan Gabal (KDU-ČSL) and Jan Zahradil (ODS) joined the panel hosted by Vít Dostál. The panel was focused on political parties' plans regarding transformation policy should the Foreign Minister's position fall to their party; an emphasis was also placed on further direction of Czech transformation policy and priority countries – recipients of transformation aid.

A meeting of Visegrád NGOs took place as a part of Strengthening Human Rights and Democracy Advocacy in Europe project took place on October, 27th, in Warsaw, with the purpose of establishing cooperation among NGOs in Visegrád region.

On Thursday, December, 7th, a full-day training on Czech media space took place as a capacity building event for member organizations. The core part of the training was provided by [Josef Šlerka](#), Executive Director of [Independent Journalist Foundation](#), and a leading Czech expert on social media data analysis. The training had two main purposes: 1. To explain the principles and structure of ownership of Czech media; 2. To describe how

propaganda works in the Czech media environment with an emphasis on adequate response. The training ended in a two-hour debate with Robert Břešťan, a journalist and editor-in-chief of [HlídacíPes.org](#). The debate focused around possibilities of improving interaction between journalists and NGOs.

Declarations and Opinions

DEMAS participated in crafting a summary opinion of the Czech Republic regarding EU financial instruments, especially EIDHR, *Public Consultation on the External Financing Instruments of the European Union – EIDHR*. In its contribution, DEMAS pointed out main advantages and challenges of the current EIDHR and offered a few ideas of its improvement and simplification.

The Platform nominated Ildar Dadin, a Russian human rights defender, an activist and a prisoner of conscience, who was the first person to be convicted for repeated protests against the Kremlin based on repeated violation of Public Assembly Act, for this year's Václav Havel Award.

DEMAS participated in drafting a document containing joint priorities and recommendations by *Měj se k světu* for the upcoming general election in autumn. In this joint document, the initiative presented its vision of the Czech Republic in 2030 together with steps leading towards implementation of this vision.

On May, 15th, it appealed to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic to act to continue [extraordinary Czech aid to Ukraine](#). In its resolution no. 167 dated 12-03-2014, Czech government gave its consent to providing aid to Ukraine for reconstruction and support of democratic transformation for 2014 – 2016 in the total amount of CZK 50 mil.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic was the recipient of the Platform's posi-

tion of May, 29th, on reviewing TRANS country priority list. This opinion is intended to provide a practical foundation for further expert debate at the Foreign Ministry.

On May, 30th, DEMAS signed [a joint letter of international NGOs](#) in response to the upcoming EU-China summit which was to take place in Brussels on June 2nd, 2017. The letter was addressed to the President of the European Council, President of the European Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, and it used this opportunity to show a clear commitment of the EU and its member states to the support of human rights in China.

On June 14th, the Association appealed to the Czech Foreign Minister to [call](#) on the Hungarian Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade Péter Szijjártó regarding the alarming situation of Hungarian civil society at the time when new law on financing Hungarian NGOs and civil society using foreign funds was adopted.

Early in August, the Platform sent Minister Chvojka [its position on the Basic Framework of Civic Education](#). In this opinion, it reacted on the drafting of the new concept of civic education.

In mid-December, DEMAS sent a letter to Czech MP's – excluding SPD and KSČM parties – regarding amendments to the proposed state budget for 2018 submitted by Jiří Kobza (SPD). The letter received positive feedback from the "democratic block" MPs.

The Platform continued to publish its Newsletter; four issues were published in 2017. This Newsletter is one of the tools DEMAS uses for communicating with the outside world. All issues are available at our regularly updated website [www.demas.cz](#) in the News section. In the final quarter, the website was revised and updated.

Projects

[Transition Promotion Program by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic](#) supported a one-year project of DEMAS capacity building, networking, exchange of information and raising awareness among experts regarding Czech transformation policy. The project was also aimed at supporting advocacy efforts and cooperation with the MFA of the Czech Republic.

The project entitled *Support of Advocacy Activities towards the EU and Central European Cooperation* for the period from October 2017 until September 2018 was supported by [the National Endowment for Democracy](#). Its main goal is to support DEMAS members' advocacy activities with the EU institutions and NGO cooperation in Visegrád countries.

Financing

As we already mentioned under Projects, DEMAS implemented two subsidized projects in 2017.
MFA CR: 600 thous.
NED: 122 thous.

All expenses were non-investment by nature, split into individual subsidized categories in accordance with the corresponding budgets; mostly, they were classified as personnel costs, services and overhead costs.

Total consumed purchases: 158 thous.

Material consumption: 2 thous.

Travel expenses: 30 thous.

Costs of representation: 3 thous.

Other services: 123 thous.

Total personnel costs: 690 thous.

Wages: 521 thous.

Social security tax: 167 thous.

Cost related to statutory social security: 2 thous.

Other costs total: 1 thous.

Misc. other costs: 1 thous.

Total contributions provided: 46 thous.

Membership fees paid: 46 thous.

Total costs: 895 thous.

Total operational subsidies: 722 thous.

Operational subsidies: 722 thous.

Total contributions received: 112 thous.

Membership fees collected: 112 thous.

Total revenue from own operations and from the sale of goods: 4 thous.

Total income: 838 thous.

Profit before and after tax: -57 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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Observers:

Caritas of the Archdiocese of Prague
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Transparency International