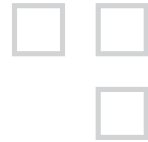
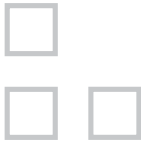


SUPPORTING CHANGE **PROCEEDINGS**



A Workshop for Central European NGOs Active in Democracy Assistance and Promotion and Representatives of American and European Partner Organizations

Prague, March 29–30, 2007



Organized by the U. S. Embassy in Prague,
the Czech and Slovak Fulbright Commissions
in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Czech Republic

TABLE OF CONTENT

Foreword – Tomáš Pojar <i>Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Czech Republic</i>	9
Gabriela Dlouhá <i>Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Czech Republic</i>	12
Paula Schriefer <i>Freedom House, USA</i>	15
Igor Blaževič <i>People in Need, Czech Republic</i>	21
Václav Nekvapil <i>Association for International Affairs, Czech Republic</i>	24
Martin Pašiak <i>Pontis Foundation, Slovak Republic</i>	27
Marta Pejda <i>Grupa Zagranica, Poland</i>	31
Péter Rada <i>International Centre for Democratic Transition, Hungary</i>	35
Mirosław Sycz <i>Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Poland</i>	41
Aristotelis Bouratsis <i>EuropeAid Cooperation Office, EU</i>	45
Roel von Meijenfheldt <i>Institute for Multiparty Democracy, the Netherlands</i>	47

Jeff Lovitt <i>Policy Association for Open Society, Czech Republic</i>	53
Nadia Diuk <i>Central Europe and EuroAsia, National Endowment for Democracy, USA</i>	56
Oľga Algayerová <i>Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Slovak Republic</i>	60
Nadia Diuk <i>National Endowment for Democracy, USA</i>	65
Maria Leissner <i>Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sweden</i>	68
John K. Glenn <i>German Marshall Fund, USA</i>	71
Jeremy Nagoda <i>EuropeAid Cooperation Office, EU</i>	75
Paula Schriefer <i>Freedom House, USA</i>	76
Jiří Schneider <i>Prague Security Studies Institute, Czech Republic</i>	79
Jeremy Druker <i>Transitions Online, Czech Republic</i>	81
Grigorij Mesežnikov <i>Institute for Public Affairs, Slovak Republic</i>	85

Katarína Vajdová <i>Civil Society Development Foundation, Slovak Republic</i>	90
Break-out sessions	95
The Balkans – Group report	96
Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine – Group report	99
Middle East – Group report	102
Latin America – Group report	103
Appendices	107
Participant bios	108
Workshop Participants	117
Workshop program	121

The U.S. Embassy in Prague and the J. William Fulbright Commissions of the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic would like to thank the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic and Deputy Foreign Minister Tomas Pojar for co-sponsoring the „Supporting Change“ workshop on democracy promotion. They would also like to express their gratitude to the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the United States Department of State for the grant provided to cover the major portion of the costs of organizing the workshop.

An electronic version can be downloaded at www.fulbright.cz/democracy

FOREWORD – TOMÁŠ POJAR

The First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Czech Republic

Dear participants, colleagues and friends,

It has often been noted that countries in this part of Europe have gained experience through their struggles, successes and failures in the process of transition at home. Today we continue to observe the effects of these developments.

After the establishment of viable democracies in this region, we evolved from recipient countries into partners and actors for “supporting change” in the future. After existing for decades under various forms of totalitarian rule, we have restored a system based on respect for human dignity, the rule of law, human rights and fairness. With this achievement, we have actively demonstrated that democracy remains the only legitimate political system and we continue to support and contribute to the efforts of democracies around the world.

Courage and determination to support change are now needed in order to face the current challenges and impediments to democracy assistance.

It is imperative that we clearly recognize the right to peaceful struggle against oppression. We must work to integrate our own experiences in order to help define Europe’s contribution to international democracy assistance. We must always bear in mind the danger posed by totalitarian regimes’ sophisticated practices to gain control over people’s lives and minds and should remember that apathy of the silent majority does not signify agreement with the political status quo. We must appreciate how difficult it is to rebuild the foundation of democratic institutions, freedom of the media, citizens’ activism and civic spirit, after years of totalitarian rule. If we underestimate these factors during the process of transformation, we may be challenged with the phenomenon described by experts as the “backlash against democracy.” Over the last two decades, examples of this phenomenon have been demonstrated in the eastern and southern regions of the EU. Those who are involved in the fight for freedom and democracy must be aware of the pitfalls and difficulties in overcoming the past, a process which is inevitable and

may last years or even decades. We must assist our counterparts in dealing with the consequences of post-totalitarianism, such as corruption, the absence of rule of law, and the void of morality. And last but not least, we must warn about the disappointments of an imperfect democracy as well as encourage perseverance on the demanding road towards democracy, even if the goal seems unobtainable.

In addition to expertise and understanding, we also have important tools at our disposal in our efforts to support change. As members of the EU and NATO, we have, for the first time in history, a voice equal to other member states. We have regional Visegrad Four cooperation in the political arena and in other fields. Well-developed civil society organizations in our countries are very capable of creating excellent new proposals to meet specific objectives as well as developing well-designed strategies in this area. Furthermore, we are able to use our own funds for assistance programs for the development and promotion of democracy.

In summary, I believe that we have good reason to have confidence in our mechanisms for support of democracy and respect for human rights worldwide, due in part to the effectiveness of the strategies we continue to pursue with our allies.