



Dear Ms. Alida Vracic,

The ICDT is a non-profit organization based in Budapest, Hungary which collects the experiences of recent democratic transitions and shares them with those who are determined to follow that same path. Instead of promoting democracy in general, the ICDT sets more concrete and pragmatic goals. The Centre strives to show how dozens of young democracies have made, and are making, the transition, so that those who set off on this difficult journey from dictatorship to democracy in the future may learn from the successes as well as from the failures.

Being one of the most important components of democracy, civil society can also be one of the most fragile ones. As we can experience in the case of countries which have gone through democratic transitions in the recent past, the underdevelopment or moreover, the lack of civil society may result in serious problems. This is especially true in those countries when political transition has already finished within its institutional framework.

The objective of the project entitled **„Civil Society and State in the Process of Social Transformation”** of the International Centre for Democratic Transition is to measure the relations between state and civil sphere in two regions: Central and Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans. Measuring these relations in the process of social transformation will be based on elaborating an objective index system which is not only capable of describing the situation and circumstances amidst civil societies are functioning, but will serve as a base for orientation for expert and political decision-makers, providing a competent argumentation which supports the strengthening of civil society. As a result of this programme, an evaluation system measuring state-civil society relations will be elaborated, which will be standardised enough to make comparisons, however is flexible enough to assess country specificities. In a later phase, the project will be extended to further target regions. We are aware that several projects have recently been launched to investigate the political, economic, legal and socio-cultural context that civil societies are functioning in. However, the ICDT's approach towards this research area is new in the following way: our Centre intends to elaborate a project placing this analysis in a transformational context and examining how civil societies are effected by the process of democratic transition.


As a first event of this project, our Centre is organising a two-day expert meeting in Zagreb, Croatia on 19-20 January 2009, co-ordinated by István Sebestyén and Péter Nizák, Hungarian civil society experts. The aim of this event is to analyse the relationship between state and the civil sphere in the target regions and to lay down the basis of the methodology of the evaluation system. As we are sure that your stature and experience would greatly contribute to the success of the event, we would be greatly honored if you could accept our invitation to this workshop and give a lecture on the situation of civil society in your country. Also, in order to share your experiences with other experts and to make comparisons possible, we would also kindly ask you to prepare a short study of 4-5 pages briefly introducing the political, legal etc. circumstances civil society is functioning in your country. (Attached please see the project proposal providing you with guidelines. We have also attached a similar study about Hungary which we would recommend that you read.) These studies assessing the different situations of civil societies in

Central and Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans will serve as the basis of discussion. Furthermore, as a second project event, our Centre is planning to organise a second meeting in February 2009 with the same participants in Belgrade, where the experts would report on how the index system is applicable in their countries and where it needs further improvements. (Your expert honoraria will consist of 250 EUR for each study.)

In the hope that our project has attracted your interest and looking forward to your – hopefully positive – reply,

Yours sincerely,

Budapest, 3 December 2008



Sándor Köles
Senior Vice President for Programmes and Development
ICDT



Ambassador István Gyarmati
President&CEO
ICDT