

Visegrad Platform for Dialogue on Democracy, Human Rights and Civil Society | 19th Forum 2000 Conference workshop

Visegrad Group Countries' Support for Democracy in Eastern Partnership Countries: Government vs. Civil Society Support

September 13, 2015

14:00 – 16:00; Hotel InterContinental, room Peter

Moderators:

Christopher Walker, Executive Director, International Forum for Democratic Studies, NED, USA (tbc.)

A vast majority of the funds that the EU provides to Ukraine as a part of its recent democracy assistance effort is aimed at capacity building through government programs while only a small fraction on building civil society. Also in other Eastern Partnership countries the civil society sector remains underfinanced and dependent on mostly foreign sponsors. As a result, some voices from the region suggest that support for democracy needs to focus more on “building the capacity of the society to build the government.”

- Does the EU underestimate the bottom-up approach or is it on the right track?
- Could the support of civil society be where the V4 countries work jointly despite the group's internal incoherence?
- Should the V4 Group countries' role be in galvanizing other EU members to reassess the EU democracy support policy in the region?
- How could they more effectively support programs that provide needed expertise to local think tanks and NGO's and reevaluate our understanding of what is happening on the ground in Central Asia?

Is the V4 Group's Role as a Democracy Promoter in Question?

September 15, 2015

14:30 – 16:30; Hotel InterContinental, room Klementinum

Moderators:

Jiří Schneider, Senior Fellow and Director of Special Projects, Prague Security Studies Institute, Czech Republic (tbc.)

As the transformation of domestic political scenes in the V4 Group countries and events during the Ukrainian crises show, the internal challenges and external pressures undermine the democracy promoter role of V4 countries within the EU. If the democracy assistance policy remains a part of their foreign policy, V4 countries need to clearly formulate why they should support the policy as such and why they support liberal values.

- Can the Visegrad Group still find a common ground in its attitude towards democracy assistance in third countries?
- If the democracy promotions narrative is shaken, will it affect the International Visegrad Fund?