

One World Romania

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**International Documentary Film
Festival on Human Rights**

4th Edition

16 – 21 March, Bucharest

Cinema Scala, Bucharest, Romania

March 16, 2011

Opening speech by

Thorsten Geissler

Director, Rule of Law Program South East Europe,
Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung

I am very happy to welcome you to the official opening of this year's international documentary film festival on behalf of the Rule of law program South east Europe of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation. We are proud to be the main partner of One World Romania, a festival which is about to become a tradition. The promotion of democracy and respect for human and civil rights and the protection of minorities are core elements of the work of Konrad Adenauer Foundation, a German Christian democratic think

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tank which works in more than 120 countries around the globe with more than 80 offices abroad.

In Romania we are represented by what we call our Landerbüro and by the Rule of Law South East Europe of which I am the Director. We are based in Bucharest but we promote the Rule of Law in ten different countries in this part of Europe.

How wonderful it would be if human and civil rights were simply respected in every country, if nobody had to live in fear because of his political or religious belief or because he belongs to a minority.

How lovely it would be if the words "torture" and "discrimination" had no practical relevance any more but were purely for academic debates about the past, subjects discussed by historians. Unfortunately this is not the case. While we sitting happily together in this cinema in Bucharest, during these very minutes people in many countries of the world get murdered, tortured or are the objects of discrimination depriving them of the right to live a self-determined life.

The documentaries that will be screened will draw your attention to different forms of the violation of human rights. It is our intention to rise your and our awareness of problems that exist, sometime in far away countries, sometimes next to our door. Because the fact that we live in countries that are members of the European Union which stands for democracy, the defence of human and civil rights and the protection of minorities does not mean that our societies are perfect. The fact that the European Court of Human Rights is still quite a busy institution shows that a lot of things still need to be changed for the better in our vicinity.

According to Perikles, this great Greek advocate of democracy, a citizen who does not show any interest for public affairs is not a silent citizen but a bad citizen. We have the privilege to live in countries in which freedom of speech is not a hollow phrase in a consti-

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tution which is disrespected by a totalitarian regime but. We should exercise this right in the best interest of those who do not enjoy this privilege. Sometimes even in a democratic society this requires some courage if you contradict a majority. But a truly open, free and pluralistic society does only exist if people exercise their rights and sometimes take the risk of being attacked because they hold a minority opinion or because they defend the rights of others.

We should not tolerate intolerance. We should not fight diversity but celebrate it. That is my deep conviction and this is why am happy to be here tonight knowing that this conviction is shared by many if not by all of you.

I wish to express my profound thanks to all those who organized this festival and contribute to its success.

May you enjoy this festival, may you enjoy many controversial debates and may you take home many new impressions and ideas.

I wish One World Romania 2011 every possible success!