

One World Romania 2012

International Human Rights Film Festival

SPEECH HELD AT THE OPENING OF THE 5TH - INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DOCUMENTARY FILM FESTIVAL – ONE WORLD ROMANIA 2012 (BUCHAREST, 13-18 MARCH)

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you to the official opening of this years` international human rights documentary festival on behalf of the Rule of Law Program South East Europe of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation. It is the 5th edition of the festival – a small jubilee, and once again we are proud to be the main partner of this event.

But as Konrad Adenauer Foundation we are also celebrating another jubilee. 50 years ago our foundation started its international work, today we have more than 80 offices around the globe and work in more than 120 countries.

As a Christian Democratic think tank we are committed to the basic principles freedom, justice and solidarity. And we have always and will always promote democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law.

Democracy is more than majority rule based on free and fair elections. It cannot be separated from the respect for and guarantee of human rights and civil liberties. And it cannot be separated from the rule of law.

According to the Democracy Index compiled by the Economist Intelligence Unit only 78 out of 167 countries can be called democracies. More than 51% of the world population lives under hybrid and authoritarian regimes.

In many of the last mentioned countries human rights are violated every day. People are denied basic liberties and those who oppose the rulers are at risk of being persecuted, of being tortured or even of being deprived of their lives.

But even in some countries with a democratic constitution which includes a charter of individual rights and freedoms some people risk a lot when they try to exercise rights that are guaranteed to them by law. Ethnic, religious and social minorities are vulnerable and at risk of getting marginalized. Intolerance and discrimination go hand in hand.

I believe that a strong and democratic society embraces diversity and systematically respects the rights and dignity of all. We should promote the values and institutions that enable all people to participate in social, economic, cultural and political life on the basis of equality of rights, equity and dignity. And we should fight all forms of discrimination that lead to exclusion.

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V.

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I am convinced that this is also a condition for economic success in a globalized world. There are many studies that prove that companies that employ a diverse workforce are more creative, innovative, and better able to understand the demographics of the marketplace it serves and thus are more competitive and successful. And what is true for companies is also true for societies. No country can afford to scare away bright and talented people just because they are different, because the loss of human resources inevitably leads to a decline in prosperity.

Whether a society is inclusive or not is not decided by politicians and lawmakers alone but by society as a whole. Everybody has a responsibility; each of you has a responsibility.

I hope you will enjoy the festival. I hope you will actively take part in the debates, take home many new impressions and ideas and will be inspired to work for your country and for the promotion of democracy and human rights world wide as active citizens.

Let me thank all those who organized this festival, let me thank our partners and let me also thank the media which will ensure that the message that is sent out from this festival can be heard in the whole country.

I wish "One World Romania 2012" every possible success!