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PARLAMENTUL ROMÂNIEI
CAMERA DEPUTAȚILOR
SECRETAR GENERAL
Nr. 11240 / CP / 28.05.2007

Parlamentul României
Camera Deputaților
Președinte

Nr. 1319 / 11.B.O.
28 / 05 / 2007

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Către: Camera Deputaților
În atenția: Dl Bodgan Olteanu, Președinte

Parlamentul României
Camera Deputaților

B.P. Nr. 672 din 29.05.2007
24 mai 2007

Stimate Domnule Președinte,

National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) va organiza în perioada 22-23 iunie a.c., la București, un seminar internațional având ca temă centrală *tehnici de advocacy*, reunind 20 tineri activiști politici romi din regiune (România, Bulgaria, Slovacia). Acest program de formare se înscrie în seria programelor anuale de formare ale NDI destinate creșterii capacității organizațiilor de romi de a-și promova soluții la problemele cu care minoritatea romă din Europa Centrală și de Est se confruntă.

Am dori să organizăm acest seminar în clădirea Parlamentului României, cea mai reprezentativă instituție a democrației. În acest scop, *sub egida parteneriatului dintre Camera Deputaților și societatea civilă*, vă adresăm rugămintea să ne puneți la dispoziție, cu titlu gratuit, o sală în clădirea Parlamentului, în perioada 22-24 iunie a.c. Menționăm că vom asigura participanților la programul de instruire servicii de interpretariat (3 limbi) și, de aceea, am aprecia dacă sala pe care ați putea să ne-o puneți la dispoziție, să fie prevăzută cu cabine și instalație de traducere simultană. De asemenea, intenționăm să folosim servicii de catering extern pentru pranzul participanților.

Am fi deosebit de onorați dacă ați putea participa, în calitate de vorbitor, în deschiderea acestui eveniment. Considerăm că, prin participarea dv., reprezentând un partid politic parlamentar important în viața politică românească, tinerii activiști romi vor recepționa mesajul de încurajare de a se implica activ în politică, pentru a contribui la îmbunătățirea situației acestei minorități.

Sesiunea de deschidere la care vă invităm să participați se desfășoară pe data de 22 iunie a.c., în intervalul 10:00 – 11:00.

Atașat găsiți agenda evenimentului, precum și un scurt material informativ despre programul NDI destinat participării politice a romilor din România.

Programul, finanțat de National Endowment for Democracy / SUA, se derulează în perioada aprilie 2007 – februarie 2008, și are ca obiectiv consolidarea cunoștințelor și abilităților politice ale tinerilor activiști romi din România, Slovacia și Bulgaria, care doresc să se implice în politică la nivel local, pentru a promova politic în beneficiul comunităților lor.

În măsura în care considerați necesar, vă stau la dispoziție cu date suplimentare la coordonatele următoare: tel. 0726 214 399, sau e-mail julian.stoian@mes.ro.

Cu deosebită considerație,

Scott Andersen
Resident Country Director

APROBAT
În ședința Biroului permanent al
Camerei Deputaților

Nr. 672

Roma Political Participation Program

Advocacy techniques

June 21-23, 2007

Romanian Parliament, Chamber of Deputies

AGENDA

Day 1 - June 21st, 2007

Arrival and Welcome

Opening Dinner (casual, get-to-know-each other)

Day 2 - June 22nd, 2007

Advocacy Approaches

Session 1: Introductions

As part of this opening session, to set the context participants should be prepared to speak briefly to the laws affecting advocacy in their country (limitations on "lobbying", access to information etc)

Session 2: Advocating to Political Parties

Sevda to train, with NRG party platforms case study

Session 3: Advocating to the Government

Trainer TBD, Bulgarian Case Study

Session 4: Problem Solving

Creating an advocacy activity plan, Megan Unangst

Day 3 – June 23rd, 2007

Session 1: Working with the Media

Session 2: Event Organizing and Crowd Building

Session 3: Crisis Management (here we would address dealing with attacks in a constructive manner)

Sevda to Train

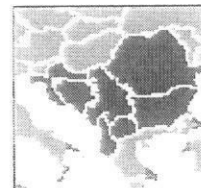
Session 4: Problem Solving

Megan to develop

Day 4 – June 24th, 2007

Departure

ROMA POLITICAL PARTICIPATION



POLITICAL CONTEXT

Roma comprise a sizeable percentage of the population in many countries in Central and Eastern Europe – up to 10 percent in some cases – but they are under-represented in mainstream political parties and elected office. Roma have been unable to use the political process effectively to solve the massive economic, social, and human rights problems that disproportionately afflict their communities. Initiatives such as the Decade of Roma Inclusion seek to improve the living standards of Roma. Yet there are still few programs aimed at increasing Roma political participation, which is the sole way by which Roma themselves can address their communities' long-term needs.

As countries in the region prepare for European Union accession, political marginalization of fast-growing Roma populations is leaving them behind and could threaten political stability. Full political participation – voting in elections, securing representation in government, and creating a tradition of political activism – offers the best way for Roma to make their voices heard.



Roma communities suffer disproportionately from inadequate housing, unemployment, and poor education. NDI is helping Roma address these problems through the political process.

ENCOURAGING POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

"I hope ...that this is the first of many working meetings between us."

*Bulgarian President
Georgi Parvanov to
Roma constituents*

NDI launched a political skills development program in Slovakia and Bulgaria in 2004 with funding from the National Endowment for Democracy. Through individual skills training, public opinion research, issue advocacy, mainstream party engagement and crossborder exchange, NDI seeks to give Roma the political skills to become elected representatives and to govern effectively.

POLITICAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Throughout 2004 and 2005, NDI political leadership training academies in Bulgaria and Slovakia addressed the principal qualities of political leadership, showcased methods for effective public communication and constituent relations, and taught negotiation and conflict resolution skills to 50 emerging Roma leaders. In the fall of 2005, NDI will begin a new round of training for 50 additional political activists.

PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH AND MAINSTREAM PARTY OUTREACH

In 2005, NDI conducted public opinion research on Roma political attitudes in Slovakia and Bulgaria. The results identified issues of importance to the Roma community and provided valuable insights into voter attitudes, political awareness, and party identification. The data enabled NDI to convey to Roma and mainstream parties campaign strategies, policy priorities, and outreach methods prior to the Bulgarian parliamentary elections and Slovak regional elec-

tions in 2005. NDI will continue to encourage parties to develop long-term strategic plans to build their base of Roma support and participation in the political process. Poll results are posted at: <http://www.ndi.org/worldwide/cee/roma/roma.asp>.

PUBLIC ISSUE ADVOCACY

NDI is working with Roma political and civic activists on issue-based advocacy campaigns at the national and local levels. Participants have successfully advocated for the creation of Bulgaria's National Anti-Discrimination Committee; founded the National Association of Roma in Public Administration in Bulgaria; and pressured a Bulgarian political party into excluding a parliamentarian from its candidate list due to derogatory public remarks made against Roma. Participants also met with President Georgi Parvanov to share their policy priorities and proposals. As a follow-up to this meeting, NDI hosted a National Roma Education Forum under the patronage of President Parvanov.



Romanian and Slovak Roma plot campaign strategy during an election simulation at NDI's Roma Political Leadership Academy.

SUCCESS AT THE BALLOT BOX

To help increase the number of elected Roma officials, NDI is working with candidates and their campaign teams on strategic planning and other campaign skills such as voter contact and platform development. NDI is also working to promote cooperation among Roma parties and between Roma and mainstream parties. With OSCE funds, NDI held a coalition building seminar among Bulgarian Roma and non-Roma parties which led to the creation of a Roma platform by the Bulgarian Socialist Party. In Slovakia, NDI facilitated an agreement between two Roma political forces in which neither would run against the other in regional elections. This is the first such agreement among Slovak Roma.

GOOD GOVERNANCE

Elected Roma officials must govern effectively to build Roma trust in the political process and to represent Roma interests. Beginning in the fall 2005, NDI will work with local Roma representatives to develop required skills to reach out to constituents, opportunities to advocate on their behalf to the mainstream parties, and the confidence to represent their concerns in policy discussions.

"I realized that in order to do more for Roma, I need to become a politician. NDI has played a significant role in helping me decide to become a candidate for the next regional elections."

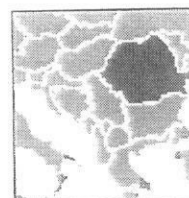
Peter Pollak, Slovakia

REGIONAL LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

The Institute hosted the first annual Regional Roma Leadership Academy in Ohrid (Macedonia), bringing top Bulgarian and Slovak Roma participants together with Roma activists from Macedonia and Romania, including Nezhdet Mustafa, a Roma member of Macedonia's parliament. The Academy provided participants with advanced political training through such activities as an interactive campaign simulation to hone political communications skills and a forum to share their best practices.

NDI plans to expand the Roma Political Participation initiative to Romania and currently engages Roma in program activities through its individual country programs throughout the region.

NDI conducts programs in Albania, Bulgaria, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia and Slovakia. For more information on NDI's Roma program, please contact Megan Volk Unangst in Washington, D.C. at 202-728-5670, Sevdalina Voynova in Sofia at 359-2-980-7760 or Zuzana Dzurikova in Bratislava at 421-25-464-3034.



POLITICAL CONTEXT

Romania is building its economy and passing reform legislation as it nears its anticipated entry into the European Union in January 2007. A stalwart ally of the U.S., Bucharest joined NATO in 2003. Hotly contested elections last year produced a government that campaigned on an ambitious reform agenda. Now the government must deliver on high public expectations amidst deep political polarization that at times extends into the governing coalition itself. With one of every three members of parliament new to the institution, political leaders face the challenge of working together and with civic groups to implement the wide array of judicial, public administration, and social reforms needed to complete Romania's democratic and economic transitions and EU accession.



Advisors in the office of the president are reviewing internal operations with NDI assistance.

NDI IN ROMANIA

Since 1990, NDI has helped citizens develop active and sustainable political parties and civil society organizations. NDI programs have led to the creation of a leading civic organization, the Pro-Democracy Association; the growth of issue-based advocacy campaigns at the local level; and more frequent and effective political party outreach at the local level. With funding from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), NDI provided assistance to political parties in conducting direct outreach to citizens during the 2004 elections. With funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), NDI is promoting long-term development of political parties and civic groups at the local level and interaction among them on addressing reform issues. NDI is also building the capacity of Romanian governing institutions to communicate with citizens through assistance to the parliament and president's office.

PARLIAMENTARY STRENGTHENING AND OUTREACH

NDI is developing a program to strengthen communication and coordination between political parties and their representatives in parliament, as well as between Members of Parliament (MP) and citizens. NDI will train staff working in local constituent offices in outreach and improving communication links with citizens, civil society, and respective political party headquarters and branches.

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

The Romanian presidency faces challenges in furthering its agenda to meet the high expectations of citizens. Responding to requests for assistance, NDI has conducted an initial needs

assessment and strategic planning session with presidential advisors. The Institute will provide technical assistance and training to senior presidential advisors, helping them to review and improve internal and external communication systems, strategic planning, and office and staff organization.

POLITICAL PARTY OUTREACH AND DEVELOPMENT

A long-term challenge in Romania's democratization process is to invigorate political parties with the organizational and political capacity to address economic and social concerns voiced by the public. NDI is assisting local leaders of parties across the political spectrum on internal and external communication techniques; recruiting, developing, and keeping members active between elections; and promoting the political participation of youth and women. NDI programs for women activists facilitate interaction among civic, political, and other sectors, build leadership skills, and provide networking opportunities, with the goal of making women more visible in public life.

"Women political activists have no place to go for networking and support. NDI has provided a setting where we can learn, make new partnerships, and share experiences."

Cristina Catana, NDI Program Participant

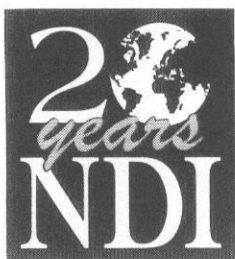
CIVIL SOCIETY DEVELOPMENT / CIVIC-POLITICAL PARTY INTERACTION

Following its partnership with the Pro-Democracy Association (PDA), which is among Romania's leading civic organizations, NDI has turned its attention to new civic groups working at the regional level, which, like PDA before them, are elevating their public profiles and beginning to influence election process and public policy in tangible ways:

- With NDI support, the Pro Democracy Association played a crucial role in monitoring the 2004 elections and resolving disputes over vote tabulation that threatened to derail the election process. PDA continues to advocate for amendments to electoral legislation based on its monitoring findings.
- The Community Development Association in Panaghia organized candidate forums and public meetings for the first time in the village's history. Also, the participant in municipal council meetings informed villagers about the decisions taken by the local council.
- The Association for Development in Lupeni organized public meetings in every city district and convinced the mayor to hold his own public meetings.
- APOWER in Timisoara convinced local authorities to establish a shelter for victims of domestic violence and to create a public – private partnership to manage the shelter;
- ARAS in Constanta successfully advocated for the municipal council to include NGO support in its annual budget.

NDI also conducts programs in Albania, Bulgaria, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Slovakia. For more information on NDI's Romania program, please contact Rebekah Sundin Piatkowska in Washington, D.C. at 202-728-5669 or Daniela Diaconu and Nick Demeter in Bucharest at 40-21-313- 9452.

Updated November 2005



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NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) is a nonprofit organization working to strengthen and expand democracy worldwide. Calling on a global network of volunteer experts, NDI provides practical assistance to civic and political leaders advancing democratic values, practices and institutions. NDI works with democrats in every region of the world to build political and civic organizations, safeguard elections, and promote citizen participation, openness and accountability in government.

Democracy depends on legislatures that represent citizens and oversee the executive, independent judiciaries that safeguard the rule of law, political parties that are open and accountable, and elections in which voters freely choose their representatives in government. Acting as a catalyst for democratic development, NDI bolsters the institutions and processes that allow democracy to flourish.

Build Political and Civic Organizations: NDI helps build the stable, broad-based and well-organized institutions that form the foundation of a strong civic culture. Democracy depends on these mediating institutions—the voice of an informed citizenry, which link citizens to their government and to one another by providing avenues for participation in public policy.

Safeguard Elections: NDI promotes open and democratic elections. Political parties and governments have asked NDI to study electoral codes and to recommend improvements. The Institute also provides technical assistance for political parties and civic groups to conduct voter education campaigns and to organize election monitoring programs. NDI is a world leader in election monitoring, having organized international delegations to monitor elections in dozens of countries, helping to ensure that polling results reflect the will of the people.

Promote Openness and Accountability: NDI responds to requests from leaders of government, parliament, political parties and civic groups seeking advice on matters from legislative procedures to constituent service to the balance of civil-military relations in a democracy. NDI works to build legislatures and local governments that are professional, accountable, open and responsive to their citizens.

International cooperation is key to promoting democracy effectively and efficiently. It also conveys a deeper message to new and emerging democracies that while autocracies are inherently isolated and fearful of the outside world, democracies can count on international allies and an active support system. Headquartered in Washington D.C., with field offices in every region of the world, NDI complements the skills of its staff by enlisting volunteer experts from around the world, many of whom are veterans of democratic struggles in their own countries and share valuable perspectives on democratic development.

Two decades of working to strengthen and expand democracy worldwide