



Memorandum

Human Rights Awards 2014

19 November 2014

The Human Rights Awards Board 2014 comprises Juliana Abramova, Elena Bogdan, Anastasia Danilova, Oxana Lipcanu, Ian McFarlane and Sass Gyula Levente. It convened in person on two occasions during October and November 2014 and carried out additional consultations via email.

In arriving at decisions on awards, the Board heard detailed nominations from, and consulted closely with a Technical Committee of experts comprised of Magdalena Adebayo, Nadejda Hriptievschi, Dmitri Kozuk, Alina Radu, Antonina Vlkova and Artiom Zavadovschi. In proposing nominations to the Board, the Technical Committee had convened their own expertise, as well as relying on a number of nominations received from the public-at-large, following several rounds of open invitation to nominate meritorious persons, groups or institutions.

The Board took the decisions included in this Memorandum by consensus, as follows:

- a. On the basis of the information brought before it by the Technical Committee, as well as on the basis of its own deliberations and the information independently available to it, the Board took decisions in favor of awards to the persons and groups in the Annex below. The Board worked on the basis of the Regulation and its criteria, as well as by developing approaches based on the reasoning and work of previous Human Rights Awards Boards.
- b. The justifications for each individual award included in the Annex below are the reasons for each given award, and are to be made public as such.
- c. For the three persons receiving honorable mention as noted below, the Board decided not to confer an award, but decided that they should receive oral mention during the Gala proceedings. They might additionally be conferred with some sort of recognition off-camera, such as a certificate.
- d. With reference to the late arrival of several nominations, the Board recommended that attention be had to ensuring that, in 2015, nominations be complete before the beginning of Board proceedings, and in particular that the nomination process be made widely known in 2015.
- e. The Board recommended that consideration be given in 2015 to recognition of nominees who have not been explicitly awarded.

Annex

The following Human Rights Awards are made non-hierarchically and without reference to category.

- The **Human Rights Information Center (CIDO)**, for perseverance in monitoring human rights and carrying out awareness-raising activities in the field of human rights.
- The Chisinau-based primary and secondary school (**Lyceum**) “**Pro Success**” for genuine progress in practice in implementing models of inclusive education, bringing children with disabilities into mainstream educational environments with appropriate support to succeed on an equal footing in common classrooms with other children.
- **Association MOTIVAȚIE** for groundbreaking work in advocating equality for persons with disabilities.
- **Ms. Svetlana Mironova**, Chief of the representation of the Center for Human Rights (Ombudsman Office) of Moldova in Gagauzia, for her exemplary efforts raising awareness about human rights among residents of Gagauzia.
- **Ms. Natalia Bordan**, an activist who has contributed to the empowerment of persons with disabilities at local level in Bender city.
- **Ms. Violeta Gașițoi**, human rights lawyer, for excellence in seeking justice for victims of gender-based violence.

In addition to these six Awards, the Board also decided to recognize through honorable mention the work of **Mr. Nikolai Bucheatskii**, Editor-in-chief of the “Chelovek i ego prava” newspaper; **Ms. Elena Scutaru**, founder and CEO at MARA Woman association; and **Mr. Simion Sîrbu**, director of the Drochia-based organization *Artemida*.

In Detail:

The following Human Rights Awards are made non-hierarchically and without reference to category:

1. Founded in 2010, the **Human Rights Information Center** (Centrul de Informare în domeniul Drepturilor Omului or shortly CIDO) (www.cido.org.md), is one of the leading human rights organizations in Moldova monitoring human rights in the country. In the recent period, among other activities, it published quarterly reports on the state of human rights in Moldova through the prism of the Universal Periodic Review. CIDO also presented the second annual edition of the National Human Rights Index, which allows evaluation of the state of human rights including in the ‘quantitative’ terms. The organization published detailed reports examining in detail issues of discrimination in education in Moldova. It also launched the first national human rights on-line portal – www.drepturi.md, aimed at delivering useful and accessible information to various stakeholders. Since the launch of the portal the organization has posted on it a series of materials concerning human rights that help people learn about their rights and how to defend them. CIDO also provides human-rights-related information adapted for residents of the Transdniestrian region. It publishes information in Romanian, Russian and English languages. Some information is also provided in minority languages such as

Gagauzian, Bulgarian, Ukrainian and Romani. CIDO has also convened, in partnership with other human rights organizations, the second edition of the National Human Rights Forum that gathered many leading representatives of the human rights defenders' community to discuss the achievements and what yet needs to be done in the field of human rights. CIDO is recognized here for having moved to the lead of independent human rights monitoring work in the Republic of Moldova.

2. The Chisinau-based primary and secondary school (**Lyceum**) "**Pro Success**" for genuine progress in practice in implementing models of inclusive education, bringing children with disabilities into mainstream educational environments, with appropriate support to succeed on an equal footing in common classrooms with other children. The "**Pro Success**" Lyceum (www.prosucces.md) was founded in 2002 as School-kindergarten nr. 40. In 2006, the school was reorganized as "Pro Success" Gymnasium. The school was established with the idea of extending the concept of the "Step by Step" Program in secondary education. The "Pro Success" Lyceum is one of the first institutions to act seriously to integrate children with disabilities into mainstream schooling and to develop throughout the years as an institution that tries to understand better ways to organize the educational process in inclusive classes. It has striven and succeeded to develop a culture of diversity for all children, regardless of their abilities or disabilities. As of 2014, 390 pupils currently study at the school, of whom 32 are children with special educational needs. The school is a model of an inclusive school, as children with disabilities are integrated and benefit from the necessary support services: support teacher, individual and group activities in the resource room, psychological counseling, etc; individualization of the education process is organized based on the children's special education needs; the teachers are particularly trained in providing an inclusive environment; the school community is aware of the advantage of the inclusive education process; the school infrastructure is accessible for children with disabilities. A number of graduates with disabilities from the school currently have their own businesses, pursue university studies, and continue to promote equality of human rights and equality in their daily life.
3. **Association MOTIVAȚIE** for groundbreaking work in advocating equality for persons with disabilities. Founded in 2002, **Association Motivație** (<http://motivatie.md/ro.html>) is one of Moldova's leading non-governmental organizations advocating for the rights of persons with disabilities. The particular feature of Association Motivație's activity is the direct involvement of persons with disabilities in the process of defending and promoting their own rights. Among other activities, in 2013-2014, Motivație supported and facilitated establishment of four initiative groups of persons with disabilities in Chișinău, Hâncești, Cahul and Edineț. These four groups have become the promoters and defenders of rights of persons with disabilities on the community level. They engaged in monitoring activities in those regions where observance of the rights of persons with disabilities is almost non-existent. Motivație has also contributed to the improvement of access of persons with disabilities – physical access to services and public buildings, access to education, access to jobs, etc. In the past year Association Motivație supported enrollment in professional educational institutions and employment of 35 young persons with disabilities. Motivație also engaged in the process of ensuring that persons with disabilities have access to voting, one of the fundamental rights in a democratic society, monitoring the observance of the rights to vote for persons with disabilities during the 2014 parliamentary elections. Motivație is also engaged in strategic litigation. In 2014, applying the Law on Ensuring Equality in practice, Motivație took legal action against the

pharmacy chain Felicia for the lack of accessibility for people in wheelchairs in their pharmacy stores. As a result of this legal initiative, the management of Felicia pharmacy chain signed a reconciliation agreement with Association Motivație and committed itself to make all of its pharmacy stores accessible to persons with disabilities within the next three years.

4. **Ms. Svetlana Mironova** is the Head of Representation of the Center for Human Rights (Ombuds Office) of Moldova in Gagauzia. From the beginning of her activity at the Center, she has been tirelessly engaged in defending human rights in Gagauzia. As a result of her management of the Center in Gagauzia, the office has become more widely known and the number of applicants has grown. Cooperation with state authorities and civic organizations, including the Executive Committee of Gagauzia, education, healthcare and social protection departments, has been strengthened as a consequence of a number of activities aimed at protection of the rights of the child and operation of orphanages, implementation of the National Torture Prevention Mechanism, prevention of discrimination, as well as collaboration with all local non-governmental organizations. For the first time, the Office has begun carrying out preventive monitoring visits to prisons having somewhat improved observance of rights of detainees. Ms. Mironova maintains a long-term cooperation with local mass media outlets and thereby broadly disseminates legal and human rights information throughout Gagauzia. She has also been involved in legislative drafting, worked to strengthen the rights of persons with disabilities, and carried out training for teachers, social workers and police on preventing criminality among minors and on the rights of juvenile offenders.
5. **Ms. Natalia Bordan**, is an activist who has contributed to the empowerment of persons with disabilities at local level in Bender city. In her professional capacity, she is the director of the municipal enterprise “Social assistance service of the city of Bender”, an entity providing services to elderly persons and persons with disabilities. Ms. Bordan initiated the “Creation of accessible living environment for persons with disabilities and for other groups of people with limited mobility in Bender for 2014-2019” Program, a groundbreaking effort in Bender to ensure inclusion of persons with disabilities. The major objective of the program is to provide unimpeded access to facilities and services in the areas which have the highest priority for persons with disabilities and for other groups of people with limited mobility living in Bender. Program implementation involves improvement of the institutional basis, creation of the accessible living environment for persons with disabilities, improvement of access to social and cultural facilities. The program aims to improve the accessibility and quality of rehabilitation services and to speed up the social integration of persons with disabilities. The Program is also aimed at reducing social distance and forming positive attitudes towards persons with disabilities, as well as raising awareness of the problems faces persons with disabilities face in the society. Having dedicated extensive efforts to overcome pervasive stereotypes about persons with disabilities, during 2013-2014, as a result of her efforts and dedication, the program was approved and accepted for implementation by the authorities. Starting from 2010 and up to now, Ms. Bordan has been working closely with various civil society organisations in the Transnistrian region assisting people in situations of social risk. As such, she has also provided positive examples of collaboration between NGOs and civil society in practice.
6. **Ms. Violeta Gașițoi**, human rights lawyer, is awarded for excellence in pursuing justice for victims of gender-based violence. She has been active in a number of cases raising

serious human rights concern, and has withstood negative pressure for her activism. Much of her legal advocacy work has been done pro bono. One recent case concerns a woman who was mentally and physically abused by the family of her husband, who did not allow her to visit the child. In another case, Ms. Gașițoi fought discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation in a child custody case. One of her most complex cases concerns ongoing proceedings related to allegations of serial sexual assault over a number of years by senior staff in the institution of the Bălți neuro-psychiatric residential institution. She has also addressed issues of corruption in law enforcement and justice bodies, abuses by prosecutors, police officers and criminal investigation officers when they detain and interrogate suspects of certain offences, as well as cases of inhumane conditions in the cells of pre-trial detention. Ms. Gașițoi has also maintained media presence on local and national TV channels providing legal expertise on a number of issues, lectures and writes a blog (<http://gasitoivioleta.wordpress.com>).

In addition, the following persons are recognized for honorable mention: (1) **Mr. Nikolai Bucheatskii** is a journalist and editor-in-chief of the newspaper "*Chelovek i ego prava*" (*The person and her/his rights*) from Tiraspol. Mr. Buceațchi is regularly and actively involved in investigating human rights issues in the Transdnestrian region of the Republic of Moldova; (2) **Ms. Elena Scutaru** is the founder of **MARA Woman** (<https://www.facebook.com/marawoman.moldova>), a non-governmental organization from the Republic of Moldova aiming to empower women in rural areas by providing them with training and work space. In 2013 they were able to establish a small manufacturing studio in Scoreni village with the financial help of voluntary donations from hundreds of individual supporters and a few commercial companies. Ms. Scutaru and MARA Woman create an environment in which women have access to employment opportunities, are informed, trained and live in a sustainable community thanks to their direct involvement in the process of economic development. Ms. Scutaru left a well-paid marketing post at an international IT company to devote her time entirely to the foundation of the association; (3) **Mr. Simion Sîrbu** is the director for the organization *Artemida*, which is composed of *The Maternal Center Ariadna* and the *Center for Assistance and Counselling for Family Aggressors* from Drochia. Mr. Sîrbu is a professional and committed individual who is very vocal in regards to domestic violence. Mr. Simion Sîrbu's dedication and leadership in addressing domestic violence are noted as worthy of honour.