

SCRUTINIZING THE ANTI-CORRUPTION STRATEGY



27 January, 2012 - FOL Movement organized a round table on the topic "The Anti-Corruption Strategy 2012-2016: Expectations of institutions and civil society in the fight against corruption". The debate brought together analysts and experts from the anti-corruption field in order to identify the potential weaknesses but also the advantages of this strategy in order to increase the effectiveness of the fight against corruption.

Armend Mazreku, an anti-corruption analyst at FOL, said that "the process of

drafting the new anti-corruption strategy for years 2012-2016 has repeated some of the shortcomings of the previous strategy and more importantly the strategy did not address the most important obstacle for the fight against corruption which is the lack of political will".

On the other hand Burim Sadiku from the Kosovo Anti-Corruption Agency said that the new strategy is reflects the results of research from domestic and international institutions. He further argued that the new strategy serves the purpose of

"progressive reduction of the level of corruption in our country." He concluded his remarks by offering the highest assurances on behalf of the agency for incorporating in the current document recommendations from Civil Society organizations.

There was a consensus among the participants of the need for the strategy to address corruption in specific sectors most affected by corruption, such as public procurement, privatization of public enterprises, finances of political parties.

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Armend Mazreku from FOL Movement, makes a public statement on the state of corruption in Kosova

February 17, 2012 – Today as Kosovo celebrates the fourth anniversary of independence, it is important to remind ourselves of the single most important threat to the new state of Kosovo: Corruption. All of us applaud and celebrate the creation of the state of Kosovo, which is built on democratic principles, which in the words of Abraham Lincoln means “a government of the people, for the people and by the people”.

While the political elite of Kosovo will speak of the achievements of the state, we as members of civil society want to talk about the main threat for Kosovo and its overall development. Corruption and organized crime are

undermining the economic progress of Kosovo worsening the social situation, it is undermining the democratic functioning of state institutions of Kosovo and above all it is preventing a proper conclusion of the supervision of independence.

In this context, we have organized today a performance under the slogan 'Corruption Connecting Politicians', a civic protest against the negligence and lack of result against corruption. Corruption is widespread in all state institutions as European Commission reminds us every year, and this can only be sustainable because it is the will of Kosovo's political elite who have captured the public budget of the country to fund their personal de-

sires.

To build a strong and functional state it is vital that citizens have confidence in institutions. Corruption and organized crime have plagued the relationship between state and citizen. While today we celebrate political independence, we have yet to achieve a genuine independence as a sustainable country. Corruption is a major obstacle in this regard.

Corruption and organized crime have clouded the future of Kosovo. The only way to lasting peace in Kosovo, is combating corruption and breaking up the ties between the political elites on the one hand and crime and corruption on the other.

FOL SUPPORTS THE CREATION OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL AGAINST CORRUPTION

February 15, 2012: - Today at the initiative of President of the Republic, the first meeting of the National Council against Corruption took place. We consider the establishment of this Council an important step in enhancing the effectiveness of institutional activities in preventing and combating corruption in Kosovo.

FOL thinks that the Council must be a promoter of concrete actions and insists on

tangible results against corruption but its role should not be reduced to empty rhetoric and an arena for meaningless speeches by government officials

FOL recommends the Council takes concrete steps in supporting joint institutional activities in combating corruption by increasing coordination and exchange of information between the institutions charged with fighting corruption.

GOVERNMENT SHOULD PUBLISH THE AGREEMENT WITH THE STATE OF IMO FROM NIGERIA

March 29, 2012 - Yesterday an agreement was signed between the Government of Kosovo (signed by the deputy Prime Minister, Mr. Behgjet Pacolli) and IMO State Nigeria (signed by Governor Rochas). In the official statement on the signing of this agreement published in the official web site of the government of State Imo/Nigeria it is said that the "Government of Kosovo will invest in the energy sector". Our government institutions have not published any official information in their web portals regarding this event, therefore creating a confusion as to rather

this agreement was signed by the government of Kosovo and the representatives of the state of Imo from Nigeria. Petrit Zogaj from FOL Movement said that the government must publish the text of the agreement. If the agreement was signed by Deputy Prime Minister Pacollin in his capacity as a businessman and representative of a company than this would constitute conflict of interest and we ask from the Anti-Corruption Agency to immediately start preliminary investigations for potential case of conflict of interest.

ABUSES IN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT THE MAIN SOURCE OF CORRUPTION



March 22, 2012: FOL Movement organized a round table to discuss the issue of abuses of public authority in procurement processes with Mr. Abdyl Limani, an expert in the Public Procurement Regulatory Commission and Mr. Admir Salihu, procurement monitoring officer in FOL. The discussion pointed the lack of coordination among institutions to regulate various aspects of Procurement processes. Instances when procurement institutions have different interpretations regarding procurement procedures are common. This creates

confusion among government procurement officers for the way forward on solving the disputes. The participants also discussed the recent changes in the Procurement Law and argued that the process missed an important opportunity to regulate some aspects of the obstacles in procurement procedures such as how to deal with cases when companies offer unrealistic prices in their tenders, which can be a hint to pre-agreements for awarding the con-

tract. Admir Salihu said that FOL has been monitoring procurement since March 2011 and in doing so has monitored about 40 procurement processes and reported on numerous legal and administrative irregularities. In all 14 reports were published with arguments for irregularities and as a result three tenders have been cancelled by the Public Procurement Review Body. FOL has also insisted that Ministry of Justice in cooperation with State Prosecutor

should indict companies that falsify documents in the process of tendering.

Abdyl Limani from the Public Procurement Regulatory Commission (PPRC) said that the institution has offered help for persons who have expressed interest regarding the legality of the procurement procedure. He also said that the PPRC is currently investigating some cases of potential abuses in procurement as a result of the information they received from citizens. Some common irregularities in the procurement process include improper documentations, cancelling the tenders without legal basis, specification of measurable criteria without discrimination, breach of contract and establishing criteria in the offer that would favor one particular group or strand of companies.

Bedri Bahtiri, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Justice said that greater transparency in the procurement offices reduces the malpractices.

FOL CRITICIZES THE LAW ON PROCUREMENT: IT PREVENTS TRANSPARENCY



Admir Salihu, left, and Armend Pajaziti during the press conference

“Article 3.1 of the law allows governments free hands in choosing when a tender should be transparent”

March 26, 2012: The analyses on the recent changes made in the Public Procurement Law, prepared by FOL reveals that in the context of the principles of transparency in spending public money, demanded by article 120 of the Constitution of the Country, the law has serious shortcomings.

Armend Pajaziti, coordinator of FOL’s project on public procurement said that the new version of the draft law, approved in August 2011, repeats many of the weaknesses of the previous law. He argued that this law is still far from being in

line with EU standards in the field of public procurement, which is also confirmed in the 2001 Progress Report of the European Commission for Kosovo. The current law does not meet the required criteria for transparency in the procurement procedures. The law even qualifies some new procurement procedures in a way that will not permit transparency and access to official information, which can have serious ramifications.

Admir Salihu from FOL Movement said that recommendations of civil society organiza-

tion that were members in the government working group to draft the new law, including FOL, were ignored. Article 3, paragraph 1 is one of the issues in the current law that will potentially harm transparency. It is formulated in that way that allows the government free hands in choosing to close public access in a procurement procedure. The analysis also calls for greater clarity regarding the responsibilities and mandate of public institutions that are charged with regulating procurement procedures.

FOL PUBLISHES CORRUPTION MONITOR: IN 2011, OUT OF 367 ACTS OF GOVERNMENT, 10 ON CORRUPTION

March 9, 2012: FOL Movement published the regular report on Corruption Monitor which outlines the activities of main institutions charged with fighting corruption. During 2011 there are 367 decisions made by the government of Kosovo, 10 of them address the issue of corruption: are finalization of the draft law on Public Procurement, the law on Declaration, Origin and Control of property and gifts of Senior Public officials, the draft law on Prevention of Conflicts of Interest, the draft Law On Protection of Informants (whistle blowers law), draft law on Witness Protection, draft law on Financing of Political Parties and the draft law on amending The Law on the Benefits of Former Senior Public

Officials. Also, the Kosovo government has supported the request of Kosovo Special Prosecutor for reimbursement of allowances and financial support to its employees. Chief executive officer at the Agency of Management of Seized Property has been appointed and the draft Criminal Code of the Republic of Kosovo has been approved.

Assembly of Kosovo during 2011 had a total of 37 sessions. During this period several anti-corruption laws have been approved, which are expected to affect directly or indirectly the fight against corruption, organized crime and the informal economy. The laws that have been approved during this

year are: Law on Witness Protection, Law on Protection of informers, the Law on Declaration, Origin and control of property of Senior Public Officials, Law on Preventing Conflict of Interest, and Law on public procurement, law on political parties finance and the amending and supplementing law for the benefit of former senior officials.

Statistics from the Kosovo Judicial Council show that during 2011: District Court inherited from previous year 45 cases, 24 new cases were recorded and 16 cases were solved. At the end of the reporting period 53 cases remain unsolved. “

Municipal Courts reported that 206 cases have been inherited

from the previous year, 132 new cases have been recorded, and 120 cases have been solved. The year 2011 ended with 218 unsolved cases.

Prosecutors during 2011 have prepared and submitted to the court 959 criminal charges for corruption against 1862 people. During the period January-December 2011 the country’s prosecutions have solved 538 criminal charges against 1038 people, while 421 criminal charges against 824 people remain unsolved.

ILLEGAL PROPERTY IS NOT ADDRESSED IN THE CURRENT DRAFT LAW ON CONFISCATION OF WEALTH



March 30, 2012 –In order to support anti-corruption legislation FOL Movement organized a conference on the confiscation of illegally acquired property and wealth which was part of a campaign initiated by FOL Movement last year, to advocate the Kosovo Parliament and Government for legislating on this matter.

FOL has argued that true justice in the fight against corruption is confiscation of the wealth and property from those individuals who came to acquire by abusing their public offices and authority. The purpose of the conference was to discuss a draft law prepared by the government on confiscation of property and wealth obtained by illegal means.

Members of the panel included the Prosecutor from the unit of Serious Crimes Prosecution from Albania, the Kosovo District Prosecutor, the representative of

the Ministry of Justice and a Professor of Law from the University of Prishtina. Drita Hajdari from the District Prosecution of Prishtina, said that in Kosovo there are results in prosecuting and punishing crime and corruption but that there isn't any progress on the issue of confiscation of property and wealth. She argued that confiscation would significantly reduce corruption and at the same time would strengthen prevention aspect of the fight against corruption.

According to her, the current draft law makes a distinction the seizure of property and wealth from confiscation: seizure would be a temporary measure and possible precursor for definitive confiscation which then becomes state property and the owner is unable to return that property.

The Representative from the Ministry of Justice, Baki Gimolli said that "The Draft Law on con-

fiscation of property is still in its initial stage. He said that the initial draft was sent to all relevant stakeholders. The Professor of Criminal Procedure at the University of Prishtina, Mr. Azem Hajdari, said that the name of the law must change. The criminal offence is one of the most severe ways to gain wealth, but not the only one, he added. One can still obtain illegal wealth and property but not qualify for criminal offense. Therefore it is important to widen the scope of the law and not reduce the confiscation of wealth and property only if it is obtained through criminal offense.

Besnik Muçi from Prosecution of Serious Crimes of the Republic of Albania shared his Albania's experience on the issue of confiscation. He said that after the approval of the anti-Mafia Law in Albania, there have been some 40 requests for confiscation of assets. The assets have been

confiscated and became state property, such as houses, apartments, land, money, motor vehicles etc., worth about 10 million Euro.

In the conclusion, the following were the recommendations of the conference

1. The name of the draft law should be changed in order to reflect the scope and purpose of this draft law. The Forum recommends that the qualifying "assets obtained by criminal act" change to "assets obtained illegally" (even when not related to the criminal offense).

2. The burden of proof for cases that are potential for confiscation of wealth and property should be upon the suspect and not the prosecution. Bulgaria, Slovenia and Albania are examples of this type of regulation.

3. This draft law should also apply to assets illegally acquired by suspects, before this law becomes applicable.

4. The law should foresee the establishment of specific mechanisms within the existing institutions (police, prosecutor, and court) in order to facilitate the implementation of the law effectively.

5. The law should also regulate the issue when property may be without an official owner

FOL PUBLISHES THE PROCUREMENT MONITOR FOR 2011: NO CONSEQUENCES FOR THE VIOLATIONS



Armend Pajaziti, left and Fidan Kalaja during the press conference

March 12, 2012 –FOL Movement published the Public Procurement Monitor report for the year 2011. Fidan Kalaja the Program Manager at FOL said that the 2011 was generally accompanied with the lack of seriousness by Kosovo institutions in combating corruption. During 2011, Procurement was the most corrupted sector in Kosovo. Our findings from directly monitoring procurement procedures in some government ministries show that Economic Operators (bidders) have constantly failed to technically meet specifications set by the tender dossiers. There are cases when they have provided fake and illegal documents as part of their offer dossier. Furthermore Economic Operators have purposefully reduced their offers in order to harm competition. Government has also awarded public contracts to Economic Operators that have, in the past, proved, irresponsible in the implementation of the contracts

Early October of last year, FOL published a report on violations and irregularities committed by the Ministry of Health. FOL mentioned names of officials who have later been arrested for their involvement in corruption affairs. FOL has confirmed that the deputy Prime Minister Mr. Bujar Bukoshi is also under investigations for corruption. FOL demands that he resigns

The process of debate offers profound and lasting benefits for individuals, for societies and for the global community as a whole.

With its emphasis on critical thinking, effective communication, independent research and teamwork, debate teaches skills that serve individuals well in school, in the workplace, in political life and in fulfilling their responsibilities as citizens of democratic societies.

FOL OPENS A NEW DEBATE CLUB IN PRIZREN



March 17, 2012 – In order to promote and support active citizenry FOL Movement has established a debate club in the Prizren whose membership is comprised of high school students. Since 2009 FOL has implemented a debate program for high schools which support critical thinking and participation in decision-making process of Kosovo youth. FOL uses the “Karl Popper” debate format for high school clubs. The Karl-Popper

from his position in order not to interfere with the investigations and become an obstacle for the functioning of the office of Deputy Prime Minister.

The Public Procurement Monitor for 2011 notes has identified following irregularities:

Government ministries have committed numerous legal violations in thirty (30) different tenders. Ministry of Justice has committed violations in 5 tenders, the Ministry of Public Administration, Ministry of Infrastructure and Ministry of Culture in four (4) tenders, the Ministry of Security Force and Ministry of Agriculture in 3 tenders, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Economic Development in 2 tenders. Meanwhile, the ministries with violations in only one tender are the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Ministry of Diaspora.

Public enterprises have committed numerous legal violations in nine (9) various procurement activities. Kosovo Energy Corporation has committed violations in six (6) tenders, Post and Telecom of Kosovo has committed violations in three (3) various procurement activities.

Municipalities in 2011 have committed numerous legal violations in a total of 37 procurement activities. Municipalities with more violations are municipality of Lipjan and municipality of Suhareka with four (4) tenders. Then, the municipality of Pristina, Gjilan, Rahovec and municipality of Viti with three (3) tenders. With violations on two (2) tenders are municipality of Gračanica, Podujeva, Shterpece and Kamenica. With violations only in one (1) tender are Municipality of Peja, Ferizaj, Prizren, Kacanik, Istog, Klllokot, Fushe Kosova, Mitrovica and Klina.

format focuses on relevant and often deeply divisive propositions, emphasizing the development of critical thinking

skills and tolerance for differing viewpoints. Debaters work together in teams of three and must research both sides of each issue. Each team is given the opportunity to offer arguments and direct questions to the opposing team. Judges then offer constructive feedback, commenting on logical flaws, insufficient evidence or arguments that debaters may have overlooked.

Every year FOL organizes debate

tournaments which bring together all debate clubs to debate on a trend social, political or cultural topic. The tournaments usually are three to five days long and include a wide range of educational activities. Winners of these tournaments participate in regional and international debate events.

Since 2009 the debate program of FOL movement has expanded from three municipalities (Municipality of Pristina, Peja and Ferizaj) to currently seven debate clubs. FOL implements its debate program in partnership with the following organizations: Community Building Mitrovica, Eye of the Vision, Initiative for Progress, Youth Initiative for Human Rights, Youth Center in Malisheva, Youth Center in Suhareka, etc. FOL is a member of the International Debate Education Association (IDEA).

THIRD NATIONAL DEBATE TOURNAMENT ON SECURITY AND LIBERTY: 20 TEAMS AND 60 DEBATERS PARTICIPATE



Members of the “iHithat” team: from right, Aurora Popova, Endrit Dibrani and Dren Shabani

6-7 April 2012: The third national Karl Popper debate tournament was organized from 6th until 7th of April by FOL and SOROS in cooperation with Syri Vizion from Peja, Initiative for Progress (INPO) from Ferizaj, Youth Center from Malisheva, Youth Centre from Suhareka, CBM from Mitrovica and Local Youth Action Council from Priz-

ren. FOL with the support from the Kosovo Foundation for Open Society SOROS/ KFO since January 2010 has been working with partner organizations in establishing debate clubs throughout Kosovo. The debate program now counts seven clubs in seven municipalities and plans to further expand in three additional municipalities: Prizren, Gjakova and Podujeva.

The three day long tournament was organized in Ferizaj in the KSF (Kosovo Security Forces) Training and Doctrine Center. FOL and its partners appreciate the support offered by the Ministry of KSF for organization of this tournament.

Twenty debate clubs, with sixty debaters participated in the tournament. The main topic of this year’s debate championship was Security versus Liberty. The winner of the tournament was team “iHithat” who will be rewarded with participating in IDEA’s international Karl Popper Debate Championship that will be organized in Mexico in July this year.

FOL OPENS ITS OFFICE IN GJAKOVA



FOL Movement from the support of Mott Foundation

opened its office in the city of Gjakova for the purpose of expanding its activities and outreach capabilities in municipal level. FOL invited representatives of the political and civil society in a modest ceremony on the occasion of the opening of the office.

Executive Director of the FOL Petrit Zogaj said that after more than two years since the founding of the organization, whose main mission is to promote transparency and

accountability of public institutions, is starting to truly develop as a movement. He added that FOL’s branch office in Gjakova will work to bring citizens closer with the decision-making process and elected officials and also increase public oversight of the Municipal authorities.

FOL PUBLISHES THE “PROCUREMENT MONITOR”



Armend Pajaziti (left) and Armend Mazreku

7 May 2012: For period January to March 2012 eleven, serious, violations in the process of tendering have occurred. Ministries with the highest number of violations are: Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, Ministry for Communities and Returns

Public Enterprises such as Kosovo Electricity Company and Post-telecommunication of Kosovo have committed offenses in four various tenders. Municipalities during this period have committed violations in three

and Ministry of Infrastructure. In addition, the Public Procurement Review Body has fined the Ministry of Infrastructure in amount of ten-thousand Euros, and has revoked the license of the acting director of procurement of this ministry.

Prizren Municipality has violated the provisions in evaluating the tender “summer and winter maintenance of roads, sidewalks, public green spaces, squares and decorative trees in Prizren and winter maintenance of roads in the villages-areas”, Municipality of Gjilan in the case of the cancellation of the tender transportation of workers and students in Gjilan Municipality, divided into 7 Lots” and Peja Municipality during the tender evaluation of “Maintenance of traffic signs - Lot 1”. Two of these tenders have been returned for re-evaluation, and only one is cancelled by the Public Procurement Review Body.

Public awareness of corruption in procurement process has increased thanks to the increase in the media reporting for irregularities. During January-March 2012 period newspapers have published sixty-nine various reports: thirty-four were reporting with investigative character.

CORRUPTION MONITOR RECORDS LOT OF FILING BUT NOT MUCH ACTION AGAINST CORRUPTION

13 May 2012 - FOL Movement published its regular report “Corruption Monitor” for the period January-March 2012 on the activities of public institutions against corruption. The Government of Kosovo during this period made 82 decisions, 4 of them on fighting (preventing) corruption. As for Kosovo’s Parliament none of its 10 plenary sessions held during this period addressed the issue of corruption.

Regarding the Judiciary, based on the statistics provided by the Kosovo Judicial Council under the category of “official misconduct” 19 new cases have been filed for the period January-March 2012, 14 cases have been solved during this time, while 120 cases remain unsolved at the end of the reporting period. As for the category “taking bribes” 10 new cases have been filed and only 3 cases have been solved. Under the category of “giving bribes” 17 new cases have been filed and 16 cases have been

solved.

The Prosecutions of the Republic of Kosovo reports that during January-March 2012 in municipal level 9 new cases have been filed, 42 individuals are charged under these cases. In general there are 100 new cases filed for the reporting period, 277 cases are ongoing, 42 are proposed indictments and 4 indictments have been issued. Investigations were dismissed against 2 cases. District prosecutors have filed 60 new cases, 383 cases have been processed by them, 8 indictments have been issued and five cases were dismissed regarding anti-corruption.

Statistics from the Department of Investigation of Economic Crimes and Corruption (DIECC) shows that in the first trimester of 2012 there are 69 cases under investigation: 39 of them were sent to the prosecutor for further proceedings with identified perpetrators.

Investigations of the Kosovo’s Police led to the arrest of 18 public officials: 6 in January and February, and 12 in March.

Kosovo Customs during the first trimester issued 2 disciplinary actions in March: a written and a verbal warning. During January and February, the unit for Professional Standards initiated 2 cases against Custom’s staff for property damage and in March one case was initiated for unprofessional conduct.

Anti-Corruption Agency (ACA) within the first trimester of 2012 has been mainly focused on two activities in the fight against corruption. During this trimester, ACA has published its report presenting its annual work and has completed the process of declaration of the property of senior public officials.

FOL DISCUSSES IMPLEMENTATION OF PUBLIC CONTRACTS



30 May 2012: FOL Movement organized a panel discussion with experts on the field of procurement to discuss the implementation of public contracts and the problems in this context with contracting authorities. Members of the panel argued that one of the main problems in the procurement process is the compilation of the filed for tenders, which results from not well harmonized process of preparation among government units.

Procurement Manager in Kosovo Correctional Service, Sadri Emërllahu, said that bureaucracy in procurement needs to be reduced for the sake of clarity and reduction of opportunity for abuse and misinterpretation. This, he argued, would increase the number of economic operator competing for public contracts.

A MEETING AGAINST FRAUD AND CORRUPTION IN PROCUREMENT IDENTIFIES THE AREAS THAT NEED TO BE CHANGED IN ORDER TO PREVENT CORRUPTION IN PROCUREMENT



17 May 2012: Supported from the Swiss Cooperation Agency and Kosova Foundation for Civil Society (KCSF), FOL Movement organized a coordination meeting with public institutions on procurement. The main item on the meeting's agenda was the legislation on procurement and competition. Public Procurement Regulatory Commission, Public Procurement Review Body, Kosovo Competition Authority, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Local Governance, Ministry of Public Administration, and Municipality of Peja participated in this meeting.

1. The Public Procurement Law does not specify the lowest price per unit, but only for the total price of the economic operator offering in a particular procurement activity which is a source of corruption;
2. Public Procurement Law contains mainly the cheapest price, along with the most economically advantageous, as the main criterion in awarding public contracts which has served as excuse to award contracts to irresponsible companies.
3. Public Procurement Law does not specify sanctions for Economic Operators that perform offenses or violations against the

Main conclusions of the meeting regarding the weakness of the procurement legislation were:

1. The Public Procurement Law does not specify the lowest price per unit, but only for the total price of the economic operator offering in a particular procurement activity which is a source of corruption;
2. Public Procurement Law contains mainly the cheapest price, along with the most economically advantageous, as the main criterion in awarding public contracts which has served as excuse to award contracts to irresponsible companies.
3. Public Procurement Law does not specify sanctions for Economic Operators that perform offenses or violations against the
4. The lack of other laws and guidelines to better-explain various provisions in the field of public procurement for various officials in Other Contracting Authorities.
5. Law on Protection of Competition needs to expand the authority and the role of the Competition Commission to take more meaningful actions against economic operators in the process of procurement.

Within regards to the institutional aspects the identified weaknesses are related to:

1. Lack of training in the field of competition - for procurement officials and civil society monitors;
2. Lack of human capacity to supervise the implementation of contracts by the Contracting Authority;
3. Lack of joint meetings between the institutions responsible for public procurement;
4. Lack of transparency in the interpretations and monitoring by the Public Procurement Review Body.

FOL'S DEBATE PROGRAM—A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY FOR YOUTH

JOIN A DEBATE CLUB



What is Debate?

From its very beginnings, debate has been inextricably intertwined with the concept of open society. For democracy to function, the values that debate encourages - reason, tolerance, the careful weighing of evidence, etc. - must be cherished and nurtured. But even within societies that restrict open discussion, debate can teach young people that no one person or government possesses the ultimate truth.

Debate is a formal contest of argumentation between two teams or individuals. More broadly, and more importantly, debate is an essential tool for developing and maintaining democracy and open societies. More than a mere verbal or performance skill, debate embodies the ideals of reasoned argument, tolerance for divergent points of view and rigorous self-examination. Debate is, above all, a way for those who hold opposing views to discuss controversial issues without descending to insult, emotional appeals or personal bias. A key trademark of debate is that it rarely ends in agreement, but rather allows for a robust analysis of the question at hand. Perhaps this is what French philosopher Joseph Joubert meant when he said: "It is better to debate a question without settling it, than to settle a question without debating it

Why Debate?

"Honest disagreement is often a good sign of progress." (Mahatma Gandhi)

The process of debate offers profound and lasting benefits for individuals, for societies and for the global community as a whole. With its emphasis on critical thinking, effective communication, independent research and teamwork, debate teaches skills that serve individuals well in school, in the workplace, in political life and in fulfilling their responsibilities as citizens of democratic societies. Once students

have learned how to debate, they are better able to critically examine the pronouncements of their political representatives and to make informed judgments about crucial issues.

The individual skills learned through debate have a broader impact on society as well. Because it teaches the principles of tolerance, nonviolence and respect for different points of view, debate can close the gap between minority and majority cultures, and other groups divided by longstanding animosities. FOL and IDEA, see debate as a way to foster international understanding, cooperation, and a free and lively exchange of ideas. As a process that both embodies and encourages peaceful discussion rather than aggressive confrontation, debate offers the world a tool that could not be more timely or more necessary.

The Karl Popper Debate Format

FOL Movement's debate program uses the Karl Popper debate format. At the secondary school level, debaters follow the Karl Popper debate format, which places students in two teams of three members. Teams are presented with a 'resolution', such as "Economic development should be valued above protection of the environment" or "Human genetic engineering is immoral".

The team affirming the resolution speaks first. The opposing team then must refute the arguments offered by the affirming team and offer arguments rejecting the resolution. Both sides are given the opportunity to present their positions and to directly question the opposing team. Neutral judges - usually parents or teachers - evaluate the persuasiveness of the arguments and offer constructive feedback on such elements as faulty logic, insufficient evidence and arguments debaters may have overlooked. Debate teams are judged strictly on the merits of their arguments.

Debate Clubs

Debate clubs are formed within schools, universities, youth clubs and community centers. Although they are usually initiated at the school level, they can also be formed in community and youth centers in countries where political conditions make it difficult to work within the school system. These clubs may then function as an educational program offered by the particular institution.

At the club level, debating teams, along with their coaches and other club members, prepare for tournaments and serve the broader school community. Parents, teachers, and community members are encouraged to participate as judges, fundraisers, and volunteers within the club program. Debate clubs are as inclusive as possible, and students of differing ages, grades, and abilities are encouraged to participate and contribute to the club and its efforts.

FOL has reached out to local NGO's in seven municipalities in order to establish debate clubs in cooperation with local secondary schools. The local partner does the recruitment and FOL organizes an initial training on the debate format. The club selects a debate coordinator who creates a schedule for regular meetings and debates on different topics. FOL monitors this process and offers help when requested. Throughout the year there are debate tournaments that are organized and each club is invited to participate. The winners of these tournaments are rewarded by supporting their participation in international and regional debate tournaments.

Debate tournaments

Debate tournaments consist of a set of preliminary debates, a 'round', in which all teams participate. In this preliminary stage, teams debate each side of the topic in alternating rounds:

a team that is affirmative in the first round will be negative in the second. The first round of a debate tournament normally pairs teams randomly. After the first round, teams are paired based on how well they have performed. With this system of pairing, tournaments ensure that teams encounter others at the same level. After the preliminary rounds are complete, the teams with the best records proceed to an elimination stage. The goal of the elimination rounds is to have the top teams debating in the final round. Tournaments involve a number of judges, whose responsibility is to offer feedback to the teams and to decide who wins the debate.

Our partners

The debate program of FOL Movement is funded by Kosovo Foundation for Open Society (KFOS-SOROS). Our implementing partners are:

- * Youth Initiative for Human Rights
- * Community Building Mitrovica
- * Initiative for Progress
- * Youth Center of Malisheva
- * Eye of the Vision
- * Youth Center of Suhareka and
- * Youth Council of Prizren


Our Mission

FOL Movement (The Speak Up! Movement) is a non-government organization established in 2008 that campaigns for active citizenry and increase of transparency and accountability of public institutions in order to contribute to good governance and prevent corruption.

In addition to strengthening the transparency and accountability of decision-making authorities and public officials, Speak Up works to open up new channels of communication between the government and citizens and reduce civic apathy through its Debate Program. Speak Up operates three programs: the Debate Program, the Good Governance Program, and the Public Engagement Program. Speak Up's programs focus on public expenditure, conflict of interest, institutional negligence, and accountability. Through research, advocacy campaigns, and networking, Speak Up increases public pressure on decision-makers to reduce public waste and abuse of power.

FOL in the European Parliament TV

[Check it out](#)



The screenshot shows the website www.europartv.eu with a video player for a report titled "Reporter: Divisions and corruption mar Kosovo's EU future". The video is 04:39 long and was published on 27/03/2012. It has 1 tweet and 1 recommendation. The video player shows the European Union flag and the text "europartv.eu". The player controls show a progress bar at 00:00 / 04:38, with options for subtitles (checked, english) and high bandwidth.

www.europartv.eu/en/player.aspx?pid=0c1bbcb2-457f-49e3-8c69-a02100a47fd0

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