

◆ *"My participation in the 'Promoting Tolerance' program reinforced my belief in the power of democracy and tolerance as a motor force for prosperity of every individual citizen and, hence, of entire nations."*

**Solomon Passy**

Bulgaria, 1995 Graduate

Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria (2001-2005)

Former Member of the Bulgarian Parliament

◆ *"For the participants coming from post-Communist and post-war countries, this program succeeded in adding precious ideas to my mind and soul. The cooperation of the AJC and FNF was inspiring. This teamwork provided a model for promoting the values of tolerance, an example which is necessary to develop in Europe in this post-war era."*

**Edita Tahiri**

Kosovo, 2003 Graduate

Minister of Public Administration of Kosovo

Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kosovo, (1991-2000)

◆ *"Tying people together by common values and a common language is an excellent basis for successful nation-building. Certainly the most emotionally impressive experience for me was our visit to the Holocaust Museum in Washington. Estonia has been one of the theatres of the two most terrible genocides in modern history. My obligation as a leading politician is to make sure that this will never happen again."*

**Kristiina Ojuland**

Estonia, 1996 Graduate

Member of the European Parliament

Minister of Foreign Affairs of Estonia (2002-2005)

◆ *"A good example of the diversity of the United States: very interesting and stimulating discussion."*

**Wojciech Borodziej-Smoliński**

Poland, 2007 Graduate

Co-ordinator of the Eastern Programme,

Centre for International Relations

◆ *"The program gave not only clear visions what, how and why people should tolerate each other, but also how valuable is cooperation, partnership and simple contacts among the ordinary people; opening borders and all political and other artificial barriers for peaceful relationship."*

**Gia Jandieri**

Georgia, 2008 Graduate

Vice-president of the New Economic School – Georgia

◆ *"This experience brought a level of self-awareness that I never dreamed of. It provided me with a raw model on what relationships should be between the state and its citizens on the one hand, and between community members on the other."*

**Adina-Ioana Vălean**

Romania, 2000 Graduate

Member of the European Parliament

Former Member of the Romanian Parliament

◆ *"There were exchanges of views and opinions on the current situation in the U.S., the world as a whole, the perception of Russia and somehow helped to break several stereotypes."*

**Dr. Galina Khartulari**

Russia, 2007 Graduate

Senior lecturer, Faculty of Applied Political Sciences,

Moscow's Higher School of Economics

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## Program

## PROMOTING TOLERANCE IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

## The Beginning

After the fall of Communism and the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the *Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom (FNF)* directed its resources towards the establishment of offices in Central, East and Southeast Europe, South Caucasus and Central Asia (CSEE). Its objective has been all along to support nascent efforts to build democracy and civic society.

The *American Jewish Committee (AJC)*, which had re-established connections with Jewish communities in the former communist countries, recognized that a Jewish revival in the region is dependent on a political environment committed to the values of democracy and tolerance and support for minority rights.

The FNF and the AJC realized that they shared a common goal and interest. A natural partnership emerged, which resulted in the program 'Promoting Tolerance in Central and Eastern Europe', inaugurated in 1992. Since then, more than 250 participants from the CSEE countries have contributed their knowledge, competence and enthusiasm to the promotion of tolerance.

The fact that 'Promoting Tolerance' is a cooperative German-Jewish program is no coincidence. The two sponsoring organizations have been promoting German-Jewish dialogue, understanding, and dealing with many of the difficult issues of the Holocaust. Through this program both organizations realized that working together demonstrates the possibility and value of reconciliation despite a difficult past. In a Europe where ethnic and religious conflicts are still painful, this program 'Promoting Tolerance' is their joint contribution to a better and more harmonious future.

## The Program

'Promoting Tolerance' is an annual program made up of the following three parts:

- ◆ *An Online Seminar* with useful basic texts on minority integration and human rights policies, training tasks and forum discussions on relevant subjects; the online seminar assists the subsequent two parts.
- ◆ *An International Seminar in Europe* which brings the participants together to both discuss the problems they face in their respective countries in combating intolerance and to develop methods for addressing the situation.
- ◆ *A Study Trip to the United States* is the core element of the program. It offers an opportunity to become familiar with the American models of inter-ethnic coexistence. AJC ensures that participants are exposed to a large variety of public and private projects and initiatives. The goal is not to instruct but to demonstrate. The intent is to contribute to the establishment of valuable contacts and the exchange of useful examples to be replicated back home.

### Sample Topics

- ◆ The Role of Civil Society in Promoting Ethnic and Religious Tolerance (1999)
- ◆ Media and Minorities (2000)
- ◆ Promoting Tolerance on the Local and Regional Levels (2001)
- ◆ Role of Political Parties in Promoting Tolerance (2002)
- ◆ Role of Media in Promoting Tolerance (2003)
- ◆ Role of Young Political Leaders in Promoting Tolerance (2004)
- ◆ Role of Culture in Promoting Tolerance (2005)
- ◆ National Pride and Ethnic Prejudice (2006)
- ◆ Interethnic Tolerance and the Role of Politics (2007)
- ◆ Challenges for the Southern Caucasus: Democracy and inter-ethnic Tolerance (2008)
- ◆ Does the multi-ethnic State have a Future? Experiences in multi-ethnic Societies and Conflict Resolution Strategies (2009)
- ◆ Promoting multi-ethnic Societies. How to do it? (2010)

## Participants

The program focuses on young liberal politicians and open minded, liberal representatives of civil societies in Central, East and Southeast Europe, South Caucasus and Central Asia. Program participants are selected by the six FNF project offices in the CSEE region.

The web-based group of program alumni allows the communication and exchange of ideas and experiences even after the end of the annual program.



## Program Goals

The goals of 'Promoting Tolerance' are:

- ◆ Promoting a climate of tolerance, pluralism, respect and an appreciation of diversity
- ◆ Improving the rights of minorities and creating an atmosphere of mutual acceptance
- ◆ Exchanging 'best practice' experiences of multicultural societies
- ◆ Encouraging cross-border co-operation
- ◆ Promoting Tolerance through the strengthening of Civil Society
- ◆ Establishing and strengthening contacts between the various levels of society through the efforts of the program's open-minded, liberal participants and alumni.

