

2019



Period of great contrasts, uncertainty, yet of hope, too.

I perceived the year 2019 as a period of great contrasts, uncertainty, yet of hope, too. I believe that the steps we have made as an organisation do make sense now and will do towards the future.

For example, it was the year when even the most optimistic people lost their illusions about the conduct by some of the

judges, prosecutors and police officers, including those in the highest positions, shocked by Slovakia's horrendous level of perfection in the abduction of the state. On the other hand, for example, it was the first time we heard some other prosecutors publicly take a stand and critically identify the problems of their institution.

The full nudity has also been revealed of the relationship of those who have the power to the fundamental democratic institutions. The political elite let it happen that the Constitutional Court, an absolutely crucial pillar of the rule of law and the state, was simply put out of operation for a long time. On the other hand, finally we managed to select and appoint constitutional judges in such a manner allowing the new Constitutional Court to be better than its predecessor.

While we as a society have the right to feel that justice does not work across the board equally for all, we are able to lend a helpful hand to individual people, and win over injustice.

The vocabulary of many public officials has gotten even grosser, and unsubstantiated conspiracies concerning the civil society still remained strong not only in the so-called "alternative" scene, but also among regular politicians. Nevertheless, the parliament did not pass a repeated draft bill prepared by the People's Party – Our Slovakia (ĽSNS) on labelling NGOs as foreign agents, and opinion polls show that non-profit organisations are still trusted by 55 to 60 % of the population.

The society's best response of all to the conspiracies was the election of Zuzana

Čaputová, our long-time colleague who spent most of her professional life in the civil sector, as the President of the Slovak Republic.

Of course, many more took events place in 2019. On the following pages you can take a closer look at what we focused on and what successes we have achieved. I am proud of all the VIA IURIS team, all colleagues who made their utmost efforts to make Slovakia more normal and fairer.

Please do not take it as a phrase, but everything that we did, we could only do thanks to those who believe in our mission and support it financially. There are hundreds of you now and I want to thank you all very much!

PS: In 2019, we also bid farewell to White Crow and let it set out flying in the world. It is in the best hands, though.



Milan Šagát
Executive Director



Programme pillars

I

Citizen

We strive to ensure that the public can effectively participate in public governance. In order for us, citizens, to be able to participate in the permitting procedures that have an impact on our lives. In order to have access to information and access to the courts in matters of public interest, such as environmental protection or efficient and responsible functioning of the state and local governments. We look for and help active people who are intimidated in defending the public interests.

II

Civil Society

An authentic civil society, one of the pillars of freedom and democracy, is endangered by unsystematic legislative proposals, populist statements of politicians and disinformation campaigns by the media that spread conspiracy theories. We stood at the birth of the civil sector in Slovakia. Today, we rebut the false myths of NGOs, and guard the legislative environment so as to make sure that the citizens of the Slovak Republic may freely express their opinions, get together and participate actively in the governance and control of public affairs in the future.

III

Rule of Law

We promote systematic measures that strengthen the independent work of the courts, prosecutors and the police corps, with no political influence. These institutions are the foundation of a functioning rule of law, with equality before the law and enforceability of justice. These authorities should guarantee the exercise of power by the elected representatives in the public interest and not to the private benefit of chosen oligarchs. They ought to guarantee that every person, including politicians, should be held accountable equally for any violations of law.



VIA IURIS in 2019

Civil compass

In a long term, VIA IURIS has supported active citizens who care about what country and environment we live in. Lending a hand to people who express their opinion, concern, comment or disagreement, is a matter of course for us. After all, one of the advantages of democracy is the possibility to participate in public affairs and express an opinion by a range of legal means such as a petition or by founding of a civic association. The law also gives the public many opportunities to not only be informed but also participate in decisions about activities that affect the environment. Also, it provides guidance to have a say in investment plans in the area and require authorities and municipalities to work properly.

In order to help resolve legal problems

easily without a lawyer's assistance, while increasing the legal awareness of the public, in the past we prepared the Civil Compass. In 2019, the programme's details were updated and a new topic was included. Thirteen manuals are intended to help the public become familiar with the set of issues, answer the frequently asked questions, and offer model submissions or argumentation points for specific problems.

Rather than providing legal advice, the Civil Compass is used for the purpose of guidance and sharing experiences in the areas covered by our organisation's activities.

How to start a civic association? How to convene an assembly? How to participate in lawmaking? How to retrieve information? How to interact with failing local government? How to influence

investment plans in our area? How to act when being intimidated for your activities? How to write up a petition properly? How to tackle inactive authorities? How to prevent interference with property rights and privacy? How to participate in environmental protection? What are the basic rules of procedure of state bodies and municipalities? How to tackle air pollution?

The full information is available at www.viaiuris.sk/obciansky-kompas



Eva Kováčechová rejoins the VIA IURIS team

After a two-year break, Eva Kováčechová, an advocate, made a comeback to our team last summer. She had worked with VIA IURIS as a lawyer, lecturer and advocate since 1999. Eva Kováčechová has worked as an advocate since 2002. She was dedicated primarily the topics of civic participation in decision-making, controlling the exercise of power by public authorities, and judicial reform. She has provided legal assistance in cases of violations of fundamental rights. She also represented a number of judges who faced disciplinary action at the time when the Supreme Court was chaired by Štefan Harabin. In 2017 he became director of the Centre for Legal Aid. One of the most important issues she tackled when working at the Centre was the administrative procedure of personal bankruptcy.



"My two-year mission at the Centre was indeed quite demanding, yet a very useful and rewarding experience. I believe that I will use the experience from my time at the governmental organisation in my legal profession and in the collaboration with VIA IURIS, which is something I look forward to very much."

Eva Kováčechová
Lawyer

"Eva Kováčechová was once one of the key people at VIA IURIS. I was very happy about her decision to return to the organisation. Eva's broad knowledge and vast experience are a great asset to all areas of our focus."

Milan Šagát
Executive Director of VIA IURIS



The White Crow

After eleven wonderful and crucial years with the White Crow, we made a big decision in VIA IURIS in 2019.

The White Crow that we have founded and awarded annually in liaison with the Fair Play Alliance, has grown since 2008 into a strong brand, confirming the importance of gratitude and support for the brave people in our society.

However, the need for a continued development and further collaboration with the White Crow brought an agreement between the two organisations to hand over the management and development of the award to an independent entity. For this reason the White Crow was taken over by the Tichá voda ("Quiet Water") civic association.

VIA IURIS and Fair-play Alliance will continue to support the award as its founders. VIA IURIS is represented in the White Crow's Board by our colleague, lawyer Eva Kováčechová.

In 2019, four people were awarded the White Crow for their courage as citizens.

Mária Sisáková, a pensioner from the village Zbudza near Michalovce, brought to the attention certain suspicious transfers of land that her neighbours had lost.

Milan Igor Hudák is one of the Roma people who were beaten during the police raid in Moldava nad Bodvou in June, 2013.

Branislav Tvarožka who took part in the Slovak National Uprising and **Eduard Marek** who took part in the Prague Uprising and was persecuted by communists.



"The White Crow was created as a unique project of two renowned civic organisations, and has established itself as a respected social institution. I have been pleased professionally to work together in organising the Awards, also as a long-time member of the Board and, beforehand, as the project coordinator. The colleagues from VIA IURIS, and I believe that this step was necessary and will enable the White Crow to become even stronger and make the best use of its broad social potential."

Milan Šagát
Executive Director of VIA IURIS



Zuzana Čaputová elected as the first Slovak Ms. President.

We monitored the situation around the presidential elections in the first months of the year. In March, the citizens cast their votes to elect the highest constitutional official, the fifth one in the sequence from the establishment of the independent Slovak Republic. After the inauguration in June, Zuzana Čaputová became the first ever female President of the Slovak Republic.

We were happy to receive the news at VIA IURIS, as Zuzana Čaputová worked with us for a long time as our former colleague. Humanly and professionally, we wish Madam President achieved every success in her new position.

Essay Contest – Problems and Challenges of the Rule of Law in Slovakia

For the second time, we organised a contest for law students, this time on the topic titled "Problems and Challenges the Rule of Law in Slovakia".

The winning essay, THE RULE OF LAW AS AN INDIVIDUAL'S ASPIRATION, was written by Maroš Hodor, a Slovak student attending the London School of Economics and Political Science: **"I really like the idea of the contest. It motivates young lawyers to consider the current legal issues and also allows them to present their ideas in front of an expert jury."**

Our great thanks go to the members of the expert jury, who spent long hours studying and evaluating all registered essays.

"As always, through the selection of the topics, VIA IURIS has demonstrated the ability to accurately cover the problems of the Slovak society in whose veins the value of the rule of law pulsates, apparently with an increasing irregularity, as one of the cornerstone values of the the Slovak Republic's Constitution. Altogether, the essayists created a very promising team of future lawyers. While using their skills and knowledge acquired through education they contested to write the best essay, they all can be regarded as the winners in the end, because, as I believe, the mere participation in an open exchange of opinions on the complex topic of rule of law, for which the civic association VIA IURIS had established a creative platform, greatly benefited all of the contestants."

Daniel Šváby

Judge of the Court of Justice of the European Union, one of the jurors





Rule of Law

The rule of law in VIA IURIS in 2019

Exremely low public confidence in the rule of law in Slovakia in the long term, and, subsequently, some publicised information on the influence of oligarchs on politicians and the judiciary have shown that it is necessary to continue to put forward systematic changes that can contribute to a credible and responsible functioning of rule-of-law institutions.

"It is understandable that this information causes public frustration and doubts whether the elected politicians actually pursue the public interest and whether the judiciary and prosecutors are really able to act independently and impartially."

Kristína Babiaková

An attorney-at-law collaborating with VIA IURIS

The election of candidates for the Constitutional Court's judges

For the second year, we covered the election of new constitutional judges. In January 2019 the marathon taking months started, which eventually resulted in five elections (nine ballots) in the National Council of the Slovak Republic. Nine constitutional judges left their seats in February 2019, but the list of new candidates was not completed until September. The whole process of election was marked by strong political influences and partly of fully put this key institution out of operation.

The system of choosing new constitutional judges was left unchanged by the government despite some efforts, and so in 2019 we concentrated on the hearings and election of applicants

for candidates by the Constitutional Committee. The topic of selecting constitutional judges became one of the most watched political and social issues of the year and influenced the presidential election campaign, too.

In VIA IURIS, we prepared:

- 54 authored profiles of applicants for candidates
- 30 basic questions for the applicants that were used in the hearings by the Constitutional Committee
- 94 lawyers supported our Call addressed to the members of the National Council of the Slovak Republic to vote responsibly and make the Constitutional Court functional again.

www.zadobruvolbu.sk

On the website of our campaign we focused on the important information not only about why the Constitutional Court is important and what decisions it makes, but we also made the public familiar with individual nominees to candidates for constitutional judges through CVs and authored profiles. During the election that took nine months, we updated the page with thematic news, records of each hearing and ballots in parliament. www.zadobruvolbu.sk was also a success among both general public and professionals.

"What I think is an excellent project is the the website Zadobruvolbu.sk prepared by the VIA IURIS."

Tomáš Němeček
lawyer and journalist in
an interview for Postoj.sk.

Questions for applicants

From the beginning of the year we worked with external experts to prepare 30 basic questions for the upcoming public hearings of applicants for the candidates for constitutional judges. We sent the list of questions divided into six thematic areas to the members of parliament, who then asked the applicants the same questions.

Public vs. secret ballot

Throughout the time we advanced the idea that MPs would vote for candidates for constitutional judges in a public ballot, so that citizens would know who the MPs elected by them voted for, and the MPs would be held responsible for their votes. We made efforts to argue in favour of a public ballot using expert opinions, as well as other activities.

"If the interests of political parties and politicians continue to prevail over the public interests, as it was for example in the selection of judges of the Constitutional Court, which was made almost inoperative for seven months by the MPs, we cannot expect an improvement in public confidence in the institutions of the rule of law."

Kristína Babiaková
an attorney-at-law collaborating
with VIA IURIS

A call by 94 lawyers

As the situation had led to a state that one of the most crucial institutions in the country was partly or completely dysfunctional a few months, at the end of March we initiated a call by 94 law personalities addressed to the MPs.

We demanded their responsible approach to the election, making the Constitutional Court functional again by electing the candidates. The signatories of the Call included former judges of the Constitutional Court, the Public Defender of Rights, the sitting and former judges of the Supreme Court, judges other ordinary courts, university rector, deans of law faculties, academics, and other lawyers.

More of our Rule of Law activities:

Measures to Improve the Rule of Law

A number of scandals that had been uncovered led to a significant decline in public confidence in the judiciary. Moreover, even when misconduct had been found, no individuals were held accountable to present the public with a sense of a true rectification. For that reason, in 2019, VIA IURIS focused on the search for solutions to raise the level of confidence in Prosecutor's Offices, the Constitutional Court, and the legislative process.

Following an initial expert analysis and a series of meetings with lawyers, judges, businessmen and representatives of companies, we decided to focus on measures that would positively shape the selection of new prosecutors and judges of the Constitutional Court and put disciplinary proceedings to work. Also, we thought that we can propose the system changes effectively from the position of the public only if the process of adopting laws in the parliament is sufficiently transparent and predictable.

In November, we sent our expert measures for improvement of prosecutors' credibility to political parties and relevant institutions, including the President and the General Prosecutor's Office. We suggested changes be made regarding the election of the general and special prosecutors, selection of new prosecutors and streamlining and opening the process of disciplinary proceedings.

We also discussed our ideas with the Council of Prosecutors, consisting of prosecutors from all over Slovakia. Meanwhile, Prosecutor General's Office created a working group to prepare amendments to prosecutorial laws, where representatives were invited from VIA IURIS as the only civil society entity involved.

The changes aimed at the functioning of the Constitutional Court and the legislative process will be presented in 2020.



Civil Society

Civil Society

The Civil Society programme is the most recently built pillar of VIA IURIS. We are active in supporting and safeguarding the civil sector both at the national level and through international cooperation.

"I see the civil society as a fundamental element of democracy and I consider the preservation of a healthy environment to be essential for the society's functioning. I am happy to be on the VIA IURIS team. I believe I can make a valuable use of my previous experience both in the Civil Society pillar and within the organisation."

Ivana Kohutková
koordinátorka programu
Občianska spoločnosť

The Civic Organisations' Voice Platform

Over the recent years, attacks on the civil sector by extreme political groups and conspirational driven media have grown considerably. They became part of communications in a number of parties. As part of our long-term vision to contribute to improving the environment for the functioning of civil society, in collaboration with the Youth Council of Slovakia and the Centre for Philanthropy, we established an informal platform of civil society organisations and initiatives – The Voice of Civil Society Organisations.

In May, 34 founding members – a variety of organisations and initiatives from all over Slovakia, with different focus areas, of different sizes and in different legal forms – adopted the Memorandum of

Cooperation. By the end of 2019, the total membership grew to 45, and the platform remains open to more other civil society organisations and initiatives.

Drafting Public Policies

A good set-up of legislative, financial and institutional framework is key for a well-functioning civil society.

The Drafting Public Policies document developed concurrently with the platform contains recommendations for improving and protecting the status quo. The document was signed by 37 organisations. The majority of signatories are the members of the Platform. Having sent our proposals to all democratic parties and the newly created political entities, we personally discussed our recommendations with representatives of parties who expressed interest in the topic. A dialogue with political parties is

inevitable to preserve a good environment of a functioning civil society in Slovakia.

NGOs trusted by more than a half of the population

The Voice of Civil Society Organisations seeks active involvement in cultivating the civil society and in building good relations, mutual support and open debate – internally in the civil sector and externally with the public. Therefore, a platform survey conducted by the Focus agency in September was very helpful for further discussions with representatives of public authorities, as well as among professionals and the broader general public. More than a half of the respondents (55%) said they fully trust or tend to trust NGOs. The most important finding, though, was that there is a greater lack of confidence among people who are unable to define or do not know any NGO activities. Put simply, informing consistently on the activities, events and

funding of NGOs improves public confidence.

A complete survey results are available at the website www.platformahlas.sk which was launched in September 2019 and contains important information about the formation, members and the possibilities of joining the platform.

"I am delighted that we have won the favour of a man like Ivana, because of her experience and expertise. One of our priorities is to protect and improve the environment for the civil society, because we think it is important for Slovak citizens to be free to express themselves, assemble and actively participate in the management and control of public affairs."

Milan Šagát
Executive Director of VIA IURIS

More of our Civil Society activities

An important part of the Civil Society pillar is the protection of civic leaders, organisations, and initiatives. To that end, we provided legal assistance and organisational and campaign communication consulting throughout the year. For example, in liaison with the Open Society Foundation in Bratislava, we prepared a programme titled From Activism to Advocacy focused on campaign planning for selected organisations.

The year 2019 brought a change in the management of the Civil Society programme. The coordinator, our long-time colleague Juraj Rizman, was replaced by Ivana Kohutková.



Citizen

Excellent News for White Crow, Ms. Lapinová, and the River Hron

Our long-term efforts are not only intended to ensure that the public can effectively participate in public affairs, but also to lend a helping hand to active people who are not afraid to express their opinions, concern or disagreement and defend justice despite obstacles and intimidation.

In 2019, we assisted in 11 strategic cases and provided 81 legal consultations, particularly with regard to the environment, access to information, protection of personal rights, the right to petition or problems with dysfunctional local government.

We were all very pleased with the outcome of the case concerning Ms.

Ľubica Lapinová, the White Crow, with a double win for environmentalists on the Hron, as well as with our project to improve the functioning of government in the domain of environment.

"This year it has been confirmed again to me that a serious approach, expert argumentation and perseverance in solving the problem open up the way for mutual respect among ideological opponents, but especially respect for actual and perdurable results. I appreciate that the work of VIA IURIS is embellished with such qualities."

Imrich Vozár

lawyer, coordinator of the VIA IURIS's Citizen programme

The Story of White Crow Ľubica Lapinová Has a Happy Ending

After seven years, the National Forest Centre (NLC) finally paid Ms. Ľubica Lapinová her wage compensation as the the courts had held that the employer had terminated her employment illegally. In the end, the whole dispute was settled by mutual agreement, with the help of VIA IURIS and the cooperating lawyers, Eva Kováčechová and Kristína Babiaková.

"You will get further with the truth than with lies. I was raised to know that when I say the truth, there is nothing to be entangled in."

Ľubica Lapinová

Ľubica Lapinová did her job responsibly for decades as the only internal auditor

of the National Forest Centre in Zvolen. Having pointed out some irregularities in the public procurement process in the well-known case of Forestportal, her life changed dramatically. Early in 2012 she received an employment termination notice for redundancy, although she was the only internal auditor at that time.

After she lost her job, she lived on social benefits for some time, participated in activation works, to make the ends meet. Ľubica had to face two criminal charges by her former employer that were eventually dropped as unfounded, and also defamation of her person and the work she had been doing for years without any reservations. When the court ruled in her favour three years ago and finally held the termination notice invalid, Ms. Ľubica Lapinová thought the remedy would be quick to arrive.

"The court, however, did not continue the proceedings, waiting for the decision of the Supreme Court, although it was not obliged to do so. Following the decision of the Supreme Court, which upheld again the illegality of the dismissal, the National Forest Centre finally recognised Ms. Lapinová's claim for salary compensation and the salary was paid based on a mutual agreement," Kristína Babiaková, the lawyer cooperating with VIA IURIS, noted.



More of our Citizen activities:

The construction of small hydroelectric power plants – for a moment, the Hron can breathe a sigh of relief

In connection with the persistent pressure on massive deployment of small hydroelectric power plants, VIA IURIS provides legal support and consultations and helps active citizens, also by legal representation in the individual cases. In a series of legal disputes on the controversial construction of small hydroelectric power plants on the Hron, in 2019 we saw two great achievements thanks to which the Hron can breathe a sigh of relief, for a while.

Hronský Beňadik

The locals and environmentalists from

the river conservation association Rieka – združenie na ochranu vodných tokov and the Slatinka Association, challenged in court the process of environmental impact assessment of the power plant planned in Hronský Beňadik. In addition to an inadequate assessment of environmental impacts, the small hydroelectric power plant was planned contrary to the zoning plan of the Banská Bystrica region, given the conflict with the preferred requirement of not impairing the attractiveness of the Hron a tourist waterway. In the case of the Hronský Beňadik hydroelectric power plant, the inadequate environmental impact assessment was also criticised by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), which endorsed the action.

The good news came in February 2019 when the Regional Court in Banská

Bystrica annulled the final opinion on the environmental impact assessment of the small hydroelectric power plant in Hronský Beňadik on the grounds of unlawfulness.

Iliaš

It was the second time that the District Office in Banská Bystrica decided on the decision not to assess the environmental impacts of the planned small hydroelectric power plant in Iliaš (a part



of Banská Bystrica), despite the fact that the Regional Court in Banská Bystrica had recently annulled a similar decision of the Office on the grounds of illegality. For that reason, the river conservation association Rieka – združenie na ochranu vodných tokov, the Slatinka Association and the local association Za dôstojnú Radvaň, with our help, brought to court a new action, which challenged the decision again.

The complaint pointed out that the District Office had failed to respect the court's ruling of 2017 and to eliminate a number of major errors despite of the binging nature of the Court's ruling on the Office. The Office's decision had not been explained sufficiently, and many public comments had not been answered at all. In addition, the legislation changed in the meantime. In the new legal settings, such a type of power plants must be subject to a mandatory complex environmental impact assessment. The Office did not take that into account, either.

However, at the end of September, the environmentalists and we were very pleased when the Court upheld our action and annulled the challenged decision for its illegality, supporting nearly all the action

points. The District Office is to decide on the matter for the third time.

We commented on three draft bills

Our legislative efforts in 2019 included activities dedicated to amendments to the Act on Forests and the Nature Conservation Act. In the summer we participated in commenting three draft new laws.

In cooperation with the Slatinka Association, in the environmental impact assessment draft bill we focused on maintaining the rights of the public in relation to the participation in proceedings, as well as other problematic parts of the bill, which did not sufficiently address the problems of the present practice.

Together with the Buildings for Future association, we took part in commenting on the new draft building development act and the new draft land zoning act, both prepared by the Ministry of Transport and Construction of the Slovak Republic. The newly drafted Building Act contained some provisions that we considered dangerous and that would severely restrict the rights of citizens in relation to building permits. In the comments on the two draft laws, we concentrated on not permitting any building projects where a permit would not comply with environmental regulations, and on strengthening the rights of the public and communities in procurement and approval of municipal zoning plans.

We discussed the comments of the three bills with the relevant ministries, however, in view of the upcoming

parliamentary elections, not enough time was left for the submission and approval of the draft laws in the ongoing parliamentary term.

Better state governance in the field of environment

"The state administration is the backbone of the state. Without a well-functioning state administration, it is not possible for the executive power to sufficiently and efficiently fulfil its tasks under the law. Especially when it concerns the constitutional obligation of the state to protect and improve the environment, which almost existentially dependent on the proper functioning of the state administration, the government. Therefore, we made some attempts to identify and name some of the problems that the state administration has to face in environmental protection plague, and to outline a solution."

Imrich Vozár

coordinator of the Citizen programme,
VIA IURIS

The aim of this project was to identify systemic weaknesses in the decision-making processes of state administration in environmental protection, with a following analysis, expert discussions and, of course, the search for solutions to eliminate the weaknesses of the system. In the project, we focused on employees of district offices at environmental care departments, as well as the employees of the Ministry of Environment and the public authorities managed by the Ministry. An extensive questionnaire survey and follow-up personal meetings with the employees of the competent authorities raised issues such as the abuse of rights in proceedings under the EIA Act and the Act on Free Access to Information, and the organisation of environmental care by the state.

After processing the analysis, some of the conclusions were discussed in expert

round-tables with a participation of a broad range of selected stakeholders.

The analysis elaborated by an expert team composed of VIA IURIS lawyers and selected experts was then presented at a conference in Banská Bystrica in November. In our presentation we also introduced a draft new model of functioning of the state administration in the field of nature and landscape conservation, which essentially consisted in a transformation of the State Nature Protection of the Slovak Republic to a governmental body, with an alternative of an independent status of the existing administrations of national parks.

The analysis, the conference's outcomes and the detailed draft of a new organisational structure of government in nature conservation will form the basis for further expert discussion on this

topic and will be made available to the public, state institutions and all relevant political parties.



Podpora

We care because we live here

"In VIA IURIS we work towards ensuring that the laws in Slovakia apply equally to everyone. Common people, politicians, and influential investors.

We have adopted a truly responsible attitude to the work we do. We strive to not only point out the things that do not work, but also to offer solutions that will benefit the society as a whole at end of the day.

It is great that there are people all over Slovakia who care about how we live in our country and have a desire to change things for the better. We meet many in our work, and it is these people who are the reason for us to try even harder.

Thanks to all of you who believe in our mission and stand with us. Any kind of encouraging feedback, each one kind e-mail, every single gift mean a huge support to us. Thanks to you we are aware that we are not alone in it.

The more of us, the more we can achieve together."



Monika Tomeková
VIA IURIS Fundraising and Projects

Finance

EXPENSES IN 2019

TOTAL EXPENSES	444 976,78 €	100,00%
PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION EXPENSES	294 539,54 €	66,19%
Citizen Programme	165 942,63 €	37,29%
Civil Society Programme	70 860,14 €	15,92%
Rule of Law Programme	38 267,57 €	8,60%
White Crow Awards	19 469,20 €	4,38%

ORGANISATION'S MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT	107 734,13 €	24,21%
Management of the organisations, projects and grants, fund-raising, communication	99 439,33 €	22,35%
Expenses for the provision of commercial services	3 605,00 €	0,81%
Website and presentation materials	2 013,65 €	0,45%
Expert literature, software	1 864,43 €	0,42%
Capacity building and training	811,72 €	0,18%

OPERATING AND ORGANISATIONAL EXPENSES	38 156,48 €	8,57%
Office operating expenses	17 072,88 €	3,84%
On-line services and software	8 080,95 €	1,82%
Computing and communication equipment	5 288,28 €	1,19%
Travel expenses	2 758,72 €	0,62%
Consultations and meetings	2 332,77 €	0,52%
Communication expenses	999,68 €	0,22%
Banking and official fees	513,59 €	0,12%
Taxes (on income, property, interest)	209,61 €	0,05%
Financial audit	900,00 €	0,20%

OTHER EXPENSES	4 546,63 €	1,02%
Membership fees and contributions	500,00 €	0,11%
Loan	1 452,00 €	0,33%
Other expenditure	2 594,63 €	0,58%

INCOME IN 2019

TOTAL INCOME	469 281,34 €	100,00%
INCOME IN GRANTS	342 333,04 €	72,95%
Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic	92 255,95 €	19,66%
Network of European Foundations	80 033,26 €	17,05%
Open Society Foundations	79 370,01 €	16,91%
Active Citizens Fund Slovakia	27 792,82 €	5,92%
Fund for Transparent Slovakia	14 040,00 €	2,99%
Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands	14 000,00 €	2,98%
United States Embassy	896,00 €	0,19%
ClientEarth	9 435,00 €	2,01%
Ministry of Justice of the Slovak Republic	5 000,00 €	1,07%
Nadácia ESET foundation	5 000,00 €	1,07%
Nadácia Slovenskej sporiteľne foundation	5 000,00 €	1,07%
Program LIFE	4 030,00 €	0,86%
International Visegrad Fund	4 100,00 €	0,87%
PILnet	1 380,00 €	0,29%

DONATIONS, ASSIGNED TAX AND REGULAR SUPPORT	121 223,04 €	25,83%
Donations	83 166,36 €	17,72%
Assigned tax received (2 %)	28 056,68 €	5,98%
Slovak Telekom (donation)	5 000,00 €	1,07%
Soitron (membership fee, Amicus Club)	5 000,00 €	1,07%

SELF-FINANCING	5 725,26 €	1,22%
Income from trade – from contracts and merch sales	4 065,00 €	0,87%
Other (repaid loans, interest)	1 660,26 €	0,35%

Our activities have been financially supported by:



We have worked in liaison with:



Our team of people decided to fight for a fairer Slovakia



Milan Šagát
Executive Director



Kristína Babiaková
Lawyer



Imrich Vozár
Lawyer



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(until June 2019)



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(since June 2019)



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Ivana Figuli
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Independent Auditor's Report

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the statutory body of the civic association VIA IURIS

REPORT ON THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of the civic association VIA IURIS (the "Association"), which comprise the balance sheet as at 31 December 2019, and the income statement for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements give a true and fair view of the financial position of the Association as at 31 December 2019, and its financial performance for the year then ended in accordance with the Act on Accounting No. 431/2002 Coll. as amended (the "Act on Accounting").

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements* section of our report. We are independent of the Association in accordance with the provisions of Act No. 423/2015 Coll. on Statutory Audit and on Amendment to and Supplementation of Act No. 431/2002 Coll. on Accounting, as amended (hereinafter the "Act on Statutory Audit") related to ethical requirements, including the Code of Ethics for Auditors that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Other matter

The Association does not meet the criteria for the statutory audit of financial statements in accordance with the Accounting Act, and therefore does not even have to prepare an annual report. The audit of the financial statements was decided voluntarily.

Responsibility of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation of the financial statements to give a true and fair view in accordance with the Act on Accounting, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the Association's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting, unless management either intends to liquidate the Association or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for oversight of the Association's financial reporting process.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with International Standards on Auditing will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Association's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Association's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Association to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance, among other matters, about the planned scope and schedule of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

This is a translation of the original Slovak Auditor's Report, financial statements have not been translated. For a full understanding of the information stated in the Auditor's Report, the Report should be read in conjunction with the full set of financial statements prepared in Slovak.

Banská Bystrica, 31 May 2020

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Your support is invaluable to us.

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