

Poradna Rewarded with the 2012 French Republic's Human Rights Prize

Kosice, Paris, 10 December 2012: The Slovak non-governmental organization Center for Civil and Human Rights (Poradna) received the French Republic's Human Rights Prize, *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity*, for its human rights protection work in Slovakia. Poradna is the first NGO from the post-communist Central Europe to receive the prize.

This prestigious Human Rights Prize, established in 1988, is awarded for individual or collective action on a ground in a field of human rights, irrespective of nationality or borders, by the French National Consultative Commission on Human Rights (Commission).

Poradna is first ever NGO from the post-communist Central Europe to be honoured with this prize. Poradna was rewarded for its long standing work in a field of defending rights of Roma minority, in Slovakia, in particular of forcibly sterilized Roma women in Slovakia.

Representative of Poradna, Ms Vanda Durbakova, received the prize from Christiane Taubira, Minister of Justice, on 10 December 2012, during a ceremony in Paris commemorating International Human Rights Day.

"Although our work is not motivated by receiving prizes, Poradna feels honoured and privileged by the decision of the Commission. The prize will encourage us to continue our work in supporting those who face discrimination in Slovakia and whose human rights are violated," said Durbakova.

"We also receive the prize at a really symbolic time, when after ten years of our fight against the practice of forced sterilizations of Romani women the European Court of Human Rights ruled in favour of forcibly sterilized Roma women and provided them with compensation. Those decisions bring hope not only to us, but also to communities we are working with, that Slovak government will finally take this issue seriously." added Durbakova.

"On behalf of all staff and members of Poradna, I would like to thank the French authorities for this award and for their support to our grass-root work," concluded Durbáková.

Poradna is a human rights organization, based in Košice, Slovakia, founded in 2001. It conducts advocacy, strategic litigation and educational activities to combat discrimination against Roma in the country. In 2002, Poradna documented the practice of forced sterilization of Romani women. Since then, it has been litigating individual cases of forced sterilization in the domestic proceedings and at the European Court of Human Rights and advocating for the redress to the victims of this practice.

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