

Annus Mirabilis: Commemorating the 20th Anniversary of the Transitions in Central and Eastern Europe

Objectives

The project aims to analyze the political, historical, and social background of the late 1980s, to assess and synthesize the essence of the peaceful transitions of Central and Eastern Europe and to commemorate the events of the exceptional year 1989.

Background

Central and Eastern Europe is celebrating the 20th anniversary of its countries' transitions in 2009. The project will not only commemorate the year 1989 in a dignified way, but will also provide countries in transition with the lessons learned. The ICDT will analyze the effects of transition from a historical, political, and civil society point of view and, thus, provide a useful tool for those who are facing the same phenomena now, which Central and Eastern European countries were facing in the late 1980s.

Project

The Centre intends to collect the experiences of prominent figures of the transitions and respective events of the late 1980s through three conferences held in 2009. In co-operation with eight Budapest-based embassies, the ICDT organized a high-level international conference in March 2009, which analyzed the changes regarding foreign policy. Participants from Central and Eastern, as well as West European countries evoked their memories of the events in 1989. The subject of the second conference in June 2009 is the historically exceptional event of the Pan-European Picnic of August 1989, and historians and politicians will jointly evoke the events of the symbolic gesture of opening the border between Austria and Hungary twenty years ago. The third conference in October 2009 gathers the representatives of organizations that played a key role in nurturing and supporting the development of civil society in the region. To round off the commemoration, the last conference examines how civil society was "born" in the late 1980s, observes what changes it has gone through since, and what the main lessons are.

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