

Meeting with Mikhail Fedotov, Chairman of the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation (Council of the President of the Russian Federation on Development of Civil Society and Human Rights), Doctor of Laws, Professor

Moscow, 14 November 2012

Notes by Svetlana Pasti of what was told by Mikhail Fedotov:

The Council of the President of the Russian Federation on Development of Civil Society and Human Rights worked with President Medvedev in 2009-2012. It had 40 members, among them well-known journalists, human rights activists and leaders of human rights organizations. Now the Council is extended by one third. One third of the previous Council left. Now there are 62 members in the Council. This is a little too much. In the old Council actively worked 15 people, now active members are about 20.

Two days ago we had a meeting with President Putin. In our sessions we have examined for example the "Khimki forest" conflict between ecologists and local authority in Khimki city. We invited the mayor, the police, procurator ship, ministry of ecology and protesting people and a result the conflict was softened. One session was dedicated to the problem of closure of the archives of the 2nd World War. We attained so that the Defense Ministry would publish the edict to open these documents. Another session was dedicated to the conditions of people in the prisons and in particular to the matter of Magnitsky. As a result, we attained that our members of council could be present at the judicial sessions, what earlier never it was. The Investigation committee asked to give to it experts from our council. One special session was dedicated to the rights of people on the elections. Another session was about introduction of alternative military service in the country. For each session we assume the recommendations, which then go to the President. The President charges to work with these recommendations and then they report from the accomplished work. I would like to issue laws, but there is the President for this and parliament. Government apparatus works ineffectively, slowly; they perceive us, the public organization, as partisans.

On the initiative of our Council the concept of public television has been promoted. Last year we created a working group and turned to Medvedev with the proposal to create public television in Russia. We proposed to transform the government television into a public television. Medvedev decided to make otherwise, to create public television along with the government television. At the meeting with Putin yesterday I raised this question and Putin said that this is supported. The Council for public television is already established. This is an independent organization from us, an initiator of public television in Russia. This independent organization is established not in the manner that we proposed earlier. We have not very high opinion about it, but we will look and are prepared to help.

We have a lot of independent media in Russia. However, the bigger is the independence, the smaller is the audience; the greater the audience, the greater is dependence. All federal television channels are the state channels. We want to attain so that the heads of federal channels would come to the Council and would report about their programme policy. This would be big progress.

Fedotov made these proposals for the BRICS project:

- To establish a *BRICS network of media researchers*. To take this as the constitutive meeting, affirmed by the members of appropriate organizations, represented here by their specialists. For example, from Russia they can be represented by MGU, Vartanova, and the Department of UNESCO of the Higher

School of the Economics, Fedotov. And we as network of BRICS media researchers are open for contacts with other organizations such as UNESCO, BRICS Forum, WAN, GIPP and other structures working on media studies and industry. I will try to find channels to propagate our network. In particular, I am interested in such questions as freedom and privacy, what is public figure, what is public sphere, the problem of the Internet and freedom of speech, questions of self-regulation.

- I suggest to establish a regular *Roundtable of Media Lawyers of the BRICS countries* to discuss and inform each other on the questions of legal regulation of the media systems of the BRICS. This Roundtable could meet in IAMCR Conference in Dublin in 2013.
- To run this work continuously by using Internet technologies. For example, in Brazil they are discussing a new draft of law on media. We, all participants, receive this draft, as English translation, and discuss it online and then give our recommendations. As a result, the Brazilian colleague gets the opinion of international experts of the BRICS countries regarding the new draft of media law in his country. That is, our Roundtable works like self-regulation body. Here are two important aspects: self-regulation and co-regulation.
- The Chair of the Russian Union of Journalists, Vsevolod Bogdanov, has raised the question about crisis of trust between media and society. I suggest establishing the close collaboration with him.

In closing, Fedotov introduced and gave us five publications in Russian:

- The latest (10th) volume of *Works on Intellectual property* which includes articles on problems of information and formation of cyberspace law. This is the scientific journal published by National Research University of Higher School of Economics and the UNESCO Chair on copyright and other intellectual property rights. The journal covers the questions on media legislation; it is distributed by subscription and also is available in the Internet.
- The volume VII of *Works on Intellectual property* released to 15-year anniversary of the law of the RF on Mass Media. Documents and materials. Under the general editorship of M. Fedotova. 2006.
- A book "Phenomenology of juridical miracle" written together with Jury Baturin, Fedotov's co-author of the first post-Communist media law in Russia. "In the totalitarian country to adopt a democratic law about the media is a miracle and we explain how this miracle was done."
- A new book *Handbook on Media Self-Regulation. 2nd issue. Ethical aspects of media coverage of judicial proceeding* edited by Jury Kazakov and Mikhail Fedotov (2011, Moscow: Creative Center for UNESCO).
- A brochure about the Council.