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Internal Organization of the Civic Forum

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Summary:

Internal organization of the Civic Forum – structure, function, and areas of concern

Original Language:

Czech

Contents:

Translation - English

What We AreThe Civic Forum is a medium for the renewal of genuine civic positions and life, forgotten more than forty years ago. The following text therefore does not contain any statutes, it only wants to be a concise guideline for creating local civic forums. The internal organization of Civic Forums: 1. The Civic Forum (further only CF) is a spontaneously created citizen movement, which is united by the effort to find positive outcomes from the current crisis in our society. No one is excluded from this movement who agrees with the program directives of the CF, published on 26 November 1989 and who especially refuses the further continuation of a political system consisting of one ruling party. We consider the basic goal of the CF to be the complete opening of an environment for the creation of political pluralism and for the organization of free elections in our country. 2. It is possible to create a local CF anywhere based on regions, professions or interests by citizens, and not institutions. We recommend that membership in the CF be established by signing the charter of the local CF organizations; we further recommend that an informal coordinating group be established to which the citizens could turn, and that its representatives be elected. 3. Relations between the Coordinating Center and the local CFs: a) The CF Coordinating Center and the local CF constitute a unit joined solely by the active civic attitude of its members. The Civic Forum does not have a complicated hierarchy, only a horizontal net with every local Civic Forum, connected to one coordinating center; b) The Coordinating Center is just an informational and organizational center, and it is in no way an administrative center; its task is to collect information from local CFs, exchange it and inform [all local CFs] about past and future activities. All local Civic Forums operate completely independently on the local level; c) The Coordinating Center represents the Civic Forum in negotiations with central state and international institutions, mostly on the basis of suggestions and recommendations from the local CF. 4. The function of the informational center of the CF: a) In order to secure informational links, it is necessary to submit in writing to the Coordination Center these basic details about the local CF: business, region or interest group where the CF was created, precise address, telephone number, names of the representatives, number of members (rough estimate at least). These data will be entered on file centrally; b) Contact with the Coordinating Center—for a period of three weeks starting on 28 November 1989, the record-keeping, collection of information and consulting services of the CF will be located at: Špálova galery, Národní Třída 30, 110 00 Praha 1, tel. 268366, 265132, 267529. The new address and telephone line of the Coordinating Center will be released promptly. The post office box of the CF: 632, pošta 111 21, Praha 1, Politických véz 4, Communications Professional Training Center entrance. CF account 2346-021, SB S branch Praha 2, 110 01 Praha 1, Václavské náměstí 42; c) Transfer and exchange of information between individual local CFs and the Coordinating Center will be ensured in the form of an informational bulletin, which will be sent out by the Coordinating Center by means of mass communications or exceptionally by telephone. 5. The orientation of the activity of the local CF: The point of the activity of the local CF is the activation of civic behavior of its own free will and discussion in political and everyday life. Therefore the Coordinating Center can not and does not want to hand down any orders and restrictions, it solely provides suggestions and recommendations. 6. We believe that the local CFs should concern themselves very soon with these areas of activity: a) Local CFs should specify and define the opinions of citizens in the broad democratic discussion. The discussion should lead to political differentiation, which is an indispensable prerequisite for a pluralistic democratic political system; b) Local Civic Forums can pursue solutions to local problems, which are not satisfactorily dealt with by the current social structures. Local CFs can thus contribute to the creation of civic home rule or to the transformation of the institutional bureaucratic apparatus into a democratic one; c) Local CFs can prepare strikes, demonstrations and other activities supporting their demands, even the demands of the whole Civic Forum if it should be necessary. In this sense, the local CFs are a continuation of the strike committees until all the demands of the CF have been met. d) Local CFs should support all citizens in all areas where relations with the current undemocratic structures results in violations of civic rights in the broadest sense of the word. Local CFs are therefore the means for civic self-defense. Supplement solely for consultative workers Legally the local CF is a free coalition of citizens, it is not a legal subject and in this way does not have any rights or responsibilities. The Civic Forum as a free coalition of citizens has the same rights as an individual citizen. If the local CFs should deal with money, it is useful to keep it in a safe and enter the contributions and withdrawals into the

account book and elect a treasurer and auditor. It is useful to provide monetary gifts over 3,000 Kcs in the form of a deposit book. The Civic Forum Prague, 28 November 1989 [Source: ÚSD AV CR, KC OF Archive, file OF Documents—typescript copy A4, 3 p. Translated by Caroline Kovtun.]