

**To: Civil Rights Defenders (former Swedish Helsinki Committee)**

Dear CRD/SHC Executive Team:

In my capacity as Conference Chair of the Justice in the Balkans: Equality for Sexual Minorities International Academic Conference (Podgorica, Montenegro, October 23 to 26, 2009), and on behalf of DAAD Alumni Club Montenegro, once again I would like to take this opportunity to **THANK YOU for your help and support** ! Additionally, DAAD Alumni Club Montenegro is grateful to all of our donors, as well as to YOU and our friends who supported this important project.

This was the first international academic conference considering the rights of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgendered (LGBT) persons ever to be held in the Balkans. The event attracted leading international experts and several dignitaries from the region, from Europe and the rest of the world. Dignitaries included Peter Schieder, Honorary President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, H.E. Mr. Kevin Lyne the British Ambassador, and Ms. Dagmar Schmidt German's Deputy Ambassador to Montenegro, who attended the opening ceremonies and some other sessions during our Conference. The event discussed a variety of topics, including the impact of European integration on Balkan countries in transition and the impact of law on the social problem of homophobia. About 120 persons participated in the conference, which received significant and generally positive local press coverage. Detailed report about the Conference work will be published by the end of December 2009 and will be sent to your address.

The fact that the conference was able to safely bring together regional activists and international experts on LGBT issues was the most important outcome. The initiative will continue on an annual basis for at least 4 more years in a variety of locales, beginning with Vienna in July, 2010. A Declaration of Podgorica will be finalized by November 15. The Justice in the Balkans initiative will be translating the Declaration and the Yogyakarta Principles into the various Balkan languages. The new project Art for Justice will begin to be realized in the Balkans as well etc...

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Jovan Kojicic  
Conference Chair

President, DAAD Alumni Club Montenegro