

## The second round of the debate: Know Your Rights

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The Promo-LEX Association conducted a debate on human rights together with high school students from the Mihai Eminescu Lyceum in Dubasari, Stefan cerl Mare Lyceum from Grigoriopol, and Evrika Lyceum in Rîbnița.

After the theoretical part of the event, where young people had the opportunity to learn in detail about basic human rights and freedoms, the students participated in a practical exercise, in which they divided in groups and worked to create imaginary countries based on ten most important human rights.

We had a great opportunity to show our abilities to think and propose ideas. We cannot deny the importance of human rights today. I learned about the existence of certain rights that I was unaware of, and but about the relationship between the person and the state.

Alina, class 10 C

It's very important to know your rights, who protects them and from whom, and, most importantly, the situations when there is a need to appeal to those rights.

Nichita, "Mihai Eminescu"  
Theoretical Lyceum



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This has been a life lesson that will help me in the future. I learned many things I did not know –and did not even think I could have learned in school.

Andrei, class 12 A

I believe that today's activity was very useful for young people, because I learned about the essence of certain human rights, and I acquired skills to defend them. Unfortunately, another thing I realized is that young people today only know that they have certain

rights, and forget the fact that other people enjoy the same rights as them.

Daniela, "Mihai Eminescu"  
Theoretical Lyceum

We talked in detail about the right to life, freedom and family. I very much liked the debate in which I participated, especially the group work. I wish for more such activities that help shape our personalities, and help us develop abilities that we will definitely use in the future. We are now motivated to be better informed about our rights every day.

Victoria



*The debates were organised within the project „Strengthening human rights in the Transnistrian region of Moldova”, implemented by Promo-LEX Association, with the financial support of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED).*

## Impressions about the non-governmental sector of Vinnitsa

Within the project "Strengthening human rights in the Transnistrian region of Moldova", implemented by Promo-LEX, this fall three human rights activists will benefit from an internship with some NGOs in Ukraine.

The overall goal of the internship is to provide the opportunity for human rights activists in the Transnistrian region to strengthen capacities to promote and protect human rights and to acquire knowledge, skills and relevant experience in the field of human rights.

### *An article by Janna, Promo-LEX intern*

During the internship, I had the opportunity to familiarize myself with the activities of a number of NGOs in Vynnytsya, working in the field of information and education, advocacy, helping disabled people, working with victims of human trafficking and domestic violence.

The rights, defended and promoted by these NGOs include: the right to healthcare, reproductive rights, access to sound information on healthcare, rights of disabled persons, the right to protection against discrimination, and gender rights.

Vynnytsya NGOs use several methods in their work, including: trainings, conferences and focus groups with the target audience, social theater and focus-theater, awareness and advocacy campaigns. The field of youth work (students, youth activists) is well developed with regard to the promotion of volunteering and voluntary participation in projects.

The increased activism of youth and development of volunteering is illustrated by the fact that non-governmental organizations, especially youth NGOs, were able to successfully implement more long-term social projects in the town and without external financial support.

NGOs work with schools, and some of them have cooperation agreements and joint projects in the field of information and promotion of youth rights - for example, the agreement between NGOs and the Technical College of Vynnytsya or the cooperation of NGOs working in the field rights of persons with disabilities with the Institute of Pedagogy and Psychology in Kiev.

Some projects with increased social value are supported by the government, through the co-financing from local budgets (eg, a hotline for victims of domestic violence, etc.), and specialists and trainers from educational NGOs are involved extensively in public institutions (at a regional and local level), where they conduct trainings for local and municipal public employees (for example, social workers, medical personnel, etc.).

According to representatives of non-governmental organizations, the general attitude of the local authorities towards the work of local NGOs is positive, given the possibilities they provide to use their resources to develop the region and its infrastructure, and resolve social problems.

To make a general conclusion about the work of NGOs in the Vynnytsya city and region, many of which, according to their representatives, have been working since the mid-1990s, it should be noted that the region has many diverse, strong and active non-governmental organizations, which operate in a highly competitive environment (many of them, in one way or another, use volunteer resources). Unfortunately, at present, the work of NGOs in Ukraine, regardless of their major goals and objectives, is strongly influenced by the tragic events, crisis and military operations in the east of the

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country. These events can not help but affect, in one way or another, the work of NGOs, which bring togethersome of the most active and progressive members of the civil society. For these reasons, many NGOs are now focusing on psychological trainings, work to help reintegrate different regions of the country and people from different regions, and conduct patriotic education courses for young people affected by war (refugees, participants anti-terrorist operation, etc.).

***The internship program is part of the project Strengthening human rights in the Transnistrian region of Moldova,"implemented by Promo-LEX Association, with the financial support of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED).***

### A thief without theft

In the previous edition of the newspaper, on 28 January 2014, we published an article entitled: "You're Only Guilty of the Fact that I am Hungry", which accounts in detail the troubles of the former chairman of the Bender Bread Factory, Valentin Veaceslavovici Babkin, an honorable man who was awarded a Medal of Honor, and a famous businessman. The district court in Tiraspol sentenced him to 15 years in a maximum-security penitentiary with the confiscation of property for unproved embezzlement in very large amounts. The motive for this sentence is a credit Babkin took in Gazprombank, in 2011, which was registered on 4 persons, including on his mother. Some people do it this way, but the court decided it was the wrong way to proceed.

The businessman used the credit to increase production and turnover, not for consumption. Until the day of the arrest, on 22 February 2014, Babkin had honored due payments in full amounts, and did not cause any worries or suspicions. Babkin did not flee the region with lots of money, did not challenge the conditions or provisions of the credit agreement or try in any way to distort its execution. There was no damage to the state, economic agents or individuals. Where is the fraud then?

The previous article voiced a version that the elimination of the chairman of the factory in such a cruel manner was part of a wider plan for the re-privatization of the Bender Bread Factory, which was carried out in violation of legal and contractual provisions, which was not in the interest of the state.

There was a grain of hope that the region's supreme court would see the obvious.

But on 4 February, the supreme court examined the appeal of Babkin and his lawyers, Vladimir Vadimovici Maimust and Victor Mihailovici Casico. In Babkin's absence, the lawyers tried to prove there was no component of fraud or criminal intention in the actions of the defendant: the agreement timeline and conditions were not violated. The plaintiff, currently minister of economic development, Mr. Artiomenko, did not mention any theft in his complaint. Were there any issues occurred between the parties, they were to be resolved in an arbitration court. But the bank or credit beneficiary did not put any issues forward.

The court established that Babkin's mother was one of the victims. She rejects this status, assuring the court that her son did not commit any theft and asking that he be released. But the court reasserted her status of victim. Italian company "CETRUS" was registered as a guarantor for the credit, and they did not submit any claims in this regard. Who then is interested in such a draconic sentence to the defendant, namely 15 years in a maximum-security jail?

Our newspaper wrote earlier about the atrocious murder of Olga Goncear, after which one of the two accomplices received a suspended sentence of 6 years, and the other accomplice was sentenced to 7 years in jail. And what do you think, dear readers? The defendants thought that the pronounced sen-

tence was too harsh, and they submitted an application to review their case. While here we have a sentence of 15 years in jail with confiscation of property - and for what? At the time, Gazprombank and the Bender Bread Factory were co-shareholders in a joint enterprise. So, one Shareholder gave a credit to another shareholder to grow their common business. And there is no evidence in the case of misdirected use of funds.

But it seems that certain circles are not interested to see Babkin get a softer sentence or be released. As soon as he was arrested, they took his property, including goods that could have served as guarantees for the credit. Now, dear readers, imagine he were to be set free and claim his rights for that property. No way! So he gets 15 years, and not a single day less. They decided to get him out of the game completely. And it seems that both courts helped them in this regard.

The case has not been properly investigated. It has not been established who received the money, who issued the credit, where did larger amounts go to. But it seems that it is not the task of the investigation. The main thing was to have Babkin removed.

The chairperson of the Gazprombank board of directors and the person who signed off on the credit, Larisa Tugolucova, left Transnistria even before the active phase of the investigation. One would say she did the right thing if we recall the bitter story of Oxana Ionova, who has been in detention for 2 years now, while the law enforcement are trying to figure out the article under which she should be prosecuted. At the supreme court hearing, the young lady representing the prosecution did not even attempt to combat the arguments of the defense. She did not challenge any of the arguments.

I was surprised to see that Babkin's relatives and family members showed no optimism at the trial. Before the hearing, they told me they already knew what the decision would be. The supreme court rejected the appeal of Babkin's defense counsel, and the district court sentence remains valid. Valentin Bab-

kin, a laureate of the Order of Honor, an entrepreneur of the kind our republic needs desperately, will rot in jail for 15 years. He himself doesn't know why.

Readers ask us to follow up on the developments of the situation of resident of Ribnita, Ruslan K, whose story we published in our newspaper issue of September last year, in an article entitled: "Before the Dark". As you recall, when Ruslan was set to be released from jail, local law enforcement officers proposed him to cooperate with them by infiltrating in an organized criminal group and provide them information in its internal workings. When Ruslan refused, he was threatened that they would spread the word in prison circles that he agreed to work with them and find a way to send him back to jail, for a longer period. And they did.

I am sorry to inform our readers that the district court in Ribnita sentenced Ruslan to 15 years in a maximum-security jail. I received a letter from Ruslan, which is filled with despair and sadness. The young man writes that, seeing no way out, he is seriously thinking about taking his own life.

How can we alleviate this man's pain, how can we help?

We must warn the Transnistrian residents again and again to never, under no circumstance, to cooperate with the law enforcement by infiltrating in organized criminal groups. We wrote about this numerous times – they use the information obtained this way, and then turn the snitch in to the criminal groups or criminal communities in prisons.

***The article was developed by "The man and his rights" / Человек и его права newspaper's team, with the support of Promo-LEX Association, within the Matra Programme (Embassy of Kingdom of the Netherlands).***

# Promo - LEX

*Advancing democracy and human rights*



**National Endowment  
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The **Promo-LEX Association** is a Non-Governmental Organisation focused on promoting democratic values, whose purpose is to advance democracy in the Republic of Moldova, including the Transnistrian region through promoting and defending human rights, monitoring democratic processes and strengthening the civil society.

**Promo-LEX Association provides free legal aid assistance on issues of human rights violations for the inhabitants from the Transnistrian region of Moldova. For consultations please contact: Tel: 0(22) 45-00-24**

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