

I am at home here*

Proclamation against xenophobia and spreading of fear of diversity

The shadow of xenophobia, spreading of fear and growing violence against everything, which is only slightly different from the majority views are becoming more numerous in the Czech Republic. Public space and social networks in particular witness daily disturbing verbal exhibits of intolerance, hatred and prejudice, which are reflected more or less in extreme behaviour of individuals and groups.

How can one remain indifferent in such situations when a different swimsuit of a lady sparkles hysteria full of hatred? When a politician invites publicly to purposefully bully tourists of colour? When a woman with a veiled face becomes victim of physical abuse only because of her faith? When many social network users share the video showing a father advising his son how to cope with the Roma or Muslims in a violent manner? How can one stay untouched by situations when any refusal of diversity is disguised by a pretended protest against inadaptability? Diversity is not inadaptability.

Spreading of violence of one person against another, in particular against differently behaving minorities is slowly turning into one of underlying topics of the political fight for votes. We find it alarming that no warning against this election campaign whirl is heard from traditional democratic parties nor from high-level political figures, including the President of the republic. And what's worse, their obvious silence or tacit agreement – maybe caused by fear of losing votes – seem to establish the growing extremism, support it and progressively turn it to standard. Extreme is not extreme any longer. This may be fatal for our society and its future. History alone is both example and lesson showing that such a hunt for diversity may lead to a robotised large-scale production of dead corpses.

The Czech society was positively shaped especially by humanist ideals and the humaneness of Masaryk, Čapek and Havel. We are proud to declare our support to their legacy and in our minds we are calling for respect concerning principles of diversity, which in turn enrich us all. We have faith in a country, where people tolerate different colour of skin, place of origin, faith or culture; where any outer sign cannot have a greater meaning than a person's true character; where even a negative experience with an individual must not turn into hatred against the group

* The title of the proclamation refers to the large-format pictures exhibition involving members of ethnic and minority groups of the Liberec Region, held by the City of Liberec and the local Community Centre Kontakt in 2016.

of which such individual is member; where equal education or employment opportunities must be available to anyone without exception.

This is why we call on all citizens, especially the politically, socially and culturally active ones to be aware of any and all exhibits of hatred and extremism, to be concerned about them and not to be afraid to refuse them any time audibly in public. To raise their voice right now when symptoms of xenophobia in the Czech society may hopefully be still considered temporary and fleeting. To resist any would-be trendy craze of the so-called political incorrectness masked by the freedom of speech in the interest of respect for minorities and diversity of all kinds, since that is only a disguise used to spark dangerous passions and hatred among people. We are one society and each of us has an integral and specific part in it. We are all equally at home here.

Liberec, 31 August 2017

*The Proclamation was published at the occasion of the 6th summer festival of foreigners and ethnic minorities **Liberec – One City for All**. To declare support of the Proclamation please go to www.protixenofobii.cz.*

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