

Tale til MF Kim Valentin (V)**141. IPU-session, den 13.-17. oktober 2019, Beograd**

Chairpersons, Fellow parliamentarians, Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a pleasure for me to address this unique assembly.

After 15 years in politics I was in June this year elected to the Danish Parliament.

My party, the Liberal Party, got a very good result, increasing our number of seats in Parliament – however we lost the governing power, and we are now the largest party in opposition.

The present government in Denmark is like usual a minority government consisting of one party only, this time it is the Socialdemocrats – having around 25% of all the votes.

As Parliamentarians we all know the value of constructive dialogue and the need to make political compromises. That is also a corner stone in the danish democracy and I am sure that it is the same by you all.

That's also why I value the IPU so much: It is the forum for dialogue between parliamentarians. We do not necessarily represent our government back home. We represent our own political convictions and belief.

Sometimes we don't even agree within our national IPU-delegations. That is not a sign of weakness in my opinion. On the contrary, that is a true reflection of the democratic composition of our national parliaments.

Before I was elected to the Danish parliament I was the Mayor in a Danish city. Furthermore and perhaps more important I am the President of a Danish NGO working with non formal adult education.

In Denmark the involvement of the civic sector in non formal adult education has been an important factor in establishing a well functioning democracy with the layers of the society as participants.

The formalization of this important work was established by the civil society organizations – NOT the government. It happened in the years after the Second World War. It was founded in the remembrance of what ignorance of the people can do to the world.

The purpose was to inform and engage people in the development of our democracy. The aim was also to avoid new waves of fascism and extremism – some of the root causes for the Second World War. This is also true today – I am sorry to say.

This popular movement has secured a high level of engagement and involvement in developing our democracy. Our society is in general based on dialogue between people and a high level of trust in public institutions – and a low level of corruption.

It is founded on values like freedom of expression, freedom of association and freedom of religion – and it is the civic society who is the driver of this movement.

The French politician Maximillien Robespierre [1758-1796] made it very clear. Let me quote:

“The secret of freedom lies in educating people, whereas the secret of tyranny is in keeping them ignorant.”

Let me now briefly try to link the value of non formal education made by civic sector organizations with the theme of the general debate today: The need for a democratic, rule based international world order.

To me it is obvious:

Democratic states are best suited to engage in a constructive dialogue compared to non-democratic states.

Only democratic states take into consideration the need and opinions from their citizens.

Democratic states accept compromises and agree on the need to create strong international institutions with a democratic foundation.

Therefore the best way to strengthen the international rule based order is to strengthen the development of democratic institutions locally. Here the civil society organizations play a crucial role.

Regrettably the international rule based order is under pressure. We are witnessing a global tendency where power politics are overruling the democratic dialogue.

To day we fight the self-inflicted ignorance of our society in the form of fake news. The problem is however the same as 80 years ago. We have to educate people. The true freedom of people lies in knowledge. A peaceful world is found through understanding and dialogue. Education of the people is the foundation for a democratic, rule based international world order.

I would like to thank you for your attention and by the way: I am always willing to share with you experiences from the Danish non formal adult education, if you are interested.