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## **Manfred Nowak nominated by the International Cultural Diversity Organization (ICDO) as the first recipient of the ICDO Excellence Award**



**Manfred Nowak**, EIUC / GC of Human Rights Secretary General, was recently nominated by the

International Cultural Diversity Organization (ICDO) as the first recipient of the **ICDO Excellence Award**, which is given each year to honor a person, institution or organisation for its outstanding contribution, promotion and safeguarding of Culture Diversity and Human Rights as well as for his/her/its excellence in field of work.

He was honored with the award on Saturday, 8 September 2018, at a gala dinner in Vienna (as part of the Long Night of Intercultural Dialogue, see <http://dialognacht.at/en/>) and on this occasion he held the following speech.

"We currently witness two antagonistic trends: globalisation and nationalism. On the one hand, we experience a rapid development towards a world without borders. We communicate without borders via the Internet. We consume goods and services from all corners of our planet. We travel around the world and use English as a global lingua franca. We migrate, settle down, study, work and live abroad and found mixed families, and in doing so enjoy our universal human rights. In general, we experience this broadening of our horizon - this diversity - as fascinating and enriching.

On the other hand, there are others who seem to be afraid of other cultures, of multi-culturalism and diversity. They consider otherness as a threat to their own group identity and culture. They react with nationalism, xenophobia, racism, new authoritarianism and by restricting the equal human rights of all those whom they consider different: migrants, refugees, Roma, the LGBTI community, persons with disabilities, Jews, Muslims etc. If need be, they resort to hate speech, fake news and violence.

In my opinion, this new right-wing nationalism is fundamentally undermining our universal values of human rights, democracy, the rule of law and peace: values, which the world has gradually developed in reaction to the Holocaust. At the same moment that we are celebrating the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights this year, we are confronted with the strongest attack on human rights since the end of World War II.

Nevertheless, I remain optimistic. Even the most extreme nationalists, such as Donald Trump who is separating babies and infants from their immigrant parents for many months and who is starting a trade war with China and Europe to "make America great again", or Viktor Orbán who is building a fence around his country, and many others who wish to establish a "Fortress Europe" and let refugees drown in the Mediterranean, will not succeed to turn the clock back and stop globalisation. What we currently witness is a last and brutal attempt of nationalists to return to the nostalgic world of the Westphalian system of ethnically clean nation states and to weaken international organizations, such as the United Nations and the European Union. However, this will only be a short intermezzo. After all, history tells us that nationalists have no common political agenda and will soon turn their nationalism against each other.

We need to stand up and fight for universal human rights in a globalized world order. The International Cultural Diversity Organization (ICDO) provides us with the tools of advocating and practicing diversity

management in our societies, as transnational companies have been practicing for many years within their business communities. The ICDO reminds us that the “New World should be based on diversity, respect and equal rights for all”. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, when proclaiming that we are all “born free and equal in dignity and rights”, only makes sense because we are different. If we were all the same, we would need no right to equality. Equality presupposes a right to be different. To be different is beautiful. As the ICDO proclaims, “we should celebrate our diversity and debate our differences without fracturing our communities”. These are beautiful visions which, above all, require respect for otherness, for other cultures, religions and customs: “To be able to accept those different from us is truly to understand humanity”, and I would add “universal human rights for all”.

I congratulate the ICDO for its visions and its activities aimed at fostering integration of otherness in an increasingly hostile environment. I am very honoured to be the first recipient of the ICDO Excellence Award, and I promise to continue to stand up and fight for a better world based on human rights, respect and cultural diversity".

- [International](#)

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