



INTERNATIONAL  
PRESS INSTITUTE

WORLD CONGRESS AND  
57TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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## IPI Opening Ceremony Speech

Piotr Niemczycki, Chairman of the International Press Institute

Mr President, ladies and gentleman I wish you a very welcome on behalf of the IPI to this Opening Ceremony of our World Congress. So here we are in fascinating Serbia and we are particularly honoured to be in company of Boris Tadić, President of the Republic of Serbia. Mr President, thank you for taking time welcoming IPI to Belgrade.

First two sentences of the IPI Constitution write: “World peace depends on understanding between peoples and peoples. If people are to understand one another it is essential that they have good information“. In accordance with this belief IPI had been meeting for 57 years at the World congresses around the globe to spread this idea. We are meeting every year to articulate the importance of free and independent media as the fundamentals of democracy. Without free and independent media there is simply no way of achieving sustainable democracy. But even in the democratic societies free media are facing new challenges: state control of our opinion by different ways has been the unfortunate reality in too many countries. We always have to remember that free media are not something given and we have to fight for it every day.

Some of us share the same fascination for Serbia; we would like to learn more about Serbian life, politics, culture and history. But also we would like to learn more about the condition of free speech and media in Serbia. So I would like to our hosts for giving us this opportunity.

Before I leave the podium to thank speakers and panellists for accepting our invitation to participate in this event. Thank you. I would also like to thank all the people who are organizing and supporting this conference. Without them this would not have been possible. Thank you. I would like to thank all of you for supporting IPI participating in this conference and for spreading the idea of free media across the world and showing the importance of it. We always have to remember that the free media is not a given.

Thank you.