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# THE *COALITION* 2000 PROCESS IN 1999

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SOFIA  
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## 1. BETWEEN TWO POLICY FORUMS

- The key event in anti-corruption activities during 1998 was the first Policy Forum, which was held in Sofia in November and endorsed an Anti-Corruption Action Plan. With this document an attempt was made to align the democratic reform priorities with anti-corruption initiatives. The fact that *Coalition 2000* was able to propose for public consideration a comprehensive program containing a general conceptual framework and concrete anti-corruption solutions and reforms was a success in itself. In the year following the first Policy Forum, the Anti-Corruption Action Plan gained credit as a document, which was often referred to in Bulgaria and used in other countries as a model for mapping out national anti-corruption priorities. In the words of George Soros, the Bulgarian anti-corruption plan is the most comprehensive and ambitious document of its kind.
- The road from theoretical concept to social practice required the creation of a *mechanism of cooperation* among the coalition partners and the concretization of joint initiatives for the achievement of the outlined goals. In this respect, *Coalition 2000* was able to establish regular working contacts with experts and representatives of state institutions, which helped broaden the scope of consultations not only within the *Coalition 2000* activities, but also in the process of general political decision-making reflecting on the corruption situation in this country.
- The *Steering Committee* generally supervising the initiative proved an effective instrument for exchange of opinions and formulation of common positions by the representatives of civil society organizations and state institutions. The Committee was enlarged last year to include representatives of TI-Bulgaria, the Foundation for Local Government Reform and two trade union organizations: the Confederation of Independent Trade Unions in Bulgaria and the Podkrepa Labor Confederation. It functioned as a working body not only in the context of monthly meetings, but also through established daily contacts and informal consultation between the Secretariat and its members.

It should also be noted that *Coalition 2000* was able to establish contacts beyond the Steering Committee with a number of representatives of state institutions, political parties and public organizations. To a varying extent and in different forms they were associated with the Coalition's activity and contributed to its implementation. In this sense, the Policy Forum did not conclude with the adoption of the Anti-Corruption Action Plan and, to a large extent, became the embodiment of the coalition idea on a national scale.

On the other hand, the initial expectations for a stronger commitment on the part of the government to the anti-corruption priorities outlined in the Anti-Corruption Action Plan were not justified, which tended to weaken the motivation to address the problem among the representatives of the government parties.

## 2. CLEAN FUTURE PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

The campaign included a number of initiatives and public events aimed at successfully positioning the initiative, defining target groups, formulating and producing concrete messages and ideas, selecting forms and instruments of communication, etc. Experts with different backgrounds were involved in this process.

The goal of *Clean Future* is to foster greater public intolerance of corruption. This implies transforming prevalent attitudes, creating proper public motivation, establishing an organizational structure for social action, ensuring a sustained process of social change, etc.

The public awareness campaign involved non-governmental organizations, representatives of state institutions and independent experts.

- A competition for local partners of *Coalition 2000* was held under the **Small Grants Program** in April 1999. As a result, pilot projects of 13 NGOs, based in different towns and cities throughout the country, were supported. The pilot stage of the Coalition's local projects (April – July) enabled monitoring of corrupt practices on a local level and experimentation with various anti-corruption initiatives aimed at transparency and openness of local government. This activity is still in progress after the second local partner competition was held in October 1999.
- The public awareness campaign involved the use of various **anti-corruption instruments and practices**: local (municipal or regional) councils for counteracting corruption, telephone hot lines, reception offices and mailboxes for citizens' complaints and alerts, round tables, public forums and press conferences, anti-corruption articles in the local/regional press, broadcasts in the electronic media, etc.
- The Secretariat of *Coalition 2000* coordinated the production of appropriate **promotion materials**: the design of a *Coalition 2000* logo and the printing of two posters. Several videos were produced after an extensive process of script selection and focus group pre-testing. A campaign song was also written and produced.

### THE PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN IN FIGURES

Anti-corruption awareness days	10
Public forums	2
National working meetings/seminars	3
Municipal round tables	28
Videos	6
Anti-corruption song/audio clip	2
Anti-corruption posters	2
Anti-corruption concert	1
Publications in the central and local press	over 200
Broadcasts in the electronic media	87
On foreign TV programs	3
Foreign press publications	7
Clean Future quarterly newsletter	three issues
Electronic newsletter	monthly
Anti-corruption readers	4 published
Coalition 2000 web site	

### 3. THE INSTITUTION OF THE PEOPLE'S DEFENDER (THE OMBUDSMAN)

In early 1998 the Law Program of the Center for the Study of Democracy began exploring the possibility of introducing an Ombudsman-type institution on a national level to act as a complementary mechanism for monitoring and control over the public administration and an out-of-court means of restoring the rights of citizens violated by the state or by government officials. The establishment in Bulgaria of such an institution restricting corruption and the abuse of power became one of the key priorities of *Coalition 2000* from the very beginning. Within the framework of *Coalition 2000* an expert group of the CSD Law Program continued its research and analysis of the existing legal framework and the functioning of this institution in a number of established and new democracies. The concept developed on the basis of this analysis, however, takes into account the existing needs and public attitudes, and political, legal and constitutional realities in Bulgaria. It formulates a set of recommendations for the future introduction of the Ombudsman, its status and role in the country's political and legal system, and outlines the basic elements of its future legal regulation. In April 1999 the CSD Law Program experts completed the first draft law on the people's defender.

Meetings, public discussions and consultations were held at different stages of this process with Bulgarian and foreign experts, politicians, citizens, representatives of NGOs, and the parliamentary Committee on Human Rights, among others. The more important ones included:

- Meetings with Ambassador Anders Sahlin, leader of a Swedish government delegation, which visited Bulgaria in January.
- Visit to Sofia in July by Mr. Claes Eklund, the Chief Parliamentary Ombudsman of Sweden, homeland of this institution.
- Talks with Spanish parliamentarians and the People's Defender of Spain, Mr. Alvares de Miranda, during a visit by Bulgarian MPs and experts to Spain in May.
- Visit by the First Deputy of the People's Defender of Spain, Mr. Antonio Rovira, and Canadian experts to Sofia in November.

In addition, a series of meetings, seminars and discussions on the draft law was organized within the framework of the Citizen Participation, Public Hearings and the Development of an Improved Public Policy in Bulgaria project implemented jointly by CSD and the Santander Group of European universities.

## 4. INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

The international aspects of the *Coalition 2000* activities developed along several lines:

- Dissemination of information among the international community about the development of corruption and anti-corruption measures in Bulgaria. The purpose is for the international community, and particularly the international organizations represented in Bulgaria, to obtain an accurate idea of the spread of corruption in this country and the anti-corruption initiatives of public and private institutions, including *Coalition 2000*.
- Coordination of the efforts of *Coalition 2000* with those of the international organizations implementing anti-corruption programs in Bulgaria. In this respect, active cooperation was maintained with the Council of Europe, the United Nations Development Program, the World Bank, the European Union, and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).
- Cooperation with non-governmental organizations from countries neighboring to Bulgaria. This cooperation was initiated by the Coalition in view of the importance of the regional aspects of corruption, especially in the context of enforcement of the Stability Pact for South-East Europe.
- Part of the message promoted through the *Clean Future* public awareness focused on the need to involve Bulgaria in the mechanism of exchange and cooperation with international organizations and other foreign institutions in the fight against corruption. *Coalition 2000* helped raise public awareness of the importance of this fact by publishing a collection of international anti-corruption acts, to which Bulgaria is a signatory, by involving representatives of foreign organizations in *Coalition 2000* events, by disseminating information about the international anti-corruption standards and the impact of international cooperation in this field.

The experience of *Coalition 2000* in conducting joint anti-corruption initiatives combining the efforts of NGOs and governmental organizations and institutions, as well as in developing the methodology of the Corruption Indexes highly praised and discussed at a number of international forums. At the same time, the Coalition could benefit from the exchange of experience with similar initiatives and anti-corruption practices implemented in other parts of the world. *Coalition 2000* was represented at the following international forums in 1999:

- The Bulgarian coalition model in the fight against corruption was presented at a high-level anti-corruption conference in Washington DC in February.

- In June, in cooperation with foreign institutions, *Coalition 2000* organized an international conference on *Coalition Building and Monitoring to Counter Corruption: Strategies and Impact in the Countries of Central and Eastern Europe*, which was held in Varna.
- Within the framework of the anti-corruption conference organized by the Constitutional and Legal Policy Institute of the Open Society Institute in Budapest in June, *Coalition 2000* presented the *Clean Future* public awareness campaign.
- In October, representatives of *Coalition 2000* shared their experience at the world anti-corruption conference, held in Durban, South Africa, and attended by more than 1,600 participants.
- The best practices in combating corruption were presented at the international conference held in Milan in November, organized by the International Scientific and Professional Advisory Council of the UN Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Program.

In the mean time, *Coalition 2000* continued its efforts at improving the interaction with other initiatives on a regional and international level.

- *Coalition 2000* joined the Anti-corruption Network Transition Economies, implemented under the auspices of OECD; *Coalition 2000* will also host the forthcoming Balkan Forum on February 25-26, 2000, in Sofia, organized by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).
- The *Coalition 2000* experience also encouraged the development of regional initiatives. The Coalition's Secretariat, the Center for the Study of Democracy, in cooperation with the International Legal Development Institute (IDLI) in Rome formulated a Southeast Europe Legal Development Initiative (SELDI) in April.

## 5. MONITORING

The Corruption Monitoring System (CMS) is an essential part of the anti-corruption initiatives implemented by *Coalition 2000*. Consisting of a system of quantitative and qualitative surveys, the CMS is aimed at generating information about the structure and dynamics of corrupt behavior in the country which allows conclusions to be made about the spheres, scale and evolution of corruption, and the related attitudes, assessments and expectations of the general public, public sector officials and specific social and professional groups. CMS features the following products:

- The *Coalition 2000* Corruption Indexes (CI) is the main product of the system. It summarizes the general dimensions of corruption and corrupt behavior, and is published on a quarterly basis. CI were published for the first, second and third quarter of 1999.
- Qualitative analysis on the basis of 12 focus groups involving representatives of occupations associated with the so-called *gray zones* of higher corruption risk.
- Quantitative survey of attitudes towards corruption among public officials.
- Monthly and weekly media monitoring on the subject of corruption.