

CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF DEMOCRACY

LOCAL ANTI-CORRUPTION INITIATIVES



Sofia, 1999

© **Center for the Study of Democracy**
Coalition 2000

1 Iazar Stanev St., Sofia 1113

Tel. (+ 359 2) 971 3000, Fax (+ 359 2) 971 2233

www.online.bg/coalition2000, coalition2000@online.bg

Jivka Damianova, Editor

© Stefan Kassarov, cover design

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface	5
PART ONE: The Process <i>Coalition 2000</i> at the Local level	
<i>Zhivka Damyanova: Coalition 2000 Expert</i> Local Government and <i>Coalition 2000</i> — Legal Framework and Interaction	9
<i>Emil Tsenkov: Coordinator of Coalition 2000</i> The Local Anti-Corruption Coalitions: Pilot Phase in the Building of a <i>Coalition 2000</i> National Infrastructure	21
<i>Petkan Iliev, Major Assistant Professor, University of National and World Economy</i> <i>Tihomir Bezlov: Senior Fellow, Center for the Study of Democracy</i> Local Government “Transparency Matrix”	32
PART TWO: Local Anti-Corruption Initiatives	
A. Local Monitoring	
<i>Svetlozar Kostov, Plamen Bakalov, Experts, Black Sea Law Community:</i> Bourgas Jurists on Corruption: Opinion Poll of the Black Sea Law Community	45
Corruption in the Municipal Administration of Vratza: Two Points of View	50
<i>Elena Ivanova, Expert, Regional Association “For the Revival of Civil Society,” Pleven:</i> Analysis of the Results from a Telephone Survey within the Framework of the “Citizens — Corruption — Local Administration” Project	55
B. Anti-corruption Structures	
<i>Borislav Tsekov, President, Association of Young Lawyers, Member of the World Jurist Association:</i> Intermediary Groups: A Mechanism for Curbing Corruption Pressure in Municipalities	64
<i>Deyan Ashkov, Chairman, Bulgarian Youth League “Stefan Stambolov”:</i> Regional Anti-Corruption Municipal Council — Smolian Region	67
Appendix: List Of Activities On Small Grant Projects	73

PREFACE

This brochure represents an attempt to analyze and summarize the activities and results of the first stage of the Small Projects program of *Coalition 2000*. Following a competition held in the beginning of 1999, thirteen non-governmental organizations, most of them based in different Bulgarian town and cities, were included in the first pilot stage of the program. They include: 'Civic Council in Razgrad' Citizens Coalition, 'Stefan Stambolov' Bulgarian Youth League — Smolian, Center for the Study of Political Processes — Shoumen, 'Lecturers' NGO — Plovdiv, 'Revived Civil Society' Regional Association — Pleven, InfoEcoClub — Vratza, Black Sea Legal Community — Bourgas, 'Sexaginta' Open Education Youth Center — Rousse, as well as the Sofia-based Christian Revival Movement, the Corruption-free Society Association, the Association of Young Lawyers, the Foundation for Entrepreneurship Development, and the Bulgarian Association for Fair Elections and Civil Rights. Within a time frame of three months (April — June 1999) they conducted activities covering the whole spectrum of the anti-corruption campaign: participation in the *Clean Future* Public Awareness Campaign, local government monitoring, establishment of anti-corruption structures, using different instruments to expose and curb corrupt practices in the respective municipalities.

Despite the fact that such a short time frame does not enable the potential of the *Coalition 2000* local initiatives to be fully utilized, the experience accumulated during that time can be used to map out future spheres, forms of organization, and instruments in this new part of Bulgarian reality. This is why the brochure focuses on the practices which seem most promising for our future work. It will continue with the second stage of the *Small Projects 1999-2000* program within whose framework a permanent cooperation structure will be established with local NGOs as part of the *Coalition 2000* process.

In a structural respect the pamphlet consists of two main sections. The first contains analyses of the pilot stage of local initiatives conducted by *Coalition 2000* experts. The second section presents the so-called "best practices", as well as some sociological studies conducted by our local partners. With the stipulation that these are initiatives in their pilot, i.e. experimental, stage we recommend them as already tested instruments which could effectively be used to accomplish the goals of anti-corruption activity.

A List of Activities under the *Small Projects* program of the 13 NGOs is appended.

PART ONE

**THE PROCESS *COALITION 2000*
AT THE LOCAL LEVEL**

ZHIVKA DAMYANOVA,

Coalition 2000 Expert

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND *COALITION 2000*: LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND INTERACTION

Corruption at the local level: bribing policemen, doctors, tax officers, municipal administrators for construction permits or a municipal market stall — the kind of corruption known as mass, everyday or low-level corruption — is assessed by experts to be much more widespread than corruption at high levels. Municipal employees are widely regarded as the most corrupt civil servants, probably because of their direct and personal contacts with citizens in providing the most ordinary and most sought after public services. On the other hand, the admission that this kind of corruption helps people to survive, gradually causes society to accept it as the norm.

Against this background, the Action Plan Against Corruption of *Coalition 2000*, with its proposals for coalitions, constructive interaction and partnership between local government and civic structures is very useful and topical. Indisputably, the first positive effect is that the anti-corruption idea is descending from the high circles of the government and intellectual elite to reach people in the country, i.e. the ordinary citizens.

Anti-corruption goals and initiatives at the local level were also discussed at the International Conference held in Varna on 19 and 20 June this year on the subject of: *Coalition Building and Monitoring to Counter Corruption: Strategies and Impact in Central and Eastern Europe*. It spotlighted similar features in the corruption situation in the post-communist countries and the extremely dangerous consequences of wars in the Balkan region where the ambitions of organized crime and illegal profiteers to dominate the local economy with the aid of corrupt local officials are manifested. The participants in the conference rallied round the idea of joint anti-corruption actions of local, national and international organizations, of concrete initiatives addressing specific regional needs. Openness and transparency in local government and active citizens participation through NGOs formed the basis of these initiatives.

We all realize that the thus clearly and succinctly defined goal — “struggle against corruption” — hides a large-scale task that is difficult to encompass and measure. It is no accident that corruption is regarded as a global challenge on an international level. In Bulgaria, as admitted even by the government, corruption and crime are the main obstacles in the process of establishing democratic val-

ues and European integration, and of creating a favorable environment for foreign investments and rapid economic development.

It is necessary to unfold all-out anti-corruption activities in which, besides the authorized human rights and justice administering institutions, the coalition model will discover its field of action and its specific mechanisms and forms of influence aimed at changing public attitudes, creating intolerance of corruption, building awareness of civil rights, and raising the image of local government — promoting confidence in the institutions and motivating proposals for improving legislation.

The attainment of these goals in the short-term and long-term largely depends on the interaction between local government and civic structures. In this respect, considerable experience has been accumulated in Bulgaria in recent years. The accomplishments of the pilot project of local anti-corruption initiatives within the framework of *Coalition 2000* proved the viability of the coalition model. Basic problems can also be outlined, such as cases of confrontation which, no matter how different in the various municipalities and regions, share a common source. One such factor of decisive significance for the environment in which the anti-corruption coalition is developing and will continue to develop, is the legal framework and actual position of the main partners — local government and citizens associations.

The present paper attempts to point out those formulations in the legal framework which directly or indirectly influence the behavior of local partners in anti-corruption activity. A future in-depth and comprehensive study, taking account of constantly developing practice, could also produce constructive proposals for improving interaction and, ultimately, for improving the anti-corruption environment at the local level.

Limiting and preventing corruption in local government, including elective municipal bodies of the mayor and municipal council, as well as the municipal administration, is an implicit part of the reform of local self-government and one of the imperatives of the transition from totalitarianism to civil society. Ever since the start of the reform, however, municipalities and their problems have remained on the fringe of the attention of legislators, except during election campaigns. As soon as they were passed, the Local Self-Government and Local Administration Act (LSGLAA, 1991), the Local Elections Act (LEA, 1995) and the Territorial Administration of the Republic of Bulgaria Act (TARBA, 1995) were attacked for a number of shortcomings, flaws and omissions. Amendments to these acts are constantly being adopted, invariably aimed at improving the legal framework of local self-government. In practice, however, the trend towards the destabilization of local government is continuing. It is still too early to count the pluses and minuses of the new administrative and regional development acts passed this

year (1999). There are serious misgivings that, due to the lack of definite legal and financial guarantees (in the first and second act respectively), local government bodies remain in a critical position — placed on an unequal footing and dependent on the central government.

Let's take a closer look at the legal status of the municipal mayor. It is no secret that the mayor's institution boasts the longest tradition in the 120-year-long history of Bulgaria. Besides the President of the Republic, mayors are elected under the majority system, directly by the population. In accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria (Article 139) and the LSGLAA (Article 44), the mayor, as the body of executive power on the territory of the municipality, is in charge of all executive activities, organizes the implementation of the municipal budget and of the decisions of the Municipal Council, represents the municipality before third persons, and manages and decides on municipal property.

It is equally well-known that for the inhabitants of the municipality, town or village, the mayor is the embodiment of power. The mayor is personally responsible to his fellow-citizens for his government and actions; he should be accountable to them, whilst they should exercise control on him.

Regrettably, during the last couple of years we have witnessed an undermining of the prestige of the mayor's institution. Reports of municipal mayors exceeding their rights, abusing their powers, being handed over to the prosecutor or court, or temporarily removed from office in contravention of the Constitution, have become the order of the day. The most frequent charges are brought against abuse of power and illegally derived benefits — either personal or in favor of close circles — in the privatization of municipal companies, licensing of businesses, assigning municipal contracts, and sale and leasing of municipal property.

What is happening to the well-known prestige and democratism of the mayor's institution? The answer to this question in all its aspects interests both political parties and civic structures, as evidenced by the public debate on the political elite and democratic values during the ongoing period of transition.

Here we are drawing attention to a situation which may well be considered paradoxical for the mayor's institution in Bulgaria. Once elected and having assumed office, the mayor discovers that the government of the municipality depends completely on the central government. According to the statutory framework, it is the central departments which determine the size, structure, wages and management schemes of the respective municipal departments in the main municipal activities: education, health care, social assistance, public order and safety. In practice the municipality conducts activities without a real

chance to control the management and expenditure of funds in relation to, for example, schools, hospitals, the land commission, regional police department, regional tax department, etc. These teams are subordinate to the state departments which, in turn, are not directly committed to the solution of concrete regional and municipal problems. Although the municipality is responsible to citizens with regard to typical municipal activities such as maintenance of the water-supply and electricity network, the actual activity is carried out by state structures.

Another source of tension is the regulation of relations between the mayor and the Municipal Council, i.e. between local executive and legislative power. In accordance with the legal framework (Constitution, Article 138; LSGLAA Article 18 and 21), the Municipal Council is the supreme body of local self-government. Article 21, Paragraph 1 specifically defines 22 groups of powers, the list not being exhaustive because Paragraph 2 also lists “other tasks of local importance which are not of the exclusive competence of other bodies”. The mayor, besides coordinating his activities with the central departments, is also obliged to implement the decisions of the Municipal Council.

The operative management of the municipality, and concrete decisions on a number of questions concerning the management of municipal property, infrastructure, etc., are often hampered by the slow and inefficient mechanisms of the municipal councils — either due to lack of the necessary quorum in the permanent commissions, the practice of transferring correspondence for consideration from one commission to another, or delayed meetings of the Municipal Council.

The work of some municipal councils is simply blocked by the political confrontation among the groups of municipal councilors. The most negative consequences result from the practice of voting according to party principle — even on matters such as water supply or kindergarten repairs. In answering the question of why a drastic reduction of hospital funds was approved, one UtDF municipal councilor said: “They [the BSP majority] are raising their hands like obedient schoolboys.” In another case when the UtDF majority voted *en bloc*, the result was that the Roma municipal councilors actually voted against a sewerage project for a Roma neighborhood.

Differences and contradictions between the mayor and the Municipal Council emerge not only on the basis of political confrontation, but also due to the inadequate distribution of rights and responsibilities between the two institutions. Among the municipal councilors, vested with supreme powers and elected on a party list, personal responsibility is blurred. In practice, many municipal councilors regard themselves as responsible mainly to their party, whereas the mayor carries personal responsibility for his actions before the population.

Finally, we should also mention the role of the regional administrations, established recently and still at the experimental stage, so to speak. In Bulgaria, in contrast to most European countries, these are purely administrative, appointed rather than elected bodies, without the right to their own funds for the development and conduct of social activities. To make up for this, regional governors are assigned certain rights in exercising control over the activities of local self-government bodies. This fact, in contravention of Article 144 of the Constitution, has already given rise to objections by experts and creates conditions for new conflicts between local government and the “Center”, personified by the regional governor.

This is the picture, albeit schematically presented, of the links and dependencies of local government by virtue of which local self-government is realized. It is only natural that a large group of problems should manifest itself in the course of the implementation of the pilot program of local anti-corruption coalitions. These problems include the lack of transparency in municipal incomes and expenses, shifting and blurring responsibilities or escaping behind collective responsibility, (in practice irresponsibility), and a lack of efficient citizens control. The attempt of the NGOs to launch a public debate on municipal finances and possible abuses met with a number of obstacles, both in municipalities where the budget is guarded almost like a “state secret”, as well as in municipalities where the budget is displayed in a prominent place for all to see, but only a few citizens ever stop to read it.

The situation of local incomes and expenses is such that they are voted on as a matter of form by the municipal councils, but limits and priorities are regulated in the national budget and in the ordinances of the respective ministries. The population pays taxes without even knowing where the money goes. Local incomes cannot affect a change in local policy because this is not within the competence of the municipal administration. Viewed formally, the municipality is a cash register through which money passes for financing a centrally regulated health, educational and social policy.

The financing of municipalities continues according to an ultra-centralized model. The new Corporate Income Tax Act (1997), the Personal Income Tax Act, and the Local Taxes and Fees Act failed to produce even a simple quantity increase of local incomes. If local incomes formed 21-22% of the general municipal incomes in 1994-1996, in 1998 they comprised about 17% of the local budgets, whilst the greatest part — over 80% — came from state transfers (according to information of the Ministry of Finance). The most significant source of income — General Income Tax — remains at the disposal of the central government. The situation is exactly opposite in countries with developed local self-government where income tax is a purely local tax. This makes for stable and

independent local finances and helps to solve specific local problems with local resources.

Conversely, in Bulgaria, as admitted by one of the founders of the tax administration, “mayors are not elected on the basis of the tax and finance policy they offer for accomplishing the set goals, but mainly on a party principle, and it is only natural that the one who is closer to the executive has a greater chance of success” (1).

Another factor detrimental to the stability of municipalities is the manner in which state target subsidies are determined. In the present difficult economic situation of the country and the impoverishment of the population, only a few municipalities are able to rely solely on their own incomes. In the view of experts, however, subsidies are not clearly defined and subjective decisions are possible. (2) Despite the existence of formal criteria (from five in 1993 their number has now grown to 21), in practice the mechanism for the formation and distribution of subsidies is extremely complicated and nontransparent. There are no guarantees of just distribution to motivate municipalities to effectively utilize funds. The statement of an MP on the question of subsidies, i.e. that the mayor must know “how” to ask for money, speaks for itself. The “abnormal” practice of mayors spending much of their time in Sofia in search of funds and knocking on the doors of ministries (or ministers, depending on their personal connections) is regarded as normal.

The failure to pay the wages of doctors and teachers in municipal institutions has come to be regarded as normal. It is only natural that the protests of doctors in Shoumen, Kazanluk and Stara Zagora are addressed to the municipality and mayor. But it is not always known who is responsible for this gross violation of their civil rights, guaranteed by the Constitution and the Labor Code. Whereas the Municipal Budgets Act envisages sanctions for municipalities failing to meet their prescribed obligations, including the payment of wages, there are no legally regulated sanctions against the ministry in case of failure to regularly transfer the full amount of state subsidies to the municipalities. In the pyramid of state institutions, municipalities are placed in an unequal position.

The centralized management of incomes and expenses is still the greatest problem of the municipality and its executive body, the mayor. Conditions exist for shifting responsibility from the local to the central government. Instead of being dependent on his electors, the mayor turns out to be dependent on ministers and the cabinet. Instead of trying to find a solution to local problems in the local community, the municipal administration does so in the “Center” which provides all the “goods”. This is a serious distortion which questions the existence of genuine local self-government.

The “crippled” interaction between the municipality and the bodies of public order and safety are a typical example. The mayor is in the center of public concerns with regard to crime and the corruption linked with it. This function is laid down in Article 44 of the LSGLAA which even provides for the possibility of the mayor issuing compulsory orders to the chiefs of police departments. This possibility remains purely theoretical though, since it is neither endorsed with adequate powers, nor guaranteed by the LSGLAA, the National Police Act, or ordinances of the Interior Ministry.

As a result of the obvious discrepancy between responsibilities and powers, the struggle against crime, which in reality is increasing in both big and small municipalities, cannot be efficient. It is a little known fact that most mayors do not regard the maintenance of public order and safety as a very serious priority problem for the municipality. (3)

Crime — the greatest evil in the state — is considered a problem of the central government and its structures.

A further conclusion is that not only with regard to crime, but also in coping with their economic and social problems, such as unemployment, health care and maintenance of the infrastructure, the municipalities are forced to rely to a large extent on the central government. It is no accident that precisely health care, education, social welfare and investments in the municipalities are now declared “gray zones” where corruption pressure is greatest. In these spheres management and financing are determined by the central departments, whilst the moral responsibility is left to the municipal administrations. It is clear that the discrepancy, duplication and inadequate distribution of rights and responsibilities between central and local level create conditions for arbitrariness, abuse of power and corruption.

The studies revealed a need for a decisive reform of local self-government in which the tax services should shift to the operative management of the municipal administration, whilst municipalities are given the power to determine and collect local taxes, and are given greater independence at the local level in regard to education, healthcare, the land commissions, and crime. When mayors ask for greater autonomy of the municipalities, this is not a matter of wanting greater rights, but of seeking adequacy between the constitutional powers and responsibilities to the population, on the one hand, and financial and administrative possibilities for their realization, on the other.

The shortcomings in the current legal framework, and the lack of economic, structural and administrative guarantees for realizing municipal activities and programs, create conditions for abuse and violations. That’s when local government shifts to “manual operation” and enters the thicket of the “gray sector”.

Legality is replaced by the principle of “everybody save himself as best he can”. The undermined prestige of the mayor’s institution and the lowered image of the mayor in many places is also largely due to this.

In this situation it is understandable why participants in the anti-corruption discussions voiced skepticism and distrust of the effectiveness of cooperation with the municipal authorities. What’s the point of discussing draft budgets with the citizenry if the budget parameters are defined by the Ministry of Finance; what’s the point of discussing regional development programs without any clear criteria of target subsidies? These are all key questions which need to be solved by legislation in order to effect a change in local self-government, and hence also in relations between local government and the public sector.

Only then will Bulgaria be able to come close to the principles of the European Local Self-Government Charter (Article 9) according to which local governments are entitled to sufficient funds of their own to freely dispose of in exercising their constitutional competencies.

The reform regarding decentralization of power as a preventive measure in the struggle against corruption in the state and municipal administration is also realized by the representatives of NGOs, especially those who are working in the sphere of municipal activities, for municipal and regional development.

Such a reform can be achieved — as required by the Constitution — solely with the consensus of the political forces in the National Assembly. In this respect the mission of NGOs or the so-called third sector, including local anti-corruption coalitions, is to take part by means of specific impact mechanisms in the mobilization of civil society in favor of the reform, to lobby among genuine reformist MPs, regardless of their political affiliation, and to interact with genuine reformist municipal councilors, willing to assume self-government, rather than to be governed.

Conditions are also ripe for the adoption of an Non-governmental and Non-profit Organizations Act. In fact, the legislators’ work can be facilitated — the rapid growth of the third sector in Bulgaria provides enough material for legislative initiative. Statistics show that some 7,500 such organizations are currently registered under the Persons and Family Act. Only 1,000-1,500 of these are truly operating, however, funded mainly by foreign sponsors and institutions. About one percent of the financing comes from the state. Within the framework of the Strategy for Bulgaria’s Accession to the European Union the government has also stated its willingness to “assert the role of NGOs as a corrective and partner of the state and municipal administration through their inclusion in policy formation and implementation and by providing services in all spheres of public life”. The adoption of such an act will regulate relations between the state and public

sector, and contribute to greater stability and confidence among their institutions.

The active assistance of the non-governmental sector in the discussion and preparation of other legislative decisions as well — such as the access to information, and the creation of a new democratic institution for the control of state and local government and the protection of civil rights (ombudsman or people's advocate) — is an activity of principal importance for improving the environment of interaction and coalitions, including at the local level.

At the same time, the limited powers of local government turn the development of the third sector into a public reserve of local self-government. The interaction with NGOs enables some of the restrictions to be compensated for and additional possibilities to be created for assisting in the solution of economic, social, ecological and other problems of the municipalities and regions. This applies fully to anti-corruption coalitions.

What has been carried out so far within the *Transparency of Local Government* campaign reveals a realistic orientation to identifying the level of interaction with the different bodies of local self-government — the mayor and municipal councilors. The existing political will for struggling against corruption is a good basis for the broader inclusion of municipal councilors in anti-corruption coalitions and the use of their powers for legislative initiatives, for the participation of NGOs in Municipal Council meetings with a deliberative vote, and for signing memorandums for interaction. The adoption of a Program for Struggle against Corruption by the municipal councils in Pleven and Lyazkovets is a good example of this.

Interaction is also needed with such a significant structure as the permanent commissions of the Municipal Council which, in accordance with Chapter Six of the LSGLAA, have every right to serve as the transmitters of civic initiatives in the Municipal Council and to exercise control over the execution of its decisions. Representatives of NGOs could be involved as experts and consultants in connection with signals of violations and abuse. The permanent commissions could also help to establish feedback with the ongoing local corruption monitoring; i.e., to monitor the reaction of the municipality to revealed corruption practices. The optimization of the control function of the permanent commissions in spheres where corruption pressure is strong — issuing licenses and permits, leasing municipal property, assigning municipal contracts, supplying municipal establishments with fuel and food, construction, tenders, etc. — would be a welcome positive practical result of anti-corruption efforts.

The new Information Services Centers set up with the municipalities are a natural ally of the anti-corruption coalition. They are also a place for meetings and

contacts with local journalists — something which was cited as an important condition for anti-corruption activity. These Centers came into being thanks to the joint efforts of the municipality and the non-governmental sector — above all the Foundation for Local Government Reform, with the financial and technological support of foreign sponsoring organizations. An interesting initiative for turning municipalities into an “effective and friendly supplier of information and services” is currently underway in Blagoevgrad, Dobrich, Gabrovo, Haskovo and Stara Zagora. It will be interesting to see whether this new acquisition has made the municipality more transparent. Has corruption pressure diminished, has there been a change in corruption factors? The general poverty of the municipalities justifies the purposeful joint use of funds from the municipal and non-governmental sector for publishing public awareness materials such as a Manual of Public Services and accounts of municipal finances, as well as the organization of “open reception rooms” or consultations for citizens.

It may be said that the intensification and mobilization of the existing levels and teams in local government are an important reserve for local anti-corruption coalitions and, above all, in the work for improving the image of local government, for greater transparency, and greater citizens participation and civic control.

In this respect, the question of the openness and transparency of appointments in the municipal administration emerges as one of the most difficult problems, observed by almost all local partners. It is clear that the choice and appointment of municipal employees is complex and responsible. The status of the municipal employee is regulated in the Local Self-Government and Local Administration Act — the principle of competition is introduced, job descriptions are prepared. Even so, many aspects remain unregulated by the legal framework. Has the motivation of the municipal employee — ruled by the striving for personal gains in the recent practice of the totalitarian state — changed in one decade? How does the modern idea of the social function and the role of employee professionalism combine with the still existing idea of “stable position in exchange for personal loyalty”? Is the frequently discussed principle of teamwork being adequately applied?

The monitoring conducted so far shows that this part of the work of the municipality is often guarded like a taboo. The traditional Bulgarian paternalistic idea of the nature of public power probably also plays a role in this. In reality, the authorities themselves are interested in changing and establishing public and objective criteria of appointments because, above all, the performance of municipal activities and population services depends greatly on good employees. Besides this, appointments along the lines of friendship, family ties and party affiliation, already strongly opposed by the public, are the first symptoms

discrediting a new government. The nepotistic services of civil servants are one of the poorly concealed practices of corruption.

Thus, a basis exists in this sphere, too, for joint efforts by municipal and civic structures. The European countries and the USA have gained considerable experience in the introduction of mechanisms for the prevention of conflicts based on personal or group interests, for avoiding the intertwining of official and personal interests, for guaranteeing the transparency of incomes and supervision of the established rules. The legislation of the European Union also contains standards of professional ethics.

The anti-corruption environment in the municipality will also be improved by creating better organization in the work of the administration, better conditions and computerization. The fact that the issuing and completion of standard documents takes place in a large common room, aimed at preventing improper contacts between citizens and employees, should help to minimize personal interference in the drawing up of documents, restrict the arbitrariness of civil servants and ease corruption pressure on citizens.

The resources of the anti-corruption coalition are expanding outside the framework of the municipal government and administration thanks to the initiated decentralization in some spheres in which municipal functions and rights have been delegated to civil structures. We are referring to the committees for tripartite cooperation which have direct knowledge of corruption pressure on the extremely sore problem of unemployment and the conditions for appointments. The reading clubs which have now gained legal independence are another local community center manifesting definite willingness for anti-corruption activity. The Youth Centers, together with the schools where, as the experience in Rouse shows, new ideas are born, are particularly conducive to joint initiatives.

The broad representativeness and the participation of a greater number of NGOs is also a guarantee of the greater effectiveness of anti-corruption coalitions. Opportunities are opening up for joint initiatives with regional organizations and associations of municipalities, as well as with the Foundation for Local Government Reform and the National Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria. Thus, the work of coalitions both on a local and national level will aid the reforms for better local self-government, help to create a suitable legal environment for the non-governmental sector as a corrective of power, and establish new models of interaction and (why not?) the model of a "Corruption-free Municipality".

NOTES

1. Statement by Krassimir Angarski at the “Parliamentarism and Modern Local Self-Government in Bulgaria” seminar, Sofia, April, 1999
2. Local Budgets in Bulgaria, Sofia, 1998, pp. 64-65
3. Study among 100 mayors in the Republic of Bulgaria: “Attitude to Reforms in Local Self-Government”, Sofia, 1998, pp. 13-14

EMIL TSENKOV,
Coordinator of *Coalition 2000*

THE LOCAL ANTI-CORRUPTION COALITIONS: PILOT PHASE IN THE BUILDING OF A *COALITION 2000* NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

The local anti-corruption initiatives, formulated and put into practice by *Coalition 2000* in numerous municipalities, represent an indispensable addition to the nationwide Clean Future Awareness Campaign. The inquiries completed in a number of Bulgarian towns as a part of the *Coalition 2000* Small Projects program unequivocally revealed that corruption within local authority structures is a fact.

On the other hand, counteracting corruption in local government and public services at the municipal level is focused on because in this area the efforts for achieving greater transparency and publicity have greater chances for success, and measuring their effectiveness is relatively easy.

The general conclusions made with respect to the local authorities could also be applied to the central administration. There too, corruption and the inclination to corrupt practices exist in association with the other vices, haunting the administration and the citizen-public authority relationship at the municipal level. The majority of these vices are deeply rooted and bear the mark of half a century of socialism with its totally formalized public organizations and initiatives, and with people alienated from political power as a result of the hyper-centralization.

It is not accidental that, as one representative of the local authorities in Plovdiv concluded, municipal administration has not altered over the last fifty years. That is, bureaucracy, ineffectiveness, insufficient information, lack of responsiveness to the demands for quality public services, etc., are the chronic diseases of local government that create preconditions for the emergence of corrupt practices. Also, it is widely believed that corruption appears as a consequence of the scanty remuneration of public servants, forcing them to seek other financial sources in order to be able to support their families.

Thus, the *Coalition 2000* experts are aware of the fact that if the anti-corruption measures are not supplemented by other activities and initiatives designed to promote local government and civil control, they would resemble a treatment dealing with the symptoms of the disease, instead of its causes. This, however, does not mean that corruption-related problems should be dismissed as a typi-

cal phenomenon of the transition period. The *Coalition 2000* local initiatives facilitate the identification of those aspects of the reform which directly affect the diffusion of corrupt practices.

On the basis of the first three-month phase of the implementation of local anti-corruption projects, some initial conclusions could be made describing the current possibilities and the future perspectives for cooperation with local authorities, as well as the preconditions allowing the reproduction of mass and bureaucratic corrupt practices.

One of the major factors generating corruption is *the lack of transparency and accountability in the public services sphere*. In a situation of non-transparency and procedural vagueness in the institutions, the citizens could easily be misled and forced to pay for services which are free of charge, and could be humiliated by unconscientious public servants.

The issue of information availability about public services is two-sided. On the one hand, the problem is overcoming the inertia of bureaucracy or its conscious interest in monopolizing information. Of course, not all of these cases imply deliberate inclination to corruption. An unqualified public servant could conceal his incompetence by pointing to the lack of procedural guidelines and unspecified applicability of the services. The consequence of such a motivation is evident: the combination of incompetence and self-interest damages the citizens' interest, while the cases of corruption pressure bring financial losses, in addition to humiliation and disappointment from the work of local institutions.

Thus, the major goal of the local anti-corruption initiatives, based on the interaction of representatives of the local authorities with civil society, is to *promote the transparency of public services and to create preconditions for civil control of the governmental institutions*. Basically, the very nature of the problem implies a self-critical attitude on the part of the directors of local public institutions, and segregation of interests in order to "open up" the respective municipality. As a result of the implementation of the local anti-corruption initiatives, different forms of interaction could appear, varying from productive cooperation and compatibility to confrontation and obstructionism. The practice of the 13 non-governmental organizations participating in the pilot projects during the period April-June 1999, delineates this spectrum of forms of interaction between the public and the private sector in the municipalities under consideration.

NGOs and the local administration: forms of interaction

There were three basic types of interaction between the organizations of civil society and local governmental structures.

The first kind of interaction could be defined as the *coalition* type. It is characterized not only by the stated enthusiasm of high-ranking representatives of the local authorities, but also by their actual participation in the various initiatives of the pilot projects. The anti-corruption coalition created in Smolian exemplifies this type. Here, there were good personal connections between the leader of the non-governmental organization implementing this project and the local administrative political elites. In this case then, institutional cooperation is pre-conditioned by the existence of friendly relations between the leaders of institutions belonging respectively to the public and the private sector. (Although this interaction seems unproblematic, this may be due to the short time frame of the pilot project and its effectivity still needs to be proved).

The coalition type of interaction has some advantages. Most importantly, the personal commitment on the part of the heads of key municipal and central institutions ensures an “institutional umbrella” for potential cooperation with the lower system levels (for instance, for the purpose of acquiring administrative information). Generally, the commitment of local government executives to the anti-corruption campaign facilitates its legitimization and public institutionalization.

In the case of cooperation among institutions of the public and the private sector, the subject of an anti-corruption critique might be a representative of the medium or lower ranks of the municipal/central administration. In other words, the active collaboration of the local political elite implies the absence of corrupt practices among the top ranks of local government. By default, corruption in analogous situations is “bureaucratic corruption”; i.e., it emanates from the abuse of the right to administrative discretion, but not through the possession of political power or the channels of party clientelism.

The disadvantages of institutional cooperation follow from the assumption that political corruption is non-existing. Or, corruption becomes a very delicate issue, since it directly affects the interest and position of local government leaders involved with the anti-corruption initiative. In other words, cooperation of this type can only be effective if the highest political and administrative ranks of local government are not involved in corrupt deals and practices. In this theoretically ideal case, the coalition principle would imply multiplication of the efforts for curbing mass/bureaucratic corruption by combining the instruments of the local state/municipal apparatus with those of the non-governmental sector, business circles, and local media.

However, it is highly probable that institutional cooperation in the context of the anti-corruption campaign will be accompanied by instances of corrupt practices on the part of some high-ranking officials, and in particular with cases of abusing the power attached to the position of appointing particular people, or in the

process of decision-making in the corresponding institution. In such cases the cooperation would represent only a verbally stated commitment on the part of the leaders of local government, while, in actuality, their behavior would be of what can be called the *imitation* type.

In those instances when local government leaders try to identify with the anti-corruption goals and ethics through mimicry in the public space, publicity is the most effective tool for pressuring them to prove their stated commitment. Politicians and senior administrators should be held accountable; their stated commitment to the campaign should be utilized and transformed into a tool for influencing the lower echelons of the local administration.

A touchstone for the validity of the commitment of high-ranking local government officials to the campaign goals is the extent to which the representatives of the middle administrative stratum (department heads, chief accountants, personal secretaries, etc.) will alter their practices. A situation in which the executives issue a permission (for instance, for access to information) which is dismissed by the lower-standing administrators raises suspicion of passive resistance to the anti-corruption activities. In other words, there is evidence for behind-the-scenes counteraction to the publicly encouraged efforts of the non-governmental organization (respectively, the local anti-corruption structure).

The predominant situation, however, suggests a local configuration of a somewhat different type. The prevailing attitude in the majority of the studied municipalities is that some local institutions' officials are involved in abusing political influence and/or administrative power. At the same time, some executives enjoy a good public reputation and for this reason they could be included in the anti-corruption initiative. In isolated cases, there is institutional cooperation by sectors, as a result of the executive status of the officials in question. For instance, in a given town the mayor is corrupt, but the chief of police is honest and cooperates with the local non-governmental organization. Here is a case of creating an activist lobby structure within the system of local government, which could even involve entire institutions, and which signals the existence of "interest differences" among the representatives of the executive political and administrative elites. Thus, the very commitment to and public identification with the fight against corruption will exacerbate the already existing differences, this time, however, reinforced by the diverging responses to the anti-corruption initiative. The power arrangement in the case of institutional cooperation by sectors in the anti-corruption campaign implies a continuous "positional war" between the local anti-corruption coalition and the local officials who passively oppose it. The anti-corruption structures in Vratsa, Razgrad, and Shoumen have been confronted with such lack of cooperation.

In the most adverse case which we can describe as a confrontational type of interaction the local authorities/institutions become hostile to the non-governmental organization and its initiative, refusing any kind of interaction with it, and even attempt to threaten it or to apply administrative pressure. This course of action goes through several stages — disregard, irony, and open hostility.

In the case of a confrontational type of interaction between the anti-corruption coalition and the local authorities, the nature of the anti-corruption lobby within the power system alters. There are activists who support the anti-corruption campaign and, thus, assume a critical or an openly negative stance toward the local government executives. Such lobbyists could be categorized as “opposition lobbyists”, without necessarily being members of the political party opposing those in power. The table below summarizes the basic forms of interaction between the local authorities and the non-governmental sector:

Situation type	Local government response	Target of the anti-corruption campaign	Lobby structure type	Description of the municipality
Coalition	Cooperation	Middle-level ranks of the bureaucracy	Institutional	Transparent/open
Imitation	Passive resistance	High-ranking bureaucracy	Activist	Transition type
Confrontation	Active resistance	High-ranking bureaucracy	Opposition	Enclosed

Explanatory notes to the table

- An activist lobby structure/representatives of the administration consists of people who cooperate honestly with the anti-corruption structure and are ready to enter into conflict with the high ranks of the administration
- An institutional lobby structure includes decision-makers from the local government, thus ensuring the cooperation of the entire institution
- A “target of the anti-corruption campaign” signifies the specific stratum of the bureaucracy on which the local anti-corruption coalition exerts pressure

The Clean Future Campaign From the Viewpoint of Political Parties

The implementation of the Clean Future Awareness Campaign highlighted the issue of compatibility between the anti-corruption objectives and specific political party interests. Instances of compatibility as well as deviation exist in relation to the already discussed models of institutional interaction.

Compatibility follows from the circumstance that the district, municipal, and central institutions' directorates have a particular political bent. In other words, in the cases of coalition-type cooperation with the high-ranking administrative elite, it could be expected that the non-governmental organization/anti-corruption coalition will not be opposed by the local management of the locally predominant political party. However, the situation becomes more complicated if the UDF/UtDF, the major political party on a national scale, is the opposition power in the particular municipality. As often occurred in the course of the Small Projects program, in the cases of open or passive resistance by the BSP local government representatives, some non-governmental organizations were favored and even publicly supported by the central state authorities, as well as by the district governor. This is a situation of the "sandwich" type, which could bring short-term dividends to the anti-corruption organization, but at the same time it bears the disadvantages of possible politicization and public identification with party objectives. In actuality, however, an active commitment on the part of political officials nationwide should be expected exactly in this situation.

The emergence of still another situation is possible, in which the anti-corruption coalition enters into conflict with the corrupt local UDF management and is objectively supported by representatives of the opposition political forces (BSP, etc.), although such instances were lacking during the first stage of the campaign. This pattern would be the most disadvantageous to the non-governmental organization, due to the drawbacks of being publicly identified with the left opposition in a predominantly "blue" municipality.

To summarize, the goals of the anti-corruption initiative could be promoted by political dynamics and mechanisms, especially when the rising political power intensively utilizes anti-corruption slogans and messages in its election campaign, attempting to build for itself the image of an alternative to the antecedent corrupt government. So was the case with the UDF/UtDF which assumed power in 1997, taking advantage of the wave of public discontent from the combination of incompetence and corruption among the ruling BSP representatives. The commitment of the new government to the fight against organized crime and corruption created the specific conditions for the promotion of the *Coalition 2000* initiative.

This commitment is especially important for the local anti-corruption initiatives, since it diminishes the risk of confrontation in those municipalities where the local authorities belong to the governing political party.

At the same time, against the backdrop of the election campaigns (Bulgaria is now just in the beginning of the campaigns for local government elections which are to take place in the autumn of 1999) the common focus of the efforts of the reformist party/coalition, on the one hand, and of the local anti-corruption struc-

ture, on the other, may deprive the latter of its individuality and lead to its subordination to narrow party interests. The reverse case is possible too, if the ruling UDF perceives the initiatives of *Coalition 2000* as undermining its pre-election efforts to represent the situation in the country, including the fight against corruption, as more optimistic. Paying attention to the complexity of politics, *Coalition 2000* designs its initiatives so that they will not be politically suspicious. Thus, the two peaks of the anti-corruption campaign were scheduled respectively for the periods May-June and October-November, i.e. preceding and following the election campaign.

The principle of autonomy of civil initiative/organization represents an important aspect of the collaboration with local and national structures of the political parties. This principle places the interests of civil society outside the political plane, and thus it should be of priority significance when considering the benefits/disadvantages of entering into coalitions with political entities. According to Pasquale Ferraro, Deputy Director of IDLI (Rome), it is necessary that there be "creative tension" in the relations between the local authorities and the non-governmental sector. This means that cooperation should promote transparency and civil control, instead of concealing scandalous disclosures, or removing the attention of the general public from the areas of corruption in public administration.

These arguments may look like wishful thinking against the background of the hyper-politicization of public life locally, as well as at the national level. Political intolerance thwarts the promotion of civil interests and inadvertently negatively affects the municipal anti-corruption campaign. The validity of this dynamic is not limited to Bulgarian public life. David Putnam's representative study of North and South Italy reveals that in the areas where political intolerance is most pronounced, civil society is weakest, and corruption is most ubiquitous. In the context of the *Coalition 2000* initiatives, hyper-politicization and the lack of productive dialogue among the local party entities marginalize the fight against corruption as a social initiative, or lead to attempts to subsume it under the mechanisms of local confrontation. Conversely, political tolerance and the promotion of the autonomy of civil institutions imply a removal of the "party umbrella" protecting corrupt public officials, and requires the establishment of objective criteria for the evaluation of their work. In such municipalities the distinction would not be between "our people" and "their people", but between qualified and reliable administrators, on the one hand, and corrupt and incompetent bureaucrats, on the other.

Cooperation with the Private Sector

It is only natural that non-governmental organizations in a municipality create a model for coalition cooperation, based on the common interests of civil society in the area of fighting corruption. In practice, this happened as soon as the projects were launched. Thus, for example, one of our local partners was the 'Civic Council in Razgrad' Citizens Coalition which incorporates a number of NGOs. Coalition cooperation at the stage of project implementation was also realized in Plovdiv where the partner of *Coalition 2000* — 'Lecturers' NGO — interacted closely with the Lawyers for Civil Rights Association, the MENSA-Plovdiv Association, and the 'Media with a Human Face' Association, among others. Cooperation along the "horizontal axis" was realized in Vratsa, Shoumen, Pleven and elsewhere.

In continuing to implement the local initiatives of *Coalition 2000*, it would be a good thing to encourage NGOs to form coalitions in implementing the projects and even to apply with jointly developed projects. Of course, this approach should not result in obscuring competencies or a lack of coordination. This danger could arise if the distribution of tasks and responsibilities is not clearly defined.

Serious efforts should be made to involve representatives of the local business elite in future anti-corruption coalitions. With the exception of the Foundation for Entrepreneurship Development, none of our partners are able to boast any major involvement of businessmen in their anti-corruption initiatives during the first stage. Clearly, we need to develop those aspects of transparency and openness in local government which would correspond most to the interests of the local business community in a given municipality.

Forthcoming Tasks and Priorities

Both the positive and negative results of the pilot stage of the local initiatives of *Coalition 2000* need to be analyzed in order to properly channel the efforts of our future partners, as well as of the coalition as a whole. The best way to ensure an optimal launchpad for the program's second stage is perhaps the *better specification of the mission of anti-corruption organizations*. It would not be logical to expect the public to show confidence in organizations which themselves are unclear about the parameters of their activity and the genuinely accomplishable set goals. The confusion in the public image of anti-corruption structures should also be considered in this respect.

The legitimization of NGOs through anti-corruption projects faces further difficulties linked, on the one hand, with the scale of the goal that is difficult to measure and, on the other, with the largely negative nature of these efforts, aimed

at destroying a permanently established, albeit depraved, status quo in municipalities.

This shows yet again that, in future, *Coalition 2000* should encourage a balance between critical/destructive tasks (of the “struggle against” type) and constructive tasks in the efforts for greater transparency and openness of local government.

The accomplishment of this task will be aided by the clear identification of the *whole cycle of activities* which will be realized as part of the local initiatives of *Coalition 2000*, i.e.:

- Corruption monitoring
- Prevention (by means of legal consultations for citizens exposed to corruption)
- Legal assistance for the victims of corruption
- Signals and interaction with competent bodies
- Control of signals and the activity of justice — administering bodies in cases of corruption
- Cooperation with local government for transparency of public services
- Concrete proposals for reforms and solutions of existing corruption-related problems.

It is no accident that these priorities, recommended by *Coalition 2000*, are in the same vein and at times also identical with those of the public reform. In this sense, the optimal positioning of local anti-corruption initiatives presupposes the publicly stated partiality of the respective NGOs to the philosophy and goals of the administrative reform and the strengthening of local self-government in the spirit of modern standards and practices.

In this sense, the local anti-corruption coalitions are objective allies of the reformist forces which are trying to create a modern municipal administration. Transparency and citizen control within the municipality would be guaranteed to an even larger extent if it were under conditions of genuine decentralization, the reduction of the levels of local self-government by bringing administrative services closer to the population, and the processes of rationalizing the activity of the local authorities. It is clear that downsizing the bureaucratic apparatus and shifting some public functions to non-governmental and private business organizations conform to present-day trends for improved public services. In addition, this should also help to diminish bureaucratic corruption.

The experience gained so far within the Small Projects program evidences the need of introducing the following elements:

- Developing clear criteria for appointments in local government institutions, including computer skills.
- Introducing clear and publicly announced rules of procedure for providing available public services.
- Endorsing a publicly announced system of sanctioning public servants and giving up the practice of blurring responsibility.
- Giving up the practice of willfully defining areas of “administrative secret”.
- Continued implementation of the reform of local self-government in conformity with modern models of municipal administration and public services.

Last, but not least, there is the problem of the development of civil society and enhancing citizens knowledge within the framework of the municipality. This will be one of the accompanying results of the successful implementation of anti-corruption initiatives at the local level. At the same time, the success of the efforts for transparency and openness is determined by adequate public activity and realized interest. It is no secret that part of the problems of transparency of local government are related to the lack of initiative and the need of citizens to be informed. There is the peculiar phenomenon of “passive transparency”; i.e., information is available and can be used by any interested citizen, but interest is either lacking or not active. One example is provided by Razgrad Municipality. The report of our partner organization ‘Civic Council in Razgrad’ Citizens Coalition shows that the municipal administration uses a number of forms of transparency in its activity. Thus, for example, the mayor gives press conferences for the local media once a month, the local ‘Gledishta’ paper publishes the mayor’s weekly schedule, Radio Oberon airs the weekly schedule of the mayor and municipal administration, the acts of the mayor and municipal council are posted on a news board on the ground floor of the municipal administration, the mayor publishes an annual report of his activity, mail boxes for citizens initiatives are put up, advisory councils are set up as consultative bodies, etc. Even so, our partner organization assesses citizens control to be inadequate.

The passivity, resignation and isolationism that negate citizens control and public activism are a result of objective factors. The decommunization and accompanying disintegration of formal mass organizations have still not been balanced by adequate processes of restructuring citizens interest in the conditions of political democracy. This is also evidenced by the continuing negative attitudes to the activity of both national and local NGOs.

All this suggests that the local initiatives of *Coalition 2000* also have a place in the process of the revival of civil society and the modeling of its social role. The success of this long-term task requires the third sector, both on a national scale and, more specifically, at municipal level, to gain the confidence of both the local public and local authorities, to the extent that this is possible. The recipe is a known one: NGOs must convince people of their personal and professional integrity, their long-term commitment to defending citizens interests, the stability of their organizations and the efficiency of their efforts. The latter is perhaps most important — in an environment of inflated speech, first under socialism and then in the conditions of transition, people trust deeds rather than words and promises.

PETKAN ILIEV,

Major Assistant Professor, University of National
and World Economy

TIHOMIR BEZLOV,

Senior Fellow, Center for the Study of Democracy

LOCAL GOVERNMENT “TRANSPARENCY MATRIX”

The theorists of the so-called school of positive government explain the successes of the small European nations with the fact that in these countries there are more civil servants in the state administration for every 1,000 inhabitants than in the other countries, including the large industrially developed states. In that case, if the number of civil servants announced by Minister Tagarinski is to be trusted, Bulgaria ought to be the most prosperous state in Europe, if not the world. Clearly, we are an exception to the theory of this school.

What theory and practice prove, however, is that absolute faith in the honesty of civil servants does not exist anywhere. The figure of the enterprising bureaucrat who turns his position into a semblance of commercial enterprise has been part and parcel of history practically from the beginnings of the state. In other words, the problem of corruption has not been solved anywhere in the world. Nevertheless, it is the state which narrows or broadens the possibilities of deriving personal benefits, material or otherwise.

According to present empirical studies, the average Bulgarian comes most frequently in contact with corruption at the level of local government. After the dismantling of the Soviet model of centralized government, local administrations in the country were granted considerable rights and resources. At the same time, the crisis in the state led to the disintegration of regional and national links which turned the local administrations into lone isles of survival left to cope on their own. The absence of a developed civil society, of independent local media and of effective democratic local structures of the main political forces, enabled the chaotic distribution of property, budget subsidies and contracts. Practice during the last eight years has shown that the administrators at the local level have an extremely short “time horizon” which creates preconditions for rapid commitment to different groups and personal economic interests. In this aspect corruption at the local level has become a commonplace mechanism without which the functioning of both business and public institutions would be impossible.

The local government “Transparency Matrix” emerged after a number of successive steps: expert analyses of and accompanying reports on possible risk or “gray sectors” in municipal government, complemented by interviews with employees at different levels of local administration, formalization of the registered problems and the creation of a common scheme, encompassing the different cases. Subsequently, a table was drawn up which horizontally covers the main sectors in municipal administration — Health Care, Education, Social Welfare, etc., and vertically — the amount of distributed funds, fixed funds (wages, social security, etc.) and non-fixed funds or funds determined by the different bodies and levels in municipal government (See Table).

So far, the local government “Transparency Matrix” has been used experimentally by the NGOs taking part in the project. Information is collected through polls with experts, through expert reports, through accompanying interviews, etc. The respondents and interviewees mandatorily include mayors, deputy mayors and local administration employees, and are in addition to information and reports about municipal budgets. With a view to the comprehensive study of the problems of corruption and local government, the poll and interview method is applied both to municipal administrators and employees, as well as to potential users of municipal services.

One of the aims of the local government “Transparency Matrix” was to compare different municipalities in the country with regard to level of transparency. Here we will try and summarize the information we received from NGOs which took part in the initiative for the struggle against corruption at the local level. The *Coalition 2000* project included a total of 13 such organizations, of which seven tried to collect information about nine municipalities — the municipalities of Vratza, Bourgas, Pleven, Shoumen, Smolian and Razgrad, and three boroughs in Plovdiv (with the exception of Plovdiv Municipality).

The local government “Transparency Matrix” revealed, no matter how paradoxical it may seem, that conditions for corrupt activities are missing in Bulgaria at the level of local administration. The experiment shows that — starting with the boroughs in Plovdiv Municipality, where non-fixed expenses tend towards zero, and ending with Smolian Municipality where they reach about 4.2% for the Health Care sector — the hands of municipal employees are tied when it comes to the distribution of financial resources. If this is so, we will have to focus our attention on the services provided by the municipal administrators: licenses, responding to various requests, registration of socially disadvantaged persons, etc. This will probably be introduced as an element of the monitoring planned for this autumn.

Returning, however, to the initial idea of fixed and non-fixed expenses, we come across the paradox that a municipality such as Plevan Municipality is so

transparent that it does not have any non-fixed expenses determined by appointed employees. In another matrix, on the other hand, the column of non-fixed expenses, i.e. expenses determined by appointed employees, is headed by the remark that these employees “do not decide, they only perform”. In the case of the boroughs in Plovdiv the result is understandable because the main resources there (almost 99-100%) are determined by Plovdiv Municipality which, meanwhile, failed to provide information for the local government “Transparency Matrix.” In the final analysis, it turns out that the transparency coefficient A_j (a coefficient limiting the risk of corruption) tends towards 1. From the point of view of administrative interaction with financial resources, then, Bulgarian municipalities are the most transparent ones in the world.

This result also suggests something else — that the information provided by the municipal administration is inaccurate to a large extent. This means that the collected information should be carefully scrutinized; i.e., the financial figures provided by the municipalities should be verified in a number of different ways: through the municipal budget (1), through municipally-funded companies like hospitals and sanitation firms (2), through expert assessments (3) and public opinion polls (4).

On the other hand, the completed matrixes show the need for common approach both with regard to recording information and with regard to the reports accompanying the matrixes.

On the basis of the information contained in the matrixes, several basic “gray zones” were outlined in the activity of local administration. These “gray zones” represent the different possibilities enabling the local administration to derive benefits and, correspondingly, the possibility to participate in corrupt practices. There are at least four levels in each “gray zone”, i.e. a gradation of the possibilities of corruption in size and scale. The first level consists of cases (practices) in the respective sector which offer the greatest possibilities both with regard to extent and with regard to the typicalness of the activity for the sector, i.e. the most common practice.

Health Care

- At first level: signing contracts for the supply of medicines through tenders presenting offers to committees. Possibility of substituting offers.
- At second level: signing building contracts with “trusted” companies and the chance to substitute offers.
- At third level: paying for free medical services directly to doctors. Decisions of medical bodies, issuing sick leave and medical certificates against pay-

ment. Chance to steal medicines, food, fuel and building materials. Bribing head physicians to appoint or send young doctors to specialize abroad.

- At fourth level: appointing "trusted people" by means of formal competitions. Keeping them on in case of layoffs.

Education

- At first level: signing contracts for fuel supplies and school repairs in tender offers. Possibility of substituting offers.
- At second level: signing contracts for leasing school premises for commercial activity. Possibility of substituting offers to derive personal benefits. Failure to observe the ordinance banning alcohol and cigarettes and the opening of gambling halls near schools. Chance for corrupt behavior.
- At third level: possibility for corrupt behavior of teachers — raising the marks of pupils in core subjects and entrance exams.
- At fourth level: exempting pupils from school attendance against payment and appointing "trusted" people. Keeping them on in case of layoffs.

Social welfare

- At first level: possibility of including persons with undeclared incomes in the list of people entitled to social assistance.
- At second level: possibility to choose "trusted" firms for food, clothing and fuel supply contracts.
- At third level: unequal distribution of donations from the country and abroad.
- At fourth level: appointing "trusted" people. Keeping them on in case of layoffs.

Investments

- At first level: possibility of substituting offers in order to benefit "trusted" companies when signing contracts for the design and construction of infrastructure projects. Privatization of municipal property, benefiting relatives and "trusted" companies.
- At second level: deliberate poor control on the performance of contracts.
- At third level: providing inside information of strategic importance about the results of tenders to "trusted" companies.

- At fourth level: appointing “trusted” people. Keeping them on in case of lay-offs.

Licensing

- At first level: issuing business licenses to subjects not conforming to legal requirement and criteria. Giving the best business venues to “trusted” companies.
- At second level: calculating a smaller area than the actually used one. Listing a different business regime than the actual one.
- At third level: creating artificial obstacles for businesses rivaling “trusted” companies.
- At fourth level: appointing “trusted” people. Keeping them on in case of lay-offs.

Building rights

- At first level: chance to derive personal benefits when issuing licenses. Turning a blind eye to illegal construction.
- At second level: combining official and private practice on the part of architects and construction engineers in the municipality.
Misappropriation of consumables and technology.
- At third level: deliberate poor control on the performance of construction contracts.
- At fourth level: appointing “trusted” people. Keeping them on in case of lay-offs.

The corrupt practice at the local level in customs offices, described by the Bourgas Legal Community within the framework of the *Coalition 2000* Small Projects Program provides an interesting example. (3) Studies of this kind also need to be carried out by other local partners in order to confirm and complement the practices described by this organization.

The different segments of the matrix also require different methods of collecting information. Thus, for example, the schemes of influence on local government require the informal gathering of information from all political forces (taking or not taking part in local government, ruling or opposition forces). Interviews rather than opinion polls should be used here as the more appropriate method.

As already mentioned, unified methods will be needed to complete the matrix in future.

In the final analysis, the legal rules interpreted by the local administration enable expenses to be almost completely referred to the "fixed expenses" section since they are predetermined by the municipal budget, which is approved by the local parliament (municipal council). This blurs responsibilities and reduces the problem of transparency to the question of who in the municipality does, after all, decide the distribution of budget funds as time and sums. In other words, regardless of the fact that this resource is specifically earmarked (e.g. for hospital "X") and predetermined in size, it must nevertheless be duly received (by payment order, for example). This means that there is a concrete civil servant on whom this operation depends. In this light, the possibility of corruption exists and this expenditure can be referred to non-fixed expenses. Precisely this should be taken into account in the future completion of the matrix in order to avoid ending up with the paradox that all expenses are fixed, i.e. predetermined by the municipal budget.

We will try and present some observations on the problems emerging in collecting information.

As a whole, it may be claimed that NGOs did not come across open opposition by the local administrations anywhere in the country. At the same time, however, two main schemes were used by the local administrations which made access to information difficult:

- despite demonstrated willingness for cooperation, information was not provided. There were different ways to this approach: accountants and financiers "forgot" about the mayor's instruction, or else the matter was postponed and a futile search began for the proper employee equipped to provide the desired information (a typical case: information about the leasing of beaches).
- information was provided, but only in general terms which did not enable any analysis to be carried out.

It should be noted that the NGOs were able to find their own ways of collecting the necessary information. Unfortunately, the short time within which the information had to be prepared precluded the exhaustiveness necessary to enable us to compare the nine municipalities.

It should also be noted that the actual "instrument" for systematizing and formalizing this information, the so-called "transparency matrix", was not sufficiently universal and accurate. Thus, for example, the typical "gray zones" such as tenders for the supply of food products, fuel and consumables were almost

absent in small and medium-large municipalities, in contrast to big ones. This is due to the fact that there is little chance of making any extra profit in supplying hospitals, schools and social establishments. Towns like Razgrad and Smolian are an example of this.

In reporting the results of this first stage, it should be pointed out that a number of interesting trends were outlined during our work which are largely subject to discussion.

- Unclear distribution of the responsibility of local and central government. The most typical and frequently cited cases refer to building permits, and the possibility of a number of civil servants at middle municipal and middle national level to delay or speed up, to stop or permit construction. The appointment of directors of hospitals, schools, social and police services creates a peculiar situation in which the responsibilities for the distribution of resources are blurred.
- The analysis of the different cases which may be defined as “corrupt practices” revealed that the appointment of people especially in small municipalities often becomes a basic corruption resource. The question arises of how to measure and assess this “gray zone”.
- One of the biggest problems at the local government level is the borderline between “friendly” and “bought service”. This problem is becoming even more complicated when considering that the territory of “non-pecuniary bribes” is expanded in small municipalities by “middlemen” and third persons — friends, relatives or fellow party members. The extreme tolerance of such forms of corruption make anti-corruption efforts extremely difficult.
- The problem of imitated control. Municipal committees are a typical example in this respect. Considered formally, there are only a few municipalities in which these committees have not adapted to the new forms. According to the comments of NGOs, however, municipal committees are a typical form of imitating control. It suffices to take a look at the minutes of their meetings to realize the problem of imitation. Typically, one person, usually the committee chairman, “guides the committee”. The situation is similar in different municipalities in the country where even public organizations which imitate public control are sometimes included. Possibly one of the biggest challenges in this respect is how to distinguish imitated transparency from genuine transparency.
- The problem of the proportion between formal and real management is also worthy of special discussion. A typical example is the approval and pegging of all or almost all expenditures according to sector (health care, education, social welfare, etc.) although the final expenditure is determined by the

mayor or one of his deputies. After that the "small scandal" in the local parliament is of very little importance.

A basic problem in collecting information about the finances of municipalities (budget, incomes, expenses) is seen in the "mayor-financier" relation. In many cases the written authorization of the mayor is not sufficient reason for the respective employee to provide the required information, despite that it should be accessible to all. This applies to almost any "sensitive information" such as information about tenders, building permits, etc.

- A concrete problem emerged in Plovdiv where Plovdiv Municipality did not provide complete information, in contrast to the borough mayors who, as a whole, proved more obliging. It should be mentioned, however, that most of the budget expenses of the boroughs (100% in some cases) refer to "fixed expenses", whereas "non-fixed expenses" are concentrated in a huge municipal company, Plovdivinvest, which is subordinate to Plovdiv Municipality. Thus, despite being legally entitled to this, the boroughs are unable to distribute and expend a large part of the public resource.

Due to the great relative share of fixed expenses, "big corruption" (the distribution of budget funds) by appointed employees in the regional administration is financially limited. What we have here instead is the so-called "small corruption" linked with certain administrative services (applications, permits, licenses, etc.).

All these problems will have to be eliminated the next time information is gathered for the matrix. On the basis of the accumulated experience, the range of used methods will probably also be expanded, including the use of expert analysis.

Good prospects are also opening up thanks to the initiatives of regional NGOs which offer possibilities for development, for example, by creating objective indexes of the state of the different municipalities. The attempt in Shoumen (Center for the Study of Political Processes) to analyze applications filed by citizens and administrative suits filed against the municipality is a very interesting approach. The attempts to conduct regular sociological surveys among citizens having contacts with local administration (Plovdiv and Smolian), as well as monitoring the coverage of the theme of corruption in the local print media (Razgrad) are also interesting.

The public committees set up for the struggle against corruption (Shoumen, Plovdiv, Smolian) provide a good possibility for the development of the "transparency matrix". Such organizations can indeed deal with the real zones of corruption and try to realize systematic rather than spontaneous control.

Low-ranking officials								
Problems:								
Criteria for recruiting members of the Commissions entitled to allocate municipal funds								
Criteria for the appointment of municipal officials								
Business interests in the respective sector								
Schemes for influencing local authorities								
Economic influence: Sponsorship, grants, joint activities								
Political influence: Appointment by political protections, lobbying aimed at obtaining municipal funds								
Sector supervision (bodies, regulations and procedures)								
Ways to supervise the activities of the mayor and the deputy-mayor								
Ways to supervise the activities of the Municipal Council								
Ways to supervise the activities of municipal officials								
Possible "gray areas"								

NOTES

1. Local Government “Transparency Matrix”
2. Our schematic assessment formula, based on the comparison of fixed and non-fixed expenses has conditionally been called “corruption activity risk coefficient”. Our aim is to further develop the proposed scheme by developing more accurate formulas for comparison after sufficient information has been accumulated.
3. Customs/corrupt practices
 - Falsely documenting taxed goods. Listing tariff positions requiring less duty.
 - Letting goods through without any customs documents.
 - Using schemes to evade the restrictive regime, e.g. the ban on the export of breeding stock is circumvented by mixed batches with a common certificate of lower quality.
 - In working with regular clients/businessmen, teams are formed with which the transfer of goods is agreed on in advance.

PART TWO

**LOCAL ANTI-CORRUPTION
INITIATIVES**

A. Local Monitoring

SVETLOZAR KOSTOV,

Expert, Black Sea Law Community

PLAMEN BAKALOV,

Expert, Black Sea Law Community

BOURGAS JURISTS ON CORRUPTION: OPINION POLL OF THE BLACK SEA LAW COMMUNITY

The study was conducted on the basis of a project of and by a team of the Black Sea Legal Community. One of the established professional elites formed the target group. Ninety jurists from almost all legal professions were polled: judges, lawyers, prosecutors, legal advisers, researchers and law students. Every professional community has its own specifics which must be taken into account both in preparing and conducting the study, as well as in processing the obtained information. The specific features in this case include higher general education, possession of special knowledge about corruption (as a phenomenon punishable by law), and greater possibilities of coming into contact with this phenomenon. Another interesting feature which emerged in the analysis of the collected information was the highly skeptical attitude of jurists regarding the effectiveness of the struggle against corruption.

The study was conducted during the second half of May 1999 in the city of Bourgas.

Main goals: examining the view of jurists on corruption, the spheres of life in which it thrives, and the factors which cause it.

Aim of the study: to reveal the spheres in society in which corruption is most widespread in order to enable NGOs to focus their efforts on them, both for study and counteraction.

Method of procedure: the study was completely anonymous, covering a random sample of respondents, regardless of type of legal profession, years of service, special field, prestige in the guild and other socio-demographic factors. Almost all questions were partly or fully open, enabling the respondents to write down or complete (to different degrees) the answer of their choice.

As regards content, the first question aimed to establish the view of jurists of the nature of corruption. The respondents had a multiple choice of five definitions but were allowed to give more than one answer. Most of them defined corruption as "bribery" (68 answers or 75.5%) and "venality" (45 answers or 50%)

(Table 1). This view of corruption is only logical since it describes the two approaches and the two parties involved in a corrupt deal. In fact, this concept of corruption comes closest to the legal definition of the phenomenon in Article 301 of the Penal Code (the crime of SUBORNATION). An almost equal number of respondents chose “demoralization” (28), “depravity” (26) and “degeneration” (17) which are different aspects of the moral side of the question.

TABLE 1. Corruption is:

Bribery	75.5 %
Venality	50.0 %
Demoralization	28.0 %
Depravity	26.0 %
Degeneration	17.0 %
No answer	6.7 %

The frequent combination of answers of the first and second group warrant the conclusion that, besides possessing the necessary intellectual knowledge of corruption, jurists also clearly express their permanent negative attitude to this phenomenon. This conclusion is also supported by the fact that only six of the respondents (6.7 %) found it difficult to define corruption and/or did not accept any of the possible options.

In answering the second question: “Do you come across corruption in your daily life?”, an equal number of respondents (6) claim that they have never done so. According to the rest (over 93 %), the presence of corruption in our reality is indisputable and most prevalent in health care and customs (73 answers or 81 %), followed by state administration (60 answers or 67 %), the judicial system (59 answers or 66 %), municipal administration (56 answers or 62 %), privatization (48 answers or 53 %), education (41 answers or 46 %), land reform (40 answers or 44 %) and construction (36 answers or 40 %). (Table 2). In addition to these nine possible answers, the respondents also cited another four spheres where corruption is rampant: politics, trade, the Interior Ministry system and the Bar Association. The sum total of the percentages for this, as well as for the other questions exceeds 100 % because the respondents were allowed to give more than one answer. It is obvious that jurists consider Bulgarian society to be seriously affected by this phenomenon.

TABLE 2. Corruption is most frequent in:

Customs	81 %
Health care	81 %
State administration	67 %
Judicial system	66 %
Municipal administration	62 %
Privatization	53 %
Education	46 %

Land reform	44%
Construction	40%

The answers to the third question regarding the reasons for corruption proved particularly interesting. The respondents were again able to pick more than one of the possible answers, as well as to add their own. Most jurists (68 or over 73%) consider the *low living standard* of the population in Bulgaria as the main factor breeding corruption (Table 3). In this sense, one of the respondents also added the country's bad economic state and the dependence on foreign subsidies. As second in importance the respondents cited inadequate law enforcement, expressed in the answers of *non-punishability of offenders* (61) and *poor control on observance of the laws* (56), i.e. 68% and 62%, respectively. Another important factor is the *lack of transparency in the activity of local and state bodies* (42 or 47%). One of the respondents also cited another aspect of this — the sluggish administration. An equal number of respondents (33) opted for *lack of coordination between control bodies* and *inept legislation*. Least importance was attached to the *lack of information about the legislative process* (9 answers or 10%). Among the individually added factors of corruption, the following are most interesting: "the deep-seated conviction that you have to pay for having a problem solved", "the lack of tradition in establishing a market economy", and "the absence of a stable value system in our society".

TABLE 3. Reasons for corruption:

Low living standard	73%
Non-punishability of offenders	68%
Poor control on observance of the laws	62%
Lack of transparency in the activity of local and state bodies	47%
Lack of coordination between control bodies	37%
Inept legislation	37%
Lack of information about the legislative process	10%

These figures show that jurists do not regard the human factor as the most blameworthy in a situation of bribery, since they place low living standard and the lack of or poor law enforcement at the top of the list of the reasons for corruption. The trend to explain the corruption of a civil servant with external circumstances gives cause for alarm because it tends to exonerate and relieve him of personal responsibility in consciously deciding to transgress, if not the laws, at least the moral standards of society.

This could possibly explain the respondents' marked skepticism on the question about the effectiveness of a broad public discussion on the problem of corruption and creating an attitude of intolerance to it. Thirty-six or 40% of the respondents do not think that the campaign against this phenomenon is going to

change anything in society. Greater expectations are pinned on other, more concrete measures (economic, political, legislative, etc.). Many of them regard the initiation of a widespread public debate merely as a “basis” and “beginning” of more effective actions.

The analysis of the answers concerning the factors breeding corruption enables the deduction of some basic guidelines for counteracting it. In the opinion of respondents, the necessary measures should be graded in the following order of importance: first — raising people’s living standard, second — punishing any committed violations, third — strict law enforcement. This is followed by transparency in the activity and optimization of the work of the administration, improved legislation, etc.

In the end, the jurists were asked to briefly describe an instance of corruption that they had experienced. Oddly enough, 63 of them, or 70 percent, failed to answer this question. Another 10 or 11 percent gave quite general formulations or answers, ranging from “Situations like this happen every day” and “Nothing can be done without connections, acquaintances and money” to “Fortunately I personally have never been in such a situation”. Only 17 persons, or 19 percent of the respondents, cited concrete cases.

Some of the possible reasons for the reticence of the respondents are contained in the following answers: “I don’t want to cite a situation I have experienced. The absence of a signature does not necessarily mean anonymity since the questionnaire is filled out in one’s own handwriting and giving a bribe is also a crime.” Or “I am a state body and if I say that I have not been offered such alternatives I would be lying. This is a matter of judgement and personal moral. Society itself is not sufficiently mature and developed and accepts so-called ‘corruption’ as something normal. We all go to state-run health institutions with at least a box of chocolates, don’t we?”

In absolute number and with regard to spheres of manifestation of corruption the described concrete cases largely confirm the above-mentioned findings. Most of the examples are in the realm of health care — seven in all. They are followed by the police and education — four each, municipal administration — two, and the judicial system — one.

The following frank answer is perhaps most telling and emotionally colored: “I am 34 years old. Regardless of the fact that I have been pregnant twice, in both cases I was refused the necessary medical assistance in the maternity ward (because I did not pay) and now I have no children, nor will I have any, due to my lack of money to pay the corrupt medical employees.”

The thus described results of the poll among the 90 jurists warrant the following general conclusions and recommendations:

- Corruption is an extremely widespread phenomenon in Bulgarian society. The social conditions of the transition in economic, political and moral values stimulate the development of forms and instances of corruption.
- Experienced as most painful by ordinary people is the so-called mass (everyday) corruption, i.e. the widespread corruption in administrative services, customs, hospitals, the police and schools.
- Due to their specific work jurists often come into contact with corruption. They are familiar with it, but only a relatively small part of them succumb to it. At the same time, there are serious doubts concerning the effectiveness of the ongoing struggle against corruption.
- In this connection it would be interesting to establish which of the legal professions produces greater skepticism among practicing jurists, compared to the rest. In future polls of this kind the respondents could, for example, be asked to name their legal profession under explicit guarantee of anonymity.
- NGOs should focus greater efforts on their work among jurists. They should try to maximally use their knowledge and potential in the struggle against corruption by attracting them as members or involving them as partners in networks with their organizations. Considering the sizable public presence of the legal profession, this would serve to multiply the effect of the counteraction of corruption.
- There is an extremely great need to broaden and improve the legal framework of the struggle against corruption. The terms describing the different forms and manifestations of this phenomenon need to be defined much more accurately and in greater detail, since the clear awareness of which act is an act of corruption and what legal consequences it entails has a large preventive effect in an individual psychological aspect and hence also in a social aspect. Once again, jurists in the structures of civil society should be the initiator and motor of changes and improvements in this respect.
- Special attention should be paid to the development, with the participation of NGOs, of practical strategies and programs for counteracting corruption, for making full use of the possibilities of specialists in different fields with a bearing on the problem, and to actively adapting the accumulated wealth of foreign experience to Bulgarian conditions.
- In conclusion, the various citizens' measures against corruption can only be successful if they naturally complement other widespread actions aimed at limiting above all the economic realm for the manifestation of corruption.

CORRUPTION IN THE MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATION OF VRATZA: TWO POINTS OF VIEW

I. VOX POPULI: ASSESSMENT OF THE LEVEL OF CORRUPTION ACCORDING TO A STUDY CONDUCTED IN VRATZA BY A TEAM OF THE FOUNDATION FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Within the framework of the *Coalition 2000* process, in May 1999 the Foundation for Entrepreneurship Development conducted an opinion poll among the town's population. It covered two groups: representatives of small and medium-sized business, and citizens. Here are its most important results:

Fifteen percent of the respondents said they had been faced with attempts of being forced to give bribes. Half of them said that this happened less than three months ago. One third of the respondents said they had never been faced with such attempts, the rest refused to answer.

The majority of the respondents (45%) consider that only some public servants are corrupt, whilst 35% believe that "almost all public servants are involved in corruption" or that "most public servants are involved in it".

The representatives of the General Customs Directorate (85%), tax administration (60%), judges and doctors (40% each), MPs (35%) and police officers (30%) are regarded as being most corrupt. They are followed by the bodies of executive power at central/regional level (ministers, regional governors and their deputies) and at local level (mayors, their deputies, etc.), named by 25% of the respondents. Oddly enough, prosecutors (20%) and investigators (15%) are considered far less corrupt than judges. This could partly be explained by the position of judges to decree the final decision (sentence), thus affecting more interests. A role is also played by public attitudes shaped by the mass media — for example, the court, doctors and customs are a particularly frequent target of negative reports.

The citizens of Vratza particularly resent acts of corruption which directly affect their daily life — obtaining documents, medical treatment, settling disputes, etc. This is why they tend to be more critical of manifestations of corruption by low-ranking officials who stifle their individual initiatives. Corruption in the sphere of big business (the product of market decentralization and liberalization) does not concern them as much. Oddly enough, despite the fact that none of the respondents regarded the claim of "transparency of procedures" in administrative

activity as true, only 10% consider the lack of transparency in privatization, tenders, public contracts and the like to be a serious obstacle.

Factors causing and favoring the spread of corruption

Outside factors	Respondents — %		Subjective factors	Respondents — %	
	Companies	Citizens		Companies	Citizens
1. Low wages of public servants	88	55			
			2. Striving for personal enrichment of people in power	35	50
			3. Intertwining of official obligations with personal interests	40	40
4. Imperfect legislation	40	35			
5. Lack of strict administrative control	40	35			
6. Ineffective judicial system	22	30			
7. Moral crisis in the period of transition	10	30			
8. Problems inherited from the past	6	20			

CONCLUSIONS:

- Both citizens and local business representatives consider corruption as one of the biggest problems which hamper economic development and make people's everyday life difficult.
- So far, the executive, legislative and judiciary have failed to cope successfully with corruption. One reason is the existing corruption within them. It is bred by a number of factors: low labor remuneration, work in an unstable environment, frequent change of laws and ordinances, constant replacement of management personnel, etc.
- The institutional capacity for struggle against corruption is unsatisfactory, including the possibility for resolute anti-corruption measures by judges, prosecutors, investigators and the police.

4. An important precondition for the central government's struggle against corruption is the adoption of measures for:
 - creating the necessary laws and procedures for struggle against corruption
 - viable taxation system
 - laws and ordinances regulating the market, banks and commercial transactions.
5. Effective anti-corruption activity is impossible unless the adopted statutory acts are successfully applied.
6. There is no public intolerance of corruption: "people observe the law only when it suits them".
7. The development of regional and municipal programs for struggle against corruption would be an important element for successful anti-corruption activities.

II. EXPERT OPINION: CORRUPTION IN THE MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATION IN VRATZA (1)

The quality of administrative services and the work of the municipal administration and the municipal leadership is assessed as poor by citizens. This is due mainly to the lack of transparency of most municipal activities and procedures, as well as to the insufficient professionalism of some municipal employees.

On the other hand, subjective factors also contribute to the spread and deepening of corruption, i.e. the striving for personal enrichment at any price and as quickly as possible. Quite often, official obligations are also closely intertwined with personal interests.

The biggest scandals caused by corruption in municipal administration are linked with the acquisition of budget funds, distributed for different activities:

- 1) The fact cannot be ignored that all contracts with partners are signed only by the mayor. But before reaching him the contract is coordinated in different departments, depending on its object. This system should exclude arbitrary acts by individual employees in the administration. Unfortunately, however, on the one hand it is a bribe-taking machine at different levels and, on the other, it collectively misleads the mayor to such an extent that it is subsequently difficult to prove who is to blame and exactly who signed the document which runs counter to the interests of the municipality.

The situation is particularly drastic with regard to the leasing of temporary business sites, parking lots and plots. Due to the huge number of small and tiny firms wanting to start business this way, the stakes are so high that the money paid for rent to the municipality is but a token sum of the money paid for getting the desired plot, shed or temporary business site. As a result, the whole town, and especially the central part, is dotted with all sorts of ugly and unappealing street stalls, etc. And all this under the pretense of aiding small and medium-sized business.

- 2) Corruption practices also evolve within the framework of municipal investment programs and infrastructure. They include new construction, capital repairs, roads, street lighting, garbage collection and dumping grounds. The money is distributed when the municipal budget is prepared and approved. The expenditure of these funds is controlled by the Investment Policy department. Its employees are linked with some of the most glaring cases of corruption. They all work with their own circle of companies to which municipal contracts are assigned and in practice money is siphoned off. This sometimes even happens under “strict” observance of the requirements of assigning contracts through tenders.
- 3) Wide possibilities for corruption are also provided by the so-called “Building Right”. The legal framework which frequently changes the regulations of this type of activity is also “conducive” to this. Construction is controlled by three teams: local administration, a special commission in the system of Municipal Administration which monitors and approves the town plan, and a state building supervision inspectorate which looks out for illegal construction. This legal framework strongly favors low-ranking employees. Architects and construction engineers in the municipal administration “combine” public work with private practice. Thus, citizens who need their approval for a given document, “voluntarily” assign the project to the municipal employees. In addition, municipal technology and consumables are used for private purposes both during and outside working hours.
- 4) The even more rampant corruption in hospital institutions and in municipal hospitals, above all, cannot be ignored either.

The thus observed state of corruption in Vratza warrants the conclusion that interpersonal relationships have been damaged and the moral system has been degraded to a large extent because manifestations of corruption are an act which involves two parties — those who demand bribes and those who agree to give them.

For this reason, an important prerequisite for the struggle against corruption is to take actions for:

- creating a legal framework which exactly defines and regulates market relations and commercial transactions
- drafting laws for struggle against corruption
- developing individual municipal programs to combat corruption
- increasing citizens intolerance.

NOTES

1. We are referring to the so-called “entourage interview”, i.e. an interview with a qualified expert whose anonymity has been guaranteed in advance.

ELENA IVANOVA,

Expert, Regional Association

“For the Revival of Civil Society,” Pleven

ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS FROM A TELEPHONE SURVEY WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE “CITIZENS — CORRUPTION — LOCAL ADMINISTRATION” PROJECT

1. METHODOLOGY

Subject of study: 171 adult citizens in the city of Pleven

Method: Telephone poll

Choice of respondents: Simple random sample on the basis of home telephone numbers.

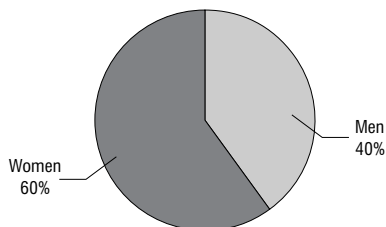
Starting number: 16, step — 133

Representativeness: Due to the limited size of the sample, the results are not representative of the studied total. In this sense the study is a probing one. Its aim is reduced to analyzing some trends in public opinion with a view to the concrete goals of the project.

Description of the studied sample: a total of 171 adult citizens in the city of Pleven, divided as follows:

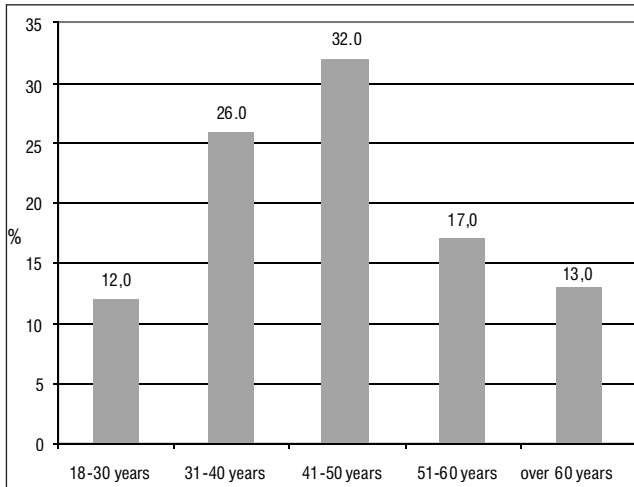
1. By sex: men — 40%, women — 60%. (See Chart 1)

CHART 1. Distribution by sex



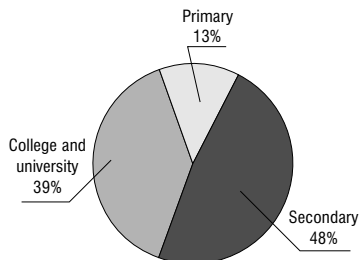
2. By age: 18-30 years — 12%, 31-40 years — 26%, 41-50 years — 32%, 51-60 years — 17%, over 60 years — 13%. (See Chart 2)

CHART 2. Distribution by age



3. By education: primary — 13%, secondary — 48%, college and university — 39%. (See Chart 3)

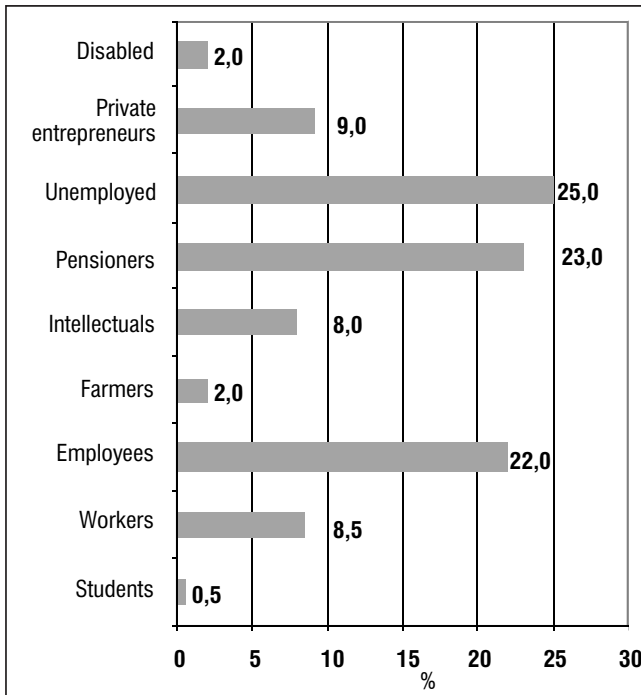
CHART 3. Distribution by education



4. Social status

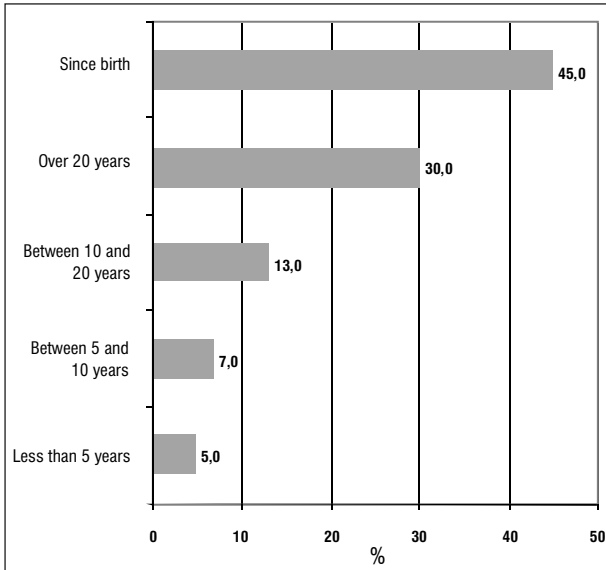
Students — 0.5%, workers — 8.5%, employees — 22%, farmers — 2%, intellectuals — 8%, pensioners — 23%, unemployed — 25%, private entrepreneurs — 9%, disabled — 2%. (See Chart 4)

CHART 4. Distribution by social status



5. Length of residence in Pleven

Since birth — 45%, over 20 years — 30%, between 10 and 20 years — 13%, between 5 and 10 years — 7%, less than 5 years — 5%. (See Chart 5)

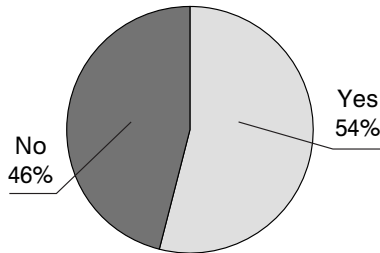
CHART 5. Distribution by length of residence in Pleven

Note: In view of the characteristics of the studied sample it should again be stressed that the cited results outline only certain tendencies.

2. PUBLIC OPINION ON THE QUALITY OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES IN PLEVEN MUNICIPALITY

According to the results of the poll, 54 percent of the respondents **used** the services of local administration, whilst 46 percent **did not use** these services. (See Chart 6)

CHART 6. Have you used local administration services?



Dissatisfied users predominate among those who say they used administrative services. Complaints concern mainly the speed of service: served quickly — 37%, served slowly — 63% (Chart 7); and competent information received: yes — 40%, no — 60% (Chart 8).

CHART 7. Local administration services

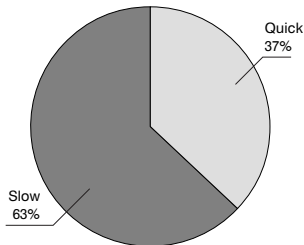
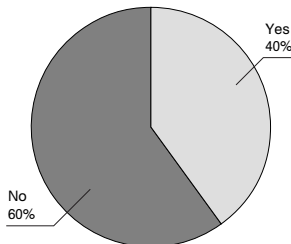


CHART 8. Were you given competent information?



Citizens are satisfied with the polite attitude of employees in 59% of the cases and dissatisfied in 41%.

The results show that 22 percent of the citizens who used municipal administration services claim that they had to pay for them. It appears that they are unclear about the difference between the cost of services and the expenses for duty, stamps, appraisals, etc. In this sense only a few people know that administrative services are free of charge.

The biggest percentage of citizens used the services of the Regional and Urban Planning and Construction Department — 22% and the Municipal Property Department — 15%, followed by the Health and Social Work Department — 12% and the Economic Development, Trade and Services Department — 11%.

As a whole, the quality of services is assessed as negative, with the exception of Education: satisfied — 61%, dissatisfied — 39%, and Administrative Organizational Services: satisfied — 58%, dissatisfied — 42%. (Table 1)

TABLE 1. Your assessment of the quality of services:

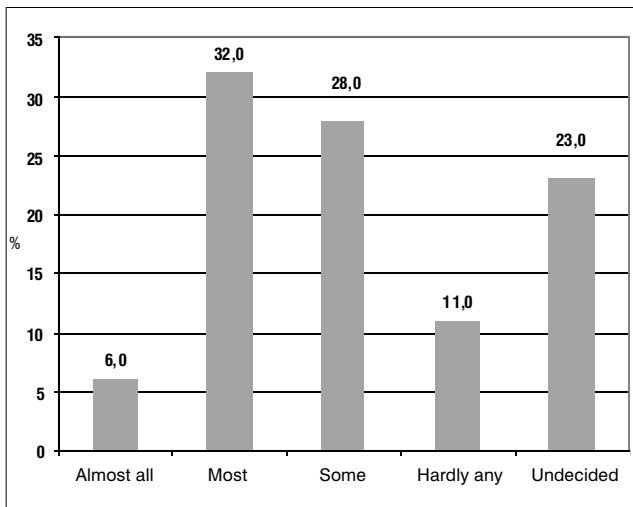
Departments	Satisfied	Dissatisfied
Education	61%	39%
Administrative Organizational Services	8%	42%
Municipal Property	17%	83%
Economic Development, Trade and Services	22%	78%
Culture	27%	73%
Regional and Urban Planning and Construction	30%	70%

Citizens are most dissatisfied with the services of the Municipal Property Department — 83%, followed by the Economic Development, Trade and Services Department — 78%, the Culture Department — 73%, and the Regional and Urban Planning and Construction Department — 70%.

3. CORRUPTION IN LOCAL ADMINISTRATION IN THE EYES OF PUBLIC OPINION. CITIZEN ASSESSMENT OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH CORRUPTION IS A WIDESPREAD PHENOMENON AMONG LOCAL ADMINISTRATION EMPLOYEES

Only one tenth of the respondents believe that there are hardly any corrupt employees in local administration. The rest consider that more or less of them are corrupt. Almost all — 6%, most — 32%, some — 28%, hardly any — 11%, undecided — 23%.

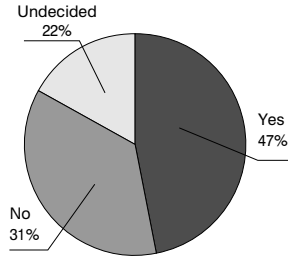
CHART 9. Corrupt employees in local administration:



No doubt, the bulk of public opinion is that corruption is widely present in local administration. Moreover, many are convinced **that this is the only way to obtain quick and quality services.**

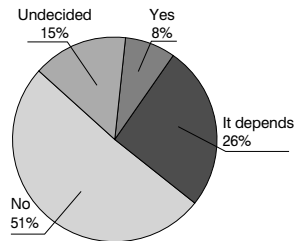
Of the 31% of citizens who claim that they would not offer to pay for such services, 24% simply don't have the money and a mere 7% are convinced that the employees would refuse a bribe.

A total of 47% would offer money, 31% would not, and 22% are undecided. (Chart 10)

CHART 10. Would you offer money?

Corruption is not only registered by public opinion. It is about to become a publicly admissible, commonplace phenomenon. Potential willingness for corrupt actions is evidenced among a considerable part of citizens.

Corruption still retains its negative moral character in the mind of citizens, although it is accepted as a "necessary evil". The projection technique shows that the respondents, put in the place of the municipal employees, believe that: they would accept bribes — 8%, depending on circumstances — 26%, refuse bribes — 51%, undecided — 15%. (Chart 11)

Chart 11. Would you accept a bribe?**4. RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Heightening the quality of administrative services necessitates the operation of a consultative information center which will orient citizens concerning the place, time and kinds of services, and provide competent legal assistance about the mechanisms and way of solving the problem.

2. It is necessary to provide public information about the specific activities of the municipal administration, adapted to the practical needs of citizens.
3. It is necessary to train employees of the busiest offices in specific techniques of communication with citizens and the settling of disputes.
4. It is necessary, with the aid of NGOs, to provide free legal advice to citizens who do not know how to solve their administrative problems.
5. It is necessary to optimize the overall organization of administrative services.
6. A key measure against the spread of corruption is to heighten the awareness and legal training of citizens with the aid of NGOs and the media.
7. From a statutory point of view it is necessary to reduce to a minimum the local administration's power to issue permits. Restricting the powers of employees to subjectively decide matters can be achieved by guaranteeing greater openness and transparency in the decision-making mechanisms.

B. Anti-corruption Structures

BORISLAV TSEKOV

President of the Association of Young Lawyers,
Member of the World Jurist Association

INTERMEDIARY GROUPS: A MECHANISM FOR CURBING CORRUPTION PRESSURE IN MUNICIPALITIES

In mid-1998, the Association of Young Lawyers of Bulgaria (AYL) created an expert team on anti-corruption issues and initiatives related to combating corruption. At this stage, the program, which we have called “Anti-corruption Civic Initiative”, funded by the US Embassy in Sofia and *Coalition 2000*, consists of projects implemented at the municipal level (in four municipalities). The program also has an international dimension — AYL will host a conference of the World Jurist Association on 1 October 1999 in Sofia on “Legal Instruments for Enhancing the Transparency, Openness and Accountability of Governments.” Prominent legal professionals from the USA, Germany, Russia, Ukraine and other countries will take part in it. The foreign speakers will include Mr. Nihal Jayawickrama, Transparency International Executive Director, and Prof. Garry Hunter from Ohio University, USA, who has devoted many years of his professional activity to the problems of corruption.

Our activity at the local level has convinced us of the following:

- there is a necessity for independent civic structures to assist citizens in their relations with the local authorities and to monitor the activities of the municipal bodies;
- there is the belief that combating corruption means only law enforcement and punishment for the guilty, and not enhancement of transparency, awareness building and improving of citizens knowledge about their rights and the functions and powers of the public bodies.

Guided by such observations and by our understanding of the role of NGOs in combating corruption, we have concentrated our efforts on creating a model for action at the municipal level through which:

- citizens can be assisted in realizing their rights, and their legal knowledge can be enhanced concerning the administrative services provided by the local authorities;
- civic control can be exercised over the local authorities, aimed at restricting corruption;
- public awareness can be built and a public intolerance towards corruption can be fostered;
- transparency of the local authorities can be improved regarding important local projects funded by the municipal budgets or related to the lending of municipal property.

These projects provide for the realizing of concrete anti-corruption initiatives at the municipal level, implemented by organized groups of experts called "Intermediary Groups." They fight corruption by creating offices for consultation with affected citizens. Their basic role is to take a stand against maladministration, unlawful or unreasonable acts or actions, delays of process, negligence or any other bureaucratic abuses, which on a mass scale compel the citizens to hand out bribes to the local officials in order to realize their rights and lawful interests. This is a general practice which, above all, undermines the citizens' confidence in the institutions and the legal order in this country.

The Intermediary Groups consist of lawyers, journalists and volunteers, and are designed to mediate between the citizens and the local authorities regarding the administrative services. In case of unlawful or unreasonable acts or actions of the local administration, or in case of unlawful delays of process, the Groups assist the citizens with preparation of documents, legal advice and advocacy before the municipal administrative bodies, and if necessary they help the citizens to file complaints before higher municipal bodies according to the Proposals, Signals, Complaints and Petitions Act. This Act was adopted before 1989 and is not adequate to contemporary social realities. However, it provides for certain mechanisms, procedures and obligations for the authorities to answer to signals for corruption and proposals regarding improvements in the administration submitted by citizens or organizations. Let me say that we are planning to draft proposals for a new, modern law to guarantee the rights of citizens to petition and will submit these draft proposals to the standing parliamentary committees and to the Council of Ministers. We consider the work of our Intermediary Groups so far quite satisfactory — more than 200 citizens have been consulted during the last two months in the four municipalities we are working in. In order to facilitate the work of our groups we have prepared and xeroxed standardized forms for written consultations, signals and proposals, as well as information

materials for the reception rooms and for the other activities of our organization within the scope of the said project.

Another priority of the Intermediary Groups is monitoring the activities and policies of the local authorities with regard to restricting corruption and the violation of the rights and the lawful interests of citizens through maladministration. The monitoring process will result in special reports and recommendations for improving the organization and procedures of the municipal bodies. These reports will be presented to the local authorities, the media and local NGOs. With a view to increasing the transparency of the local authorities and enhancing the role of NGOs in public policy making, the Groups will gather and announce information about important local projects funded by the municipal budgets.

We consider as very important the publication of Citizens' Handbooks presenting the legal regulations in a wide scope of municipal administrative services (e.g. certificates, authorizations, licenses) and in a format that is synthesized and understandable to the layperson. The handbooks will be distributed within the local communities — to citizens, businesses and NGOs. I believe that the handbooks concerned will be an efficient assistant to the citizens and a real guide in the labyrinth of the administrative services, bodies, documentation and procedures.

Mail boxes have been announced where citizens, whose anonymity is guaranteed, have the opportunity to send signals about corruption among the local authorities.

We are in permanent dialogue with local authorities through a number of workshops and round table discussions on issues like the functioning of the municipal authorities, access to information and amendments in local regulations aimed at reducing licensing procedures. One practical result of this dialogue is the participation of representatives of AYL in working groups on drafting local plans for combating corruption in two of the municipalities.

This mediation between the citizens and local authorities, along with civic control and the improving of legal knowledge, are the basic instruments for NGOs in combating corruption. In this sense the *Coalition 2000* process should be directed even more toward working on the local level. Local NGO coalitions, consisting of both organizations committed to the anti-corruption issues and also NGOs with other areas of activity, should be created in the municipalities. They should work in close cooperation with *Coalition 2000*. This is the way to enhance the space for public debate and to demonstrate the common will of the NGO sector to deal with anti-corruption issues through their specific instruments.

DEYAN ASHKOV,

Chairman, Bulgarian Youth League “Stefan Stambolov”

REGIONAL ANTI-CORRUPTION MUNICIPAL COUNCIL — SMOLIAN REGION

The Regional Municipal Council for Struggle Against Corruption — Smolian Region (1), hereinafter called RMC, is a voluntary public forum without a juristic status. It was set up on 19.05.1999 as part of the anti-corruption project of the *Stefan Stambolov* Bulgarian Youth League, developed within the framework of the *Coalition 2000* process. The Council is open in nature and serves as a place for dialogue between representatives of state and municipal institutions, non-governmental organizations, business, the media and citizens. It unites their anti-corruption initiatives and helps to implement them under full transparency.

1. RMC Composition

1.1. The following *state institutions* are represented in the RMC: Regional Administration, District Prosecutor’s Office, District Court, Regional Directorate of Internal Affairs, the Regional Customs Directorate and Tax Offenses Prevention Service with the Ministry of Finance, State Financial Control, etc.

1.2. The *municipal institutions* are represented as follows: Smolian Municipality is represented by the deputy mayor and secretary of the municipality, as well as heads of departments in the municipality. Representatives of other municipalities also take part: the mayor of the village of Momchilovtsi, as well as representatives of Roudozem Municipality, Dospat Municipality, Devin Municipality, Borino Municipality, Chepelare Municipality, Madan Municipality, Zlatograd Municipality, Nedelino Municipality and Banite Municipality.

1.3. The main *trade unions* are also represented in the RMC by their chairmen. They include the Podkrepa Confederation of Labor, the Confederation of Independent Trade Unions of Bulgaria, the Promyana National Trade Union and the District Medical Board of the Bulgarian Medical Association.

1.4. *Non-governmental organizations*: A number of organizations in the third sector are taking part in RMC, based either in the town of Smolian or in smaller municipalities within Smolian region. (2)

1.5. *Media*: The anti-corruption campaign is assisted by the editors-in-chief of the papers *Otzvovk*, *Rodopski Vesti* and *Rodopski Pregled*, Foton-K cable TV network, Radio Rodopa and the correspondents of Bulgarian National Radio, the Bulgarian News Agency BTA, Standart News daily and Maritsa daily.

1.6. *Businessmen*: The executive directors of the Bulgarian Industrial Association and Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

1.7. *Freelance jurists and public figures*

2. RMC Structure

The Regional Municipal Council for Struggle Against Corruption has a three-tier structure.

2.1. Regional Public Forum:

Composition: By definition it includes all RMC members. At the same it has an open composition.

Meetings: At least once every three months, convened by the chairman.

Tasks: Determines the long-term program and action guidelines of RMC, adopts an action plan against corruption, analyzes and assesses the state of corruption in the region, submits proposals for changes to the legislative and statutory framework to the relevant institutions and bodies, elects a Coordination Council from among its members.

2.2. Coordination Council

Composition: seven persons

Chairman: Peter Malamov, Mayor of Momchilovtsi village

Deputy Chairman: Deyan Ashkov, Chairman of the *Stefan Stambolov* Bulgarian Youth League

Secretary: Siyka Zabileva, spokesperson of the Regional Directorate of Internal Affairs

Members: Georgi Kroumov, District Prosecutor, Bisser Goranov, Secretary of Smolian Municipality, Vassil Vassilev — lawyer.

Meetings: Holds meetings at least once a month, convened by the Chairman.

Tasks: Implements the decisions of the Regional Public Forum, coordinates and manages the activities in the Action Plan against Corruption, maintains contacts with other regional anti-corruption councils and *Coalition 2000*, as well as international contacts, prepares the agenda and organizes the staging of the Regional Public Forum, reviews the signals of citizens and takes the necessary actions in cooperation with the respective institutions and bodies.

The activity of the Coordination Council is guided by the idea of consensus and cooperation between the state and private sector, the trade unions, media and NGOs as a key prerequisite for the success of the struggle against corruption.

3. Secretariat

The functions of the Secretariat of the Regional Municipal Council for Struggle Against Corruption are performed by the *Stefan Stambolov* Bulgarian Youth League. They include operational activities on the implementation of the Action Plan against Corruption, as well as furnishing the Coordination Council with materials and information.

The Secretariat collects and provides information on the problems of corruption, receives signals of corruption and duly presents them to the Coordination Council and the respective institutions and bodies, monitors the appearance and development of other anti-corruption initiatives at local and international level, establishes contact with the institutions conducting them and briefs the Coordination Council on them, organizes different meetings and visits.

4. RMC Goals and Priorities

4.1. Goals:

- To attain the kind of level of influence in the struggle against corruption which would lead to a change in the value system, attitudes and behavior of people, causing them to regard manifestations of corruption as inadmissible and unworthy.
- To achieve transparency and openness in the actions of state and government institutions and local government.
- To improve the economic and social environment.

4.2. Priority activities:

- Promoting partnership between citizens associations, business and NGOs, on the one hand, and state and municipal institutions, on the other, in the struggle to restrict corruption practices in the region.
- Collecting signals of citizens about manifestations of corruption and taking the necessary measures jointly with the respective institutions and bodies.
- Local monitoring of corrupt behavior in the region.

- Conducting a public awareness campaign to broaden the knowledge of citizens about public services and civil rights, and when those are under pressure of corruption.
- Preparing proposals for improving the work of the state and municipal administration and for increasing the transparency of public services in particular.
- Formulating possible proposals for changes to the legislative and statutory framework.

5. Activities carried out during the pilot stage of the project (April — June 1999):

- Press conference to familiarize the local and national media with the project.
- Introduction of a special column on the problems of corruption in the *Rodopski Vesti* daily and the local press.
- Interviews and broadcasts in the electronic media.
- Regular airing of information about RMC activities on Radio Rodopa.
- Opening a Free Legal Advice Office on the problems of corruption and signals of citizens. The Office offers:
 - Reception room (Smolian Regional Administration, office 516, open daily from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m., Monday to Friday).
 - Hot line for signals of citizens (telephone: 0310/2-46-01, open daily from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday to Friday).
 - Mail box for signals in writing (P.O. Box 111, Smolian Central Post Office, daily).

The office is managed by jurist Peter Malamov, former officer in the Regional Directorate of Internal Affairs. (3)

- Study on “Transparency and Local Government” with the participation of state department experts, trade-union consultants and independent experts.

6. First Results

As a result of the studies conducted by RMC, the following “gray sectors” were defined; i.e., sectors/activities containing prerequisites for corrupt behavior:

- Health care: buying apparatuses; supplying medicines, food and fuel; current repairs; issuing free medicines; issuing sick leave and medical certificates.
- Education: contacts for the supply of fuel and food, auxiliary school materials, school building repairs, contracts for leasing school rooms for business, raising the marks of pupils in core subjects and entrance exams, exempting pupils from school attendance against payment.
- Social welfare: persons with undeclared incomes receiving social assistance for heating and food; contracts for the supply of food, clothing and fuel; distribution of donations from the country and abroad.
- Culture: tenders for current repairs; contracts for organizing festivals and celebrations; contracts signed by directors of museums, galleries, libraries, opera houses and theaters for leasing rooms and outdoor space for commercial activity; supply of books, paintings, and museum exhibits (possibility of substitution with forgeries).
- Investments: contracts for the design and construction of infrastructure projects, privatization of municipal property, poor control on the performance of contracts, providing inside information of strategic importance in tenders and auctions.

Listing these “gray sectors” is a necessary prerequisite for continued RMC activity and for focusing anti-corruption efforts and initiatives in the region on the most susceptible teams of the state and municipal administration.

In conclusion, it may be said that only the first step has been made towards accomplishing the goals pursued by the RMC — creating the organization and action mechanism of the circles which have publicly committed themselves to the anti-corruption cause. The accomplishment of the goals and activities mapped out in the Action Plan against Corruption will be a decisive test for the viability of the RMC.

NOTES

1. Geographically, the RMC encompasses the territory and population of Smolian region. This covers 10 municipalities: Smolian, Roudozem, Dospat, Devin, Borino, Chepelare, Madan, Zlatograd, Nedelino and Banite.
2. These are: the Stefan Stambolov Bulgarian Youth League, the Bulgarian Association for Fair Elections and Civil Rights, the Association of Rhodope Municipalities, the Movement for the Protection and Development of the Central Rhodopes, the Regional Development Agency under the PHARE

Program, the Open Society Club, the Lady Diana — World Without Tears Foundation, the Center of Non-Profit Organizations, the Center for Sustainable Mountain Development, the Rodopi Hoteliers and Restaurateurs Association, the Eco-World Rodopi Association, the Unique Rhodopes Association, the Citizens' Forum Association, the Rodopi 21st Century Association, the Center for the Development of Zlatograd Municipality, Business Center Devin, the Partnership for Local Development Association — Madan Municipality, the Union for the Protection of the Rhodopes — Chepelare Municipality, the Care and Charity Association — Smolian.

3. The activity of these specialized teams warrants the conclusion that signals of corruption are prevalent in the sphere of health care, the bodies of the Traffic Police and the Hygiene and Epidemiology Inspectorate, the municipal and state administration, and provide evidence of illegal appointments, lay-offs and dismissals. Unfortunately, people are reluctant to reveal their identity and to present facts and evidence of cases of corruption.

APPENDIX

**LIST OF ACTIVITIES ON
SMALL GRANT PROJECTS**

Foundation For Entrepreneurship Development

Number	Activity	Objective	Media effect	Products
1	Sociological survey in the town of Haskovo	The survey has been conducted with the assistance of the Regional Agency for Social and Economic Development in Haskovo. Two groups of people have been interviewed – representatives of the general public and owners or managers of small and medium size firms.		Analytical report
2	Anti-corruption round table discussion – Haskovo, June 23	Participation on the part of 30 people from the regional and municipal administration, NGOs, businessmen, journalists.	Reports in local newspapers and electronic media (Haskovo), and on the national radio "Horizont" channel	
3	Public Anti-corruption Forum - June 30	Participation by representatives of the municipal and regional administration, the mass media, the regional hospital and the Vratza Customs Office, the local court of justice, firms, NGOs	Publications in the local press, reports on the central radio and television	

Students' Association "Anti-Corruption Society" — Sofia

Number	Activity	Objective	Media effect	Products
1	Round table discussion entitled "The Students' Town - A Corruption-Free Area"	Discussion on corruption-related problems in the Students' Town attended by representatives of the local administration, NGOs and youth organizations.	Reports aired by the national radio "Horizont" channel and by private radio stations in Sofia /"Darik," "Alma Mater"/ TV reports aired by "Channel 3" TV and "Nova Television" Publications in <i>Democratsia, Monitor, Noshten Trud, 24 Chassa,</i> and <i>Sega</i> dailies	
2	Anti-corruption concert in the Students' Town (April 27)	The concert was organized under the motto "The Students' Town - A Corruption-Free Area" and attracted prominent youth bands. More than 7,000 students attended.	Reports aired by the national radio "Horizont" channel and by private radio stations in Sofia /"Darik," "Alma Mater"/ TV reports aired by "Channel 3" TV and "Nova Television" Publications in <i>Democratsia, Monitor, Noshten Trud, 24 Chassa,</i> and <i>Sega</i> dailies	
3	Publication of a brochure	The purpose of the brochure has been to inform students about their right to obtain an accommodation in the Students' Town		Distribution of the brochure

Association Of Young Lawyers

Number	Activity	Objective	Media effect	Products
1	Seminars with representatives of local authorities in Pleven and Lyaskovets	Presentation of the project and cooperation proposals	Publications in the national and local press	
2	Workshop in Lyaskovets entitled "Transparency in the Work of Local Authorities" - legislation, existing practices, and problems (April 23)	The discussion has focused on the work of local authorities and on the possibilities for exercising civic control. The meeting has been attended by the mayor, the deputy mayor, representatives of local authorities and NGOs, journalists.		
3	Public discussion in Lyaskovets entitled "Civil Society Against Corruption" (May 12)	The number of participants has been expanded to include local authorities, NGOs, trade-unions, jurists, journalists, and public activists.	Covered by "Eurocom" TV and by Radio "Sprint" – Pleven	
4	Joint press-conference in Pleven with the Regional Association "For the Revival of Civil Society" (May 12)		Publications in the local press	
5	Conference in Lyaskovets "Transparency in the Work of Municipal Administration" (June 29)	Presentation of the "Administrative Services Handbook"		"Administrative Services Handbook," designed for the citizens of Lyaskovets municipality. A similar handbook has been drafted for the municipality of Pleven. 1000 copies of the two publications have been printed.
6	Completion of the local government "Transparency Matrix"			Inserting the collected data in the integrated matrix.
7	Formation of mediation groups and other organizational and technical activities (end of April)	A total of 93 individuals from Lyaskovets and Pleven have used the services provided by the mediation groups		
8	Public meeting with the citizens of Merdania village in the municipality of Lyaskovets	Approximately 40 people have requested legal advice on administrative problems and services.		
9	Drafting a brochure "How to Oppose Corruption - Practical Advice" and providing information about Internet sites on corruption-related problems			Drafting and publishing a brochure.

Civic Coalition "Civic Council" — Razgrad

Number	Activity	Objective	Media effect	Products
1	Conducting media monitoring	Completion of forms designed to evaluate the local media coverage of the issue of corruption		Producing a report on the media monitoring
2	Telephone survey (May 3)	101 people interviewed about corruption in Bulgarian society		Analysis of the survey results
3	Press-conference announcing the start of the anti-corruption project	Presenting the project to the media	Media coverage of the press-conference	
4	"Clean Future" essay competition	6 essays submitted		Report on the results of the competition
5	Announcing the opening of a telephone hotline	Citizens of the city have been invited to provide information about cases of corruption	Advertising the telephone hotline on the local "Oberon" radio	No phone calls received /possible reason: it is an office telephone number/
6	Round table discussion "Procedures for Enhancing Transparency and Countering Corruption in Local Government"	29 managers and representatives of local and regional authorities, public activists, and journalists took part in the round table.	Publications in local/regional newspapers. A sharply negative opinion about the usefulness of this campaign has been registered on the part of the editor-in-chief of the local private newspaper <i>Eksp</i>	Report on the results from the round table
7	Public Forum "Clean Future" discussing the role of the media and civil society in the fight against corruption (June 30, 1999)	The discussion has been attended by representatives of non-governmental organizations, the media, local authorities, and young people.	The Anti-corruption Public Forum has enjoyed large media coverage	Report on the work of the forum
8	Organizing a happening under the title "United Against Corruption" (June 30, 1999)	Several pop bands from Razgrad have played at the concert	The happening has received excellent media coverage	
9	Participation of the chairperson of the anti-corruption coalition in a meeting hosted by the Regional Council to Combat Crime	An analysis of the corruption situation in the region has been made		
10	Collecting information for the local government "Transparency Matrix"	Determining the principles for distributing financial resources among the various administrative units		Incorporation of the data in the integrated matrix
11	Anti-corruption information day (June 30, 1999)		Publications in the local press and reports in the electronic media	

Bulgarian Youth League "Stefan Stambolov" — Smolian

Number	Activity	Objective	Media effect	Products/ Results
1	Collecting information for the local government "Transparency Matrix"	Location of the "gray areas" and the sectors containing potential incentives for corrupt practices	Reports in local newspapers and magazines (<i>Rodopski vesti</i> , <i>Otzvuk</i> , <i>ARO</i> magazine) Reports on radio "Rodopa," radio "Smolian," cable television "Foton-K"	Inserting the data into the local government "Transparency Matrix"
2	Establishing an anti-corruption telephone hotline, post office box, and a reception room for free-of-charge consultations on corruption-related problems	15 people visited the reception room. Over 208 calls expressing support for the project objectives were received on the telephone hotline. 11 signals of corrupt practices were also received on the phone. Another 34 testimonies of corrupt practices arrived by mail.	Reports in <i>Rodopski vesti</i> newspaper and on radio "Smolian"	
3	Anti-corruption information day: press-conference (April 19)	Establishing a Regional Anti-corruption Public Council	Reports in the local and national press and electronic media (<i>Rodopski vesti</i> , <i>Otzvuk</i> , <i>Rodopski pregleđ</i> , <i>ARO</i> magazine, radio "Smolian," radio "Rodopa," cable television "Foton-K," Bulgarian Telegraph Agency, Bulgarian National Radio, <i>24 Chassa</i> daily)	
4	Round table discussion (April 19)	Discussion on the corruption situation in the town of Smolian and on the possibilities for reducing corrupt practices at the local level	Reports in the local press and electronic media (<i>Rodopski vesti</i> , <i>Otzvuk</i> , <i>Rodopski pregleđ</i> , <i>ARO</i> magazine, radio "Smolian," radio "Rodopa," cable television "Foton-K"	
5	Joint session of the Regional Anti-Corruption Public Council and representatives of the local authorities, journalists, and experts (May 19)	The Regional Anti-corruption Public Council has been officially constructed	Reports in the local and national press and electronic media (<i>Rodopski vesti</i> , <i>Otzvuk</i> , <i>Rodopski pregleđ</i> , <i>ARO</i> magazine, radio "Smolian," radio "Rodopa," cable television "Foton-K," Bulgarian Telegraph Agency, Bulgarian National Radio, <i>24 Chassa</i> daily)	
6	Civil action "Citizens and Administrative Services" (June 14)	Monitoring the quality of administrative services provided by the administration in the town of Smolian (10 volunteers)	Reports on radio "Smolian," radio "Rodopa," and cable television "Foton-K"	
7	Meeting of the Regional Anti-corruption Council to discuss transparency in local administration (June 14)	The meeting has been attended by representatives of the regional and municipal administration		Recommendations for improving transparency in local administration
8	Organization of a workshop on the rights of citizens (June 28)	The workshop has been designed to acquaint citizens with their rights, with the duties of the administration, and with the way services are provided at municipal and regional level		
9	Monitoring of the local press coverage on the issue of corruption			<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Analysis of the results from the monitoring 2. Choosing the Winner of the "Say No to Bribery" Award - the journalist Zarko Marinov, Editor-in-Chief of <i>Otzvuk</i> newspaper

Center For The Study Of Political Processes — Shoumen

Number	Activity	Objective	Media effect	Product
1	Anti-corruption workshop (April 13, 1999)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Presenting the objectives of the Anti-corruption Action Plan 2. Forming a work group for civil monitoring of the Shoumen municipality 	Report in <i>Shumenska Zaria</i> daily Report on radio "Forte" and on TV - Shoumen	
2	Seminars in the municipalities of Kaspichan and Novi Pazar (May 27-28, 1999)			
3	Round table discussion (May 13, 1999)	Discussion on the local government "Transparency Matrix"	Extensive media coverage	Proposals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cutting down the 1999 budget of the United Hospital Complex • demanding from "Municipal Marketplaces" company to provide a financial report • asking local administration to clean up the town of Shoumen more often
4	Meeting with public activists (June 2, 1999)	Discussion of the anti-corruption campaign with the editors-in-chief and the directors of regional media, with the trade-union and NGO leaders		
5	Constituting a Regional Anti-corruption Public Council (June 25, 1999)	Discussing the results from anti-corruption activities so far. Determining the agenda of the Public Anti-Corruption Forum	Numerous reports in the regional media	
6	Public Anti-corruption forum with the participation of the Vice-President Todor Kavaldzhiev (June 29, 1999)	Discussion of the need for civil control over public administration and for coordination of the anti-corruption efforts of government authorities and civil society organizations	Publications in the regional press	Proposals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • organizing an anti-corruption awareness campaign among the students at the University of Shoumen • hiring workers from the gypsy minority for the construction of public utilities in gypsy neighborhoods • establishing an anti-corruption post-office box in the office building of the regional governor • drafting a declaration to the Bulgarian President
7	Collecting data for the local government "Transparency Matrix"		Media reports on the local government "Transparency Matrix"	Inserting the collected data in the integrated matrix

"NSO Lecturers" — Plovdiv

Number	Activity	Objective	Media effect	Products
1	Local Government "Transparency Matrix"			
2	Telephone hotline	The hotline is open and maintained by "Jurists in Support for Civil Rights," a partner organization to "NSO Lecturers"		Weak interest, probably due to the inadequate promotion of the initiative
3	Two surveys among citizens (200 people interviewed)	Conducted by the partner organization "MENSA – Plovdiv" among two types of respondents – customers receiving local public services and clients of health-care institutions		Summary and analysis of the two surveys
4	Creation of a "Clean Future" Internet page	Developed with the cooperation of Infoserive - Plovdiv		
5	Public meeting "Transparency of Local Government and Citizens' Trust" - May 14	Attended by representatives of NGOs, businessmen, municipal councilors, journalists, etc.	Articles in <i>Maritsa</i> daily, <i>24 Chassa</i> daily, <i>Standart</i> - Plovdiv, <i>Trud</i> - Plovdiv. Reports on radio "Darik."	
6	Public meeting "Public Services and Citizens' Trust"	Attended by the deputy mayor of the municipality of Plovdiv, by representatives of local non-governmental organizations, the media, etc.	Articles in <i>Maritsa</i> daily, <i>24 Chassa</i> daily, <i>Standart</i> - Plovdiv, <i>Trud</i> - Plovdiv. Reports on radio "Darik."	
7	Discussion "Citizens and Municipal Services" - June 6	Over 150 people participated in the discussion	Numerous materials dedicated to the discussion have been published in Plovdiv newspapers. Reports about the discussion have been broadcast by TV-Plovdiv and by local radio stations.	
8	Public meeting "Local Government and Citizens' Trust" - June 17		Articles in <i>Maritsa</i> daily, <i>24 Chassa</i> daily, <i>Standart</i> - Plovdiv, <i>Trud</i> - Plovdiv. Reports on Radio "Darik."	
9	Civil Council for the protection of citizens' rights before local government - July 13	The council consists of ten people - eight representatives of NGOs and two independent experts.	Despite the media coverage, "NSO Lecturers" registered weak public interest in the initiative.	

Regional Association "For The Revival Of Civil Society" — Pleven

Number	Activity	Objective	Media effect	Products
1	Press-conference (April 22)	Presenting the project before the mayor of Pleven municipality, the deputy mayors, and all departmental managers at municipality administration	Reports on the cable televisions "Pleven Sprint" and "Eurokom," and also On radio "Horizont"	
2	Second press-conference	Announcing the establishment of a telephone hotline	Reports on the cable televisions "Pleven Sprint" and "Eurokom," and on radio "Horizont"	
3	Round table discussion "Legal Barriers to Corruption"	The discussion has been attended by representatives of municipal administration, NGOs, and civic activists. It has been decided that the media will be provided with testimonies of corrupt practices and that a pressure will be exercised on local administration to announce anti-corruption measures.	Reports on radio "Plus" and radio "Express." Reports on the cable television channels "Evrokom" and "Pleven Sprint."	
4	Collecting data for the local government "Transparency Matrix"			
5	Publishing information bulletins for April and May	The bulletins contain information on the various municipal departments and the services that they perform.		Distribution of the two bulletins among citizens.
6	Three round table discussions (May 4, 12, 20) on the following topics: "How to Taking an Active Civic Stance in the Fight Against Corruption," "Is Public Administration Interested in Solving Citizens' Problems?" and "The Ombudsman Institution - Advocate of Citizens' Essential Rights"	The round table discussions have been attended by experts and have fulfilled information and awareness purposes.	Reports on the cable television channels "Pleven Sprint" and "Eurokom," and also on radio "Plus." Articles in local newspapers (<i>Posrednik, Posoki, Pleven za Pleven, Plevenski Vesti</i>)	
7	Survey among citizens	The objective has been to determine the quality of the services provided by municipal administration, and the citizens' attitude to corruption.		
8	Telephone survey	Same purpose as above.		Analysis of the survey results

InfoEcoClub — Vratza

Number	Activity	Objective	Media effect	Products/Results
1	Public discussion - April 20			
2	Press-conference - May 11	Presentation of the project. Announcement of an anti-corruption poster and cartoon competition and promotion of a telephone hotline	Radio "Vratza"	
3	Official opening of the "Clean Future" exhibition, containing anti-corruption posters, children's drawings, and cartoons.	Over 100 works displayed for a period of one month		
4	Publishing informational bulletin entitled "Clean Future" - May 25 and June 9	The bulletin describes the main objectives of the anti-corruption project.		
5	Discussion of the Convention for the Right to Information, citizens' participation in the decision-making process, and access to justice in cases of conflicts on environment protection issues.	Reducing corruption linked to environment protection issues.	Publications in the local press (<i>Konkurent</i> daily and <i>Chance</i> daily).	
6	Establishing Public Consultative Council on Environmental and Health-Care Issues	Discussing the option to introduce a local ombudsman in the field of environmental protection		
7	Filing a lawsuit against the municipality for breaking the Environmental Act in determining the location of a local Shell service station.		Publications on the case in the local press	Analysis presented at the International Conference in Varna
8	Proposals for legislative reforms			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction of penalties for public officials breaking the law; - Changing Article 23 of the Environmental Act which currently allows for financial support to be provided to the so-called independent experts by investors (potential polluters) - Reports containing evaluation of the effects on the environment of new projects to be drafted by organizations independent from the state, on the model of the United States; - Abolishment of the term "silent refusal" applied in cases in which the municipality is allowed to refuse the right to property restitution; - Adoption of a new act requiring discussions and consultations with representatives of the public before a decision on environmental or health-care issues is taken by the administration; - Establishment of the ombudsman institution at local level. The local ombudsman should be elected by citizens but financed by the municipal budget.

Black Sea Law Community — Bourgas

Number	Activity	Objective	Media effect	Product
1	Anti-corruption information day (May 4)	Announcing the start of the project	Reports on the national radio "Horizont" channel, on radio, "Glarus" and radio "Maya" (local radio stations). Three articles published in local newspapers.	
2	Introductory round table discussion	Distribution of a questionnaire among jurists intended to provide a definition of corruption		- A proposition to expand the legal notion of corruption. It is advisable that the term corruption includes not only common cases of bribery but also all those acts of violation of the law when the exchange of material possessions and other valuables is not directly time related. Put simply, all cases of exchange of services in a later moment of time, which have been directly related to preceding actions, should be criminalized.
3	Survey among customers of the municipal administration	Evaluating the quality of public services provided by the municipality		Sociological analysis and a legal assessment.
4	Accompanying interviews	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Analysis by a public servant working in the Bourgas municipal administration 2. Analysis by a professor of administrative law 3. Analysis by a journalist covering the work of local government 		
5	Collecting data for the local government "Transparency Matrix"	Finding the mechanism for making spending decisions		Inserting the collected data in the integrated local government "Transparency Matrix"
6	Survey among foreigners (tourists and international businessmen in the town of Bourgas)	Measuring the foreign citizens' susceptibility to corruption pressure and what they find as "dangerous areas"	A press-conference and subsequent publications in the local media	Analysis of the corruption pressure on international businessmen and other foreign citizens
7	Public discussion (July 6, 1999)	Discussion on corruption-related problems with representatives of the Customs Service, the health-care services, the Prosecutor's Office and the Investigation Office, the police, the state administration, municipal councilors and experts		
8	Training seminar	Training businessmen (members of the Bulgarian Trade and Industrial Chamber – Bourgas) how to apply preventive anti-corruption measures in the economic sphere		
9	Publishing an information leaflet	The informational leaflet instructs citizens how to react to corruption pressure		Distributing the information leaflets

Youth Center For Open Education "Seksaginta" — Rousse

Number	Activity	Objective	Media effect	Results/Products
1	Seminar "Say No to Corruption" - April 28	Attended by teachers and students from the Vocational School of Electrical Engineering		
2	Round table discussion "Corruption Could be Defeated" - May 13	Attended by representatives of the Ministry of Interior, NGOs, high school and university students		
3	Debate entitled "Corruption Could be Defeated" - May 27	Attended by students from "Vassil Aprilov" high school and by students from the Vocational School of Electrical Engineering		
4	Anti-corruption debate with the participation of students - May 5			
5	Seminar "Causes of Corruption and Ways to Fight it"	Attended by students and teachers from "Angel Kantchev" high school		
6	Debate entitled "Causes of Corruption and Ways to Fight it" - May 28	Attended by students from the high school of economics – Rousse		
7	Wrap-up meeting "The Role of Students' Council in the Fight Against Corruption"	Attended by students from the City Students' Council and by representatives of the students' councils in 8 schools		
8	Designing an anti-corruption logo and poster, and publishing a newspaper			

Movement For Christian Revival

Number	Activity	Objective	Media effect	Products
1	Two seminars on the following topics: "Morality and Corruption" and "Corruption as a Sin."	The seminars were attended by teachers of humanities, students, the mayors, and other representatives of the administration at "Triaditsa" and "Ilinden" municipalities in Sofia	Reports from the seminars have been broadcast by the special religious program of the national radio "Hristo Botev" channel. Articles about the event have been published in 24 <i>Chassa</i> daily, <i>Standart</i> daily, <i>Democratsia</i> daily, <i>AzBuki</i> weekly.	
2	Survey among the participants	Its purpose has been to present a picture of the participants' moral and religious views on corruption		
3	Preparation of a brochure	It will include the lectures by renowned theologians heard at the seminar.		

Bulgarian Association For Fair Elections And Civil Rights

Number	Activity	Objective	Media effect	Products
1	Press conference in Pleven – April 4	Announcing the start of the anti-corruption project developed by the Bulgarian Association for Fair Elections and Civil Rights (BAFECE) within the framework of <i>Coalition 2000</i>	Reports on radio Pleven, and on other local electronic media	
2	Press conference in Sofia – April 14	Announcing the start of the anti-corruption project developed by the Bulgarian Association for Fair Elections and Civil Rights (BAFECE) within the framework of <i>Coalition 2000</i>	Reports on the national radio “Horizont” channel and on private radio stations. Publications in national daily newspapers (<i>Democratsia, Trud, 24 Chassa, Monitor and Duma</i>)	
3	Press conference in Veliko Tarnovo – April 21	Presenting the anti-corruption project developed by the Bulgarian Association for Fair Elections and Civil Rights (BAFECE) within the framework of <i>Coalition 2000</i>	Reports in local newspapers, local radio stations, and local cable TV stations (“Videosat 95” and “Eurocom”)	
4	Anti-corruption forum in Pleven – May 18	Attended by municipal councilors, representatives of political parties, of NGOs, and of local business associations. Proposals for legislative changes, and for ways to strengthen civil control over the work of local authorities have been discussed.	Reports on radio Pleven and on other local radio stations	
5	Press conferences in the towns of Blagoevgrad, Varna, Kardzhali, Plovdiv and Yambol.	Discussing corruption problems in the municipalities of Blagoevgrad, Varna, Kardzhali, Plovdiv and Yambol	Publications in local newspapers and reports on local electronic media	
6	Anti-corruption round table in Veliko Tarnovo – May 21	Attended by the regional governor, the mayor of Veliko Tarnovo, and representatives of local associations. Antonii Galabov presented the BAFECE activities within the framework of its anti-corruption project.	Publications in local newspapers (“Borba”, “Novini”) and reports on the local electronic media	
7	Final press conference – June 22	Assessing the project results	Publications in national dailies	Final report “Anti-corruption Public Forums”