

## Information Centre on the Council of Europe in Sofia

*The Center for the Study of Democracy has been hosting the Information Centre on the Council of Europe in Sofia since 1993. The Information Centre provides the Bulgarian public and institutions with information on the activities and supports Council activities in priority areas. Below are some of the highlights for the year 2001. Additional information is available at [www.cid.bg](http://www.cid.bg)*

### Releases in 2001

#### Translations

- Gender mainstreaming. Conceptual framework, methodology and presentation of good practices & Going for gender balance. A guide for balancing decision-making
- Handbook on National machinery to promote gender equality and action plans. Guidelines for establishing and implementing National machinery to promote equality, with examples of good practice.
- Going For Gender Balance A Guide For Balancing Decision-Making
- The Council of Europe, 800 million Europeans

#### Publications

- European Convention on Human Rights: Starting points for Teachers (in Bulgarian)
- Gender mainstreaming. Conceptual framework, methodology and presentation of good practices & Going for gender balance. A guide for balancing decision-making (in Bulgarian)
- Case-law Digest of the European Court of Human Rights (in Bulgarian)

### *European Social Charter*

For several years now the Information Center on the Council of Europe in Sofia has been involved in the mechanism for ratification of the European Social Charter by Bulgaria. The national mechanism is a consultation network of government, non-governmental and professional organizations who are stakeholders in the process of ratification. The mechanism is an example of best practice in establishing public-private partnerships in key areas of reform in a country in transition. The national mechanism is coordinated by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy and

includes representatives of all major trade unions, associations of disabled people, trade and business associations, the National Social Security Institute, etc. The Information Centre has been providing informational and logistical support for the network.

In November, the Information Centre hosted a consultation meeting of Council of Europe experts providing technical assistance for the development of the Bulgarian national report on the ratification of the Social Charter.

An important occasion in 2001 for the national mechanism was the marking of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the launching of the European Social Charter. On October 18, 1961 the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Ministers opened the Charter for signature, inviting the member states to adhere to this major treaty, guaranteeing social and economic rights and hence serving as a genuine counterpart to the European Convention on Human Rights which, for its part, guarantees civil and political rights. On this occasion, on October 18 the Information Center hosted an official celebration meeting at its premises. The celebration was an important acknowledgment of the significance which Bulgaria's government and civil society attribute to the cooperation within the framework of the Charter. Ms. Lydia Shouleva, Deputy Prime Minister and Labor and Social Policy Minister, Ms. Elena Poptodorova, Director of Human Rights Department in Foreign Affairs Ministry, members of the Bulgarian Ratification Committee, the

Director of National Employment Office Mr. Oleg Choulev, and the leaders of two of the largest trade unions Mr. Zhelyazko Hristov, Mr. Konstantin Trenchev were among the guests of the evening.

### *South East Europe Strategic Review On Social Cohesion*

On October 24-26, the Information Centre hosted the first meeting of the Employment Network set up by the Council of Europe for the purpose of the South East Europe Strategic Review On Social Cohesion. The review process was launched in May 2001 and the Information Centre was the first to host a meeting of the network.

Ms Liliana Stankova, Head of Migration and European Integration Section at the Bulgarian National Employment Service was elected Chairperson of the meeting. On behalf of Bulgaria, she welcomed the participants. Mr. Boyko Todorov, Director of the Documentation



*Deputy Prime Minister Lydia Shouleva addressing the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary European Social Charter celebration meeting*

Centre of the Council of Europe in Sofia was introduced and thanked for his assistance in organizing the event.

Mr. Stefano Dominioni of the Council of Europe Secretariat outlined the South East Europe Strategic Review on Social Cohesion in its various components - Employment, Health, Housing and Social Protection - and put the work of the Council of Europe in the framework of the Stability Pact for South East Europe. The themes discussed throughout the three-day meeting included the transformation of the labor market; identifying vulnerable groups and their needs and policy responses to improve access to employment.

Several working groups discussed the transformations of the labor market with a particular focus on the following subject areas: main trends regarding employment and unemployment, long term unemployment, migration patterns, refugees, labor market segmentation, the "shadow economy", as well as the definition of vulnerable groups, identification of the processes excluding people from

the labor market, social and economic deprivation linked to that exclusion, main priorities in terms of (re)insertion of vulnerable groups into the labor market, and assessment of the needs to that purpose.

### *Case law digest of the European Court of Human Rights*

In 2001, the Information Centre published a book containing a digest of the Bulgarian translations of some 42 cases from the case law of the European Court of Human Rights. The book was edited by a team of eminent Bulgarian lawyers led by Justice Dimitar Gochev, Constitutional Court Judge and former Judge at the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. The purpose of the of the publication is to make accessible to the Bulgarian legal community some of the key judgments of the Court on some of the key articles of the European Convention on Human Right – such as articles 3, 5, 6, 8. The book contains some of the landmark cases in these areas as well as the first case brought against Bulgaria in the Court.



*From left to right: Ms Liliana Stankova, Head of Migration and European Integration Section at the Bulgarian National Employment Service, and Mr. Stefano Dominioni and Mr. Frederick Lapeyre, Social Cohesion Development Division at the Council of Europe*

