

## Information Centre on the Council of Europe in Sofia

*The Centre for the Study of Democracy has been hosting the Information and Documentation Centre on the Council of Europe in Sofia (IDCCE) since 1993. The Information Center 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 2001. Additional information is available at [www.cid.bg](http://www.cid.bg).*

### Launching the European Year of Citizenship through Education

The Information Centre was involved in the activities linked to the official launch of the European Year of Citizenship through Education. In December (5.12.-22.12.2004) the IDCCE organized a book exhibition "Council of Europe's Latest Publications" in the Central Hall of St. St. Kiril and Methodii National Library. It was opened by Deputy Secretary General Maud de

Boer-Buquicchio, and by Mr. Slavomir Dabrowa, Ambassador of Poland. The ceremony was attended by diplomats, public officials, representatives of non-governmental organizations, and journalists. The Information Centre was also involved in the activities of the National Commission for the European Year of Citizenship through Education.



On December 13 the Deputy Secretary General Ms. Maud de Boer-Buquicchio opened the book exhibition of the IDCCE "New Council of Europe publications" at the premises of the National Library

## **Decentralization and Local Democracy**

The seminar **European Policies of Regionalization and the South-Central Region in Bulgaria** was held in Plovdiv on April 15. It was co-organized by the Plovdiv Regional Authority, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities with the Council of Europe and the CoE Information Center in Sofia. The forum was attended by representatives of the Ministry of Regional Development and Town Planning, as well as by some 60 regional governors, mayors, heads of departments at local administrations, professors, representatives of NGOs and journalists. The Chairman of the Chamber of the Regions of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities Giovanni Di Stassi, charted the Council of Europe philosophy in matching administrative regionalization with the development of local democracy. He stressed that regions are treated as an active partner in the development of democracy in Europe.

## **Building Support for the Ombudsman Institution**

Following the 2003 public discussion on the introduction of the Ombudsman Institution in Bulgaria, attended by the Council of Europe Secretary General Walter Shwimmer, another round-table was held in July, 2004 on *The Ombudsman Institution on National and Local Level: Bulgarian Experience in the European Context*. It was organized jointly by the IDCCE, CSD/*Coalition 2000*, and the Local Government Initiative. The discussion benefited from the participation of Dr. Hans Martin Tschudi, Vice-President of the Congress of the Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe and Justice Minister of the Canton of

Basel, Switzerland. Mr. Tschudi shared the experience of the ombudsman institution in his own canton and in Switzerland in general, where this institution is an integral part of the democratic traditions.

## **International Conference on Conflict Prevention**

The Information Centre and the United Nations Association of Bulgaria were the co-organizers of an international roundtable on "Crossborder Collaboration between intergovernmental organizations and civil society in prevention of violent conflicts" in July, 2004. The event was attended by more than 40 representatives of international organizations, NGOs from East and South-east Europe countries and the Caucasus region, diplomats and journalists. The deliberations were aimed at producing regional agendas for conflict prevention as well as to facilitate the establishment of an International Agenda, that will set the standard for seeking nonviolent solutions to conflicts and to foster the role of civil society in peace building.

## **Press-Conference on Cyber-Crime**

The Information Centre also hosted a press-conference on the Council of Europe Cybercrime Conference held in Strasbourg from 15 to 17 September. The topics discussed included cyber terrorism, fraud, child pornography sites, data protection and copyright. Ms Anelia Angelova, senior expert at the International Department of the Ministry of Justice, Mr Dimitar Markov, CSD Law Program Project Coordinator and Mr. Nikolay Petrov, CSD's media advisor provided journalists with additional information on the Bulgarian legislation and European practices on cyber-crime.

## Migration: Human Rights and Security

In September the IDCCE hosted a discussion on **Migration, Security and Human Rights** with a focus on the new approaches to regulating migration in Europe. The discussion profited from the participation of Ms. Denislava Simeonova, project coordinator at CSD's European Program and author of *Migration and National Security*, Ms. Rositsa Gencheva, expert with the International Organisation for Migration, Ms. Petya Karayaneva, UNHCR Office in Bulgaria, Ms Nadia Kozhuharova, Animus Association, Mr Georgi Karakolev, Academy of the Ministry of Interior, journalists, and representatives of student debate clubs.

## Debating Contest for University Students

Students from several Sofia universities participated in a debate competition on Security and Human Rights organized by the IDCCE Sofia. The debated topics included: restrictions on civil liberties in the post 9/11 period, crisis migration and security, military intervention and human rights; terrorism and human rights. Six debate teams competed in three rounds on October 16, 17 and 23. The finals were on October 24th at the Ceremonial Hall of Sofia University and were attended by many students and journalists. The winners received awards provided by the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Sofia and IDCCE-Sofia.

## Translations and Publications

### Translations

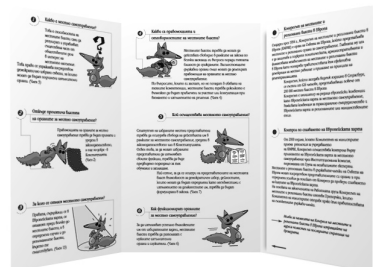
1. The IDCCE translated a number of information articles for the Bulgarian

website in the Council of Europe portal. These included: "The Council of Europe in Brief", "Focus", Speech by the President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe "Building One Europe" (Schieder), Speech by the Secretary General, "Historical overview", "Key dates", "What's What", "The Council of Europe's Member States", "To Visit the Council of Europe", "The Parliamentary Assembly", "About the Committee of Ministers", "Bulgaria and the Council of Europe", "The European Court of Human Rights – Q & A"

2. The CoE Manual on European Citizenship (T-Kit Under Construction: Citizenship, Youth and Europe).
3. The CoE Manual on Intercultural Learning (T-Kit Intercultural Learning).

### Publications

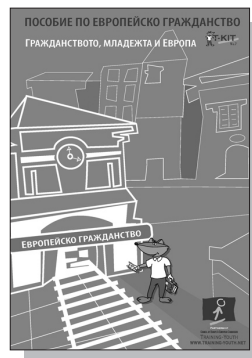
1. The brochure entitled *Have you heard of the European Charter of Local Self-Government?*



2. *The Council of Europe Manual on European Citizenship* (T-Kit Under Construction: Citizenship, Youth and Europe).

3. Information briefs

On December 5 The Secretary General of the Council of Europe Mr. Terry Davis visited the IDCCE and discussed its past and future activities.



From left to right: Ms. Dimitrinka Slavtcheva, Documentalist, IDCCE, Mr. Terry Davis, Secretary General, Council of Europe, Dr. Emil Tzenkov, IDCCE Director, Mr. Jean-Loius Laurens, Director, Private Office of the Secretary General and the Deputy Secretary General, Mr. Jack Hanning, Head of Relations with International Organizations and Non-Member States, Council of Europe