

## 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 2005. Additional information is available at [www.cid.bg](http://www.cid.bg)*

### *Year for Democratic Citizenship through Education*

The Centre held a number of events aiming at promoting the European Year of Citizenship through Education. On that occasion the Council of Europe's brochure T-Kit on Intercultural Learning was published in Bulgarian. It was later distributed within the education and public library network. The other Council of Europe's brochure, which was translated in Bulgarian – T-Kit on European Citizenship, is used by both expert-teachers and by the youth audience. A number of public lectures were held on the European standards on citizenship and on the perspectives to the Bulgarian youth.

The Information Centre took an active part in the organization body responsible for the European Year.

### *The Warsaw Summit*

The Information Centre organized a press conference to inform the media about the importance of the Third Summit of the Heads of States and Governments of the Council of Europe, which took place in the Polish capital on 16-17 May. The main documents, namely the adopted Plan of Action, which confirms the Council of Europe leading role in developing democracy, human rights and the rule of law were distributed and commented.

In relation to this event the Information Centre updated its system for informing the journalists from the main newspapers about the CoE activities regularly in Bulgarian language.

### *The European Cultural Convention Anniversary*

Information Centre on the Council of Europe in Sofia opened an exhibition in the Euro-Bulgarian Cultural Centre (EBCC) dedicated to the 50th anniversary of the Cultural Convention. The exposition contains posters from the annual exhibitions organised by the Council since 1954 in different member states illustrating most of the great epochs: Byzantine, Romanesque, Gothic, Humanist, Classical, Baroque, Rococo, Neo-Classical, Romantic, Modern and Contemporary, and focused more particularly on people who left an indelible mark on their time: for instance Charlemagne, Queen Christina of Sweden, the Knights of Malta, the Medicis or King Christian IV of Denmark. The exhibition in Sofia was inaugurated by Mr. Yavor Koynakov, director of EBCC and Emil Tsenkov, director of ICCE-Sofia. Ms. Deiana Danailova, director of the European Cooperation Department of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, made a retrospective presentation of the cooperation between Council of Europe and Bulgaria.

### *Gender Equality Partnership*

The Information Centre formed a close partnership with the Bulgarian Gender Equality Coalition and with the Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation in relation to the introduction of the anti-discrimination legislation in accordance with the European standards. That partnership resulted in the public discussion on Macroeconomic Aspects of the Gender Equality, which was held on September 16, 2005, followed by the discussion on *Does Society Understand What are We Trying to Say?*, held on December 5. The participants exchanged ideas about the necessity of expanding the information campaign for actual guarantee of the Bulgarian women's equality in the context of the European standards of the Council of Europe. The partnership with these NGOs included the planning of a number of forthcoming events.

### *e-Democracy Contest*

The Information Centre co-organized also an essay contest on "E-Democracy 2017: Challenges to Political Parties

and Civil Society". The contest was organized jointly by the Bulgaria Development Gateway, the Information Centre on the Council of Europe in Sofia and the Coordination Center on ICT, and took place under the auspices of the Minister of Public Administration, Mr. Dimitar Kalchev. Its participants were acquainted with Rec (2004)<sup>11</sup> and Rec (2004)<sup>15</sup> of the Council of Europe, in addition to the **Green Paper on the future of democracy in Europe (2004)**. The authors of 14 competing essays were invited to take part in a round table discussion organized on May 20, 2005. The event brought together over 30 participants – leading experts in political science, information technologies and international relations.

### *Prevention of Violence against Children*

Another partnership between the Information Centre and the Childhood without Tears Foundation was focused on Bulgaria's important issue of the violence against children. The initial roundtable on Prevention of Violence in Schools – a Common European Priority was held on October 12, 2005.



*Participants in the discussion "Does Society Understand What are We Trying to Say?"*

Representatives of state institutions, NGOs and media attended the discussion. The Information Centre disseminated the text of Council of Europe's brochure *Violence in Schools – a Challenge for the Local Community*. The Information Centre and Childhood without Tears organized a joint press-conference at which they presented a project for better protection of children witnessing in court.



*Participants in the roundtable on prevention of violence in schools*

\* \* \*

The Information Centre's library continued its activities towards providing information on Council of Europe's activities and Bulgaria's participation in it. In order to do that the following CoE publications were translated:

- **Violence in Schools – a Challenge for the Local Community**
- **A Partnership Approach to Crime Prevention**

