

## Coalition 2000

CSD has been the Secretariat of *Coalition 2000* since its launch in 1998. Since then, the Coalition has made a significant impact in the field of anti-corruption in Bulgaria. Through its efforts, both the assessment of corruption and anti-corruption policies came to reflect the best international standards. The 2005 focus areas of *Coalition 2000* were:

- developing and advocating anti-corruption policy reforms;
- successful establishment of the national and local ombudsman offices. The achievements in this area are described in the section on CSD' Law Program.

### I. Advocating Anti-Corruption Policies

On 22 February, 2005 at the Boyana Conference Center, *Coalition 2000* hosted the Seventh Anticorruption Policy Forum. The Forum, organized annually by *Coalition 2000*, is a high profile public event for anti-corruption initiatives, bridging the efforts of the civil society and public institutions in the fight against corruption.

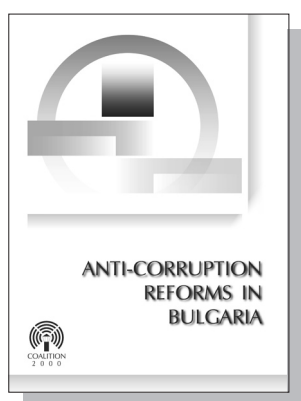
The event was focused on the presentation and discussion of the annual corruption assessment report for 2004 of *Coalition 2000*, which this year was titled **Anticorruption Reforms in Bulgaria**. The report makes an overview of the major achievements and problems of anticorruption reforms in Bulgaria since 1997 and analyses the dynamics of corruption in the Bulgarian society.



From left to right: Ms. Anastasia Moser, MP, Co-Chairperson, Parliamentary Group of the People's Union, Ms. Debra McFarland, Mission Director, USAID, Bulgaria, Dr. Ognian Shentov, CSD Chairman, Mr. Anton Stankov, Minister of Justice, Chairman, Anti-Corruption Coordination Commission, Council of Ministers.

One key concept emphasized at the Forum was the role of public-private partnership in counteracting corruption as an important social innovation over the past seven years, both in Bulgaria and abroad. Another main idea that permeated the discussions was that the building of a national anticorruption infrastructure in Bulgaria was made possible as a result of the parallel functioning of three major factors: civic initiatives and activities of the civil society; cooperation with the state administration and governments; a strong support by the international community.

The report **Anti-Corruption Reforms in Bulgaria** highlights the present-day challenges that Bulgaria should meet with its upcoming accession to the EU, such as overcoming its structural and institutional failures, the effective operation of the judiciary and law-enforcement, and organized crime and gray economy which generate corruption practices.



*The drop in the absolute number of corruption transactions actually concluded has been significant – around two-fold.... Nevertheless, corruption in the economy still poses a serious problem and the anticorruption reforms in the business sector have been proceeding at a slower pace.*

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Bulgaria  
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Another emphasis in the report is the prominent role of civil society as the initiator of the public debate on corruption that should largely be credited for pushing the anticorruption reforms up to a whole new level. Whereas in 1997 raising public awareness of corrupt practices and problems was perceived as the main task of anticorruption efforts, subsequently the goals were redefined and prioritized developing and implementing clear-cut and practical anticorruption measures, programs, and policies in the areas of legislation, the political process, and public administration.

On 31 March, 2005 at the American Embassy in Sofia *Coalition 2000* organized a ceremony for bestowing the annual awards for best journalistic materials on corruption-related topics published or broadcast in 2004 in Bulgaria. For a first year, two categories were introduced in the contest: for publications in print media and for materials broadcast by electronic media. 22 journalists from over 15 print and electronic media from all over the country publicizing cases of corruption or successful anticorruption activities participated in the 2004 competition. It was conducted for a third consecutive year. In 2002 *Coalition 2000* initiated the awards competition for best materials investigating corruption to stimulate the active anticorruption

position of the Bulgarian journalists and the media as a whole.

The third annual awards were presented by the US Ambassador to Bulgaria James Pardew. In his welcome address, Ambassador Pardew emphasized the fact that independent media searching for the truth are a major factor for guaranteeing the freedom of speech and democracy. He also objected to the use of the judiciary system in Bulgaria for intimidating media that investigate corruption cases. Ambassador Pardew congratulated the prizewinning journalists for their courage to take personal and professional risks by reporting stories of corrupt politicians and organized crime.

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The experience of Bulgarian NGOs in monitoring and measuring corruption is receiving increasing international recognition. On 17 and 18 June, 2005 the Center for the Study of Democracy hosted a workshop on the future of corruption monitoring jointly organized with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). The workshop brought together leading experts in the field to discuss the role of corruption monitoring in the context of the evolving international anti-corruption policies. At the two-day event issues related to the methodology of international comparisons and interpretation of results were also debated, such as: whether the existing data is sufficient for the development of reliable comparisons over time and among different countries and how this data could be used in the domestic and international political decision-making.



*Award-winning journalists at the ceremony, from left to right: Evgeni Todorov, Plovdiv Public TV; Todor Gospodinov, 168 Hours Weekly, Varna; Milena Dimitrova, Cash Daily; Ekaterina Aneva, NTV; Vassil Ivanov, NTV; Ambassador James Pardew; Mirolyuba Benatova, BTV; Dimitar Iliev, 168 Hours Weekly; Kristina Koleva, ProMedia.*



*Panel participants from left to right: Dimitri Vlassis, Chief, Crimes Convention Section, UNODC, Dr. Ognian Shentov, CSD Chairman, Nikolai Milkov, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs*

In the light of the forthcoming entry into force of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), the workshop took stock of existing approaches and methods to assess the levels, nature, location and impact of corruption and their respective impact both on the public as well as on policy makers, as well as to monitor the implementation of international instruments against corruption, with a view to identify basic parameters for the measuring and monitoring of corruption and anti-corruption.