

The *Coalition 2000* Process

I. Between Two Policy Forums

Almost two years in existence now, *Coalition 2000* (www.online.bg/coalition2000) has acquired universal recognition as an innovative anti-corruption initiative both in Bulgaria and internationally. In the year following the first Policy Forum, the Anti-Corruption Action Plan gained credit as a document, which was often referred to in Bulgaria and used in other countries as a model for mapping out national anti-corruption priorities. In the words of George Soros, the Bulgarian anti-corruption plan is the most comprehensive and ambitious document of its kind in post-communist societies.

The key event in the activities of *Coalition 2000* in 1999 was the second meeting of the Policy Forum, which was

held in Sofia on December 13. While the first meeting in November 1998 was devoted to endorsing the Anti-Corruption Action Plan of *Coalition 2000*, in December the members came together to evaluate the anti-corruption progress in Bulgaria and to chart the period to come.

One year after the endorsement of the Anti-Corruption Action Plan, the Coalition presented a Corruption Assessment Report (CAR) for Bulgaria to the second Forum meeting. CAR was a pioneering attempt to provide an overview of the relevant developments in the areas identified by the Action Plan. The document also puts the issues of corruption and anti-corruption initiatives in the overall context of the democratic reform priorities of the country.



Ms. Ekaterina Mihailova, Deputy Chair of the Parliament's Anti-Corruption Committee, US Ambassador Richard Miles (middle) and CSD President Dr. Ognian Shentov at the Second Annual Meeting of the Coalition 2000 Policy Forum.

Whereas in early 1999 the subject of corruption was the natural monopoly of the political opposition and of the critically inclined media, by the end of the year the debate has come to involve basic structures of civil society, all the leading media, the institutions of the executive, legislative and the judiciary.

Corruption Assessment Report -
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The road from theoretical concept to social practice required a mechanism of cooperation among the coalition partners and a number of specific initiatives for translating goals into results. In this respect, *Coalition 2000* was able to establish regular working contacts with experts and representatives of state institutions, which helped broaden the scope of consultations not only within the *Coalition 2000* activities, but also in the process of general political decision-making reflecting on the corruption situation in this country.

The Steering Committee, generally supervising the initiative, proved an effective instrument for exchange of opinions and formulation of common positions by the representatives of civil society organizations and state institutions. The Committee was enlarged last year to include representatives of TI-Bulgaria, the Foundation for Local Government Reform and two trade union organizations: the Confederation of Independent Trade Unions in Bulgaria and the "Podkrepa" Labor Confederation. It functioned as a working body not only in the context of regular meetings, but also through daily contacts and informal consultations between the Secretariat and its members.

To a varying extent and in different forms representatives of state institu-

tions, political parties and public organizations were associated with the Coalition's activity and contributed to its implementation. In this sense, the impact of the Policy Forum as an institution of *Coalition 2000* went beyond the endorsement of the Anti-Corruption Action Plan and the Corruption Assessment Report and became the embodiment of the coalition idea on a national scale. On the other hand, the initial expectations for a stronger commitment on the part of the government to the anti-corruption priorities outlined in the Anti-Corruption Action Plan were not justified, which weakened the motivation to address the problem among public officials.

A significant part of the Coalition efforts in 1999 was focused on promoting changes to the regulatory framework which favored the curbing of corruption. As a Secretariat of the Coalition, CSD led the effort in drafting the law on the ombudsman institution in Bulgaria. An important linkage was made with the reforms in another key sector – the judiciary (see Law Program for further details).

II. Clean Future Public Awareness Campaign

The "Clean Future" campaign included a number of activities and public events aimed at promoting the public standing of the initiative, defining target groups, formulating and producing specific messages and ideas, selecting forms and instruments of communication. Experts with different backgrounds were involved in this process.

The goal of "Clean Future" is to foster greater public intolerance of corruption. This includes transforming prevalent attitudes, creating proper civic motivation, establishing an organizational

structure for social action, ensuring a sustained process of social change, etc. The public awareness campaign involved non-governmental organizations, representatives of state institutions and independent experts.

- In April 1999, CSD, as Secretariat of the Coalition, held a competition for local partners of the Coalition under the Small Grants Program. As a result, pilot projects of 13 NGOs, based in different cities throughout the country, were supported. The pilot stage of the Coalition's local projects (April – July 1999) enabled monitoring of corrupt practices at the local level and testing of various anti-corruption initiatives aimed at transparency and openness of local government. A second round of small grants was awarded in October 1999 and their implementation continues in the year 2000.
- The public awareness campaign involved the use of various anti-corruption instruments and practices: local (municipal or regional) councils for counteracting corruption, telephone hotlines, citizen reception offices and mailboxes for citizens' complaints and alerts, round tables, public forums and press conferences, anti-corruption articles in the local/regional press, broadcasts in the electronic media, etc.
- The Secretariat of *Coalition 2000* at CSD coordinated the production of appropriate promotion materials: the design of a *Coalition 2000* logo and the printing of two posters which were widely disseminated throughout the country. Several videos were produced after an extensive process of script selection and focus group pre-testing. A campaign song was also written and produced.

The Public Awareness Campaign in Figures

Anti-corruption awareness days	10
Public forums	2
National working meetings/seminars	3
Municipal round tables	28
Video films	6
Anti-corruption song/audio clip	2
Anti-corruption posters	2
Anti-corruption concert	1
Publications in the central and local press	over 200
Broadcasts in the electronic media	87
In foreign TV programs	3
Foreign press publications	7
Clean Future quarterly newsletter	three issues
Electronic newsletter	monthly
Anti-corruption readers	4 published
<i>Coalition 2000</i> web site	

The innovative approach of Coalition 2000 favors an open and transparent implementation process rather than simply joining a few actors in a formal anti-corruption organization. This approach is particularly relevant in the political environment of SE Europe where common formal institutions are only just emerging. We recognize that the public-private dialogue and partnership in preventing corruption introduced by Coalition 2000 is unique in the post-communist context.

Richard Miles,
Ambassador of the United States
to Bulgaria

III. International Activities

The international aspects of *Coalition 2000* activities developed along several lines:

- a) Dissemination of information among the international community about the development of corruption and anti-corruption measures in Bulgaria. The purpose was for the international community, and particularly the international organizations represented in Bulgaria, to obtain an accurate idea of the corruption spread in this country and the anti-corruption initiatives of public and private institutions, including *Coalition 2000*.
- b) Coordination of the efforts of *Coalition 2000* with those of the international organizations implementing anti-corruption programs in Bulgaria. In this respect, active cooperation was maintained with the Council of Europe, the United Nations Development Program, the World Bank, the European Union, and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Particularly helpful was the cooperation with the Information Centre on the Council of Europe in Sofia which is represented at the Steering Committee of the Coalition.

- c) Cooperation with non-government organizations from countries neighboring on Bulgaria. This cooperation was initiated by the Coalition in view of the importance of the regional aspects of corruption, especially in the context of enforcement of the Stability Pact for South-East Europe.
- d) Part of the message promoted through the "Clean Future" public awareness campaign focused on the need to involve Bulgaria in the mechanism of exchange and cooperation with international organizations and other foreign institutions in the fight against corruption. *Coalition 2000* helped raise public awareness of the importance of this fact by publishing a collection of international anti-corruption acts, to which Bulgaria is a signatory, by involving representatives of foreign organizations in *Coalition 2000* events, by disseminating information about the international anti-corruption standards and the impact of international cooperation in this field.

The experience of *Coalition 2000* in conducting joint anti-corruption initiatives combining the efforts of NGOs and governmental organizations and institutions, as well as in developing the methodology of the Corruption Indexes was highly praised and discussed at a number of international forums. At the same time, the Coalition could benefit from the exchange of experience with similar initiatives and anti-corruption practices implemented in other parts of the world. *Coalition 2000* participated in the following international forums in 1999:

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- *Coalition 2000* was presented as a model initiative in the fight against corruption in Eastern Europe at a global conference on corruption held in Washington D. C. on February 22-23, 1999. The conference under the title Fighting Corruption in Developing Countries and Emerging Economies: The Role of the Private Sector brought together anti-corruption experts from around the world to compare experiences, foster debate, and generate a private sector action plan geared towards the 21st Century.
 - In June, *Coalition 2000* organized an international conference on Coalition Building and Monitoring to Counter Corruption: Strategies and Impact in the Countries of Central and Eastern Europe, which was held in Varna, Bulgaria.
 - Within the framework of the anti-corruption conference organized by the Constitutional and Legal Policy Institute of the Open Society Institute in Budapest in June, *Coalition 2000* presented the Clean Future public awareness campaign.
 - In October, representatives of *Coalition 2000* shared their experience at the world anti-corruption conference, held in Durban, South Africa and attended by more than 1,600 participants.
 - Best practices in combating corruption were presented at the international conference held in Milan in November, organized by the International Scientific and Professional Advisory Council of the UN Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Program. In the mean time, *Coalition 2000* continued its efforts at improving the interaction with other initiatives on a regional and international level.
 - *Coalition 2000* joined the Anti-Corruption Network of Transition Economies, implemented under the auspices of OECD.