

Speech for Ambassador Beyrle  
Center for the Study of Democracy 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary to Celebrate  
Public-Private Partnership Partnership  
for Anti-corruption Reforms in Bulgaria  
CSD Garden, #5 Alexander Zhendov Street  
Monday, July 23, 2007, 18:30

Good Evening Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am honored to join you this evening to celebrate a long and successful partnership. The Center for the Study of Democracy was one of the early participants in the democratic change in Bulgaria that the USG has supported. Ognyan and his staff have worked with my predecessors. And I am sure they will continue to do so with my successors.

You all are aware of the broad and diverse portfolio that the Center manages. All who are here today – both Bulgarians and foreigners – have partnered with CSD in one way or another. We are proud that the USG's most successful partnership with the Center is in fighting corruption.

What you might have not known is why the USG launched its anti-corruption program in Bulgaria in 1998 -- well before it became a major concern for the public and the donors. The truth is that nine years ago CSD approached USAID with a proposal to fight corruption. The proposal was convincing and that is how we started this successful partnership.

Many things have happened during the partnership, but I will mention a few of them:

- A no-go area for public discussion ten years ago, anti-corruption is now a mainstream concern in the policy agenda. The Bulgarian public recognizes corruption as the #1 problem in the country. In this regard, the Corruption Monitoring System pioneered by the Center has shown not only that corruption can be measured but that such measurement proves crucial in effectively combating corruption.
- The Bulgarian public is now tangibly and verifiably less tolerant of corruption and demands increased accountability in public service.
- CSD was a key resource in assisting the GOB to draft its three-year, anti-corruption strategy in early 2006.



- Several public institutions now focus on corruption and a GOB anti-corruption commission oversees the implementation of the anti-corruption strategy. The ombudsmans – championed from the very beginning by USAID-supported Coalition 2000 - is now accepted as a key element of a transparent governance mechanism.

Today, we complete this anti-corruption program with a sense of accomplishment – Bulgaria is a member of the EU; administrative corruption is down twofold and NGOs are a major partner of the government in monitoring reforms and policy design.

The presence of so many stakeholders in this good governance endeavor today testifies to the strength of public-private partnership in this country. Bulgaria has demonstrated successful examples of cooperation between the Parliament, the Executive Branch, and the non-governmental sector to bring about significant legal changes to promote more transparent governance. These are important steps forward for Bulgaria's fight against corruption.

But, there is still more work to be done in areas such as: corruption at the political level, abuse of funds for public procurement, and corruption in political party financing. In all these areas, corrupt public officials must be investigated and prosecuted to the full extent of the law. These types of corruption can seriously affect the social, political and economic development of Bulgaria. The role of watch-dog organizations like CSD will become even more important in the years to come. I assure you of U.S. Embassy's continuing commitment to support good governance.

I want to thank the Center for the Study of Democracy for their hard work and the friendship, and to wish you further success.