

Coalition 2000: Public-Private Partnership to Counter Corruption

The 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. In this period Bulgaria improved its rating in the Corruption Perception Index of Transparency International - from 66th place in 1998 Bulgaria is now at 45th place out of 102 countries.

2002 marked the beginning of the second phase of the work of *Coalition 2000*. Following a Framework Agreement for Cooperation between the Bulgarian and the US governments, in June 2002 USAID officially launched its Open Government Initiative. The Initiative focuses on areas such as public finances and procurement, and will include the public-private partnership of *Coalition 2000*.

The official signing ceremony was hosted by CSD, *Coalition 2000* Secretariat and

was attended by government officials, including the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Public Administration. In his address to the meeting Justice Minister Anton Stankov highlighted the crucial significance of anti-corruption for the success of overall reform efforts.

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I. Supporting Anti-Corruption Policy

Public-Private Partnerships

The Policy Forum is the Coalition's main public-private platform. The Forum, organized annually by *Coalition 2000*, is a high-profile public event of anti-corruption initiatives, focusing on the increased cooperation between civil structures and institutions in the fight against corruption. On February 12, 2002 the Fourth Anti-Corruption Policy Forum of the *Coalition* took place with the participation of all institutions involved in the fight against corruption: politicians, non-governmental organizations, media, the business and diplomats.



Mr. Frederick Schieck (right), USAID Deputy Administrator and Mr. Georgi Nikolov (left), Chairman of the National Audit Office of Bulgaria signing the Memorandum of Understanding



From right to left: Mr. Ognian Shentov, Chairman, Center for the Study of Democracy, Mr. Georgi Parvanov, President of the Republic of Bulgaria, Mr. Georgi Petkanov, Minister of the Interior and Ms. Ekaterina Mihaylova, Chair of the Union of the Democratic Forces

Addressing the participants, the President of Bulgaria Mr. Georgi Parvanov stressed the substantial role of the civil society in the fight against corruption and congratulated *Coalition 2000* on the consistent efforts in the analyses of corruption, underlining that the result of these efforts is truly significant. The President pointed out that the necessity of a professional analysis of corruption and of a clearer

definition of countervailing measures had become particularly important in the context of increasing intolerance of Bulgarian citizens to corruption.

The other main instrument of the public-private effort of the Coalition is the annual **Corruption Assessment Report**. In 2002 its preparation involved various experts from governmental and non-governmental institutions. The



Participants at the Coalition 2000 Policy Forum

Report maps a significant part of the Bulgarian legislative and institutional reforms and evaluates the anti-corruption potential of government policies, the contribution of civil society and the role of the media.

Facilitating Policy Design

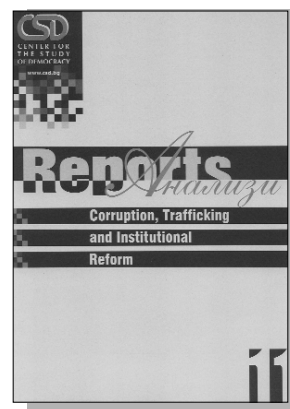
A key part of *Coalition 2000*'s process is the provision of expertise and networking support for the development of government policies that target various corruption loci. Thus in 2002 the Coalition provided expert advice through participation in the working group of NGOs and donors' organizations aimed at developing the government **Program for the Implementation of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy**.

Coalition 2000 also facilitated the input of Bulgarian and foreign stakeholders in the development of key pieces of legislation with an anti-corruption impact. This included the process of improving the **legal framework for political parties** in Bulgaria. Among the most important issues in the debates were the opportunities for political parties to perform commercial activities, the necessity to improve the control over the financing of electoral campaigns and the introduction of tax preferences for persons financing political parties.

Coalition 2000 assisted in the development of the **draft law on asset forfeiture for Bulgaria**. It was drafted by the Ministry of Interior in cooperation with the US Department of Justice and the Coalition was instrumental in ensuring the input of various stakeholders. In the discussions hosted by the Coalition representatives of the Bulgarian judiciary raised issues such as the procedures on the part of the innocent owners when they have to protect themselves against the state and the need for a legal definition of the term „criminal activity“.

Coalition 2000 led the debate in Bulgaria on identifying and developing responses to the **linkage between corruption and terrorism**. *Coalition 2000* provided a public platform for the discussion of the Draft Law on Measures against Financing of Terrorism. The draft was developed by a Working Group with the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Interior. The Coalition facilitated the contribution of Members of Parliament, representatives of the executive branch, magistrates, experts, representatives of banking and financial institutions, foreign diplomatic missions, foreign and international organizations, non-governmental organizations and the media to the Draft Law. Together with CSD's European Program, the Coalition was instrumental in the organization of the Regional Policy Forum *International Cooperation in Countering Terrorism* held in Sofia in June 2002.

Coalition 2000 was one of the first to identify trafficking as a major factor contributing to corruption in Bulgaria. A **Task Force on Trafficking and Corruption** was set up in May with the aim to elaborate a trafficking and corruption report for Bulgaria. It included experts from the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Interior's Academy, the Customs Agency, National Service for Combating Organized Crime, National Border Police



Service and CSD. The *Corruption, Trafficking and Institutional Reform* report, published in November 2002, is dedicated to trafficking as one of the most serious problems of the Bulgarian transition towards market economy.

The explosion of trans-border crime during the last 12 years has led to the emergence of criminal infrastructure, developed and maintained by criminal groups and semi-legal „power groups“. The trans-border crime in Bulgaria is a part of the new network of international organized crime, which was established after the end of the Cold War and which is closely connected to the regional channels of smuggling and trafficking. Smuggling (including drug smuggling) and trafficking are the main sources of income for organized crime in the country.

II. Building Capacity and Promoting Awareness

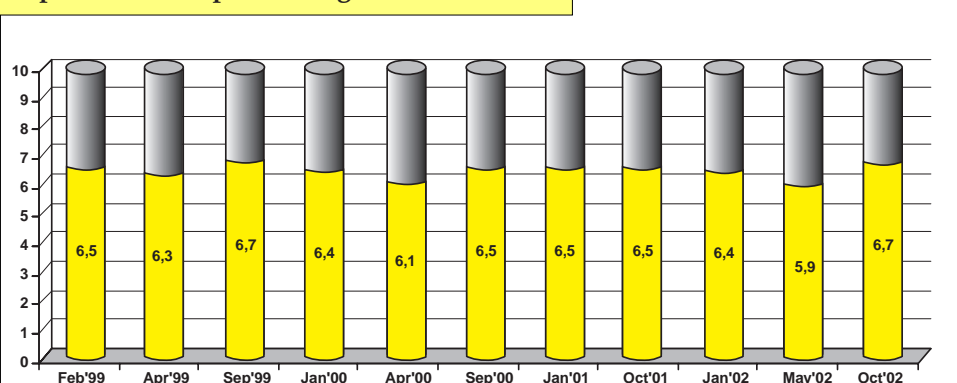
During its fifth year of action Coalition 2000 intensified the public awareness activities with the aim to establish practical mechanisms to support anti-corruption

efforts through public education, media and dissemination of research and policy findings, and to facilitate closer cooperation networks or expert alliances as the backbone of larger coalitions.

Since 1997 *Coalition 2000* has been setting the standard in implementing the Corruption Monitoring System, a national corruption-diagnostic instrument. It evaluates the spread of corruption in society and public institutions, measures the public trust in government policies in this area, and through its media outreach increases public intolerance of corruption.

In 2002 *Coalition 2000* adopted a new approach to its **web outreach**. From a web presence that mostly covered the Coalition's own activities, it moved towards a comprehensive coverage of corruption developments and anti-corruption policies in Bulgaria. Anticorruption.bg was the first Bulgarian specialized portal site to disseminate updated information about recent corruption cases, research and publications, different anticorruption problems, initiatives and measures taken in the country.

Spread of corruption (Bulgaria 1999-2002)



Source: *Corruption Monitoring System of Coalition 2000*

Taking into account the growing significance of the problem of corruption to the Bulgarian society, *Coalition 2000* decided to develop this site in order to give publicity to its activities and increase public awareness of the complex problems confronting

the fight against corruption. The Anticorruption.bg site provides access to many resources such as publications, studies, polls, research and reports produced both in Bulgaria and abroad, thus facilitating knowledge-sharing between anti-corruption forces.



Dr. John Sullivan, Executive Director, Center for International Private Enterprise (left) and Dr. Ognian Shentov, CSD Chairman at the Black Sea Anti-Corruption Initiative Inter-regional Workshop

In the summer of 2002 *Coalition 2000* announced a small grant competition for anticorruption projects of non-governmental organizations. The **small grant program of *Coalition 2000 Civil Society against Corruption*** aims to encourage the widest possible participation of civil society in implementing a variety of transparency and anti-corruption measures. It also aims to promote civil society participation in anti-corruption activities and in the application of mechanisms of civil control over the state, especially with regard to the implementation of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy for Bulgaria for the period 2001-2004.

III. International cooperation

Facilitating the transfer of best international practices is among the key objectives of *Coalition 2000*. This includes both the application of advanced knowledge and expertise, developed in the European countries and the US in Bulgaria and sharing the results and approaches to anti-corruption, adopted by the Coalition in

Bulgaria, with other countries in transition.

An example of the latter was the **Balkan-Black Sea Anti-Corruption Initiative Inter-regional Workshop** held in cooperation with the Center for International Private Enterprise, Washington D.C., in October 2002. The workshop was part of a 2-day event which brought together business leaders, policy makers, and experts in the field of anti-corruption from Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Serbia and Uzbekistan. The emphasis was on identifying key lessons learned from combating corruption in Southeast Europe and their most effective application in the Caucasus and Central Asia. The workshop also promoted the exchange of useful advocacy strategies and successful institutional reform and coalition building, focusing in particular on the work of *Coalition 2000* in Bulgaria. The second day was devoted to visits to the Ministry of Justice, National Audit Office and Sofia Ombudsman and the final session to conclusions, recommendations and action plan formulation.



Judge Eva Joly (left) and Bulgarian Justice Minister Anton Stankov at the discussion *Anti-Corruption in Bulgaria: the Role of Judiciary and the Law Enforcement Institutions*

As regards bringing advanced international expertise and advice to Bulgaria, the Coalition has aimed to provide access of stakeholders in Bulgaria to prominent anti-corruption experts abroad. In October 2002 Judge Eva Joly, one of the leading investigative magistrates in France, visited Bulgaria at the invitation of the Coalition. Among many other meetings Judge Joly had with Bulgarian politicians and NGO leaders, she was the keynote speaker at a discussion on the **Anti-Corruption in Bulgaria: the Role of Judiciary and the Law Enforcement Institutions** held at the Center for the Study of Democracy.

Addressing the meeting, Judge Joly focused on the French experience in inverting the burden of proof in economic crime matters. As anti-corruption instruments she also highlighted the necessity of efficient rules on the transparency of income of public officials and the need to increase the budget of the judiciary which in Bulgaria is currently only 10% of that in the EU member states.

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Looking back on the experience of *Coalition 2000* in the year 2002 it is evident that the model of public-private partnership it has been promoting in the past five years has made a significant impact on the implementation of anti-corruption policies in Bulgaria. Drafting of key pieces of legislation, institution building work and other efforts are now carried out in cooperation between government institutions and the private sector.