

COALITION BUILDING AND MONITORING CORRUPTION: THE COALITION 2000 PROCESS AND ITS RESULTS

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The *Coalition 2000* process was successfully launched in April 1998 with the aim to fight corruption in Bulgarian society through a process of co-operation among governmental institutions, NGOs and individuals leading to the development of an Anti-Corruption Action Plan for Bulgaria, and the implementation of an awareness campaign and a Corruption Monitoring System. The institutional structure of *Coalition 2000* ensures the following characteristics :

- The *Coalition 2000* process is **open** in that it provides a mechanism through which the major stakeholders - governmental and non-governmental organisations, business associations and international organisations - could provide input and participate in both the design and implementation in a way which makes best use of their respective experience and expertise;
- It establishes a **public-private dialogue and partnership** in a process of concern to the whole society;
- The *Coalition 2000* process is **transparent** by means of regular dissemination of information among concerned institutions and media outreach;
- The *Coalition 2000* has its own **distinct identity**, which is independent of the identity and particular objectives of the participating organisations, although it is not a separate legal person. This holds true for its substantive aspects as well as for the accounting and administration of the project.
- *Coalition 2000* has a considerable **public standing and high profile**, which is in itself an important prerequisite for a substantial anti-corruption impact.

Targets of the *Coalition 2000* Anti-Corruption Effort

Anti-corruption efforts must address several aspects of the problem: the legislative framework, executive administrative organisation, existing perceptions and attitudes (public awareness), and existing behaviour patterns. To address these problems, *Coalition 2000* uses the “social marketing model” similar to anti-corruption campaigns recently advocated by World Bank experts. The model includes three targets which address the principle factors of corruption:

- monopoly (which in the case of Bulgaria is caused by the predominance of the state in the economy and other sectors of social life),
- discretionary power (due to the lack of clear administrative rules and regulations), and
- accountability (because of the poor functioning of watchdog agencies or the lack of such agencies).

In terms of content, the impact strategy of *Coalition 2000* is based upon the following main three elements:

Defining impact objectives through an Anti-Corruption Action Plan

During Phase One of the project, which ended in December 1998, an Anti-Corruption Action Plan for Bulgaria was drafted and endorsed by the first *Coalition 2000* Policy Forum. As a first step, an expert task force was established to draft the **outline document** as a basis for the Anti-Corruption Strategy and Action Plan. As a second step, following the completion of the work by the task force, two thousand copies of the outline document were circulated among all concerned institutions - governmental, non-governmental and international - to solicit their comments and additions. Thirdly, a policy workshop was convened at the level of deputy ministers and experts in order to finalise the suggestions and comments to the outline document. As a result of the consultations and workshop discussions, the task force of experts finalised an Anti-Corruption Action Plan for Bulgaria to be considered by the members of the Policy Forum during its first meeting.

The process of development of the Action Plan went through a number of stages of analytical work and consultations. Six expert working groups covered: reform of the judiciary, public administration, legal reform, curbing corruption in the economy, the role of the media, and international aspects of fighting corruption. The comprehensive approach adopted in drafting the initial document reflected the *Coalition 2000* logic of involving all anti-corruption stakeholders. The Coalition invited contributions from central and local government agencies, private businesses and NGOs, trade unions and international organisations. Co-operation with the Economic Development Institute of the World Bank, OECD/SIGMA, the Council of Europe, and US government experts has allowed the Coalition to benefit from a significant pool of international experience. The *Coalition 2000* initiative was developed in close co-operation with the local mission of USAID, whose contribution was particularly helpful, as well as with USAID's Washington office expertise.

The Policy Forum, which was convened in November 1998, was attended by over 150 government officials, business leaders, NGO and international organisation representatives. The main purpose of the first meeting of the Policy Forum is to discuss and adopt an **Anti-Corruption Action Plan for Bulgaria**. Impact is maximised by involving policy-makers and businesspersons in the drafting process which enhances trust and transparency in different sectors of public life. The Bulgarian Action Plan is a consensus document approved by the basic actors in Bulgarian society. Based on the consensus reached, implementation will be a joint effort of all parties involved in the drafting process. Its meetings ensure that the work carried out under the *Coalition 2000* process by various institutions reflects a consensus of the concerned public and private institutions. (see the attached contents of the Action Plan).

In line with the Anti-Corruption Action Plan developed by *Coalition 2000*, non-governmental organisations throughout the country were invited by the *Coalition 2000* Secretariat to submit proposals leading to the practical implementation of Phase Two activities. A total of 28 small grant project proposals were received by the *Coalition 2000* Secretariat and 12 have received support. The first results from these small grant projects have been very encouraging. *Coalition 2000's* local partners have made a substantial

contribution to the Coalition anti-corruption public awareness campaign by spreading its messages from central to municipal level. Local NGOs have also assisted in the development of corruption monitoring for the local government.

Affecting behavioural change through dissemination and advocacy

The effective implementation of the action plan is supported through different mechanisms: a) building awareness of corruption and its various forms in Bulgarian society by using different forms of public education, public discussions, and dissemination of the research findings and policy recommendations; b) transforming public awareness into an advocacy role, keeping the issue of corruption at the forefront; and c) pressing government to implement anti-corruption strategies and reforms.

The wide media coverage contributes towards the other main goal of the Coalition - to reduce public tolerance of corrupt practices by means of a targeted awareness campaign. The initiative will focus its campaigning and awareness raising activities on three main target groups considered to be of key significance for the success of anti-corruption reform: the general public, policy decision makers, and elite professionals, including the media. The awareness program has included the utilisation of a mix of national and local print media, national radio, private radio networks, television and the Internet¹.

Reinforcing the awareness raising component and tracking progress through CMS

The basic function of process monitoring will be to assess the effectiveness of policy change efforts in all major areas envisioned in the Action Plan and to evaluate the functioning of the established anti-corruption institutions. Monitoring also serves as a “watchdog” tool of the public policy process and as a way to provoke public discussions. The Corruption Monitoring System (CMS) was designed as a means to provide topical information about corruption perceptions and levels of intensity of corrupt practices in different sectors of public life on a regular basis. Its unique design, developed by Vitosha Research with CSD, in consultation with an Expert Council of government and non-governmental specialists, produces information both about the proliferation of corruption and about the effectiveness of action plan implementation.

The corruption assessment indexes, published on regular basis, provide an approximation for the scope and specific aspects of corruption based on the assessment of the general public and of public officials. The indexes include four major elements of corrupt behaviour: pre-conditions, actual behaviour, behaviour results and corruption expectations.

The *Coalition 2000* Corruption Indexes are one of the main outputs of the *Coalition 2000*. CMS results have been published regularly making it possible to estimate the dynamics of public attitudes and actions characterising different aspects of corruption-related phenomena. In April 1999 the *Coalition 2000* Corruption Indexes for the second quarter of the year were published. They indicated that the practical effectiveness of corruption had continued to decline. Compared to February 1999, the index for the practical effectiveness

¹ TV clip and posters to be shown during the presentation

of corruption dropped from 6.9 to 6.7. The decline was even bigger when compared to June 1998 when the index was 7.4.

Oversight of the Action Plan

Two main institutional bodies are responsible for overseeing the design and implementation of the Action Plan.

Steering Committee

The Steering Committee provides the co-ordination of the activities and outputs of the Coalition. The group of 7 NGOs which took the initiative invested a particular effort into ensuring the representative nature of the Committee. Thus, it reflects the history of the initiative as well as the results of consultations and the publicity effort in general.

The Steering Committee meets regularly, approximately every four-to-six weeks. It has a major role in the follow up to the Policy Forum meetings. The Steering Committee prepares the meeting agenda through advance consultations with the Forum members and reports to the Forum on the activities and outputs during the preceding year. The structure of the Steering Committee is intended to ensure two main objectives: efficient management covering all aspects (political/institutional, economic, legal, information and interface with international institutions) and public-private dialogue -- with partnership as a key prerequisite for a substantial impact.

Secretariat

For the purpose of providing permanent support to the work of the Steering Committee, a Secretariat was established at the Centre for the Study of Democracy. The Secretariat provides the day-to-day operational management, logistical support and reporting for activities. In co-ordination with the Applied Research and Communications (ARC) Fund, the Secretariat maintains a **public information desk** hosting both online and print materials. These include survey data, original research developed by the Coalition, major publications and studies in the field of anti-corruption, and reference links to relevant information. Another task of the Secretariat is to carry out monitoring visits/meetings in order to assist the co-ordination work of the Steering Committee. The Secretariat also surveys developments and initiatives, both locally and internationally, in the field of anti-corruption and informs the Steering Committee, thus ensuring the effective co-ordination of the *Coalition 2000* process with any other corresponding effort.

Coalition Building and Monitoring in Anti-Corruption: Strategies and Impact in Central and Eastern Europe

Approximately 100 representatives of non-governmental organisations, including business associations and other interest groups, public officials from the region and international organisations gathered in Varna on June 19-20, 1999 for the International Conference “Coalition Building and Monitoring in Anti-Corruption: Strategies and Impact in Central and Eastern Europe” organised by *Coalition 2000*.

The conference discussions focused on existing strategic concepts for involving civil society organisations in Central and Eastern Europe in the fight against corruption in the context of transition to pluralist democracy and market economy. Presentations emphasised the impact of NGOs as initiators/generators of partnerships with government agencies, as well as their role in exercising pressure and serving as watchdog of reform.

In conclusion, the participants of the conference agreed that reducing corruption required not only the relevant institution-building measures but also creating the social preconditions for establishing the rule of law. In this context, it is important to foster: i) a democratic political and economic culture based on trust and respect of government institutions, ii) transparency and openness of the activities of the administration, and iii) an orientation towards stability and predictability. This could be achieved through co-operation among the institutions of the state and civil society on the model built by *Coalition 2000*.

The participants in the Varna Conference also considered initiatives to promote transparency and accountability at a regional level. The OECD had already provided one possibility in this respect by developing an Anti-corruption Network for Transition Economies. The next step could be the establishment of a Balkan Forum on Accountability and Transparency to facilitate the exchange of information on anti-corruption among the states in the region. Another avenue in the fight against corruption could be provided by the Southeast Legal Development Initiative (SELDI) conceived by the Centre for the Study of Democracy and the International Development Law Institute. SELDI's main objectives include strengthening civil society in the countries from the region and contributing to the building of the rule of law and democratic institutions in those states.

Anti-Corruption Action Plan For Bulgaria

A. First Action Line: Creating a Favourable Institutional and Legal Environment for Curbing Corruption

1. Public Administration Reform
2. Establishing New Institutions and Offices with Controlling and Monitoring Functions, and Improving Existing Ones
3. Developing the Public Procurement System
4. Reform of the Political Party Sphere

B. Second Action Line: Reforming the Judicial System

1. Legislative Reform
2. Reorganising the Operation of the Judicial System
3. Improving Staff Recruitment Procedures and Professional Training
4. Taking Measures to Expose Corruption in the Judicial System

C. Third Action Line: Curbing Corruption in the Economy

1. Transparency and Accountability in the Privatisation Process
2. Liberalising the Conditions for Private Business Development
3. Limiting Corruption in Financial and Economic Relations within the Private Sector
4. Enhancing the Effectiveness of Economic Arbitration Procedures

D. Fourth Action Line: Enhancing Civic Control in the Fight Against Corruption

1. Developing the Institutional Framework of Civic Control
2. Involving Professional Associations and Trade Unions in the Anti-Corruption Campaign
3. Co-operation with the Media in Implementing the Anti-Corruption Campaign
4. Co-operation with Religious Institutions to Foster Moral Integrity and Counteract Corruption

E. Fifth Action Line: Changing Public Perceptions of Corruption

1. Anti-Corruption Public Awareness Campaign (Clean Future)
2. Public Education Campaign about the Rights of Citizens and Obligations of the Administration in the Sphere of Administrative Services
3. The Anti-Corruption Campaign within the System of Public Education at Its Various Levels
4. Expected Obstacles to the Achievement of the Goals of the Public Awareness Campaign

F. Sixth Action Line: International Co-operation

1. Co-operation with International Organisations and Integration Structures
2. International Economic, Financial, and Trade Institutions and Organisations
3. Co-operation with Other International Organisations
4. Regional Organisations and Initiatives
5. Regional Co-operation on a Multilateral and Bilateral Basis
6. Co-operation with Government Aid Institutions on a Bilateral Basis

for more information, see www.online.bg/coalition 2000.htm