

Tenth Annual Anticorruption Policy Forum
January 28, 2009
Center for the Study of Democracy

Speech by Ambassador Michael Geier, Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Bulgaria

Dr. Shentov, thank you very much, Mr. Pirinski, Mr. Borisov, Members of the Parliament, dear friends: The annual report is a very important instrument for embassies to understand a little bit more about Bulgaria, but most importantly this topic of corruption and organized crime comes up in our daily contacts with businessmen, German businessmen, who again form an important part of the Bulgarian industry and trade.

Corruption has both an economic and ethical side, as Mr. Stefanov pointed out – corruption is costly for the national economy because it misallocates financial resources and is a burden especially for small and medium size enterprises and for private citizens, who could otherwise bear the financial crisis much more easily.

Second, as Mr. Borisov pointed out, corruption destroys the ethical fabric of trust and confidence in society and fosters criminal behavior up to organized crime.

Germany enjoys a very high level of police and judicial cooperation with Bulgaria, with an emphasis on human trafficking and narcotics. This cooperation, which is very fruitful, normally stops at “the untouchables”. Mr. Borisov mentioned the penal procedure, Mr. Parvanov - also. Last week we had probably the largest economic crime procedure for a long time, it was the head of the German Post Office who was condemned finally and the whole procedure took two days. Now imagine the same thing in Bulgaria: probably at some stage the accused would have "fallen ill" with great certainty.

And finally I want to say something about our position - our position as foreigners. As one of the German Presidents always said, if you pointed a finger at somebody, three fingers would point back to you. We also know that much of the corruption in Bulgaria has its origins in rich countries, including my own.

Thank you very much.