
President's Overview

At the time the Center for the Study of Democracy was established in the late autumn of 1989, none of us - twelve young scholars who founded it - could foresee the dynamic development it would undergo. Bulgaria was already on the road to democratic transition, and we cherished romantic illusions about the depth and speed at which reforms would proceed. Five years later, we still find ourselves deeply involved in the institutional reform debates, but we now realize that these transformations will take much longer to complete than we had initially expected.

The pages that follow describe the many and varied activities which the Center undertook in the areas of economic, legal and institutional reform in 1994. Without going into details here, I would like to emphasize the highlights of our work.

Because it is vital for the recovery of the national economy, privatization has always occupied a conspicuous place in the Center's research and advocacy activities. In 1994, our economic reform efforts were concentrated on the key issues of privatization, private sector development, and foreign debt conversion. Most prominent was the assistance which CSD provided to municipal authorities in the implementation of the privatization law. Particularly, we helped prepare the regional development and municipal privatization program in the Bansko municipality. Serious efforts were also devoted to the creation of a Mutual Privatization Fund, and Investment and Privatization Fund with the Ministry of Agriculture.

CSD developed policy recommendations for the expansion of US-Bulgarian trade and investment which were the outcome of the Bulgarian-American Economic Cooperation Forum held in December. The recommendations were presented to President Zhelev and President Clinton shortly before the US-Bulgarian summit in Washington in February 1995.

In the field of legal reform we combined our law drafting efforts with activities aimed at developing a viable "third sector" in Bulgaria. A successful outcome of these efforts was the finalization of a draft law on non-profit organizations in Bulgaria.

1994 was also the year in which we expended the geographical scope of our partner institutions. Along with the support of US organizations, CSD received increased funding from European institutions. This was the first year of operation of the Information and Documentation Centre of the Council of Europe in Sofia, and the year in which CSD worked on two major research projects funded by the European Union. With the support of the EU, we began preparatory work on a long-term project, "Europe 2000: Bulgaria and the European Union", the outcome of which will be a White

Paper on Bulgaria's accession to the European Union. The Center has created strong bipartisan support for this project which will help guarantee its successful implementation.

CSD has been one of the pioneers of independent social and opinion research after 1989. Survey information and analyses of social, economic and political developments in the country have provided a solid foundation for much of the Center's activities. Building upon experience and tradition, this year we extended the range of our work to include market research which we consider an important instrument for achieving financial sustainability.

Such a range of activities bears testimony to the hard and dedicated work of my colleagues. I take pride in the achievements of our Center, and expect that this record will continue in the future.



Ognian Shentov
President