
Overview of 1995

Mission: Impossible?

Striving to achieve the CSD's mission of "building bridges" was particularly challenging during 1995. So challenging in fact, it defied all of our expectations. The reasons for this are many and complex - from the economic hardships and political controversies, to pressures placed on the non-profit sector, and repeated attempts to narrow the boundaries of the re-emerging civil society. The drawing we have chosen for the cover of this year's report - a precarious bridge held in place by a passing celestial body - is admittedly self-ironic. However, it is an accurate illustration of the "mission impossible" which CSD has undertaken.

Despite these obstacles, the CSD staff continued to build upon its work from previous years with characteristic enthusiasm and dedication. In 1995, our primary efforts focused on:

- Building an adequate institutional framework for economic reform;
- Drafting a new Collateral Law;
- Training a critical mass of investment fund managers to take part in the process of mass privatization;
- Monitoring the public attitudes and expectations of mass privatization;

Final drafting of a new law on non-profit organizations - this law provides for modern legal regulation of the voluntary sector. CSD has managed to enlist the support of all major NGOs in the country.

Two developments deserve particular notice in this year's highlights.

European policy studies have evolved into a major component of the CSD's research and advocacy activities. The project Europe 2000: Bulgaria and the European Union was a pioneer effort related to the implementation of the Europe Agreement between Bulgaria and the EU, which entered into force in early 1995. The extensive policy analysis document prepared for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs laid the groundwork for the formulation of the country's pre-

accession strategy in several key areas of implementation. As a testimony to the quality of our work, this document was presented by the government at a number of events held within the Structured Relationship established by the Europe Agreement.

In another development, Vitosha Research succeeded the CSD's Sociological Program. The new entity focuses on market research activities, including consumer and media research, advertising assessment and marketing consultancy in addition to traditional

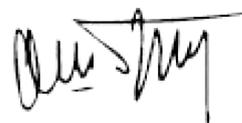
opinion polling and social research. This specialization is an important contribution towards the long-term viability and financial sustainability of CSD.

The other programs of the Center were equally successful. Cooperation with the Council of Europe, the Central and East European Law Initiative (CEELI) of the American Bar Association, and the Institutional Reform and the Informal Sector (IRIS) project of the University of Maryland continued throughout 1995.

The next year also promises to be a challenging one for the CSD staff who remain committed to fostering civil society in Bulgaria.

In conclusion of this brief overview, I would like to share my satisfaction with a recent evaluation of the CSD as "one of the few full service think tanks in Central Europe." Such words are a compliment to the Center's achievements over the past seven years, and a testimony to the quality, hard work and devotion of our professional staff.

Book donation is generally considered outside the main focus of the Center's activities but it has, nevertheless, proved very useful for introducing foreign expertise to the country. Responding to this demand, CSD continued its book donation initiative and distributed over 40,000 volumes donated by the Sabre Foundation and the Sabre Trust to libraries, NGO's and various institutions across the country.



Ognian Shentov
President