

# Vitoshka Research

- In 1998, Vitoshka Research carried out 25 quantitative and qualitative research projects, which can be divided into four categories: public opinion surveys, social surveys, economic surveys, and media surveys. This included more than 10,000 face-to-face interviews, 60 in-depth interviews, 47 focus groups, and 4 telephone interviews.
- Within *Coalition 2000* Vitoshka Research has been extensively engaged in the development and implementation of the Corruption Monitoring System and the Corruption Indexes Report.
- Public opinion about politics and the economy;
- Elites and the changes in Bulgaria;
- Market and democratic values in the transition period

## Bulgarian Elite Survey

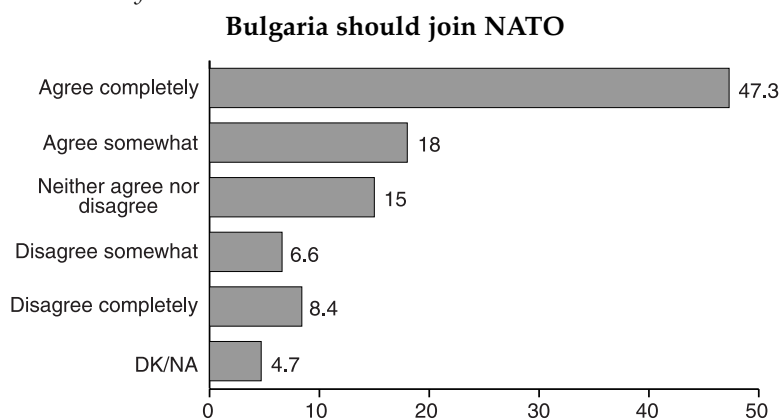
The survey is part of a longterm international project aimed at studying the opinion of Bulgarian elite on social change in the country. The main objective of this survey was to explore some of the social, economic and political attitudes of the Bulgarian elite.

The survey was carried out in the major cities of Bulgaria: Sofia, Plovdiv, Bourgas, Varna, Rousse, Yambol, Kurdjali, Lovetch, Montana. The sample included 427 representatives of the following elite groups: government, politics, the state economic sector, private business, public institutions, the police, army and security, media, culture, science and religion.

## I. Public Opinion Surveys

A total of five research projects of that type were conducted in 1998. Four of them were based on national representative samples and one of them was based on quota sample. The basic topics covered were:

*Bulgarian Elite Survey*



The attitudes of the Bulgarian elite towards NATO are definitely positive. About half of the respondents support Bulgaria's joining NATO. The moderate supporters of this policy option are 18% of the respondents, while those who oppose Bulgaria's joining NATO are about 15% of the respondents.

## II. Social Research

Social research included six quantitative and qualitative studies. Vitosha Research conducted over 2,500 face-to-face interviews, 40 in-depth interviews, and 30 focus group discussions. The surveys focused upon:

- Non-governmental organizations and their economic environment;
- Attitudes of citizens towards state officials;
- Protecting women's rights during privatization.

Social and economic research projects conducted by Vitosha Research in 1998 were commissioned by Women, Law and Development (an NGO based in Washington D.C.), Center for Economic Development, Democracy Network Program, Local Government Initiative, United State Agency for International Development, and University of Glasgow.

### Protecting Women's Rights during Privatization

The main objective of this study was to enhance the success of the privatization process in Poland, Russia, Ukraine and Bulgaria through fostering citizen participation in the privatization processes and encouraging the full utilization of existing human resources. The study included three main components: enterprise characteristic survey, indepth interviews with managers, and focus group discussions. The results of this project and the three main components identified above included:

- Increased understanding of how privatization may affect women in the workforce;
- Recommendation of target interventions for state agencies, development organizations and women's groups to undertake in each of the four countries identified: formulate country-specific advocacy strategies to confront the mar-

ginalization of women in the labor force;

- Increased awareness of the benefits of maintaining a female labor force for employers, investment and privatization issues, local, regional and international development and women's organizations.

### *Protecting Women's Rights during Privatization*

#### Women's Labor Rights

A substantial part of the surveyed women disclose various workplace discrimination practices. Most widespread are abuses, especially in the private sector, of labor legislation, like working without a proper labor contract, nonpayment of social insurance allowances, abuse of working hours, violations or delays of the fulfillment of agreements (e.g. non-payment of the agreed upon remuneration, etc.). Although these practices refer to all employed, women are perceived as most affected, especially young women with lower qualifications and little work experience, who are forced to accept such conditions because of economic hardship.

**There is a firm opinion that at present women cannot get reliable legal and social protection in cases of discrimination, abuse of their rights or sexual harassment.** The reasons for such opinions are various. First, the legal protection in this respect is estimated as insufficient. Second, there are no reliable institutional mechanisms that could ensure the enforcement of the existing rules and regulations. Third, women are not fully aware of their rights. Fourth, the judicial system is perceived to have low confidence. Fifth, the legal defense of one's rights is too costly in

terms of money, time and effort, which makes it meaningless. Sixth, the attitude predominates that personal problems could be better solved with individual efforts and the use of social networks. Seventh, public organizations (e.g. trade unions, women's NGOs, etc.) cannot effectively protect women in cases of abuse of their rights.

### Coping with Government

The project focuses on one of the most difficult and confusing problems in the post-communist development of the societies in Central and Eastern Europe: the interaction between citizens and junior public officials. The University of Glasgow commissioned CSD to conduct the Bulgarian part of a comparative study exploring the characteristics of transitional civic culture. The objectives of the project were:

- To find out whether corrupt practices are a problem in the interaction between citizens and junior public officials, or whether the old "culture of complaining" which the communist regime encouraged as a system for controlling officials is still in place;
- To identify coping strategies that citizens employ when faced with unfair treatment by officials - persistence, appeal to higher authority, to the press, to elected officials; the use of contacts, influence, and bribery; or simply citizens' attempts to minimize their interaction with officials they do not trust;
- To find out whether citizens are comfortable with a culture of bribes and influence.

The findings of the project were presented in January 1998 at the conference *Corruption as a Challenge to Reforms in Bulgaria* organized by the Political Academy for Central and Eastern Europe and the Center for Social Practices.

### Citizen Participation Projects Study

The main objective of the study was to evaluate the effectiveness of the several citizen participation projects in Bulgaria supported by the Institute for Sustainable Communities (ISC), the Local Government Initiative (LGI), and the Foundation for the Development of Civil Society, and to analyze factors which influence the success or lack of success of these projects. Ten citizen participation projects were pre-selected by ISC to be studied and evaluated in the towns of Montana, Sliven, Razgrad, Plovdiv, Pleven, Veliko Turnovo, Stara Zagora, Dobrich, and Lovech.

#### *Citizen Participation Projects Study*

On the basis of the data collected, realistic expectations from projects of the type of those evaluated would involve the active civic commitment of about 1-3% of the adult population of the municipality, involvement in specific initiatives of up to 10-15% (participation in public discussions and meetings, use of consultations and "open" telephone lines and "hotlines"), and influencing 30-40% of the citizens through the media. As a rule, the projects evaluated as most effective were those pursuing specific objectives aimed at addressing topical regional issues in a manner which was both sustainable and tangible to the public.

### III. Economic Research

The main economic research projects of Vitosha Research, including a total of about 2,000 face-to-face interviews, were:

- Bulgarian Global Competitiveness Survey, commissioned by the Center for Economic Development and conducted for the World Economic Forum at Davos

and the Harvard Institute for International Development;

- Three sections in the Early Warning Report for Bulgaria - a monthly report prepared for UNDP;
- Post-privatization development of medium and large enterprises in Bulgaria conducted for the Center for Social & Economic Research (CASE), Poland.

### **Bulgarian Global Competitiveness Survey**

The main objective of the study was to present information from managers of Bulgarian and foreign companies about their evaluation of the status of different components of the business climate in the country and to identify the level of competitiveness of Bulgarian enterprises.

The study involved interviews with the senior managers of 134 Bulgarian companies (private and state) and 21 foreign companies. The results of the survey provided valuable information about the state of the economy and the existing opportunities for export oriented growth. The survey method employed was face-to-face interviews for Bulgarian companies and mail-in survey for foreign companies.

### **Post-privatization Development of Medium and Large Enterprises in Bulgaria**

The survey was carried out in cooperation with the Center for Economic Development, the Agency for Economic Analysis and Forecasts, and the Center for Social and Economic Research (CASE), Warsaw. The objective of this survey was to trace the post-privatization development of companies which were privatized before the end of 1996. The results of the survey will be used by the government to assess the post-privatization development of enterprises and to support the effort to further accelerate structural reform in Bulgaria.

### **Early Warning Report for Bulgaria**

The system of monthly reports explores the possibility of anticipating and responding to crisis situations before they become too violent or to mitigate the effects of crisis situations as they evolve. This type of data collection combined with monthly reporting is unique for Bulgaria as it develops predictive capabilities and enhances informed judgments about possible sequences of social events and their outcomes.

The project for the development of a system of early warning reports in Bulgaria which was initiated by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in November 1997 has continued throughout 1998. Work on the project is being carried out by CSD, the Department of International Relations Association, BBSS Gallup, and Club Ekonomika 2000. Project activities include:

- Designing a system of interrelated indicators aimed at monthly monitoring of the dynamics of the overall economic, social, political, religious and ethnic environment in Bulgaria;
- Developing an effective frame for data gathering and communication networks. Currently, the information is based on monthly opinion polls, data from Bulgarian governmental institutions and publications in the press;
- Summarizing the findings of the monitoring system and preparing monthly Early Warning Reports;
- Dissemination of the Early Warning Reports and bringing the information to the attention of all interested parties including potentially affected actors.

## **IV. Corruption Assessment**

The basic responsibility of Vitosha Research within the *Coalition 2000* initiative has been the development and the implementation of the Corruption

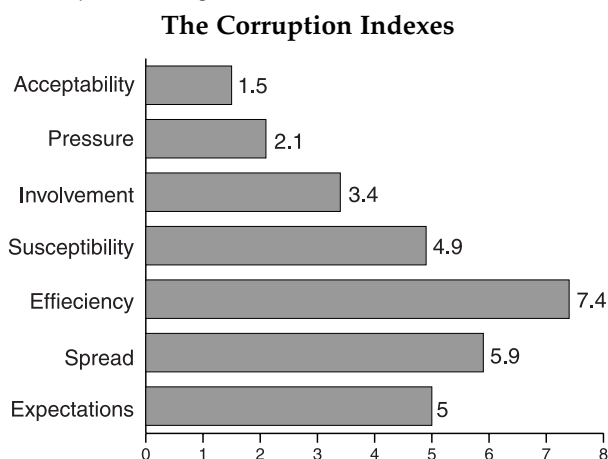
Monitoring System (CMS) of the coalition. The CMS includes a system of empirical studies and analytical reports. Its main objective is to periodically present information which would enable the drawing of conclusions about the scope of corruption in the country and about related public attitudes, assessments and expectations.

In the period July-September 1998, the first quantitative and qualitative surveys of the CMS were conducted. The *national representative survey* of June 1998 replicated some indicators that had been employed in earlier surveys. The comparative analysis outlines the structure and dynamics of public perceptions of corruption focusing on principal characteristics of corrupt behavior, the modes of reproduction of corrupt practices and the social factors generating corruption. In order to better perceive the qualitative aspects of corrupt practices, three types of *focus groups* were conducted: with public officials, with businessmen and managers and with experts. Representatives of different groups of public officials participated in the focus

groups - central and local administration, health system, education, police, judicial system, social care, tax administration and customs, etc. The qualitative research on corrupt practices also included 20 *in-depth* interviews with policy makers. Their main objective was to explore respondents' assessments of corrupt practices, the prerequisites of corruption, the mechanisms of corrupt practices, etc.

The first analytic report - *Coalition 2000 Corruption Indexes* - which is a quarterly publication summarizing the findings of the CMS surveys was prepared in November 1998 for the Policy Forum of *Coalition 2000*. It includes baseline values for the following principal aspects of corruption and corrupt practices in Bulgaria: attitudes towards corruption; involvement in corrupt practices; assessments of the scope of corruption; and corruption-related expectations. Findings reported in the *Coalition 2000 Corruption Indexes* have also been published at the web site of *Coalition 2000* ([www.online.bg/coalition2000](http://www.online.bg/coalition2000)) and have received broad public attention.

*Public Opinion on Corruption in Bulgaria, June 1998*



Corruption assessment index numbers assume values from 1-10. The closer the value of the index is to 10, the more negative is the assessment of the status of the respective dimension of corrupt practices. Index numbers closer to 0 indicate approximation to the ideal of a "corruption-free" society.

## V. Media Research

In 1998 a total of three quantitative and two qualitative media research projects were conducted. They included focus groups, face-to-face interviews and desk research. The media research projects focused upon:

- Assessment of the audience of Radio Vitosha;

- RFE programming evaluation;
- Structure and dynamics of attitudes towards media in Bulgaria.

The media research projects were commissioned by InterMedia Survey, Washington D.C. and Vitosha Radio, Sofia.

### *Attitudes towards mass media in Bulgaria*

#### **Confidence in Bulgarian media (%)**

	Bulgarian National Television	Bulgarian National Radio	Newspapers and Magazines
Completely trust	29	25	13
Somewhat trust	54	53	50
Somewhat distrust	9	10	18
Completely distrust	2	2	4
DK/NA	6	10	16

- Trust in the media is several times higher than distrust which shows that the Bulgarian public respects the “fourth power”;
- On the whole, trust in electronic media is substantially higher than trust in print media. Distrust in newspapers and magazines is two times higher than distrust in the Bulgarian National Television and Radio.

## VI. Publications

Research findings have been widely disseminated in the press. More than 15 newspaper articles have been published in the papers with national distribution. The following analytic reports and working papers were also prepared in 1998:

- Attitudes towards Social Justice, January 1998
- The Value System of Transition, January 1998
- Public Confidence in Institutions in the Period of Transition, February 1998
- Citizen Participation Projects Study, April 1998
- Corruption as a Problem of Bulgarian Society, May 1998
- Public Opinion on Corruption in Bulgaria, July 1998
- Public Opinion on NATO (September 1997 - May 1998), July 1998
- Structure and Dynamics of Attitudes towards Media in Bulgaria, July 1998
- Women's Rights during Privatization, December 1998
- Corruption Assessment Index, November 1998



*Vitosha Research staff.*