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## **Part Two**

# **Administration and Management**

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# Institutional Development

CSD is a not-for-profit organisation acting for the public benefit. Up to 2017, CSD was registered at the Sofia City Court and the *Central Register of Not-for-Profit Legal Entities* at the Bulgarian Ministry of Justice. In 2018, following amendments to the relevant national legislation, CSD was re-registered in the public *Commercial Register and Register of Not-for-Profit Legal Entities* at the Registry Agency under the Minister of Justice. Not-for-profit legal entities acting for the public benefit are obliged by law to conform to a number of additional rules, *inter alia*, to draw up and submit annually an activity report and financial statements for entry in the public Register.

In 2020, CSD continued its efforts to optimise its internal administrative and financial reporting systems. The remuneration procedures were streamlined in line with the requirements from various financing institutions, and the need to comply with national labour regulations.

In 2020, CSD employed a staff of thirty-five, of whom twenty seven in professional and management positions, including part-time consultants, and eight employees in administrative positions.

**Accountability and transparency** are guiding principles in the operation of the Center for the Study of Democracy. These principles are implemented by means of:

- CSD *Annual Reports* published since 1994;
  - regular updates about CSD's activities on its website;
  - press-releases about on-going projects and their results;
  - publications of a wide range of analyses and reports.
- The application of good management practices has been critical to the successful work of CSD. In 2020, the Center continued its efforts to diversify its sources of funding in addition to the traditional EU financial instruments *Horizon 2020*, the European Social Fund, and the financial instruments in the area of justice and home affairs. Some of CSD's activities were funded through the operational programmes administered by the Bulgarian government, as well as by the Center for International Private Enterprise, the European Climate Foundation, the Central European Initiative, the Network of European Foundations, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, and the National Endowment for Democracy. CSD also took part in tenders through its consulting arms Vitosha Research and Project One.
- In 2020, CSD reconfirmed its reputation as a reliable partner and coordinator of EU-wide projects encompassing research in the legal, security and social policy areas. In partnership with leading European think-tanks and academic institutions, CSD took part in the European debate on the assessment and development of policies related to the fight against organised crime, the integration of victims of trafficking and other vulnerable groups, public confi-
- annual audit reports published since 1992;
  - audits of individual projects;

dence in justice, de-radicalisation, and cybercrime.

In 2020, CSD donated books and educational materials to the National Police

and the Krastyu Tsonchev Attorneys' Training Centre.

## Communications

### Virtual events

In the unprecedented circumstances brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, in-person conferences were pushed aside and replaced by virtual events all across the globe. During this time, CSD promptly developed the capacity to organise and host virtual roundtables, seminars, and press-conferences at the local and international level, so as to make sure that key issues were still met with the appropriate expert discussion. We hosted more than 25 webinars and other online formats since the start of the pandemic, some of which had an attendance of more than 100 participants.

### Social presence

While being online is the norm, it is audience engagement that makes online communication purposeful. 2020 saw the addition of new platforms to CSD's social media portfolio, such as Twitter and LinkedIn. The expansion of social media presence aims to establish a larger network of policy makers, experts and professionals, and to provide an opportunity for sharing policy insights in real time.

To this end, CSD worked with London-based agency *Zink Network* on a number of capacity building workshops on best practices and know-how for SM usage by NGOs.

### New formats

Policy makers and the general public alike face an ever-increasing information flow, meaning that research findings and policy insights have to be repurposed for various formats. With this in mind, CSD started developing more easily digestible formats, such as short video and blog posts, which serve to capture the essence of the publications, and make them accessible to a wider audience.

### Brand uplift

CSD underwent a brand uplift, which includes refreshing the visual identity and developing design guidelines for publication materials, in order to make them better suited for a digital environment. New visuals and templates were developed for publications and social media channels, which will help make CSD's work more recognisable and easy to interact with.

## Internship program

The Center for the Study of Democracy aims to provide internship opportunities for outstanding students from various universities. In 2020, the year marked by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Center was approached by an unprecedented number of internship applicants from all over the globe who pursued remote work at CSD. Early on in 2020, as well as in the summer and early autumn months small groups of international interns managed to work in an office environment, with the CSD staff guiding them through the complicated situation and supporting their travel and orientation in the local regulatory and health-care milieu. There were periods of hybrid work mode, and interns were kept regularly updated on changing arrangements. The ones that worked wholly online from their home countries or places abroad where the pandemic had made them settle were involved in the CSD program teams' virtual office modes and made feel part of the family as best as possible. A few previously planned internships were cancelled, others were continued in a smart working mode, but many more team additions were gained, leaving the impression of CSD's heightened profile among the academic youth who have started to view the Center as a top place to get trained for their future policy-oriented careers.

All in all, the Center hosted 57 interns from 25 different countries. In addition to Bulgarian students and recent graduates, the Center accommodated interns from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, France, Germany, Ghana, India, Italy, Mexico, Nepal, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Russia, Sweden, Sin-

gapore, Spain, Switzerland, the USA, and Venezuela. Among the students who interned on a rolling basis in 2020 there were four interns hired under the European Universities for the EU program (EU4EU) which facilitates the transition between university education and access to employment through professional internships with a focus on EU-funded projects at organisations based in the EU, as well as graduates and undergraduates from the Blavatnik School of Government at the University of Oxford, Princeton University, Glasgow University, the Hague University and many more.

CSD attempts to match interns' professional aspirations to their assignments. As a minimum, the Center attempts to involve interns in contributing to reports and other outputs (with supervision and feedback where needed) on a topic relevant to the intern's educational background and/or future professional goals.

In 2020, all CSD programs actively engaged interns in their core activities such as desk research, data collection, literature reviews, collection and review of information and good practices and drafting parts of research and policy papers. This helped them gain practical skills and in-depth knowledge in areas such as:

- anti-corruption and good governance in Europe; state capture and Russian economic, political and media influence and disinformation in Central and Eastern Europe; energy security and transition to a low-carbon future; hidden economy and

undeclared work; international competitiveness;

- integration of migrants and social inclusion of vulnerable groups, youth employment and education policy for ethnic minorities; prevention of radicalisation leading to terrorism; governance of religious diversity; gender-based violence; overcoming employment barriers for young European citizens;
- countering radicalisation and violent extremism, prevention of radicalisation in prisons, countering drug trafficking, organised crime threat assessment;
- rights of suspects and accused; migration, reception, integration and social orientation of migrants; legal and social support to victims of crime; diversity charters throughout the EU; business and human rights; role of perceptions in shaping migration narratives.

In 2020, interns also assisted in the preparation and conducting of interviews, and the transcribing and processing of collected qualitative data. Notably, they were involved in the project preparation process, gaining valuable experience in developing grant and tender proposals. They also provided invaluable support in the organisation of CSD's public policy events which were held online during most of the year and involved the precious digital and communication skills that today's young people are well versed in.

The Center has a robust, standardised policy for mentoring newly hired interns, which frequently leads to extending offers for permanent positions as researchers and experts at CSD or at other institutions, offers of admission to elite graduate schools, or to funding schemes for additional employment and/or education. Interns, who are employed for a period of up to six months, undergo a two-stage selection and are provided with complete information to facilitate their adaptation to the receiving country and the organisation's specificities, including the shared online platforms it uses. In all cases, when interns are hired, CSD uses established templates and procedures for developing intern action plans as well as mentorship plans to guide the intern's supervisor(s), while clearly identifying the expected timeline(s) and performance indicators that would determine the successful completion of the internship. The action and mentorship plans provide initial assessment of the strengths and opportunities of the internship for both the intern and the organisation. In the online and hybrid internship mode in the corona crisis stricken 2020, interns used a dedicated workplace channel to exchange information at near live speed and participate in meetings and discussions, keeping abreast of organisational activities and becoming part of the online CSD community.

*"I did a six-month internship at the Economic Program of the CSD and I can happily say that it was a great and unique experience that helped me understand the work system of a think tank, to develop interesting skills within the research field, and to clarify some doubts I previously had regarding my career goals.*

*From the firsts days at the Center, I was challenged with interesting tasks and I was included in a project on Russian influence in Spain and Latin America. I also collaborated in energy-related projects and had the chance to attend one of CSD's events on Russian influence in Europe. Additionally, I was introduced by my supervisor to a diplomat from Venezuela (my home country) which was definitely one of the best experiences within my internship period.*

*As an intern at CSD, I always had a comfortable sense of being part of the Center and of being constantly learning new things by joining interesting conversations with interns and staff members coming from all over the world. I had a unique chance to be around highly experienced researchers who encouraged me by their experience and who constantly expressed their curiosity about my and other interns' stories. I would, therefore, recommend CSD as a workplace for any curious mind willing to explore different fields of study and to enhance their CV and their contact network, all in a comfortable and international place."*

**Susana Correia**, Venezuela, intern at CSD's Economic Program,  
October 15, 2019 – April 17, 2020

*"I had the incredible opportunity to intern at the Center for the Study of Democracy's Economic Program for two months. My tasks included the creation of a literature review for the project on Chinese Influence in Central and Eastern Europe, the preparation of a study detailing the different scandals in the sectors of infrastructure, wholesale pharmaceuticals, and wholesale fuels in Italy during the last 3 years for SceMaps, and the study of pro-authoritarian tendencies among Bulgarian MEPs by comparing their official websites and votes on pivotal European Parliament resolutions with their stance on authoritarianism in Russia and China in interviews, articles, and speeches.*

*During my stay at CSD, I learnt a lot from the incredibly dedicated staff members of the Economic Program. Despite my internship taking place in a virtual format due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Director of the Program, Mr. Ruslan Stefanov, and my supervisor, Martin Vladimirov, did their best to make me feel welcome and informed about all the tasks that I had to complete. I hope to use my stay at CSD and the increased knowledge I received on state capture, corruption, and foreign influence both in my undergraduate study and in my prospective career in academia. I had the fortune of working in an international team, which included people from all over the world, each with their own specific educational focus. I found the chance to cooperate with them on the different tasks fun, exciting, and enriching. I would like to express my gratitude to the entire team for every piece of information and advice that they gave me and for allowing me to join them in their endeavors in such a trying time as 2020 was. I would*

*recommend that everyone who has even a passing interest in politics, international relations, and economics consider the prospect of interning at CSD, as it is one of the most rewarding experiences that they can acquire."*

**Ilia Calogero Curto Pelle,**

USA/Italy/Bulgaria, intern at CSD's Economic Program,

June 1 – July 31, 2020

*"I did my internship at the Security Program at CSD. It was a rewarding experience, as I was actively involved in project proposal preparation, drafting literature reviews and short reports, and helping in the writing phase. I had the possibility to engage in a variety of topics, including, but not limited to, trafficking in human beings, firearms trafficking, white-collar crime, counter-right-wing narratives, and investigative tools. This wide variety is a reflection of the expertise that you can find at CSD and it was a good possibility to challenge myself in topics that I was not familiar with, stimulating my interest every day. Yet, the greatest opportunity I had was to follow a project proposal on environmental crime from the beginning to the end. Thanks to this activity, I was involved in a great variety of assignments which taught me a great deal. It also inspired me to pursue a specialisation in environmental crime.*

*The security team is composed of incredible experts. They made me feel welcomed and were always available to give advice on how to better achieve the objectives of assigned tasks. In particular, Dr. Tommaso Comunale was extremely helpful in guiding me through tasks, especially at the beginning when I had little clue of what was going on. I feel that through my experience at CSD, I gained new expertise and I was able to improve my skills. I especially ameliorated my analytical skills and my writing capacities. Working with the analysts of CSD allowed me to learn every day, while benefiting from their knowledge, experience and guidance. Moreover, before the second wave of Covid-19 hit Bulgaria, the office was a lively and friendly space, hosting many interns from different nations and backgrounds, thus creating a vibrant international environment."*

**Elettra Campagnolo,** Italy, intern at CSD's Security Program,

3 August – 23 December 2020

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## Consulting Arms of CSD: Vitoshka Research and Project One

Vitoshka Research EOOD and Project One EOOD are wholly owned by CSD and form the CSD Group. Vitoshka Research EOOD had started as one of the programs of CSD dealing with sociological issues and in 2000 was set up as a separate commercial company aiming to support the long-term financial sustainability of CSD through involvement in marketing and social research. The General Manager of the company is the Director of Research of CSD.

Project One EOOD was founded after consultations with the auditing compa-

ny KPMG in order to enable CSD's participation in tenders and consultancy projects. Project One is also in charge of the management of CSD investment activities. The Manager of Project One EOOD is the Executive Director of CSD. The three organisations share facilities, human, and financial resources in order to better achieve their goals, while observing distinct separation of CSD Group's commercial and non-commercial activities.

## List of Staff

### Governing Board

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Vladimir Yordanov, Executive Director  
Ruslan Stefanov, Director, Economic Program

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Mois Faion, PhD, Senior Fellow  
Tihomir Bezlov, Senior Fellow  
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Nadya Stoyanova, Analyst  
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