

# Information and Documentation Centre of the Council of Europe

The Information and Documentation Centre of the Council of Europe in Sofia is part of a network of information centers in the member countries of Central and Eastern Europe. It was established as a joint initiative of the Council of Europe, the Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Center for the Study of Democracy, and was inaugurated on December 13, 1993 by Ms. Catherine Lalumière, Secretary General of the Council of Europe, and Dr. Zhelyu Zhelev, President of the Republic of Bulgaria.

## 1993–1995 HIGHLIGHTS

- **Held over 30 seminars, lectures and workshops;**
- **Participated in two Council of Europe campaigns: the Youth Campaign Against Racism, Anti-Semitism, Xenophobia and Intolerance, and the Nature Conservation Year;**
- **Organized five public contests;**
- **Hosted three press conferences with members of the Bulgarian delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe;**
- **Issued over 10 translations and publications of Council of Europe documents, including the European Charter on the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, and the Short Guide to it;**
- **Provided information and assistance to 5,000 visitors to the library;**
- **Developed a national information network comprised of 10 subnodes in major towns across the country.**

The purpose of the Information Centre is to assist the Council of Europe's activities in Bulgaria, aimed at promoting democratic values, pluralist democracy and the rule of law. The Centre provides information on the basis of a documentary collection and online link with the Council of Europe in Strasbourg. It offers assistance to Council of Europe-related activities of government bodies and non-governmental organizations and promotes the ideals and values of the Council of Europe by organizing conferences, seminars, lectures, round-table discussions, as well as press conferences, public awareness campaigns and other publicity events. The Information Centre publishes and distributes important Council of Europe docu-

ments in Bulgarian. Its activities cover a broad range of issues, including political co-operation, human rights, social issues, education, culture, sports, youth, mass media, and local self-government. In 1996, the focal points of the work of IDCCES included:

- the national information network
- the second year of the European Youth Campaign against Racism, Anti-Semitism, Xenophobia and Intolerance
- the European Social Charter
- the case law volume of the European Court on Human Rights

### I. National Information Network

The national information network is presently well established and function-

ing, bringing Council of Europe materials closer to people outside the capital city. In 1996, all regional information units were supplied regularly with a selection of Council of Europe materials: documents, periodicals, leaflets and the publications of the Information and Documentation Centre, including the *European Convention on Human Rights* complete with explanatory materials (in Bulgarian), and the book *Roma, Gypsy, Travelers* (in Bulgarian).

## II. European Youth Campaign Against Racism, Anti-Semitism, Xenophobia and Intolerance

Believing that the campaign would have little meaning if restricted to a single year of activities, the Information Centre organized a follow-up essay contest *Diversity Is Beautiful* for students aged 14-18. The contest was announced on the Media Action Day Against Racism on March 21, and received broad publicity on the national radio and in student periodicals. The results of the contest were announced on the national radio. Three awards were presented and all participants received small souvenirs from the IDCCES.

## III. Seminars, Lectures, Discussions

On April 3, the IDCCES held a lecture for students at the Dutch College in Sofia on the topic *Bulgaria's European Integration: Problems and Prospects*, which included a presentation of a comparative analysis of Bulgarian and European law in the field of human rights. The IDCCES provided support for and participated in a seminar on the European Social Charter on May 31. In October, IDCCES organized a lecture by Professor Antonia Angelova for students of International Relations at the Slavic University. The topic of the lecture was the European Convention of Human Rights, and included a presen-

tation of a Council of Europe video film on human rights.

IDCCES provided support in the organization of the Conference on "Corruption and Organized Crime in States of Transition" in Sofia, December 12-13 under the Octopus project (a joint project of the Council of Europe and the Commission of the European Communities);

In addition, IDCCES provided support for and participated in the conference *Non-Judicial Means for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in Bulgaria*, December 17-18.

## IV. Visits

- Visit of Ms. Marija Vrazivirska, Librarian at the Skopje Faculty of Law, in connection with the opening of an Information and Documentation Centre of the Council of Europe in Macedonia;
- Visit of Mr. Christophe Poirel, Media Secretary, Directorate of Human Rights;
- May 22-24: on-site meeting of IDCCE Directors in Warsaw;
- September 23-28, meeting of IDCCE Directors in Strasbourg;
- Visit of John Murray, Co-ordinator of Activities on Roma/Gypsies, Council of Europe.

## V. Publicity Events

- In connection with the Media Action Day Against Racism, publicity materials were provided to journalists. This year the Media Action Day was given much more attention by the Bulgarian mass media owing, to a great extent, to the efforts of the IDCCES;
- April 19: Press launch of the book *Roma, Gypsy, Travelers* at IDCCES;
- April 24: Presentation of the book *Roma, Gypsy, Travelers* on the national radio;

- May 9: Interview of Ms. Janeta Shinkova on the Hristo Botev program of the national radio in connection with Europe Day.

## VI. Publications

- Liegeois, Jean-Pierre. Roma, Gypsies, Travellers. S., IDCCE, 1996, 367 pp. ISBN 954-477-017-8
- European Convention on Human Rights. S., IDCCE, 1996, 67 pp.

## VII. Other Initiatives

- In conjunction with the Center for the Study of Democracy, the IDCCES initiated the translation of the European Social Charter and a compatibility analysis.

The IDCCES started work on a project for the publication of a volume of case law of the European Court of Human Rights in Bulgarian. The digest will include 45 selected cases as well as reference instruments. The selection and editing is being done by a team of four outstanding experts consulted by Judge Dimiter Gochev, member of the European Court on Human Rights. The resulting volume will be a valuable tool for the entire legal community as well as for university lecturers of law, students and non-governmental organizations active in the field of human rights. It is due to come out at the beginning of September 1997 on the eve the fifth anniversary of the ECHR's coming into force in Bulgaria.



*Mr. Boyko Todorov (right) was appointed Director of IDCCES in 1996.*

The CSD home page is accessible on the World Wide Web at [www.csd.bg](http://www.csd.bg).

