

Vitoshka Research / Sociological Program

1991–1995 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS:

- Organized a national interviewer network consisting of approximately 350 interviewers. It is regionally based and consists of 28 regional groups (100 interviewers in Sofia and 250 in all regional centers);
- Conducted 60 quantitative national sample surveys (public opinion, social, marketing and audience research) and 30 qualitative surveys. The basic survey methods employed included face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews, focus group discussions, omnibus surveys, and computer-based perception analyzer system (quick-tally) for assessment of radio and TV programming and advertising;
- Organized an international seminar on survey methodology and organization in Sandanski, southern Bulgaria, in August 1992. The seminar was attended by pollsters from Hungary, Poland, Russia, Romania, and Bulgaria. The lectures included Dr. Peter Mohler, Director of ZUMA, Mannheim, Dr. Mary McIntosh, Chief of the European Branch of USIA Office of Research, and leading US pollsters, Nancy Belden and Gary Lawrence;
- Completed a research project, At-risk Groups and Social Problems in Bulgaria, in August — September 1994, which was part of package of surveys commissioned by the World Bank. The survey design employed several research techniques, including a quantitative survey of clients of Social Assistance Offices, focus group discussions with experts and representatives of risk groups, and in-depth interviews with selected representatives of high-risk groups. The analytical report of survey findings was presented at a seminar organized by the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare and CSD;
- Prepared more than 20 publications, covering topical issues such as pre-election attitudes and electoral behavior, value system and political affiliations of Bulgarian society, social stratification, at-risk groups in Bulgaria and public attitudes towards mass privatization.
- Established good working relations and research co-operation with institutions including the BBC World Service, USIA Office of Research, Open Media Research Institute, the World Bank, Worldnet TV and the International Social Survey Program, to name but a few.

Vitoshka Research conducted 26 quantitative and qualitative surveys and research projects in 1996. They were focused upon:

- Monitoring the public perception of economic, political and social changes in Bulgaria;
- Conducting radio audience research, media evaluation and music research;
- Conducting market research and consultancy projects;
- Preparing a series of analytic reports on economic reforms, mass privatization, social and political values during the transition;
- Developing survey information database and employment of new research techniques;
- Providing methodological and technical support to the other CSD projects.

The Sociological Program started operating shortly after the establishment of CSD. In 1990 it conducted the first independent pre- and post election surveys after the democratic changes in Bulgaria. This was an important contribution to democratic institution building and to fostering public awareness of the evolving new political and economic system. Vitosha Research was launched at the end of 1994 to develop new orientations of work for the Sociological Program of CSD and to deepen its concentration in the field of market research. Since its first surveys Vitosha Research has accumulated considerable experience in quantitative and qualitative research, which provided the foundation for building up an effective, professional research unit. Vitosha Research now works on contractual basis, covering a wide range of activities: monitoring privatization and economic behavior, gauging political attitudes, determining value orientations, conducting market research, media and audience research, advertising studies and others.

I. Research Projects

The research projects conducted in 1996 fall into four major categories: public opinion surveys, media research, market research, social and economic research.

1. Public Opinion Surveys

Seven research projects were completed. Five of them were based on national representative samples and two on quota samples. A total of 6500 face-to-face interviews were conducted by the national interviewer net of Vitosha Research. The basic topics covered were:

- public opinion about politics and the economy;
- elites and the changes in Bulgaria;
- monitor of mass privatization;
- private business and the state.

2. Media Research

Six media research projects were conducted in 1996. Different research methods were used to evaluate some media audiences:

- telephone interview;
- focus group discussion;
- media monitoring;
- music research.

3. Market Research

Six quantitative market research studies were conducted during the year. They included 3500 face-to-face interviews, 2000 telephone interviews and 9 field observations. The following research fields were covered:

- traffic count studies;
- regional infrastructure audit;
- brand image;
- advertising post-campaign surveys;
- consumer behavior.

Market research projects were commissioned directly, or through Bulgarian representatives, by KFC, Philip Morris Services — Bulgaria, Amoco Petroleum Products (Bulgarian and Polish branches), Intco Trade Ltd. Three new nation-wide and regional databases were developed jointly with Datecs Ltd.

4. Social and Economic Research

Social and economic research included both quantitative and qualitative surveys. They included over 4000 face-to-face interviews, 30 in-depth interviews, and 6 focus group discussions (in Sofia, Yambol, Kurdjali, Straldja, Tenevo), covering the following topics:

- attitudes towards social justice;
- relationships between citizens and government authorities;
- economic climate for the private business in Bulgaria;
- non-governmental organizations and their economic environment;
- rural socio-economic survey of three country regions in Bulgaria.



Mr. Michael Type, Head of the European Broadcasting Union Data & Reference Center (right) and Mr. Alexander Stoyanov, CSD Director of Research during the Market Reforms, Advertising and Audience Research conference.

Social and economic research projects were commissioned by the World Bank, the University of Glasgow, the National Council for Soviet and East European Research, the US International Research and Exchanges Board, Japan International Cooperation Agency and the Royal Netherlands Embassy to Bulgaria.

II. Conference

The conference *Market Reforms, Advertising and Audience Research* was held jointly with the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) in March. Distinguished professionals like Michael Type, Head of EBU Data & Reference Center, Dr. Peter Diem, Head of Audience Research, ORF, Austria, and Jane Perry, Media Research Director of Young & Rubicam Europe made presentations at the conference.

Apart from expert lectures on different research practices of radio and TV audience measurement, the conference provided a forum for discussions on the problems of competition and professional communication in the fields of advertising and audience research.

It was attended by broadcasters, journalists and advertisers. Broadcast researchers were represented from both the public and private sector.

III. Publications

Several analytic reports, articles and working papers were prepared by the staff members of Vitosha Research:

- *Monitor of Mass Privatization* (analyses of the results of a series of surveys conducted in April 1996 — October 1996),
- *Monitor of Mass Privatization* (analyses of the results of a series of surveys

conducted in October 1995 — October 1996),

- *Does Bulgarian Society Support Mass Privatization* (October 1996),
- *Private Sector and Government Actions in Bulgaria* (November 1996),
- *Public Perceptions of Economic Problems* (December 1996).