

Vitosha Research / Sociological Program

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 as a spin-off from the Sociological Program of CSD, in order to deepen its concentration in the field of market research.

The first surveys of the Sociological Program 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, measuring the effectiveness of advertising, and others.

1991-1994 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 county centers).
- Conducted 50 quantitative national sample surveys (public opinion, social, marketing and audience research) and 20 qualitative surveys. The basic survey methods employed included face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews, focus group discussions, omnibus surveys, and a 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 lecturers 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 a 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.

- Established good working relations and research cooperation with institutions including the BBC World Service, USIA Office of Research, Open Media Research Institute, Audience and Opinion Research Department (USA, Washington), the World Bank, Worldnet TV (USA), International Social Survey Program, and Gallup Hungary, to name but a few.

The activities of Vitosha Research in 1995 were aimed primarily at:

- Conducting market research and consultancy projects;
- Providing methodological and technical support to the other CSD projects;
- Preparing a series of analytic reports on economic reforms, mass privatization, and political values during the transition;
- Developing the skills of the research staff in order to further improve the infrastructural aspects of research: the national interviewer network, the survey information database, and the employment of new research techniques.

I. Research Projects

The research projects conducted in 1995 could be divided in two categories: social and opinion research, and market research.

Social and Opinion Research

Four quantitative research projects were conducted in 1995. Two of them were based on national representative samples. A total of 4000 face-to-face interviews were conducted by the

national interviewer network of Vitosha Research. The basic topics covered were:

- Public opinion about politics and the economy;
- Potential electoral behavior in the 1995 local elections;
- Media survey;
- Value system of the youth population.

Four qualitative research projects were completed in 1995. A total of eight focus groups involving 80 participants were conducted in Sofia, Burgas, and Dobrich, covering the following topics:

- Problems of Bulgaria's Foreign and Security Policy;
- Electoral Attitudes Before the Local Elections;
- Efficiency of the Social Security System in Bulgaria;
- The Value System and Political Affiliations of Bulgarian Society: 1990-1995.

Social and opinion research projects conducted by Vitosha Research in 1995 were commissioned by the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare, the European Branch of USIA Office of Research and Media Reaction, the Friedrich

Naumann Foundation, RFE/RL Research Institute, and the Committee of Youth at the Council of Ministers.

Market Research

Most market research projects included both quantitative and qualitative research. A total of 6000 face-to-face interviews and six focus group discussions were conducted. The research fields included:

- Buying and Consumer Behavior of Consumers of Home Electronic Appliances;
- Survey of the Electronic Appliances Shops in Sofia;
- The Milk Market in Bulgaria;
- Customers of Fast Food Shops in Sofia;

- Alcoholic Drinks Consumption.

The market research projects were commissioned directly, or through Bulgarian representatives, by Tetrapack, KFC, and Phillips, among others.

II. Conference

A conference, *At-Risk Groups and the Challenges to Social Policy*, was held jointly with the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare. Participants included experts and researchers in the field of social security and social welfare. An analytical paper based on the results of the survey *At-Risk Groups and Social Problems in Bulgaria*, conducted in the previous year, was provided to participants of the conference.

European Policy Studies

The key elements of CSD's policy studies in the field of European integration in 1995 included:

- The project Europe 2000: Bulgaria and the European Union;
- The Bulgarian Chapters of the Centre for European Policy Studies in Brussels;
- The translation of the EU White Paper on the integration of Central and East European countries (CEECs).

I. Europe 2000: Bulgaria and the European Union

From its inauguration on January 17, 1995 the project was supported by politicians from across the political spectrum. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Defense, the Minister of Trade and other officials from the caretaker Government attended the ceremony. Also present were key political figures who later became members of the new government - the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Finance, and the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Trade. Thus, under the auspices of CSD two successive Bulgarian governments with different political orientation have pledged full support for the project.

The project's principal achievement was that it laid the groundwork for a comprehensive examination of the

opportunities and problems of Bulgaria's association to, and eventual membership in the European Union. The project also analyzed recent developments inside the Union with regard to the preparation for the 1996 inter-governmental conference and its bearing on the integration of CEECs. In addition to the expert analyses, a dialogue was established in the course of the project between policy-makers and government institutions in charge of the implementation, and independent experts, both local and international. Thus, the project managed to contribute to increasing the level of available expertise on European integration issues in Bulgaria.

Among the most telling indicators of the achievements of the project is the fact that the final report prepared for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was presented by the government on a number of events held within the structured relationship established by the Europe Agreement.

Formation of Working Groups

The experience and professional skills of the Project Director, Mr. Stanislav Daskalov, former Minister of Foreign Affairs and former chief negotiator for the conclusion of Bulgaria's Europe Agreement, contributed to a smooth start-up of the work. Seventeen working groups were formed involving over 30 leading Bulgarian experts. CSD's past experience in managing

public policy research projects as well as its broad network of political, institutional and expert contacts was particularly useful in this regard. The group leaders were selected among independent experts, university professors, and government officials, in their personal capacity. All experts had knowledge not only in their respective fields but also in the operation, institutional structure, legislation and jurisprudence of the European Union. The list of working groups is given below:

Approximation of Legislation, Competition, Right of Establishment and Intellectual Property headed by Mr. Chavdar Popov, Attorney at Law, ExLege Consulting, Sofia.

Trade Policy, Foreign Trade Flows, and Free Movement of Goods headed by Ms. Biserka Benisheva, Counselor to the Mission of the Republic of Bulgaria to the European Communities.

Implementation Plan and Monitoring System of the Europe Agreement headed by Mr. Boyko Todorov, Research Fellow at the Center for the Study of Democracy.

Foreign Policy and Security headed by Mr. Todor Tchourov, Ambassador at Large at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and former Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Democratic Process and Human Rights headed by Dr. Goran Goranov, Professor at the Department of Philosophy at Sofia University.

Economic Stabilization and Growth, Internal and External Balances and Macroeconomic Framework headed by Dr. Gancho Ganchev, Deputy Minister of Economic Development, and Chairman of the Agency for Economic Coordination and Development.

The Maastricht Criteria in the Context of Bulgaria's Accession to the European Union headed by Mr. Atanas Paparizov, Minister of Trade and Foreign Economic Cooperation.

Current Payments and Movement of Capital headed by Dr. Lyubomir Christov, Advisor to the Executive Director of the World Bank, Washington, DC.

Structural Adjustment, Research and Technology, Investment and Standardization headed by Dr. Margarita Shivergeva, Deputy Chairperson of the Agency for Economic Coordination and Development.

Agricultural Policy headed by Dr. Sophia Davidova, Wye College, University of London;

Participation in European Union Programs headed by Dr. Ingrid Shikova, Associate Director of the Centre for European Studies, Sofia.

Transport Policy headed by Mr. Kiril Kirov, Senior Expert at the Economic Bank.

Energy Policy headed by Mr. Slavcho Neikov, Head of Legal Department at the Committee of Energy.

Communications Policy headed by Dr. Krastyo Mirski, Vice President of the Committee of Posts and Telecommunications of Bulgaria, and Vice Chairman of the Council of the International Telecommunications Union.

Free Movement of Services headed by Dr. Anton Pashov, Chief Expert at the Institute of Trade of the Bulgarian Ministry of Trade.

Human Resources, Social Policy and Movement of Workers headed by Dr. Yordan Christoskov, Social Policy Advisor to the President of the Republic of Bulgaria.

Environmental Policy headed by Mr. Yordan Uzunov, Deputy Minister of the Environment.

Home Affairs headed by Mr. Evgeni Palyov, Attorney at Law.

Preparation of Draft Reports

The working group topics were chosen to reflect all major areas covered by the Europe Agreement between Bulgaria and the European Union and to provide, inter alia, a basis for placing the work on the implementation of the Europe Agreement in a wider perspective. It was also considered important that the reports follow a similar structure and approach in order to provide a basis for a comprehensive accession document in the future.

Considering the importance of the process of approximation of laws, a strong emphasis was placed in the

reports on identifying the status of the respective sectors and on examining the status of Bulgarian legislation from the perspective of the *acquis communautaire*. Particularly useful in this regard was the White Paper of the European Union which presented an overall view of EU legislation relating to the internal market and provided the necessary reference for the reports.

Expert Evaluation of the Reports

Evaluations of the reports prepared by the working groups were considered an important supplementary activity in a public policy research project. The purpose of these evaluations was twofold: to expand the range of expertise available to the project and to ensure bi-partisan political assessment of the research approach and findings. The evaluations were carried out by a small group including the project coordinator, the leader of the working group and two to three outside experts and policy-makers. Twenty-four Members of Parliament, numerous government officials, and independent experts participated in the formal evaluation of the research carried out by the working groups. The evaluation group discussed the approach and findings of the reports, and provided recommendations for the expanding and deepening of the analysis from the point of view of the implementation priorities. The result was an improved organization of the reports with respect to both structure and policy recommendations.

Seminars

As 1995 marked the beginning of practical work with respect to the implementation of the Europe Agreement and the development of an accession strategy, the Center for the Study of Democracy wanted to encourage an informed public debate as a part of this policy-oriented project. Thus, in addition to the work on the reports, CSD held a number of seminars at which the initial findings of the working groups were presented with the purpose of discussing the adopted approaches. The seminars also aimed at attracting support for the project, and encouraging discussion of key implementation issues among policy-makers and experts, as well as the broader public. The following seminars were organized in the course of the project:

Developing a National Security and Defense Concept

Held on May 3-5, it was organized jointly with the Center for National Security Studies at the Ministry of Defense. The seminar was attended by Members of Parliament, Government officials, Bulgarian and foreign experts, and representatives from NATO. The seminar discussions and presentations were particularly beneficial for the working group on foreign policy and national security since they focused on the European dimension of Bulgaria's foreign policy and its implications for membership in the European structures and the mechanisms for political cooperation.

Democratic Institutions and Human Rights in the Context of Bulgaria's EU Accession Strategy

The seminar took place on June 19, and identified the steps to be taken in order to reform central and local government capabilities, and parliamentary mechanisms. The seminar was organized jointly with the Institute for Human Rights in Lyon, France. The Director of the Institute, Ms. Pascale Boucaud, and Mr. Jean-Christophe Bas, Program Director of the Aspen Institute, Lyon, France, made presentations on the criteria adopted by the EU in this area as well as relevant EU legislation. The seminar was attended by the Deputy Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights and Religious Freedoms, advisors to the President of Bulgaria, and other policy-makers and experts.

Approximation of Bulgarian Law to European Union Legislation

Held on June 26, the seminar discussed the long-term priorities of Bulgaria's legislative program in view of the integration process and identified the need for development of legislation on economic reforms, especially in the field of commercial law. The seminar was attended by the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, the President of the Bulgarian Patent Office, and other policy-makers and experts.

Foreign Policy and National Security in the Context of Bulgaria's Accession to the European Union

The seminar, held on June 29, discussed the security aspects of Bulgaria's association with the political structures of the EU. It was attended by the Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Policy, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, a former Prime Minister, heads of Departments at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and other policy-makers and experts.



Dr. Claus-Dieter Ehlermann from the European Commission (middle), Mr. Jorgen Mortensen from CEPS (left) and Dr. Ognian Shentov at the CEPS Bulgarian Chapter meeting in June.

These public events, including the Bulgarian garian Chapters of the Centre for European Policy Studies, described in greater detail below, were attended by over 200 government officials, Members of Parliament, politicians of different political orientation, and independent experts. On the whole, the events provided a forum for discussion among administration officials, politicians and experts of the strategic issues raised by the implementation task. As a result, the discussions contributed to laying the foundation of an appropriate implementation

strategy as well as to raising the general public awareness, through broad media coverage of these events, of the purpose, scope, and urgency of the implementation task.

Institutional Contacts and Networking

During the course of the project, CSD held a series of consultations with various ministries and government agencies on the status of the implementation of the Europe Agreement. These were aimed at identifying the institutional set-up with regard to implementation, and the sectors requiring most urgent attention.

CSD also maintained regular contact with the implementing agencies and informed them about the progress of the project. In this respect, contact with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as the agency responsible for the implementation of the Europe Agreement in general, was considered of primary importance. A breakfast meeting with Mr. Georgi Pirinski, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the working group leaders was held on May 17. At the meeting, Mr. Pirinski was briefed on the progress of the project. Mr. Pirinski informed the participants about the priorities of the government in the field of European integration.

The regular contacts with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Delegation of the Commission of the European Communities in Sofia contributed to the successful accomplishment of the work.

Consultations with Foreign Experts

In addition to the organization of public events and the evaluations of the working group reports, CSD contacted a number of experts from the European Union to consult the working groups in their research. CSD held consultations with Ambassador Gunnar Riberholdt, former Permanent Representative of Denmark to the European Union, during his visit to Sofia in March. The consultations were an excellent opportunity to draw from Ambassador Riberholdt's first-hand experience in the preparation and carrying out of accession negotiations.

The input of foreign experts - especially those with practical experience in association negotiations such as Ambassador Riberholdt - is deemed indispensable for the later stages of the work on the project.

II. Bulgarian Chapters of the Centre for European Policy Studies

On June 13, CSD together with the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS), Brussels, held the Third Bulgarian Chapter entitled *The Enlargement of the European Union to the East: Political Preconditions for Efficient Market Integration*.

This policy forum brought together prominent European experts and Bulgarian Members of Parliament and government officials to discuss EU economic convergence criteria for Bulgaria and the implications for Bulgaria of the White Paper of the

European Union. The guest speaker was Mr. Claus-Dieter Ehlermann, former Director General of DGIV in charge of competition. On the following day, the policy forum was followed by a seminar Financial and Budgetary Implications of the Enlargement. The seminar was an expert meeting with the purpose of discussing the macroeconomic aspects of the enlargement.

The Fourth Bulgarian CEPS Chapter was held on December 14 and was hosted by the Minister of Justice, [Mr. Mladen Tchervenjakov](#). The topic of the Chapter was *The Political and Institutional Aspects of the Approximation of Bulgarian Law to EU Legislation*. Guest speakers from the EU were Mr. Willem van Eekelen, former Secretary General of the Western European Union and Ms. Bridget Czarnota, Head of the Technical Assistance Information Exchange Office of the European Commission, and former Head of the Task Force for the preparation of the EU White Paper on integration of the CEECs.

III. Translation of the EU White Paper on the Integration of Central and East European Countries

Using the resources and experience acquired under the project *Europe 2000: Bulgaria and the European Union*, the Center for the Study of Democracy translated into Bulgarian the [White Paper of the European Union on the integration of the Central and East European countries into the internal market of the Union](#). Follow [this link](#)

for the translation of the White Paper, and [this one](#) for the translation of the Appendix to the White Paper. Intended as a general reference document to facilitate the work of implementing agencies in the associated countries, the White Paper is a key document in the process of approximation of laws. Leading project experts were involved in the editing of the different sections of

the Paper with a view towards achieving an adequate rendering into Bulgarian of the terms and logic of the document. This project was completed in conjunction with the Law Reform and Comparative Law Program of CSD. The Bulgarian translation was officially presented at the Fourth Bulgarian Chapter of CEPS hosted by the Minister of Justice.