

Vitosha Research

2005 Highlights

- In 2005 Vitosha Research carried out 40 social, economic, marketing and media surveys. Quantitative and qualitative methods were used to conduct 29,500 face-to-face structured and semi-structured interviews, 110 in-depth interviews and 24 focus groups discussions. The results of the surveys were summarized in over 20 analytical reports.
- Vitosha Research focused on five thematic areas: corruption and hidden economy; crime, victimization, national and personal security; inter-ethnic relations; socio-economic problems and social assessment; market and business surveys.
- Corruption related surveys were carried out with representatives of different professional groups: lawyers, businessmen, and employees of the Ministry of the Interior. Work on the international informal networks project (Bulgaria, Romania, Slovenia and the Czech Republic) continued with a quantitative survey among the Bulgarian elite and drafting of the summary analytical report.
- The problems of security, organized and street crime were a specific focus in the research practice of Vitosha Research. A national representative victimization survey was carried out, as well as a study of the attitude towards the police of the Bulgarian population in general and some specific groups (businessmen, ethnic minorities, etc.).
- One of the priority research targets in 2005 was the social sphere and inter-ethnic relations in the country. A considerable part of the activity of Vitosha Research was devoted to the Index of Ethnic Integration in municipalities with a multi-ethnic and multi-religious population, as well as a survey of the socio-economic problems in the Roma communities.
- In 2005 Vitosha Research joined the consortium of research agencies in Europe, which conducted the international European Working Conditions Survey (ECWS) in 31 European countries. The consortium was lead by Gallup Europe, and Vitosha Research carried out the survey in Bulgaria.

I. Social and Economic Surveys

1. European Working Conditions Survey

The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions carried out the fourth edition of its European Working Conditions Survey in September-October 2005. This is an international survey, covering 31 European countries, among them the 25 EU member states and the 3 candidate countries for EU membership – Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey.

The European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS) was aimed at:

- Providing an overview of the state of working conditions in the Member States of the European Union and Candidate Countries;
- Monitoring the nature and content of changes affecting the workforce and the quality of work in the EU;

In cooperation with Gallup Europe, Vitosha Research carried out the EWCS in Bulgaria. The research design included face-to-face interviews with working people aged 15 and over. In total 1135 working Bulgarians gave their opinion about different aspects of their working life such as working time, work organization and work-related health outcomes.

2. Study of Entrepreneurship Education in Bulgarian Schools

The project was commissioned by the Ministry of Economy and included a survey among the representatives of the business sector, students in secondary general and vocational schools, school teachers and principals. The main objective of the project was to analyze

on a national scale the state of the process of entrepreneurship training in Bulgarian secondary vocational schools. The most important research findings were as follows:

1. Despite the existence of government documents, which stress the importance of entrepreneurship training and the formation of an entrepreneurial spirit, the political commitments for encouraging entrepreneurship in vocational education are still insufficient.
2. There is no comprehensive policy, coordinated with the business sector which accounts for the opportunities and requirements of the labor market.
3. A large part of the syllabuses in vocational education are outdated both with regard to modern technologies, as well as in comparison with those used in other European countries.
4. A serious problem of vocational education in the country is the lack of a uniform system for monitoring and assessing the status and the quality of entrepreneurship training.

A roundtable discussion was organized in November 2005 to present and discuss the survey findings and the package of measures aimed at raising the level of entrepreneurship prepared by Vitosha Research.

3. Taxation and Social Security Practices

The main objective of the project is to assess the attitudes and expectations of the different categories of taxpayers to the work of the tax and social security

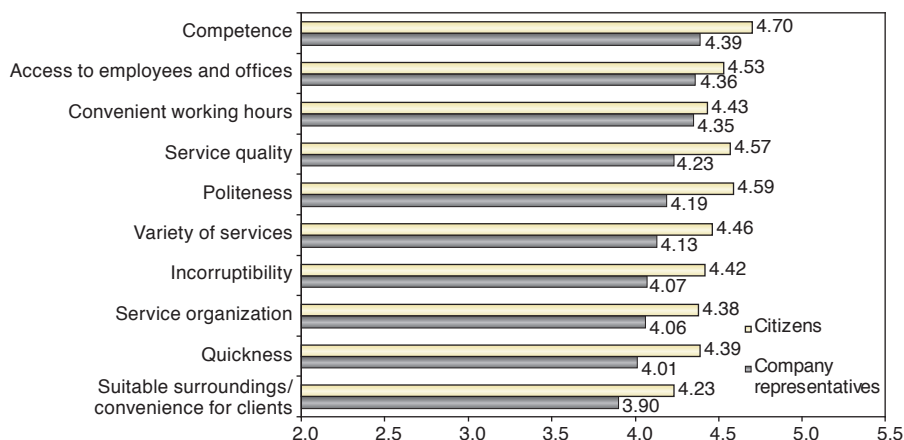
administration and to identify the needs and proposals to improve the activity of the two administrations. The analysis of the attitudes and assessments of taxpayers and social security contributors about the work of the tax administration (TA) and the National Social Security Institute (NSSI) will help to formulate recommendations for a change in the work of the two administrations. The summarized results of the survey will serve to improve the overall work of the tax and social security administrations in the context of the forthcoming reform in them and the creation of a National Income Agency.

4. The Hidden Economy in Bulgaria

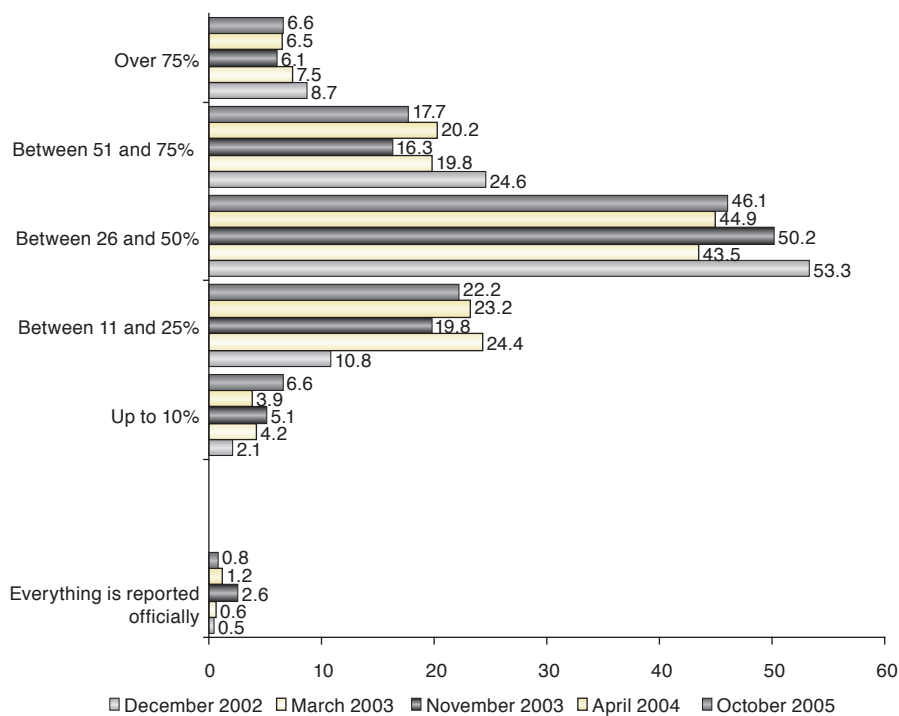
The regular Hidden Economy Survey of Vitosha Research was conducted in October 2005. The survey is part of the systematic monitoring of the hidden economy in Bulgaria (HEM), which Vitosha Research has been conducting since 2002. The survey included 308 companies from across the country. The survey employed the method of face-to-face interview.

The monitoring involves a series of representative surveys of the country's adult population and of the business sector. This makes it possible not only to observe the dynamics of the main hidden economy indicators but also to collect viable information about the differences in the attitudes of the general population and the business community towards the spread of hidden economy practices.

Chart 1. Average assessments of the tax administration activities (in 2-6 scale)



Source: Vitosha Research, *Survey of Attitude of the Bulgarian citizens to taxation and social security practices.*

Chart 2. Estimated share of the hidden economy in Bulgaria


Base: (Dec'02: N= 390; Mar '03: N= 308; Nov'03: N=313; Apr '04: N=336; Oct'05: N=243)

Source: Vitosha Research, October 2005 Hidden Economy Survey.

5. Index of Ethnic Integration

In 2005, Vitosha Research conducted two regional surveys commissioned by the Partners Bulgaria Foundation. The survey assessed the level of interethnic tolerance in twelve municipalities with higher concentration of Turks, Bulgarian Muslims and Roma population. For each of the studied municipalities an Index of Ethnic Integration was developed and a detailed analytical report based on the survey results was prepared.

The first study of six municipalities was carried out using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods:

face-to-face interviews, focus group discussions and in-depth interviews. The other six municipalities were studied with quantitative research methods only. The results from the two surveys were presented on 22 September, 2005 at the Ethnic Integration and Tolerance conference organized by Partners Bulgaria Foundation and USAID. Some of the results and conclusions presented at the conference were as follows:

- The inter-ethnic problems related to the Roma community, are mainly of a socio-economic origin, and some of the tensions observed between Bulgarians and Turks are mainly

political. The inter-group differences are not based on religious factors. In settlements where more ethnic groups (Bulgarians, Turks and Roma) coexist, the ethnic differences are softer.

- Relatively good coexistence and a fairly tolerant acceptance of otherness are seen in all municipalities with the exception of Doupnitsa and Samokov. Inter-ethnic tension and a much lower level of ethnic integration are observed in these two municipalities.
- A sense of discrimination at the labor market is registered mainly among the Roma. In all four municipalities where representatives of this group were surveyed, from 17 to 26% of the interviewees stated that they had been subject to such behavior by potential employers.
- In four of the municipalities – Razgrad, Isperih, Devin and Momchilgrad – the population supports the integrated education of children from minority groups. In the other six municipalities there are staunch supporters of segregation in education, whose share ranges from 12% in Targovishte to 46% in Samokov (35% of the Roma in Samokov also do not want their children to be educated together with the Bulgarian children).

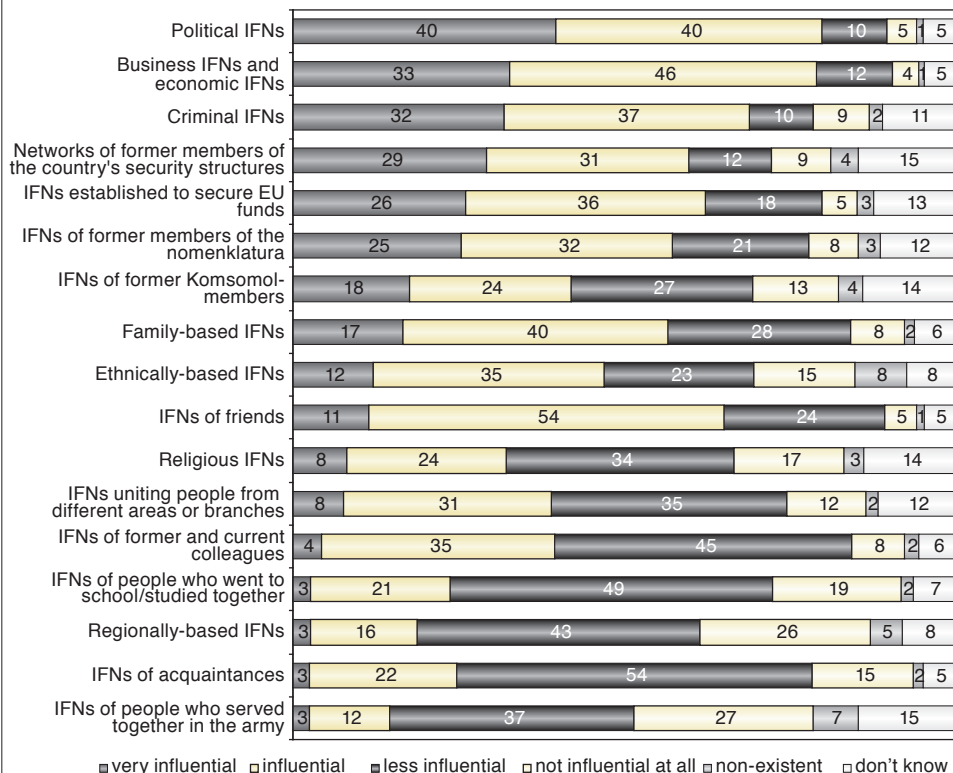
II. Study of Corruption

1. The Role of Informal Networks

The project was carried out in Bulgaria, Romania, Slovenia and the Czech Republic under the leadership of the Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research. The project analyzed the role of informal networks in politics, the economy, the judicial system and public life. Their positive and negative

aspects were studied in terms of rule of law, transparency of government and self-government, freedom of speech, civic participation and the establishment of a functioning market economy in Bulgaria. During the first phase in 2004 Vitosha Research interviewed government officials and Members of the Parliament, Bulgarian and foreign businessmen, representatives of media, of Bulgarian and international non-governmental organizations. At the second stage of the project, a round table was held for presenting, discussing, interpreting and supplementing the results from the survey of informal networks in Bulgaria. In 2005, Vitosha Research completed the final element of the project – a quantitative Elite Survey. Some of the main conclusions of the survey were:

- Elite representatives perceive the social environment in Bulgaria as favorable for the existence and development of informal relations.
- Requests to solve a problem in an informal way both directly as well as through intermediaries are a common practice in Bulgaria. Elite representatives who have never received such requests are fairly few.
- The representatives of the Bulgarian elite are approached most often for advice, help in speeding things up, assistance for access to information that is publicly available, but which is difficult to obtain, as well as with requests for finding work for somebody.
- The assessments of the influence of informal networks in one's own sector are more moderate than those of their influence on a national scale.

Chart 3. Influence of informal networks (IFNs) in Bulgaria


Source: Vitosha Research, *The Role of Informal Networks in Socio-Economic and Political Life in Bulgaria*.

2. Survey of Ministry of Interior officials

As part of a twinning project between the UK and Bulgaria to support anti-corruption measures with the Ministry of Interior (MoI), Vitosha Research was commissioned to survey attitudes of ministry officials towards corrupt practices and strategies to combat corruption. The 2005 survey was the last in a series of three studies which aimed to track the impact of the anti-

corruption measures introduced by the twinning project. The results of the VR studies were incorporated in the MoI anti-corruption policies developed by in the framework of the project.

3. Corruption in the Judiciary

The aim of the survey carried out by Vitosha Research was to study the corruption practices among legal practitioners. A quantitative survey was conducted among 250 attorneys in

regional centers. The main topics of the analysis included:

- The share of the cases in which informal payments are offered and received;
- The intensity of the corruption pressure directed towards lawyers from clients and magistrates;
- Forms and size of informal payments;
- Mechanisms for soliciting and obtaining informal payments;
- Factors for the spread of corruption in the judiciary;
- Effectiveness of anticorruption measures in the judiciary.

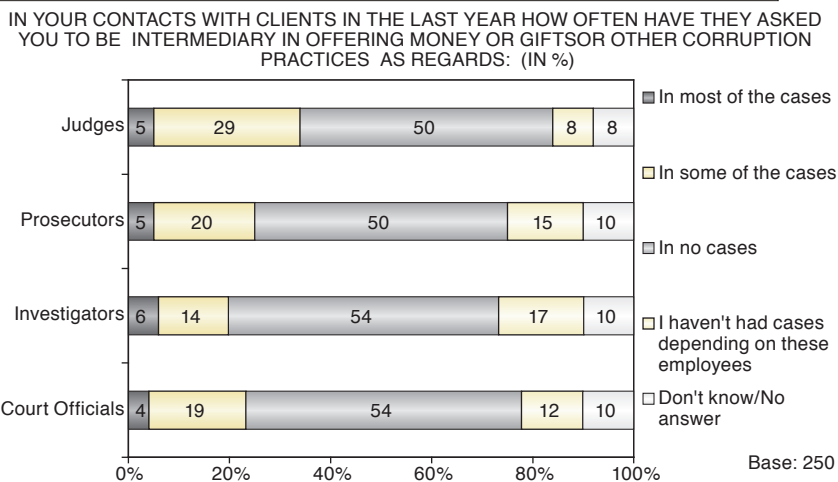
III. IT, Marketing and Media Surveys

1. Information Society in Bulgaria

In 2005 Vitosha Research studied the current state and trends in information society technologies and services in Bulgaria and developed a thorough description of the country development using following groups of indicators:

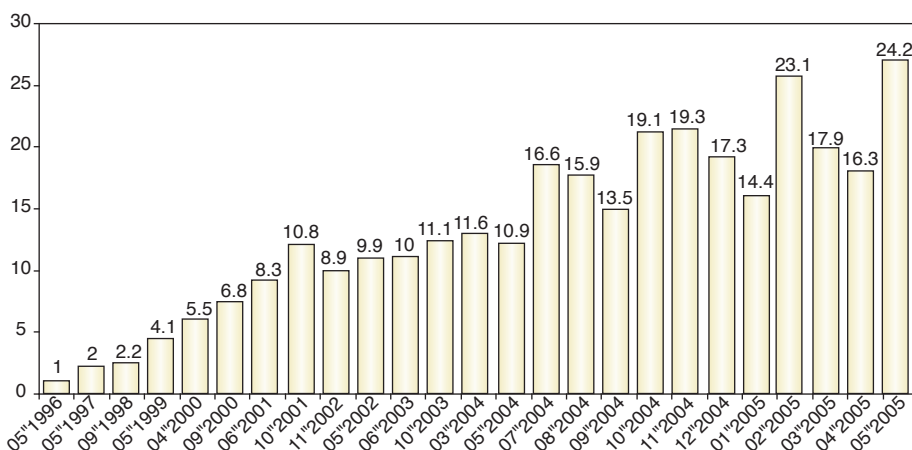
- ICT infrastructure and access;
- Skills and abilities;
- Stimulation for usage;
- E-Business;
- Public institutions available online;
- Obstacles to higher usage.

Chart 4. Pressure exerted on lawyers as intermediaries in corruption transactions



Source: Vitosha Research, Survey of Judiciary Corruption.

Chart 5. Internet penetration among Bulgarian population aged 18 and over (1996 – 2005)



Source: Vitosha Research, Omnibus surveys (1996-2005).

2. Marketing and Media Surveys

The marketing and media surveys carried out by Vitosha Research in 2005, covered mainly the following areas:

- Consumption of alcohol and spirits;
- The insurance market in Bulgaria
- The banking sector in Bulgaria;
- Common practices of antihypertensive (AH) therapy and factors influencing it
- Cost of labor and cost of living.

IV. Elite and Public Opinion Surveys

1. World Bank Client Survey

The survey provided the World Bank office in Bulgaria with information about the views of its clients and partners operations and strategies in the country. This would help the bank

to develop new strategies and programs in support of the country development, consistent with the changing conditions in Bulgaria and in the context of its accession and future membership in the European Union. The information from the survey aimed at formulating the new Country Partnership Strategy (CPS) priorities. The main categories of respondents in the survey included official from: the Parliament, the President's administration, the Office of the Prime Minister, Council of Ministers, ministries and government agencies, local administration, judiciary, private sector organizations, media representatives, academia/think-tanks/research institutes, donors.

The study was carried out through a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods: personal face-to-face interview with 300 respondents representing World Bank clients, beneficiaries and external stakeholders; in-depth interviews with "core client" representatives – 32 officials at key positions in state institutions at national

level and with considerable experience and involvement in projects and activities of the World Bank in Bulgaria. The survey also included 4 focus group discussions with representatives of state administration at the national level. Each group focused on a specific development area – health, education, economy and infrastructure.

2. Business and Trade Union Leaders Survey

The main goal of this elite survey commissioned by Princeton Survey Research Associates International (USA) is to explore some basic problems Bulgarian Top Managers are facing with regards to their main activity, as well as some interpretations from leading Trade Union leaders.

A quantitative research method will be used to accomplish the objectives of the study. The owners, managers and chief executive officers (CEOs) of large and medium companies will be the basic target group of respondents for the quantitative survey. Additionally a subset of trade union leaders will be interviewed.

3. Assessment of Judicial Training Needs in Kyrgyzstan

Vitosha Research was the coordinator of a project *Judicial training needs in Kyrgyzstan* in Republic of Kyrgyzstan, commissioned by the International Development Law Organization (IDLO), based in Rome. Face-to-face interviews with judges from different courts and regions in the country were conducted. The quantitative survey was carried out among 194 judges in Kyrgyzstan.

The study aimed at exploring the possibilities for improving the education of judges and streamlining court administration procedures. The information

collected on the training needs of the Kyrgyzstan judges and judicial staff was related to the areas of substance, procedure and court administration. A curriculum based on the conducted needs assessment was developed.

4. Studies of Public Attitudes

The Roma

VR assessed the changes in Roma population behavior in the last months of 2005 and the main factors influencing these changes. The design of the study included a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods. Quantitative survey included personal structured interviews with representatives of the Roma community and other ethnic groups (Bulgarians and Turks mainly), living in the neighborhoods close to Roma hamlets areas.

The qualitative survey supplemented the analysis, provided more detailed explanation, and identified assessments and attitudes which could not be obtained with the analysis of the quantitative data only. The following main conclusions were made in the report:

- National television networks and informal information channels have a substantial role in the life of the Roma.
- The changes in the way of life and the behavior of the Roma as a result of media rhetoric in the recent months are limited, despite the fact that they call forth tension and fear among a part of the Roma community.
- Latent inter-ethnic tensions exist; under certain conditions they can evolve into open conflicts. Orienting the media to positive discriminatory rhetoric with regard to the Roma

would contribute to a more tolerant presentation and interpretation of the existing problems and to a mitigation of potential conflicts.

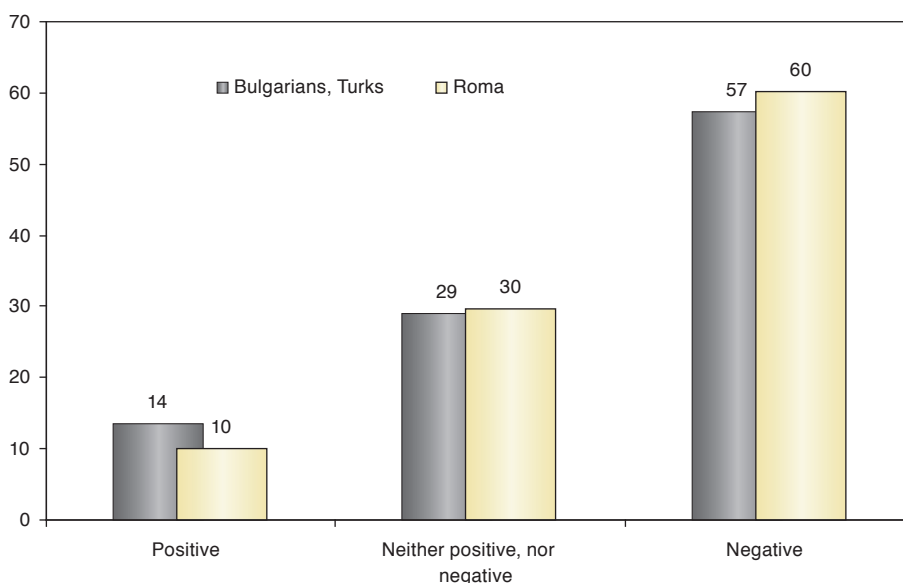
The Ada Tepe mining project

Vitosha Research conducted a public opinion survey among the population of Krumovgrad Municipality in Southern Bulgaria. The main goal of the survey was to find out how the local community feels about the gold mine construction project in the Ada Tepe area. The survey employed the method of the face-to-face interview and covered a total of 510 people living in the municipality center, as well as nearby villages located in the project impact area.

New metro stations

The primary goal of the survey was to examine how the local residents in the areas of the new metro stations under construction feel about the project, their awareness and current attitudes to the construction works. The survey was targeted at households living in the areas of the two new metro stations under construction in Sofia. One hundred face-to-face interviews were conducted with people living in the area of Sofia University and 102 interviews with households in the area of Vassil Levski National Stadium.

Chart 6. Type of information disseminated about Roma population in Bulgaria (April-September 2005)



Base: N= 500 Bulgarians and Turks; N=500 Roma

Source: Vitosha Research, *Public Opinion about Anti-Roma Attitudes in Bulgarian Media*

V. Publications and Events

The results of the surveys conducted in 2005 were summarized in over 20 analytical reports, some of which are:

1. **Entrepreneurship in Secondary Education in Bulgaria**, November 2005
2. **Attitude of the Bulgarian citizens to tax and social security practice – need for change**, December 2005
3. **Informal Networks in Bulgaria**, December 2005
4. **World Bank Client Survey**, July 2005
5. **Public Opinion about the Rhetoric Related to the Roma Community in Bulgaria**, November 2005
6. **Index of Ethnic Integration**, April 2005
7. **Index of Ethnic Integration**, November 2005
8. **The Rate of Corruption in Bulgaria**, February 2005
9. **The information society in Bulgaria**, March 2005
10. **Judicial Training Needs Assessment Survey – Kyrgyzstan**, May 2005

Vitosha Research representatives contributed to the following events in 2005:

1. Participation in Anti-corruption conference in Moldova, organized by Center for Combating Economic Crime and Corruption and Moldavian market Research. Presentation of Vitosha Research – *Anti-corruption survey in Moldova*, 7-9 December 2005
2. Presentation of survey results at a conference *Ethnic Integration and Tolerance* organized by Partners Bulgaria Foundation and USAID, 22 November 2005
3. Presentation of Vitosha Research survey results at a workshop for *Media Rhetoric and Roma Community in Bulgaria* carried out by Partners Bulgaria Foundation with the support of the U. S. Agency for International Development (USAID), 30 November 2005
4. Participation in International Colloquium, *The Art of Stealing – Corruption in Europe and Latin America* organized by the Goethe-Institut São Paulo and University of Campinas, Brazil, 16-18 November 2005
5. Round table *Entrepreneurship in Secondary Education in Bulgaria*, organized by Vitosha Research, 4 November 2005
6. Videoconference on *Corruption Monitoring and Assessment Techniques*, organized by Center for the Study of Democracy and Sofia Distance Learning Center, 21 September 2005
7. Index of Hidden Economy: Press Conference for the Results from the “Hidden Economy” Monitoring among the Population, organized by Center for the Study of Democracy, 28-29 October 2005
8. *Corruption Monitoring Workshop*, organized by Center for the Study of Democracy and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), 17-18 June 2005
9. Presentation *Monitoring and Measuring Levels of Corruption in Bulgaria and South East Europe* at IV Global

Forum on Fighting Corruption,
Brazil, 7-10 June 2005

10. Presentation of results of CMS at seventh Anti-Corruption Policy Forum of *Coalition 2000*, 22 February 2005
11. *Crime Trends in Bulgaria: Police Statistics and Victimization Surveys*, Center for the Study of Democracy, 26 January 2005
12. *Public Forum "Education and Anticorruption"*, organized by *Coalition 2000*, 18 January 2005.