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Bi-weekly Newsletter



## >> Production Underway for USAID Public Awareness Campaign

The public relations/advertising firm Membrand is producing a series of TV, radio, print and internet ads as part of a campaign to raise public awareness about the 17 years of USAID in Bulgaria. The TV ads will air on BTV, Nova TV and GTV starting on September 10. Here, photos show the production team at work. ❖



## >> Sofia Regional Court Launches Verbatim Recording with USAID Support

Following the snapping of flashbulbs and peppering of press questions, on August 2 the Sofia Regional Court became the latest and largest Bulgarian court to launch a live hearing using Verbatim Audio Recording equipment provided by the USAID Judicial Strengthening Initiative (JSI). Sofia Regional is installing Verbatim equipment in fifteen courtrooms this summer and fall, with four courtrooms already equipped. A Verbatim-equipped courtroom will soon host a high profile money laundering case, putting to further test Verbatim's abilities to accurately and efficiently maintain a complete digital record of each party's testimony. Court secretaries and magistrates are pleased with the JSI support, with judges queuing on a waiting list for the newly equipped courtrooms.

Verbatim equipment ensures a more accurate transcript of court hearings through its precise digital record, and increases transparency and accountability in trial proceedings. The JSI has provided 84 sets of Verbatim Audio Recording equipment as well as training to judges and

staff in 32 courts across Bulgaria. USAID began the program in 2004 with Verbatim installation in two courtrooms and a study conducted by the Union of Bulgarian Jurists. It then expanded to eight pilot courtrooms. Following the continuing positive reports from the chairpersons of these courts, the JSI expanded the program to include all 32 USAID Model Courts and Courts in Partnership. ❖



*IT Specialist Nikolay Dimitrov monitors Verbatim Audio Recording equipment before its launch in a live hearing at Sofia Regional Court on August 2.  
Photo: Dnevnik*