

Broadcast Training Center ProMedia

Sustainable Advocacy and Public Support for Reform through Media

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Summary of Outputs and Activities

The Bulgarian Broadcast Training Center ProMedia Foundation (BTC ProMedia) implemented the four-year USAID-funded project “Sustainable Advocacy and Public Support for Reform through Media” to supports the successful conclusion of the transition processes of Bulgaria by building a sustainable model for advocacy and public support for continued reform through the independent media.

BTC ProMedia Foundation is the successor of the IREX-Sofia Foundation, founded in 1998 by IREX – Washington to implement the USAID Professional Media Program.

The focus of the program has been to provide media support for rule of law reform, fighting corruption, decentralization of government, resolving ethnic tensions and helping vulnerable groups. A major highlight of the project has been the production of the weekly investigative anti-corruption TV program “Na Chisto”, viewed by over 2 million Bulgarians on national broadcast Television.

At the end of the period the ProMedia Broadcast Training Center has become a self-sustainable Bulgarian entity, able to continue its mission after the end of USG assistance.

Major Outputs:

Media advocacy actively supports reform in key areas of Bulgarian society;

Over 250 cases of corruption investigated and exposed on Television through the weekly investigative journalism program “Na Chisto”;

Independent Media generate **public support and pressure for the Rule of Law**;

Independent media actively involved in **fighting corruption**;

Media investigate and **expose organized crime and links with international terrorism**;

Local and national media generate **support for Decentralization of Government**;

Independent media support Parliamentary reform;

National and local **media, especially in regions with ethnically mixed populations help resolve ethnic tensions**

Vulnerable groups have increased access to the media;

Rural communities better served by the local media;

Major Activities:

The program included two closely related components: **training the media professionals needed to conduct active advocacy for reforms, and involving independent media in advocacy campaigns in favor of reform in key areas.**

The training component of the program helped increase the effectiveness of the advocacy campaigns carried out by the media.

Professional training

The ProMedia Broadcast Training Center has carried out professional training in the following areas:

- Television and Radio news reporting in priority journalism “beats”;
- Print journalism training in key areas;
- Covering Rule Of Law, crime and the courts
- Investigative reporting;
- Exposing corruption;
- Covering local government;
- Reporting on the local budget;
- Business News reporting;
- Reporting on ethnic diversities;
- Documentary production;

Media Advocacy and Support for independent production of high-quality journalism products in key areas of public interest

- Production of the weekly anti-corruption investigative program “Na Chisto”
- Investigating corruption;
- Rule of Law;
- Advocacy campaigns in fighting terrorism and organized crime;
- Improving inter-ethnic and inter-cultural relations;
- Production of the “Faces of Bulgaria” TV documentaries on ethnic diversity and integration;
- Advocacy campaigns in support of social reforms;
- Advocacy campaigns in support of the devolution of powers to the local levels of government;

BTC ProMedia Background

The BTC ProMedia Foundation is the successor of the IREX-Sofia Foundation, founded in 1998 by IREX – Washington to implement the USAID Professional Media Program. The major achievements of the initial program include helping **reform media legislation, increase the**

professionalism of media outlets and build the professional associations of the independent media;

- In 1998, helped establish the Association of Bulgarian Broadcasters, the most powerful and professionally developed media association in South Eastern Europe;
- In 1999, helped establish the Group for European Media Legislation in Bulgaria, predecessor of the Bulgarian Media Coalition, an influential citizen-professional coalition of non-government organizations, which has helped democratize the media and improve the media legislation in the country;
- Investigative Journalism program: launched after September 11, ***providing Bulgarian citizens with accurate and objective information about the fight against terrorism;***
- ***The Television Training Department*** was established in August 1999 as ***the only TV training facility*** in Bulgaria. It was instrumental in providing support for the launch and professional development of such key broadcast media outlets like:
 - bTV, the first independent broadcast Television station with national coverage in Bulgaria,
 - UTV – Cable Bulgaria, the first independent cable Television station with national coverage,
 - Evropa TV and SKAT TV, the largest independent news national cable networks;
 - TV Roma, the only Roma broadcaster in Bulgaria
 - InfoRadio, the first news-oriented independent National Radio Network;
 - Dozens and dozens of local Television and Radio stations across the country.;
- ***In 1999 – 2004 ProMedia has become a trademark for professional Television training*** in Bulgaria, bringing the highest international standards in news journalism to replace the former tradition of state broadcasting;

Major BTC/ProMedia Achievements

- **BTC/ProMedia Produces First Regular Syndicated Television Anti-Corruption Investigative Program “Na Chisto”.** The program, aired weekly by a network of nine Television stations across Bulgaria, including Nova TV, one of the three stations with national broadcast license, is the only Bulgarian Television program focused on corruption and based on investigative journalism. The program exposes corruption at different levels of government and helps create public support for the policy changes needed fight corruption;
- **BTC/ProMedia Helps Create Media Support for Fiscal Decentralization.** Working closely with the National Association of Municipalities in Bulgaria, BTC/ProMedia trained reporters across Bulgaria to better understand and cover the issues of local government and fiscal decentralization;
- **BTC/ProMedia Increases Media Professionalism in Covering Rule of Law.** Through a series of training seminars across Bulgaria BTC/ProMedia has helped increase the level of professionalism of beat reporters covering Rule of Law. The specialized training courses were held by BTC/ProMedia investigative journalism trainers, magistrates and law enforcement experts in cooperation with the local courts, prosecutor’s offices and police departments. As a result, beat reporters form the key

national and local publications have started covering rule of law issues in a more professional manner.

- **BTC/ProMedia Helps Improve Media Communications Skills of the Judiciary.** Working jointly with the USAID funded Judicial Development Initiative BTC ProMedia trained the spokespersons of the Regional courts and their PR offices, helping build better relations with the media and thus enhancing a better understanding and a stronger public support for the work of the judiciary.
- **The Independent, Self-Sustainable BTC ProMedia Foundation Takes Up the Implementation of the Professional Media Program in Bulgaria as USAID Ends Thirteen Successful Years of Media Development.** After 13 years of assistance to the media sector by USAID initially through IREX and later through BTC ProMedia, the Bulgarian media sector has made significant progress towards international and European standards. BTC ProMedia will carry on the work of IREX by providing professional training and support for the further development of independent media in Bulgaria.

2. BTC ProMedia activities by the USAID Strategic Objective Results Framework

BTC ProMedia activities fall under

IR 4.2.4 “Sustainable Advocacy and Public Support for Reform through Media” and include

IR 4.2.4.1 - Increased Professionalism in Media Advocacy for Reform and

IR 4.2.4.2 - Advocacy for Reform in Key Areas through the Media

The two components of the program are inter-related in order to ensure its increased effectiveness. The ProMedia Broadcast Training Center is helping create the media expertise needed to cover the key aspects of reform in the country and is at the same time involving the Bulgarian media in advocacy campaigns in favor of reforms in these areas.

IR 4.2.4.1 Increased Media Professionalism (Training)

In October 2004 – September 2007 the ProMedia Broadcast Training Center carried out training events for journalists from national, regional and local print and broadcast media outlets covering key areas of reforms:

Covering Rule of Law and Fighting Corruption;

Local Government, Fiscal Decentralization and Economic Reform

Reporting on Ethnic and Vulnerable Group Issues

4.1.1 Training Beat Reporters in Key Areas

In 2005-2007 the ProMedia Broadcast Training Center will continue building the professionalism of the specialized pools of beat reporters it has helped develop under the preceding workplans. These pools include well-trained journalists from national, regional and local print and broadcast media outlets covering the key areas of reforms supported by USAID in the country – rule of law, fighting corruption, fiscal decentralization, social, political and business reform. The training component of the program will help increase the effectiveness of the advocacy campaigns carried out by the media and will further strengthen the role of independent media as active agents for change in Bulgaria.

4.1.1 - Increased Media Professionalism in Covering Rule of Law and Fighting Corruption

In the first three years of the implementation of the project the ProMedia Broadcast Training Center has provided regular professional training services to beat and investigative reporters from the independent Bulgarian print and broadcast news outlets. BTC has also helped raise the professionalism of journalists investigating corruption. In order to achieve its goal of establishing the media professionalism needed to cover rule of law and expose corruption, the ProMedia Broadcast Training Center has implemented the following activities:

- A regular program of training courses has been established and made available to the Bulgarian media throughout the year;
- The Broadcast Training Center has provided provide on-going legal and journalism consultations to beat reporters covering Rule of Law;
- BTC ProMedia has coordinated its activities with all other USAID-funded ROL programs;
- Journalism trainers have worked side by side with rule of law professionals;
- Special attention has been given to the reforms undertaken with USAID support in the judiciary system;
- Training has been provided both on the national and on the local and regional levels, with a specific focus on the ethnically mixed and poor areas;
- BTC ProMedia continued training investigative reporters from independent media to better expose corruption;
- In order to enhance the investigative skills of anti-corruption reporters, BTC has provided training in business reporting, legal coverage, and investigative journalism;
- Trainings have been carried out jointly with the USAID anti-corruption program;
- BTC ProMedia also produced and distributed among journalists two new training tools - the Handbook on the new Criminal Procedure Code and the Handbook on the Civic Procedure. The two handbooks were developed by top professionals in the respective fields – Judge Theodora Stambolova from the Sofia Court of Appeal and Judge Krassimir Vlahov from Sofia City Court, professor at the National Institute of Justice. The Criminal Procedure Code handbook was launched on the day the new legislation became effective, which made the event very timely and well accepted by the professional community.

Increased Media Professionalism in Covering Local Government, Fiscal Decentralization and Economic Reform

In order to address media advocacy efforts to support the decentralization of government and economic reform, the ProMedia Broadcast Training Center has provided training and technical support to reporters covering these issues at national and local independent media outlets. The reason to work simultaneously in these areas was dictated by the fact that most media outlets, especially so on the local level, combine these beats and use the same reporters to cover them. Providing professional training to these reporters has helped improve the coverage of both local government and of business reporting. Training for local print and broadcast media has been topical and focused on the reform issues in local government and the economy. In order to achieve this goal, the ProMedia Broadcast Training Center has implemented the following activities:

- A regular program of training courses for the beat reporters covering these issues has been established and delivered;
- Training has been carried out by IREX/ProMedia journalism trainers with assistance from local government NGO activists, local government representatives, experts from the USAID-funded LGI program, the Foundation for Local Government Reform, and the National Association of Municipalities in Bulgaria;
- In order to increase the quality of beat reporting in this area, IREX/ProMedia has also provide professional training to business reporters in Bulgarian independent media outlets;
- The ProMedia Broadcast Training Center has trained broadcast and print reporters in covering issues like local budgets and fiscal decentralization;
- Areas of training also included business reporting, banking and capital markets, financial crimes, privatization, pension reform, health reform, health financing, SMEs, corporate governance, access to credit, and the energy sector;
- The ProMedia Broadcast Training Center professional journalism trainers have conduct the training sessions with the involvement of business reporting experts. IREX/ProMedia has coordinated its activities with the USAID-funded programs in these areas.

4.1.3 Increased Media Professionalism in Reporting on Ethnic and Vulnerable Group Issues

In order to improve media professionalism and build advocacy for inter-ethnic issues through the media, ProMedia BTC has provided further targeted support to media in ethnic areas and to reporters covering ethnic issues in mainstream local, regional, and national media. Special attention has been given to support for the strengthening of local media outlets in ethnically mixed areas and on improving the coverage of ethnic and social issues in the mainstream media outlets with national and regional coverage. In order to achieve these goals the ProMedia Broadcast Training Center has implemented the following activities:

- A regular program of training courses was established for ethnic and social beat reporters at media outlets across Bulgaria;
- The ProMedia Broadcast Training Center has provided additional consultations to the beat reporters working in the respective areas at their request outside the training courses;

- Support has been provided through training and the use of the local and regional networks of ABBRO and BMC.
- The ProMedia Broadcast Training Center has provided professional training in ethnic issues and conflict resolution reporting;
- The BTC has trained ethnic group leaders in media presentation skills;
- The ProMedia Broadcast Training Center has served as the production site for the broadcast components of inter-ethnic advocacy campaigns;
- Training has been carried out by the ProMedia Broadcast Training Center journalism trainers with the involvement of experts from organizations active in resolving ethnic issues and those working with the vulnerable groups;
- The ProMedia Broadcast Training Center has coordinated its activities closely with USAID and the USAID-funded partners in these areas.

The training component of the program aimed at increasing the quality and scope of the specialized coverage provided by the Bulgarian media in those areas and lays the ground for improved effectiveness of advocacy campaigns through the media carried out in the related areas.

IR 4.2.4.2 Media Advocacy for Reform

4.2.1. Media Advocacy

Rule of Law, Judicial Reform, Anti-Corruption, Fighting Organized Crime

Production of the weekly anti-corruption TV program “Na Chisto”:

Since its launch in November 2003, over 2 million Bulgarian TV viewers have watched the only regular investigative anti-corruption Television program aired in Bulgaria, „Na Chisto”. The program is produced by the Broadcast Training Center ProMedia Foundation and is shown every Sunday on Nova TV, one of the three broadcast Television stations with national coverage in Bulgaria. Over 250 programs have been produced and aired since the start of the project, investigating corruption and abuse of power on every level of government on national, regional and local level. The first two seasons of the show were broadcast by twelve national, regional and local cable TV stations, providing a wide national spread of its coverage. Since 2005 the show has been shown exclusively by Nova TV as its major weekly investigative reporting program and its audience share has grown rapidly. Currently the show enjoys 22-25% market share of the national Television audience and is watched by over 400,000 viewers on a regular basis. The program focuses on investigation of corruption and abuse of power and thus helps build strong public support

for increased transparency and accountability of public institutions. A number of programs have prompted public institutions to take action against corrupt officials. In addition to that, several programs have served as the background for parliamentary question time inquiries; cases exposed in the program have been reviewed by the anti-corruption committee of Parliament and by city councils across Bulgaria. Over the last year of the project besides corruption, special attention was given to three priority areas, which affect seriously the social, political and economic development of Bulgaria – corruption at the highest political level, abuse of EU funds and corruption in political party financing.

High Level Corruption

Corruption at the highest political and government level is especially dangerous for the development of the country, since it erodes the public administration's ability to impose rule of law, safeguard public interest and serve as an impartial regulator of opposing business interest. High level corruption also has a detrimental effect on the public's trust in government and on all efforts to impose rule of law, fight organized crime and corruption at lower levels. „Na Chisto” has monitored closely the work of the Bulgarian Parliament, the government and its ministers and agencies and the structures of the judiciary and has investigate carefully all cases in which high-ranking officials seemed to be acting in breach of their responsibilities as public figures. At the same time, „Na Chisto” has continued to apply the highest professional standards in investigating corruption and has not allowed to be dragged into the false corruption allegations, which are often being used as „black PR” tools to deal with political opponents or with the competition and are readily echoed without due investigation by some sensation-driven media outlets. In order to achieve good results in investigating high level corruption, the „Na Chisto” editorial team has continued developing its source-base within the political establishment and the law enforcement community. Close contact have been maintained also with anti-corruption NGO's and activist groups as well as a wider range of investigative journalists, who have been attracted as contributors and free-lance reporters for the program.

Abuse of Public Procurement Related to EU funds

With its recent EU membership, Bulgaria has started to receive increasing amounts of EU funds aimed at the economic and social development of the country. Over the last several years the economy of Bulgaria has been growing at a stable rate and the state budget is able to support more and more government spending both in the economy and in the social sphere. At the same time, corruption and the only partially reformed judiciary remain the major criticism of the EU towards Bulgaria. The lack of transparency in managing the increasing public funds, including funds coming from the EU and corruption at the highest political levels have resulted in what is seen as a paradox, where a stronger budget and the increased EU money might become the source of increased corruption. In order to fight this phenomenon, „Na Chisto” has focused on investigating the transparent management of public funds with special attention to EU funds. „Na Chisto” editorial team has developed sources in the relevant public institutions and in the controlling and funding institutions of the Bulgarian government and the EU. Close contacts have been maintained with civic and business organizations monitoring the management of public and EU funds as well.

Political Party Financing

In many democracies, young and established alike, political party financing is a major gateway through which corruption enters the domain of political life. Bulgaria is no exception to this rule. Bulgarian election law and the lack of transparency in political party financing result in the creation of a strong interdependency between the political elite and corporate interests, including those linked to organized crime. These links are even more visible on local level, where local business groups have managed to establish convenient majorities in city councils and to elect cooperative mayors, who pay back for the support with lucrative property and procurement deals. As in 2007 local elections were held in Bulgaria, „Na Chisto” has investigated closely how candidates and parties are being financed and has exposed cases of corruption, buying of votes and other election irregularities. „Na Chisto” has worked closely with local government and elections activist organizations and watchdogs, as well as with local reporters and media outlets on the exposure of political party financing.

Legal Support

As an investigative journalism program dealing with corruption, each episode of „Na Chisto” provokes angry reactions on behalf of the concerned individuals and institutions both on the „giving” and on the „taking” side of the corruption process. With increased focus on high-level corruption, the pressure on investigative journalists has risen as well.. In order to avoid mistakes and unsubstantiated claims of involvement in corruption, a trained media lawyer works alongside the investigative reporters of „Na Chisto”. All scripts are subject to legal proofreading and all reasonable measures are taken to prevent libel and defamation charges against the journalists. Although dozens of threats have been addressed at the reporters and the producers of the program, only in one case such charges have been brought, by a state prosecutor who was accused of corruption by a whistleblower at the investigator’s office. The case brought against the anchor and the reporter of the episode is in its initial phase and has good chances to be won by the journalists. BTC ProMedia is providing full legal support to the two journalists. The number of similar cases is expected to grow, as the investigative reporters dig deeper and deeper into corruption and abuse of power.

Prominent „Na Chisto” success stories:

- Na Chisto wins the prestigious annual "Press Freedom Award – Signal for Europa 2008", given by the largest European Journalism Association, Reporters Without Frontiers. The award is given for a series of investigative reports about the abuse of government funds for the treatment of patients with cancer. The official award ceremony took place in the Austrian Parliament on May 15, 2008.
- Na Chisto wins the annual Veronica Guerin award for an investigation about the police umbrella over the distribution of drugs in Sofia. The award is named after a famous Irish investigative reporter, Veronica Guerin, who was killed in 1996 for her work against the drug dealers in her country. It is given by the Regional Anti-Drug Council of Blagoevgrad.

- A special election series of Na Chisto investigates where does the money invested in the local elections come from and how it is being spent. The three episode series looks into the schemes for buying and abusing local government in Bulgaria;
- Na Chisto uncovers a witness testifying that a doctor from the Emergency Hospital in Sofia accepted a bribe to hospitalize a well known mafia member, trying to postpone and avoid arrest;
- Na Chisto uncovers a scheme for the abuse of EU agrarian subsidies;
- Honest cops re-installed after “Na Chisto” brings their case to the attention of the institutions and the national audience.
- The First Instance Court in Sofia ruled in favor of (former) Na Chisto presenter Boiko Stankushev and reporter Milena Dimitrova. The two are sued for libel and defamation by a city prosecutor, whose activities they had investigated. The program in question reveals disturbing facts about the activities of the prosecutor, who refused to bring charges against a car-thief despite all evidence. BTC ProMedia’s legal defense fund provided legal support and covered the legal representation costs of the two journalists;
- Na Chisto exposes a scheme for debt-for-property swap between two Bulgarian state owned companies, which brings a private firm a profit of 30 million Levs. Why do Bulgarian Railways and the National Electric Company choose a private in-between to settle their deals? The private company in question, Eurometal is owned by a Pernik-based businessman, who was recently alleged in looting 7.5 million EUR worth of SAPARD funding. He’s a big name in metal recycling, holds a small stake in the Pernik Steel Factory and owns two seaside resorts and is... one of the biggest contributors to the President’s re-election campaign;
- Using dramatic hidden camera footage of buying and selling drugs in broad daylight in downtown Sofia, Na Chisto shows how the police are turning a blind eye on heroine dealers in the Bulgarian capital;
- The program investigated how easy it is to discourage foreign investors from doing business in Bulgaria. Sadly, it doesn’t take too much: a little red tape, some notary and judicial misconduct, and some procedural loopholes and legal blunders.
- Why, despite the passed legislation, duty free shops still operate on Bulgaria’s EU borders? Na Chisto investigates how Bulgaria loses some BGN 680 million annually from illegal sales of duty free cigarettes in the country.
- Na Chisto investigates the motives behind the “green” campaign in Galabovo, in the heart of the Bulgarian power-generating complex of Maritza – Iztok. As it turns out, the mayor is using the ecological movement to put pressure on the Italian investors and make room for an aggressive newly rich Bulgarian energy tycoon;
- The prosecutors’ office in Silistra starts an investigation after Na Chisto uncovers a scheme for the abuse of an international donation. As it turns out, the milk farm donated to feed the kids from the local home for mentally challenged children is now privatized, the cows are gone and the milk for the home has ended;
- The President of the „Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarski” University in Varna was fired after the program exposed that he had received political support for illegal re-election in exchange of advanced degree diplomas issued to MP’s and members of the Government; The Varna prosecutor’s office launched an official investigation into the case and the program was used in bringing up charges against the University’s president;

- The director of Bulgarian Posts was fired after a „Na Chisto” program exposed his intentional breach of the Public procurement act in favor of a private security company;
- „Na Chisto” was instrumental in preventing the passage of a planned Amnesty law, under which pedophiles and pimps would have been released, but small time burglars would have served longer sentences;
- The police and the prosecution in Dulovo, a small town in North Eastern Bulgaria, interfered to stop the illegal jamming of the only local opposition Radio station before the parliamentary elections of 2005. The prosecution in Silistra is still investigating who installed the jamming device on the roof of the mayor’s office;
- The director of the Plovdiv prison was fired after the program exposed abuse of power and funds and the appalling living conditions at the facility;
- The prosecution brought charges against the president of the University of Veliko Tarnovo after the program exposed that he had been involved in establishing illegal University educational centers across Bulgaria through a network of private companies owned or controlled by himself;
- Human trafficking chain was broken down after Na Chisto exposed a scheme for illegal sales of Roma babies in Greece;
- The privatization of Bulgarian State Shipping Company was stopped after the program exposed bias in the process in favor of a private company owned by the former director of the state-owned enterprise. The Ministry of Transportation cancelled the procedure and developed new guidelines for the privatization of the company;

Major Stories investigated by “Na Chisto”

- ***Corruption in Sofia City Services.*** Incredibly low profit generated by the municipal firm operating Sofia’s parking lots. City councilors of different affiliations believe the real profits flow into political parties’ cashboxes or to selected protégées of the city administrators.
- ***Partisan protectionism in licensing bus and shuttle companies.*** The Union Ivkoni company accuses the Road Administration boss of soliciting a bribe. The company is co-owned by the son of the Ethnic Turkish Party MP Ramadan Atallay. Conflict of interest in holding a deputy-ministerial seat and ownership of a transportation firm.
- ***Mismanagement at the Burgas Airport.*** Firms of the ex-director’s entourage are renting vending space and are subcontracted for airport services. The former ticket center on a main trading street was sold by the ex-director in question cheaper than a tiny flat in an outlying district.
- ***Misappropriation of state-owned land by the City Council and Mayor’s Office in Balchik:*** 1 acre, part of a children’s summer camp in the village of Kranevo swapped for 1.5 acre of unregulated arable land outside the village. The land within the summer camp is at the beach and is a built-up property, whereas the replacement property is 2 kilometers off the coast line. A private entity is at the other end of this deal. The Regional Governor in Dobrich has suspended the deal and submitted it for review by the Regional Council.

In the same village, a bridge is being built, into and out of which, there are no roads. The illegal construction continues regardless of several bans by the controlling bodies. Construction is funded by the City Council in Balchik.

- **Children's summer camps serve as apport property in joint ventures, state title over the land is lost.** The former Minister of Education signed a protocol to that effect on the last day before the elections, stating the companies with which the joint-venture agreements should be signed. Will the newly-elected parliament and government attempt to gain back title of the state property?
- **The land underneath one of Sofia's landmarks – the Universiada Hall – was included in the capital of a company with 50% government and 50% private shares,** by the former minister of sport Vasil Ivanov - Luciano. Consequently, the property was repeatedly resold way below the market price. The deal was rushed through in the last remaining days of the former cabinet.
- **Abusing disability certificates.** People with certified disabilities are entitled to VAT-free import of vehicles, free parking, and other benefits. Certificates often end up in the hands of healthy people, who buy them either from the disabled they were issued to, or from the issuing bodies, Expert Labor Medical Commissions.
- **Irregularities at the Water supply facilities in Sofia.** 75% of shares in the Sofia Water Company are held by the international United Utilities and EBRD, the city of Sofia has 25%. For two years the Municipality of Sofia has been negotiating amendments to the concession with Sofiiska voda. Serious allegations of concession violations revealed recently.
- **Directors and high-ranking officers at the Plovdiv Customs involved in smuggling and VAT scams.** Meanwhile, their wives run successful businesses exploiting spouses' offices.
- **Tax Officers Charged with Corruption**Two officers at the Plovdiv Tax Directorate detained by the Economic Police, the Plovdiv District Office of the Prosecution charges them with receiving a 3,000 lev bribe during a tax inspection. Two senior employees of the Blagoevgrad tax directorate were also caught receiving bribes and consequently fired. They explained the money was tax advisors' fees.
- The Ministry of Agriculture fails to act on **data for abuse of flooding damages.** The ministry justifies failure to clean river beds with deficient funds, but in the meantime is planning massive spending to set up the future Disbursement Agency to handle accession funds in agriculture.
- **The Waste Management Crisis in Sofia.** Despite the numerous promises of former mayor Stephan Sofiyanski, a waste plant is still far from even being conceived. In want of an urgent solution of the crisis, the city's waste started being baled and stored. It turns out the citizens of Sofia are paying the rent of the storage sites, which were rushed into operation without assessing the potential impact on the environment.
- Sources claim off-the-record that a retired high-ranking serviceman and a prominent entrepreneur are involved in the waste baling scheme. According to the city's new land-use plan, the sites currently used for waste storage will be designated for the construction of business centers, hotels, sports facilities, etc.
- **The new airport in Sofia is about to be the first EU-funded infrastructure project to go down in flames.** Construction is going on for five years without any hint of a possible completion date. A collapsing ceiling, defective steering runway surface and

faulty marking paint are only part of the flaws. The initial deadline was the end of 2004. It is still unclear who will pay for correcting the faults – Bulgaria or the contractor STRABAG. It is also unexplained why a conflict of interest was allowed and continues to be tolerated: Dutch company NACO BV, entrusted with monitoring the construction, is also designing the terminal and adjacent steering runways. STRABAG was chosen among 4 international bidders.

- Apart from the airport, STRABAG is also having problems with the construction of the Vidin – Montana stretch of the European route E79. In April the road literally split open near Dimovo. Construction is beyond the deadline on the Hemus motorway too, at the Zherkovo – Botevgrad stretch. And the list may go on....
- Na Chisto reveals ***schemes for trafficking and sale of Bulgarian babies in Greece***. The gruesome business is flourishing in misery ridden Roma neighbourhoods. The plight of the gypsies is not the sole cause though. Traffickers imply they couldn't have succeeded without a few loopholes in the law, and some border checkpoint officers keeping a blind eye. Na Chisto uncovers the names of key players in trafficking, some already known to the police. A mother would get 500 to 5,000 leva for selling her baby. The cost of a house in some neighbourhoods of Burgas, Sliven, Stara Zagora, Karnobat. In some cases, the mothers haven't even signed the child adoption papers. In others they didn't know what they were signing. Some signed a piece of paper once, and then their signature was forged where needed.
The cost of a Bulgarian baby can go up to 30 thousand euro in Greece. Scores of pregnant women allegedly leave the country every year to give birth in Greek hospitals.
- The Interior Ministry and the National Service for Combating Organized Crime claim ***Bulgarian Red Cross*** chair Hristo Grigorov misappropriated a hefty donation of cancer drugs. He says he's being investigated on a political errand. According to a 2004 audit, Hristo Grigorov and his wife run two companies, one of which trades in pharmaceuticals, medical and orthopedic goods.
1000 packs of a cancer treatment drug worth over 356 thousand leva were kept in Mr. Grigorov's privately rented storage space at the Sofia Pharmaceutical Board. The drug is only being imported on government demand and is not available in pharmacies. In 2002 the batch was processed as a donation to the Ministry of Health, and then Grigorov sold them to Commercial League. The health ministry never received the donation, but bought the drug from Commercial League. An investigation is in process.
- ***Squandering the waste disposal budget in Varna***, the city dump serves well as a means of enrichment. Over a few years, the fee the city is paying for using the dumpsite at the village of Vuglen goes up from 700,000 to 2 million. The city administration could have easily profited by the well-run business, but the revenue goes to selected private firms instead.
Na Chisto tries to answer: What are the earnings and who gets the best of the waste management taxes? Why is VAT paid for a service, which is originally exempt, and where does the money go?
- For the first time the ***National Audit Office is auditing the biggest municipalities in Bulgaria***. Sofia is among the inspected administrations. The Sofiyski Imoti municipal firm is emblematic of looting city funds. Originally set up to manage municipal real estates, the company fails to perform to its specification.

In mere 5 years between 1998 and 2004, over 900 realties were privatized: stores, offices, residential buildings, regulated and unregulated land. Several schemes exist for looting the company's assets, municipal councilors claim.

- ***A nursery school is closed, to make room for a medical clinic, run by incumbent health minister Radoslav Gaydarsky.***

A donation worth 5 million levs dumped and unusable in the idle hospital.

Vidin's Harbour North groundlessly held by a private firm.

State authorities turn a blind eye to what's happening in Vidin.

- Under Bulgarian Criminal Code the creation and distribution of pornography is a felony. Regardless, pornographic material is easy to get virtually everywhere. ***The Ministry of Culture issues copyright certificates for pornographic movies.*** How can an illegal product get licensed?!

Art. 159 of the Criminal Code qualifies as a felony the creation, display, exhibition, broadcasting, supply, sale, rental or other distribution of pornographic content.

- ***Dealing with car theft:*** Na Chisto looks into a case of car theft. The car owner saw the thief, parts of the vehicle were found, among other stolen items, in the perpetrator's mother's flat. Still the charges were dismissed, even though evidence was gathered using special surveillance. With the case ruled in the defendant's favor, it turned out the car owner was to blame for losing the court's time.

- While the Ministry of Internal Affairs is resolute to eradicate corruption within the force, policemen are moonlighting in the streets. ***Policemen get cut in by prostitutes and counterfeit invoice dealers,*** and receive kickbacks from offending drivers. Hidden camera footage exposes traffic policemen soliciting bribes from offenders. The cost of getting caught and forgiven. A reality show about the dirty work on the road. Police official talks to Na Chisto host Boyko Stankushev about investigating alleged corruption among law-keepers.

- Why is the Chief Architect's position of such importance to Sofia? Who's to blame for the chaotic construction all over town? Can proper urban planning make Sofia a normal European city? The people of Sofia won't think twice to point out ***the Architecture and Urban Planning Directorate as one of the most corruption-ridden municipal offices.*** By the end of January a mayor-appointed committee was to elect a new Chief Architect.

- ***Mass fraud involving mass privatization shares in the town of Perushtitsa.*** When holders of mass privatization bonds decided to sell their shares, they were surprised to find out they had already sold them without knowing. It turned out that an enterprising fellow-citizen used forged power-of-attorney to get hold of the people's depository vouchers. The power-of-attorneys were issued by the town's mayor.

- Were there illegal kidney transplantations at the St. Ekaterina Hospital? ***Is Sofia a link in international organ trafficking?*** Is organ trading going on in Bulgaria? All those questions were raised when the newly appointed Chairman of the board of the St. Ekaterina Hospital took charge. Dr. Krassimir Gigov exposed over 20 transplantations on Israeli patients. The hospital made 15 thousand Euro per transplantation, but was breaking the law by failing to list the operations with the National Transplantation Agency and to verify donor and recipient kinship.

Meanwhile, a website offers kidneys for sale.

- ***Corruption at the Bulgarian State Shipping Company***, The “Navigation Maritime Bulgare” company’s ships are chartered through brokering companies. Nothing unusual, but in the NMB case the brokers are companies owned by people related to the NMB (former senior managers, their relatives, etc.). Besides, the NMB itself has its own daughter company – Balkan and Black Sea Shipping, with offices in London, Hamburg and other European strategic ports. This daughter company is set up to act as a brokering structure for the mother-company. Therefore the major question is why the state owned NMB still prefers to charter through other small private brokers.
- A children’s camp in Ribaritzha sold for 9 thousand levs; a recreation estate at the coast traded at the price of a medium sized apartment. Set up to pursue children’s recreation and tourism, ***the GALATEA municipal firm turns into an estate broker selling out its property at bargain prices***. The Sofia Municipality conveniently keeps a blind eye.
- ***In breach of the Concessions Act, 354 acres near Nessebar given to an offshore entity on a 35-year concession with a potential 15-year extension***. The concession terrain includes land returned to owners and heirs, municipal property and private lots. Owners rally to protest and file lawsuits. By granting the concession though, the Cabinet takes away what was restored to the original owners. The concession – granted by the Ministry of Environment and Regional Development and the former Council of Ministers – is limited to operating a sand quarry. The concession contract states the terrain can be used to operate an amusement park, once the quarry is exhausted. The deprived landowners claim the whole point of the concession is to give away land to build on.
- ***Donations to cover liver transplantations of Bulgarian children in Germany mysteriously missing***. The fight to save the children’s lives becomes a legal battle. Bank transfers were mishandled by the “German Health” company serving as an intermediary to the Hamburg-Eppendorf University Clinic, where the transplantations were to be carried out. The company, entrusted with attracting affluent foreign patients, was authorized by the clinic to receive the funds raised for the Bulgarian children’s life-saving operations.

The company provided the office of the prosecution with documents stating that the money was already spent on operations. Some of the children however have not yet been transplanted. In the process of tracking down the missing money, the children are fighting for their lives and the Eppendorf clinic refuses to perform the transplantations.

Meanwhile the German Prosecutor’s Office has dropped the bank fraud charges against the German Health company. According to the prosecution, the company legitimately spent the money. The donations though never reached the hospital’s accounts.
- The ***Sofia Municipal Council votes in favor of selling the city’s shares in 34 public companies***. The city intends to sell all its property by the end of this municipal council’s term. Much of the city-owned shares in joint companies are realties: buildings or land. It is yet to be decided how the privatization will take shape and how the bids will be held.
- Despite the stop work order of the Ministry of Culture, construction ***work for a new Sofia hotel continues on top of the newly found Roman forum***. Na Chisto

investigates whether the owners of the site are paying bribes to city officials for the continuation of the construction. As a result of the program and the publications in other media, the archaeological site was preserved and the construction plans were altered accordingly;

- **Human tissue transplantation** comes under scrutiny as Na Chisto uncovers a scheme for semi-legal payments to doctors, who explant tissue from dead patients and offer it to a Sofia-based tissue bank; In the first series Na Chisto uncovers that doctors are on the payroll of the tissue bank;

As the investigation into the tissue transplantation scheme develops, Na Chisto finds out that doctors are involved in illegal activities as they fail to notify relatives of the deceased until they have already extracted the tissues from the body. In other cases doctors offer the relatives of the deceased a small “compensation” for their consent to tissue explantation. A payment of 500-700 BGN secures them with tissue worth tens of thousands of dollars.

- **Off-shore companies, owned by MRF activists become the majority owners of huge forest areas in the Rhodopes.** City councils in the area north of Gotze Delchev, all controlled by MRF, enter into dubious joint ventures with an off-shore company for the control and exploitation of huge forest areas. Wooden material is being cut down and exported besides the ban of the regional governor.

After an investigation into the motives and potential consequences of newly proposed legislation, „**Na Chisto**” was instrumental in preventing the passage of a **planned Amnesty law**, under which recently arrested pedophiles and pimps would have been released, but small time burglars with older sentences would have served longer;

- **Na Chisto uncovers abuses in a state-run methadone program.** Under the program state clinics provide free methadone as a replacement of heroine to drug addicts. As the amounts of methadone are restricted, Na Chisto uncovers that a clinic’s director is taking kickbacks from drug addicts’ relatives to include their children in the program;

Not all promises for well-paid work in Europe should be trusted, as Na Chisto uncovers, following a tip from a viewer. The investigation speeds up a police investigation into the case;

- **Human trafficking chain was broken** down after Na Chisto exposed a scheme for illegal sales of Roma babies in Greece;
- Two members of the staff at the pathology department of a major Plovdiv hospital run their **private undertaker agency** right out of the city owned morgue. For a small monthly payback the clinic’s director turns a blind eye as relatives of all deceased patients are directed to use the services of his employees;
- **Genetically Modified Food** should be marked as such, at least under the law. The Na Chisto investigation finds out that few tests are ever run and that for producers and importers alike it’s much easier just to buy the needed certificate without submitting the food to GMO tests.
- **Can you heal heroin addicts with morphine?** A private clinic, situated in the premises of the top rated Military Medical Academy claims it can. As a result, drug addicts are now addicted to the treatment of the clinic. The Na Chisto investigation leads to the firing of the medical professor involved and to the end of the practice;

- ***The mentally retarded used as scapegoats in criminal investigations.*** In two separate cases, one in Haskovo and one in Pleven, the police are quick to come up with the arrest of the alleged child abusers and murderers. Is it a coincidence, that both turn out to be the well know local retarded? As it turns out, police violence was used in Haskovo to extract confessions form an innocent man, who was announced guilty until the true murderer of the child was found...
- ***Shkorpilovtzi***, one of the few sea-side villages on the Bulgarian Black sea coast to avoid mass construction, is about to turn into a huge construction site. Despite the attempts of the municipality's head architect, the 15-mile long unique sand dunes by the sea have been declared arable land and then sold to a developer for the construction of a hotel complex for 30,000 tourists. The Chief architect (who was fired for his participation in the program) suggests ***bribed officials at the Ministry of agriculture and corrupt city officials in the municipal center Biala*** are to blame.
- ***Na Chisto anchor Daniela Trencheva visits Libya*** to talk to Dr. Zdravko Georgiev about some of the unknown reasons why the Bulgarian medics are still in prison. He gives first-hand evidence of the incompetence and carelessness of the Bulgarian authorities in the early years of the problem and tells striking stories about the kind of abuse and torture used by the Libyan prison guards against himself and the nurses.
- ***How much does it cost to avoid tax investigation?*** In the case of the Plovdiv tax officials, caught in the process of negotiating a bribe, it's 30% of the alleged amount of hidden taxes;
- Na Chisto uncovers a corruption scheme with ***international adoptions***. The head of the respective department at the Ministry of Justice takes arbitrary decisions which children should be included for international adoption and often decides who the adopting families will be. Na Chisto finds out that the lady in question has traveled extensively "on tourism" to the countries of the potential adopting families. ***Six months after the program, the newly appointed Minister of Justice made the allegations of corruption official and fired the official.***
- Through a highly elaborated scheme of legal tricks, extortion and corruption, a Sofia based arms trader and owner of a football club becomes the ***sole owner of all the garbage business of Plovdiv***. Na Chisto uncovers the schemes and published the information for the first time. The program also uncovers a scheme, in which the businessman in question and the city mayor try to defraud the EU to fund a private garbage recycling plant. The businessman involved tried in vain to prevent the airing of the program]
- ***When corruption is involved***, even the money for cancer treatment might end up in private pockets. As Na Chisto shows, officials at the Ministry of Health have "negotiated" for the state to buy cancer treatment drugs well above market prices (the drugs are then provided for free to cancer patients);
- ***Radical Islam enters Bulgaria:*** Na Chisto investigates how a Bulgarian youth from the Rhodopes went to study to Jordan and came back a radical Islamist, involved in spreading banned extremist religious teachings.
- ***Despite an on-going investigation*** and previous scandals, for the illegal departments of the Veliko Tarnovo University it's business as usual. Na Chisto looks at the new ways to bypass the law and give away bachelor and advanced degrees at Bulgaria's second largest University;

- A fake doctor “heals” almost anything for a small fee, even on the phone. Na Chisto reporters, posing as patients, get him to talk on hidden camera about his practice. ***The reporter and producer cooperated with the police on the case and appeared as witnesses in court in the case, which was brought against the fake doctor after the program was aired.***
- ***A tragic accident in a 40-year old tram costs the death of a child.*** The city owned company, which operates the Sofia trams is fighting back having to pay the insurance to the parents. The incident provokes Na Chisto to investigate why is Sofia city transport in such a bad shape? Na Chisto investigates how the money, which might be used to upgrade the trams and busses is re-directed to private “route taxi” companies, all with the full political support of city officials;
- **Who controls the fuels sold at petrol stations in Bulgaria** – it seems that no one does. The only state lab for checks on the quality of fuel has been out of operation for a year, awaiting EU money for modernization. In the meanwhile, some ***stations mix the fuel with water and even paint solvent to make extra money.*** The state agency even issues quality certificates without checking the fuel. Na Chisto investigates if that’s happening really out of negligence...
- ***“Cop-exempt” cars*** freely drive down closed streets and park wherever convenient in the very center of Sofia. Na Chisto investigates who and why allows this to happen. The “Graf Ignatiev” street, off-limits to any regular driver, is actually quite busy with traffic. A strange mixture of Ministry of the interior and luxury “wrestler” cars jams the trams and the pedestrians, who are supposed to be the only ones allowed in. ***Soon after the program was aired, the mayor of Sofia placed special restrictive barriers to prevent further abuse.***
- Attention! When buying beef, you might be sold horse meat! Na Chisto looks into the illegal market for meat from stolen horses in Bulgaria;
- **The Winter (Sports) Palace of Sofia** is barricaded by construction sites. Na Chisto investigates how the parking lot, needed to accommodate the cars of the 5000+ visitors of the sports arena has been turned into a private lot, now open for construction.
- ***Making money off the disabled*** – it seems that this has become a lucrative business for ministry officials, doctors and distributors. Na Chisto finds out that the money available for free wheel chairs, hearing aids and other equipment for the disabled goes through a complicated network of distributors, where each one takes a share. Ministry officials „choose” the distributors of wheelchairs and seem to go for the lowest quality and highest price. Doctors from commissions for the disabled work as middlemen for hearing aid distributors – the choice is wide.
- ***A man with a stolen identity:*** An ex prisoner fights the state administration to get back his identity. The local authorities are trying to convince him, that he’s dead...
- ***Ropotamo, home of the unique Bulgarian water lily, is rapidly being cleared with bulldozers for new construction.*** Investors are in a hurry to complete their plans before the EU-sponsored „Nature 2000” protection plan is agreed. Who allows construction in national parks? Na Chisto struggles to find the answer.
- **The trash collectors in Sliven** go on strike and block the road from Sofia to Burgas. According to their bosses, the city mayor is secretly trying to let a crony privatize the company. Na Chisto finds out that the well publicized case is a fraud: the directors of

the municipal company are stirring union protests in order to cover up abuse of funds at the company;

- Na Chisto shows the story of a **disabled couple living in unimaginable** misery in an abandoned house in Kiustendil. The social workers of the local municipality use red tape to explain why the couple has been completely neglected;
- ***The ancient city of Dorostorum, one of the earliest holy Christian cities of the Roman Empire, is being demolished in favor of a mall.*** Bad luck, after 2000 years the Roman fortress has fallen to the...corrupt city officials. Overnight, despite the ban on construction imposed by the Ministry of Culture, a whole section of the ancient fortress has disappeared. For the investors and officials involved, the mall has a priority;
- More archaeological sites fall victim to construction – now it's the 25 century old necropolis of Sozopol and an ancient shrine, recently buried under the new Trakia highway. In both cases ***Na Chisto stories prompted local prosecutors to take action.***
- For the inhabitants of Lozenets, it is an illegal concrete mill. For the municipality, it is a „**temporary construction site**”, which had to be closed eleven years ago. For its new private owners, it seems like a small gold mine. Concrete is in huge demand in the neighboring parts of Sofia, so producing it under the windows of Lozenets seems to be a good business investment, especially if the city officials are willing to turn a blind eye...
- Na Chisto finds **more proof that the Bulgarian medics in Libya are innocent:** one of the nurses presents evidence, which has not even worked at the hospital in Benghazi when the AIDS infections took place. Dr Zdravko Georgiev also present additional evidence, but the courts in Libya refuse to consider it;
- ***Na Chisto discovers a witness, who presents a recording of a conversation between a well known mafia boss and a doctor at the Pirogov Emergency Clinic in Sofia.*** In the recorded conversation, the doctor instructs the criminal how to fake a heart attack in order to be hospitalized and avoid appearing in court. The doctor happens to be the leader of recent industrial action at the Clinic...
- Due to the high ratings of the program, Nova TV asked Na Chisto to select re-runs of its most popular programs for the summer vacation TV programming of the station
- **Top ten schemes how to maximize private profits** out of a municipality: Na Chisto sums up the experience of municipal privatization, corruption and abuse of funds. The program looks at the reasons why so many candidates are so eager to use any means available to win the upcoming municipal elections;
- In a follow –up investigation, a witness tells Na Chisto that the corrupt Pirogov doctor took a 10,000 levs bribe from the criminal to hospitalize him and avoid appearing in court. ***Sofia City prosecutor tells Na Chisto that he is launching an investigation into the case.***
- **Why Buy the Elections:**
Immediately before the start of the elections campaign for the local elections in Bulgaria “Na Chisto” examined the major ways of abusing local government in Bulgaria and outlined the reasons why an increasing number of local business parties and coalitions get prepared to invest into “buying” the upcoming local elections.
- **Mafia Boss “Buys” Hospitalization to Avoid Arrest:**
A well known Bulgarian mafia boss from Burgas is under trial for drug dealing. As he tries to avoid arrest, Mityo “The Eyes” gets hospitalized for heart failure. “Na Chisto”

discovers a witness, who claims the mobster paid 10 000 Levs bribe to a doctor to be accepted in the Emergency Room.

▪ **Bulgarian Pimp under Special Judicial Protection?**

“Na Chisto” investigates the links between a well known Bulgarian pimp and the local judiciary in his hometown of Pazardjik. The Bulgarian authorities refuse to hand over the pimp to be tried in France, where he’s wanted for trafficking of hundreds of women and laundering millions of Euros of illegal revenues from prostitution. Instead, he gets a short sentence in Bulgaria for the trafficking of just three young girls. While formally in prison, he gets arrested by coincidence in one of the famous Bulgarian night clubs, taking care of his usual business... Talking to “Na Chisto” the accused claims he is the victim of a police plot against his legal business. The Sofia prosecutors think otherwise.

▪ **Providing Access to Classified Information for a Fee...**

A fired whistleblower tells “Na Chisto” about a smart scheme for abusing EU farm subsidies. The ministry of Agriculture has just installed new software monitoring the use of farmland in the country. It provided information about landowners, potential production revenues, possible EU subsidies etc. The software also allows insiders to make good profits by providing access to the files to interested well paying businessmen. With the information they can claim EU subsidies without ever owning land or working in agriculture...

▪ **Why Does the National Health Insurance Fund Willingly “Lose” \$ 1 million/month?**

Deliberately slow in negotiating the annual medicine quotas and prices, selectively including medicines provided for free and manipulating lists of conditions, whose treatment is paid for by it, NHIF tolerates a few pharmaceutical companies and discriminates against the others. “Na Chisto” investigates how much money does the NHIF “lose” every month and looks into the secret reasons why.

▪ **Traffic Cops Refuse a Bribe, End up under Investigation**

Two Pleven traffic cops show how difficult it is to fight corruption on the streets. They stop a Sofia banker for speeding and refuse to accept his bribe. Instead, they report on his attempt to bribe them. Surprisingly, instead of a reward, they are themselves placed under investigation for wrongly completing the reporting forms. As it turns out, the local prosecutors is a client of the banker... “Na Chisto” makes the story public and helps the two cops get their badges back.

▪ **Abusing the State Reserve**

After years of investigation, the case against the abuses at the State Reserve finally reaches the courtroom. To everybody’s surprise, some of the major figures of the 5-year old saga are not among the accused. “Na Chisto” investigates why some of the participants in the scheme, under which the State Reserve was stripped of millions of Levs, are only appearing before the court as witnesses.

▪ **The Russe Municipal Elections Scam**

“Na Chisto” investigates where did the money invested in the elections in Ruse come from and how it helped re-elect the mayor of the city. A local “business party”, established specifically for the elections, comprises of businessmen regularly winning the public procurement contracts of the city. The “business party” buys votes in the villages around Russe. Interestingly enough, the money is paid to secure seats in the city council, but also to support the incumbent mayor...

- **Police, Insurance Companies and the Car Thieves Working Together?**
 Official police statistics report 10 to 12 cars stolen a day. In fact that figure is topped by a few more thefts that never get reported by the owners. They resort to paying a ransom as the quickest way to get their vehicle back. All this can hardly fall within the common-or-garden street crime. All too often, it's a well run business with its own hierarchy of people and, sometimes, institutions involved. A network of dealers and resellers, smugglers, security personnel, civil servants and insurers is sometimes helped out by the car owners themselves. It seems the small fry only ever get convicted. Na Chisto looks at connections between car thieves, parking security and insurers. Na Chisto speaks to three inmates at the Kremikovtzi correction facility, law enforcement officers and insurance officials.
- **Radiation in the Air of Sofia**
 For over 40 years, near the village of Novi Han in the southeast corner of the Sofia plains there's been a radioactive waste depository. Locals have little awareness of how it's run and how safe it is. Water testing in the area shows that safe radiation levels have been exceeded. Residents want the depository closed. In turn, the state is planning to expand using PHARE funds. Over 2 million Euro has been allocated. The Novi Han depository can be conserved only after a national RAW depository is fully operational. One is being planned and 1 million Euro worth of EU funding has already been awarded. However, the European Anti Fraud Office (OLAF) is investigating the tender winner: an international consortium, in which Bulgarian company "Risk Engineering" is the local partner. Insider information leaked at OLAF claims all project invoices and bid papers have been faked. Na Chisto talks to Risk Engineering owner and CEO, Mr. Bogomil Manchev, who believes all the allegations are an act of unfair competition and accuses European Commissioners of lobbyism.
- **Elections and Money**
 How much money was spent campaigning in the local elections? Where does it come from and how will sponsors be redeemed? Transparency International Program Coordinator Vania Nusheva talks about their monitoring of the elections. Bulgarian National Audit Office representative Kosta Kostov comments on political parties' spending reports for last year and says legislative amendments are needed towards increased transparency of political party funding. Market Links pollsters have monitored the campaign in the broadcast media and provide estimates about candidate spots in radio and TV. UDF, BSP and Novoto Vreme talk about their campaign spending.
- **How Much and Why Is Bulgaria Paying for Its Slow Judiciary?**
 Legal action against the state at the European Court of Human Rights have resulted in 1.5 million worth of damages paid to Bulgarian citizens over violations of their human rights. 403,000 BGN was paid during the last year only, with some of the lawsuits dealing with ill-treatment by police and lack of effective investigation. Na Chisto speaks to Konstantin Bochev, who was formally charged with one case of murder and one case of attempted murder 10 years ago. Though never standing in court, he's been in prison for nearly ten years, in the so-called "preliminary custody". Experts and lawyers believe he has more than solid grounds for convicting the state in Strasbourg.

In this Na Chisto episode, Yonko Grozev of the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee and Minister of Justice Miglena Tacheva talk about the Bulgarian Judiciary and citizens' rights.

- **Bulgarian Businessman in US Jail for Political Corruption**

Na Chisto followed up on a story, which the program investigated in 2004 as Bulgarian oil trader Liudmil Dionisiev received a suspended two-year term in a US jail. He was found to have surreptitiously giving out bribes to Iraqi officials within the Oil for Food programme of the United Nations.

According to the bill of indictment, Dionisiev, 61, in his capacity as consultant of Texas citizen David Chalmers aided in the purchase of Iraqi oil for his companies Bayoil USA and Bayoil Supply & Trading. Under one of the deals in January 2001, Dionisiev was proven to have communicated to Russian politician Vladimir Zhirinovskiy that one of Chalmers' companies would pay Iraq more than \$546 000 (376 669 euro) for the supply of 1.82 million barrels of oil.

When the row broke out in January 2004, Iraqi newspaper Al Mada published a list with 200 companies, organisations, parties and physical persons alleged of to have been giving out bribes. Among the institutions featuring in the list was the Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP). Then Bulgarian President Georgi Purvanov and then-BSP leader Sergei Stanishev denied allegations that the party had been financed through oil supplies by Saddam Hussein.

- **Arranged Fights between Football Hooligans in Sofia**

Football hooliganism in Sofia has turned into a dangerous pass-time for the fans and into good business for the organizers of the fights between them. Na Chisto, with an "under-cover" reporter acting as a fan, looks at why and how football fans are using the love of the game and their favorite club as a premise to exercise their hobby – getting into vicious fights set up online or over the phone. Na Chisto tries to find what the police can do to prevent those incidents. The program speaks to fans of some of the country's biggest clubs – Levski and CSKA of Sofia, and Botev of Plovdiv, and meets two inspectors at the Juvenile Crime unit of the Sofia police. Na Chisto tries to find how the fights are arranged, where they take place, who is making a profit from them and what the police are doing about it.

- **Police Abuse of the Mentally Ill**

About a year ago the city of Pleven was in shock with the murder of a four-year old girl, and the detention and charging of a suspect seemed to give the troubled community almost no rest. Charged with sexual assault and murder was a 44-year old mentally deranged neighbor of the victim.

The hasty apprehension raised a lot of questions about the convenient suspects the mentally ill can be.

Suspensions were recently justified – the alleged perpetrator's mental disorder was confirmed, but not his involvement in the crime. The 44-year old Martin Tsatchkov was released. It's not a question of whether he's fit to stand trial or not, there's just no evidence to even implicate him besides his full confession.

Whether he was nothing more than a convenient suspect, or he did it but the prosecution fails to evidence it, things are back where they started and there's a sadistic murderer at large.

Na Chisto speaks to victim's family, the prosecutor assigned to the case and the recently released defendant. Meanwhile, the investigation continues and the mentally challenged 44-year old remains the main suspect.

- **Making a Profit from Public Debt**

Na Chisto gets on the train to find a private business jumping on the Bulgarian Railways for the ride of their life. In the upcoming edition: an advanced course in making the best of the unsettled debts between two state companies.

Bulgarian Railways accumulated debts to the National Electric Company of about 70 million levs. Instead of having the two state-run companies figure it out one-on-one, ceding the debt was chosen.

Local company Eurometal and a shadowy offshore entity were entrusted with buying out the Railways debt. Now, while even minor procurement projects involve lengthy tender procedures, the ceding of debts of state run entities didn't seem to require bidding.

Plus, the National Electric Company discounted almost half of the debt and the private companies, which have started collecting the entire outstanding obligation, will keep a healthy profit of about 30 million levs.

Eurometal is owned by the Pernik-based businessman Ludmil Stoykov, who was recently alleged in looting 7.5 million EUR worth of SAPARD funding. He's a big name in metal recycling, holds a small stake in the Pernik Steel Factory and owns two seaside resorts and is a big time contributor to the President's election campaign...

Na Chisto speaks to BG Railways officials, the NEC Legal Department, MPs – including members of the parliamentary anti-corruption committee – and the Minister of State Administration, who used to be the supervisory authority of the railways in his previous capacity of minister of transport.

- **Are the Poor Doomed to Blindness?**

Na Chisto investigates why and how the only eye bank in the country ends up in private hands. Patient transplanted with cornea from a syphilis-infected donor. The lucrative cornea business gets the nation's only eye bank privatized on the sly. National Transplant Agency records reveal that last year only two patients received free-of-charge cornea transplantations.

Na Chisto speaks to the National Ophthalmology Consultant, a transplanted patient, the de facto owner of the formerly state eye bank and the minister of health about the cost of the apple of the eye.

- **Illegal Quarries Around Sofia**

Some quarries and gravel pits are legally operated on concession in multiple locations near Sofia. Many are illegal, too. On top of that, being a legal operation does not preclude pollution, potential health risks, excessive noise and – not the least – the lunar landscape, which is the inevitable consequence of such activities.

The village of Mramor is just across the metropolitan ring road and one finds with great surprise that the whole area is miraculously spared by the omnipresent Sofia smog. The river and the Mramor reservoir, and the whole adjacent area are the nesting place of 175 species of birds, including 43 endangered species. The whole area is proposed for enlisting as a protected habitat under Natura 2000.

Na Chisto speaks to residents, environmentalists, the people in charge and the entrepreneurs about how quarrying will affect the locality.

- **Police Protection of Drug Dealers?**

Na Chisto shows dramatic hidden camera footage of buying and selling drugs in broad daylight in downtown Sofia. Who is turning a blind eye on heroine dealers? We're used to it – whenever drugs are in question, numbers are thrown at us. Police report the arrests, the dealers count the profit, and parents have lost count of the money spent on treatment. And the doctors... well, they update the death toll. Along with fighting drugs, the police are forced to deal with corruption within the force. We were told the good old “...*there've always been corrupt cops, and there always will be...*” In the mean time, drug dealers are unfailingly on that very same corner, near schools, not exactly keeping a low profile and growing their client base.

- **Hard Earned, but Fake University Diplomas**

How must it feel to have studied for years to become a doctor, and obtain a veterinary degree in the end? That's basically the predicament of scores of students at the Plovdiv Agricultural University. In 2002 they began their studies to get a BA in tourism, and in 2007 they obtained degrees in Agricultural Tourism.

Na Chisto talks to students and the dean to find out yet another of those ridiculous puzzles the Bulgarian education system is always keen to provide. There are enough examples of admitting students in non-accredited subjects and awarding questionable degrees. The case in Plovdiv is an attempt to make up for an administrative blunder of the school at the expense of students.

- **Why Choose the Most Expensive Car Supplier for the Ministry of the Interior?**

In the course of three years a major importer sells hundreds of cars to the state. Over 13 million of taxpayers' money is involved. The state must be a welcome client, readily spending more on one vehicle than its shelf price. Na Chisto is looking closer at how state agencies are choosing the best goods and the best suppliers. Na Chisto is trying to find out whether and how the Public Procurement Act is observed. NC reporter Christina Koleva spoke to three official Lada Niva car dealers. Two of them told Na Chisto that most of the tenders are so intricately designed to make sure their competitor always wins. And the procurement cost is never in the taxpayers' interest. Now, these are private companies and their job is to compete. The job of the administration is to make sure all eligible bidders stand an equal chance. It's also their job to make all the procedures public and transparent.

Alexander Kashamov, in charge of the Access to Information Program's legal team, is in studio speaking about how the administration fails to comply with the Public Procurement Act and holds off information that should otherwise be easily available to the public.

- **How easy it is to discourage foreign investors from doing business in Bulgaria?**

Sadly, it doesn't take too much: a little red tape, some notary and judicial misconduct, and some procedural loopholes and legal blunders.

This is the story of the German investor Konstantin Mavrodyiski. A Bulgarian immigrant in Germany for many years, he sets up a joint venture with a Bulgarian partner. The new company acquires some property and the local partner hastily calls a board meeting. The German investor was invited to attend by a notary-signed letter, which he never received. Eventually, he got expelled from the partnership and lost any claim of ownership.

One partner is not being properly invited to attend a board meeting and the decisions of this very same board meeting are affected by the relevant recordation

office. None of this could've happened without a notary and a recordation judge violating professional ethics and the law itself.

Na Chisto speaks to notaries to find out that similar wrongdoing is well spread. On the particular case of Mr. Mavrodyiski, the German ambassador has submitted four protest notes to the Bulgarian government. The Mavrodyiski case is among the lawsuits monitored closely by European Commission experts.

- **Why Are Duty Free Shops Still Operating after Being Legally Banned?**

Bulgaria loses some BGN 680 million annually from illegal sales of duty free cigarettes in the country. This figure roughly matches the annual "social services" budget of the Ministry of Labor and Social Services. More is lost from illegal internal sales of duty free alcohol, gas and perfumes. Finding and buying duty free goods in Sofia is not too hard, as the Na Chisto investigative team discovers, but the real question is – why is it so hard for the law enforcement agencies to deal with the problem?

- **"Unique Bulgarian" Bees and the Euro Subsidies**

Yet another scheme for abusing EU funds: this time it is money for the bee-keepers. With a little help from friends at the ministry of agriculture, an entrepreneurial businessman has registered a "uniquely Bulgarian" bee, to which he owns all the rights. The EU money is supposed to reach all bee-keepers, but the small print of the ministry's regulations clarifies that the money can go only to those keeping the "Bulgarian bee". And there is only one expert, who the ministry deems worthy of identifying and breeding "Bulgarian bees". Guess who that might be...

- **Sharing a Ride with Criminals**

Every morning from 20 to 80 people are forcibly taken from their homes to be brought to court in Sofia. Some of them are violent felons, some are mentally ill, while others are simply unwilling witnesses to theft. Court security puts them in the same car.

Judges, court security, summons officers and ordinary people are all affected by the regulatory loopholes. When a person is summoned to give testimony in a case, and fails to be properly served the writ of summons, the court has all the right to compel their attendance, including being brought by force by court security. Whether it's the person's fault or the subpoena officer's. The work of the judiciary has often been questioned, but once again the devil is in the details. Sometimes flawed procedures, lack of funding and lack of responsibility are enough of a reason for the public disapproval of the judiciary.

- **Na Chisto Wins First Round of a Legal Battle with a Prosecutor**

In another important development, on Monday, March 10 the First Instance Court in Sofia ruled in favor of (former) Na Chisto presenter Boiko Stankushev and reporter Milena Dimitrova. The two are sued for libel and defamation by a city prosecutor, whose activities they had investigated. The Na Chisto story, aired in January 2006, discloses that the investigated prosecutor did not bring charges against a car thief despite all the gathered evidence. In the program the investigator of a particular case of car-theft accuses the prosecutor of corruption and abuse of power. The prosecutor has appealed the decision of the court. Round Two is expected in another year...

- **Who Is Paying for the "citizen" Campaign against International Investors in Galabovo**

Thousands of people in Galabovo and the region have a tough choice to make: jobs for a living or breathing air that isn't slowly killing them. Air without asbestos and sulphur dioxide or smoking vents and some wages.

Dying of hunger or toxicity is an absurd dilemma in the 21st century in an EU member country. The issue has stood for forty years and a solution is nowhere in sight. Forty years the small town in the Bulgarian southeast is besieged by the three biggest coal-fired thermal power plants in the country. The companies that run the plants are the major employers in the region, so local residents are quite defenseless. Local government is thus their only source of protection. The administration should restrain and control investors and act in favor of the people. But are they up to the task, or are their actions driven by personal feuds and pursuing their own self-interest? Who is paying for the expensive campaigns against the foreign investors? And why does the mayor claim that pollution comes only from the foreign-owned power plants?

- **Abusing Donations**

A patch of donated land, a few milk cows and some farming equipment should be more than enough to provide for scores of parentless children in a home for the mentally challenged. Brilliant and simple, the idea inspired donors to help the children in a home in Glavinitsa. Ten years later, the noble cause is buried in dirt and indifference. The idea to put a cup of warm milk on the table each morning and teach children the basics of farming brought together the Rotary International and the administration together. Rotary donated the farming equipment, while the Ministry of Agriculture gave some 120 acres of state-owned land to grow fodder for the animals.

It all started to go wrong when the donors stepped down and running the farm was handed over to the home administration. The land was sublet to a private firm and there were only a few unkempt animals left of the 70 cows that the farm had at some point of the project. Na Chisto referred all those findings to the regional prosecutor's office and the Silistra District Attorney authorized an investigation.

- **Why Choose the Most Expensive Offer in Public procurement for Cars?**

Following up on a story aired in March, Na Chisto looks into the irregularities of buying Niva SUV's for the administration. In the course of three years one major importer of such cars sells hundreds of cars to the state. Over 13 million of taxpayers' money is involved. The state must be a welcome client, readily spending more on one vehicle than its shelf price. Na Chisto is trying to find out whether and how the Public Procurement Act is observed. NC reporter Christina Koleva spoke to three official Lada Niva car dealers. Two of them told Na Chisto that most of the tenders are so intricately designed to make sure their competitor always wins. And the procurement cost is never in the taxpayers' interest. Now, these are private companies and their job is to compete. The job of the administration is to make sure all eligible bidders stand an equal chance. It's also their job to make all the procedures public and transparent.

Following the program on March 2nd, the Russia-based manufacturer told Na Chisto that there's a single authorized dealer for the whole of Europe, which is supplying all Lada dealers in Bulgaria. In this sense, there's no official importer of Lada cars in Bulgaria, but rather a network of vendors. That's contrary to what the institutions, which held bids, claimed. The Elin Pelin Forestry Board and the State Forestry Agency

told us that they had chosen the supplier because it was offering the lowest procurement cost. Na Chisto found out that the competing dealers offer lower prices for the specifications required.

The Elin Pelin Forestry Board director Rumiana Dimitrova and Directorate Head with the State Forestry Agency Todor Biogomilov speak to Na Chisto.

We also talk to the favored dealer's owner Mr. Ramadan, who made a bigger profit selling cars to the state than he would have if he sold the same amount of cars to ordinary clients.

▪ **What Went Wrong with the EU Farm Subsidies**

Na Chisto examines suspected mishandling of 48 million levs worth of SAPARD funding. 48 million levs have been awarded for the development of wholesale markets for agricultural products nationwide. The National Union of Producer Marketplaces formally protested the award procedure to the Prosecutor General, the State Audit Office and the Parliamentary Anti-corruption Commission. The Union claims that not one of their members was approved for funding, while entities, which are not eligible beneficiaries, qualified to receive subsidies. For example, major importers of agricultural goods should not be eligible if they don't meet the requirement of 50% local produce. The incumbent director of the National Fund Agriculture tells Na Chisto there were no violations of the award procedure, only some minor technical errors. The prosecution seems to disagree. Prosecutor Plamen Panayotov of the Sofia City Prosecutor's office will seek indictment of former State Fund Agriculture chief Assen Drumev. The attorney believes the case will reach court in a little over a month.

▪ **Realty Scam Perpetrated by a Former Chair of the Regional Court**

People are usually keen to unreservedly trust doctors, priests and judges. Well, that last one can cost them dearly. In Belogradchik the former regional court chair Irena Ivanova is the mastermind behind an elaborate land scam. Thousands of acres of fictitious property were sold to unsuspecting buyers. Interestingly, no actual owners were tricked out of their real estate. The scam victims are people who bought land, which only exists on paper. As the chair of the regional court, Mrs. Ivanova was well aware that many senior residents in the community had failed to claim ownership of their inherited land. All she needed to do is lodge claims on their behalf on pieces of property she randomly fabricated. Irena Ivanova drew fake transcripts of court sessions, fabricated witness names and used her contacts to obtain certificates from municipal land commissions and legitimate deeds of ownership of non-existing properties. Using counterfeit power of attorney, she was then able to dispose of the fictitious pieces of land.

Mrs. Ivanova and her husband have been charged with documentary fraud and are facing 10 to 20 years in prison. Justice Irena Ivanova was suspended as regional court chair and judge by the Supreme Judicial Council. Their accomplice Notary Vesselin Stankov was discharged by Minister of Justice Meglena Tacheva.

▪ **Corruption in Forensic Psychiatry**

Na Chisto investigates is forensic psychiatry, often decisive for major indictments, vulnerable to corruption? A defendant's competency to stand trial is key to doing justice and much is staked at the mental state opinion provided by a qualified forensic psychiatrist. Na Chisto is looking at how an expert witness can cross the line and find himself on the defendant's stand. Dr. Rulsan Terzyiski had key involvement

in some of the most significant trials of recent times. He was called to testify as a forensic psychiatrist on account of an infanticide mother and multiple homicide offenders. Until he was arrested and charged with bribery and fraud in his capacity of forensic psychiatrist on a seemingly minor instance of disturbance. Dr. Terzyiski's first hearing was only a couple of weeks ago. Na Chisto speaks to an independent lawyer about how forensic psychiatry is influencing the outcome of a trial and how likely it is for fraud to be proved.

- **Can Local Government Build Illegally?**

Na Chisto investigates the involvement of the Municipality of Blagoevgrad in the illegal construction of a huge mountain resort in the Rila Mountain outside the city. The local government, which is supposed to regulate construction in the region, is breaking the law and its own rules in order to allow for the start of a huge investment into a brand new ski resort area. Can the development of regional tourism justify breaking environmental and construction regulations? Why is the local government so keen to spend public money in a joint venture with private investors, in which the local authorities have a minimal share?

- **Nine Billion in Cash**

Nine billion – that is the conservative estimate of the annual amount of cash payments going on in Bulgaria. The impressive figure, comparable to the state budget, stands for a lot of perfectly legal payments, but also covers money-laundering and corruption. Na Chisto investigates why the efforts to put cash payments under control have been unsuccessful so far.

Advocacy for Judicial Reform

A major component of the program, implemented in partnership between BTC ProMedia and the Judicial Strengthening Initiative has been developing the skills of the Bulgarian courts to work with the media. The overall objective of the activities undertaken by BTC ProMedia is to help increase the public's trust in the judiciary through improved media relations of the courts and through increased professional coverage of the work of the courts in the Bulgarian media.

BTC ProMedia has also supported the Judicial Strengthening Initiative with expert advice and consultations on the task of building awareness and developing media campaigns in support of judicial reform in Bulgaria.

In the first phase of the program BTC ProMedia has provided targeted training for judges and prosecutors, aimed at increasing their media relations skills and specialized training for beat reporters covering the judiciary for the major national and regional print and broadcast media outlets in the country. The seminars have answered some of the following questions:

- What is the media, what do they want and how and why the courts cannot allow themselves not to be a part of it?
- What works (and what doesn't) when the judiciary and the media cross paths?

- How to develop a media strategy;
- How to reach out to the media, how to write a press release, hold a news conference and background briefing, how to prepare for print, radio and television interview;
- How to develop a crisis plan and handle the media in a crisis situation

The seminars also included practice in giving live television interviews at the local TV stations.

In the last two years of the project BTC ProMedia completed a series of advanced seminars for chairpersons of regional and district courts and members of the Supreme Judicial Council, in which the participants developed skills in building efficient and professional press relations and press offices at their institutions. Towards the end of the program for the first time prosecutors were included in the training events. PR training was included in the curriculum of the magistrates' training institution, the National Institute for Justice (NIJ), one of the main legacies of USAID in Bulgaria. Seminars for improved media relations were organized in Gabrovo in October'06, in Blagoevgrad in May'07 – two seminars for judges and NIJ graduates, in Velingrad in July'07 for members of the Supreme Judicial Council and in Varna in July'07, and Sandanski in September'07, for representatives of the prosecution.

The training events in Gabrovo, Blagoevgrad and Velingrad were carried out simultaneously with training for beat reporters covering the courts. The seminar module for advanced PR and media training, ***Organizing Effective Media Relations Office for the Court***, covered the following main issues:

- providing participants with an advanced knowledge of how to best organize the PR work of the court;
- analyzing the shortcomings of current media relations;
- discussing the role and involvement of the PR person/office;
- helping understand how to develop and sustain relations with media representatives;
- helping position the institution with opinion leaders;
- focusing on selecting public speakers for the needs of the Courts media and public relations;
- Practicing effective TV interview techniques: practical exercises and live TV interviews at local TV stations.

At the end of each seminar participants took part in a “Meet the Press” debate with court reporters and discussed ways of improving relations with the press.

In May 2007 in Blagoevgrad BTC ProMedia participated in a Judiciary Media Training for NIJ Graduates Representatives, organized by the National Institute for Justice. BTC ProMedia director Petko Georgiev trained participants in Public Relations and Broadcast Media Communication. The training included live Television broadcast interviews at the Blagoevgrad TV station.

In parallel to the judicial training, BTC ProMedia carried out training seminars aimed at improving professional media coverage of the courts. Reporters from all parts of Bulgaria participated in the events. All reporters were selected for participation in the seminar based on the selection of judges for the parallel training event for judges, so that reporters and courts chairpersons had the opportunity to discuss the specifics of their work in their cities.

At the end of the seminars the participants took part in a “Meet the Courts – Meet the Press” debate on covering the judiciary in the press. Reporters debates with Court

chairpersons from their respective cities how to overcome misunderstandings and prejudice, and how to improve their joint work.

In July'07 in Varna and in September '07 in Sandanski, BTC ProMedia carried out the first training events for prosecutors. Until recently the most secretive and closed for media and public inquiries institution, under the new Prosecutor General the prosecutors' offices are trying to build a new image for the institution and are working to develop and establish good working relations with the press. Even though the system as a whole still lacks understanding of the role and importance of media and public relations, there are promising indications that some of its young representatives are willing to start working professionally with the media and are open to a higher degree of transparency.

In addition to the training events, BTC ProMedia assisted the Judicial Strengthening Initiative in the following areas:

- Identifying the target audiences for the public awareness and outreach campaigns regarding judicial reform;
- Helping identify preferred media, including radio, television and print, to launch judicial reform programs and include in programs for legal reform advocacy;
- Working with court PR officers and court spokes people to help them determine how to best use the Internet to further educate the public regarding judicial reform;
- Assisting court PR people with professional advice on the development of their PR materials - mainly brochures, TV interviews, press releases etc.;
- Helping organize events to highlight targeted issues and announce important legal and judicial developments, impacts and initiatives;
- Generating story ideas for journalists and keeping journalists informed on judicial reform developments;
- Tracking print and broadcast stories about the judiciary and review for accuracy and best journalism practices;
- Providing technical assistance to help the SJC, the NIJ, and the courts build effective media departments and media relations.

In cooperation with JSI, BTC ProMedia produced five court reform promotion videos for Model Courts. The first in a series, the promotion videos inform the public about the improved performance of the courts achieved with the support of the JSI. The videos are the first of a series covering other model courts across Bulgaria. The videos have been used by the two courts as a way to share the progress made with colleagues from other courts and have been used as a training material at seminars for judges.

In September 2006 BTC ProMedia helped JSI organize the first national exhibition of court reform activities. Model and partner courts as well as NGO's funded under the JSI small grants program presented jointly the vast range of activities aimed at improving the functioning of the courts, achieving greater transparency and public responsibility of the respective courts and strengthening their relations with the public and the community. BTC ProMedia organized the setting of the exhibition, the press coverage of the event and the participation of the media. The Exhibition helped outline the achieved success in reforming

the judiciary and focused on areas where progress has helped improve the image and functioning of the courts.

In November 2006 BTC ProMedia organized a one week training event for TV producers, working on the launch of Court TV series in Bulgaria. The training was organized jointly with the Judicial Strengthening Initiative of USAID and was aimed at producing high quality TV series focused on the work of the courts in Bulgaria. The trainer was Pamela Browne, executive producer at FOX TV - New York, three-time Emmy award winner for TV production. On her third visit to Bulgaria as a ProMedia trainer, Pamela Browne worked with reporters, producers, cameramen and picture editors from five production teams, working on the development of court TV series and promotional videos. Participants included TV crews from BNT, Varna, Rousse, Pazardjik and Sofia.

BTC ProMedia has also provided specialized journalism training for beat reporters covering the judiciary for the major national and regional print and broadcast media outlets in the country. The aim of the training is to help the media better understand the work of the courts and become better professionally equipped to cover the judiciary. During the training, carried by both journalism and legal trainers, reporters also learn about newly adopted legislation and about the progress of the reforms in the judiciary. One such final “advanced” training seminar for court reporters from the cities of Silistra, Rousse, Stara Zagora, Vratza, Razgrad, Veliko Tarnovo, Pleven, Gotze Delchev, Sevlievo and Sliven was carried out in parallel to the seminar for judges from those cities on May 9-11 in Blagoevgrad. The reporters were trained in the new Penal Procedural Code and the drafted Civic Procedural Code and participated in the joint “Meet the courts” session with the judges from their cities. Similar training events were held in Gabrovo and Sandanski.

Throughout the year, BTC ProMedia has been providing targeted on-demand journalism training in the areas of investigative journalism, investigating corruption, covering ethnic relations, reporting on local budgets and local government.

In 2006-2007 BTC ProMedia continued producing Court promotion videos for USAID partner court institutions. The videos are developed to mark the achievement of the respective courts in achieving the status of Model Courts. The 10 minute long documentary features focus on the overall achievement in implementing reforms, improving the courts management and organization city and the improved quality of the services citizens receive from the administration of the court. All produced films have been shown at special award ceremonies at which the Courts received their Model Court status and have been used by the respective courts to promote the success of the reforms carried out with the support of USAID. Model Court Promotion Movies were produced for:

Kurdjali, Vratza, Veliko Tarnovo - October 2006

Haskovo – December 2006

Plovdiv District Court, Plovdiv Regional Court – February 2007

Smolyan, Montana, Sliven, Burgas, Gorna Oriahovitza – March 2007

Yambol, Gotze Delchev – April 2007

Dobrich District Court, Dobrich Regional Court; Varna District Court, Varna Regional Court, Shumen – May 2007

National Media Competition for Private Enforcement. In June 2006 BTC Promedia and the USAID Commercial Law Reform Program announced the results of the media competition for best coverage of the newly adopted legislation on private enforcement. The competition managed to attract media attention and thus improved public awareness of the benefits of the newly passed legislation developed and enforced with considerable USAID support. The competition gave awards in separate categories covering national and local Television, Radio and print media. The ceremony was co-organized with the National Chamber of Private Enforcement Judges and enjoyed considerable media coverage. All awarded members of the press were given the opportunity to share with their colleagues their thoughts on the new legislation and their suggestions for further improvement of the implementation of the law, thus turning the award ceremony into a professional debate on private enforcement. Journalism competitions for best coverage of such specialized areas prove to be a successful tool of attracting media attention and increase the number and the quality of the publications. The awarded professional reporters also tend to start following the issue more carefully, thus increasing the sustainability of the efforts to improve specific media coverage.

Alternative Dispute Resolution

In the first half of 2006 BTC ProMedia and ABA CEELI planned and carried out a campaign in support of alternative dispute resolution, one of the legacies of the ABA CEELI program in Bulgaria. The campaign aims at increasing awareness and usage of alternative dispute resolution as a way to decrease the burden on businesses and courts.

In April 2006 BTC ProMedia developed a “Media Strategy for Increased Public Awareness and Trust in the Mediation Process” for USAID implementing partner ABA-CEELI. The strategy aims at:

- Building public awareness about the benefits of mediation;*
- Creating trust in the mediation process;*
- Increasing the usage of mediation nationwide and in selected localities.*

The target groups of the strategy include:

- Commercial clients and private citizens in need of judicial assistance
- Lawyers
- The media
- NGO's
- General Audience

In order to achieve the planned results, the Communication strategy focuses at several major messages aimed at the specific target groups. These messages are the core of the strategy and their communication to the audience aims at achieving the needed public understanding, support and usage of the mediation services.

“Mediation – the only way to resolve a problem without creating enemies ”. The message underlines the fact that mediation is “future oriented” – it replaces the lengthy court battle, which creates enemies for a long time with a process which helps keep good business relations;

“In a courtroom there’s always a loser. With mediation everybody wins”. The message points out that the mediation process is a “win-win” technology. Unlike the result of a court case, the mediation process helps both parties protect their interest.

“Thinking of suing? Try mediation first ”. Message aimed at increasing the awareness that mediation as a way of resolving conflicts without reaching the courts. People are often weary of suing, but still go ahead, because they do not realize there’s another way to protect their interests – mediation.

“Mediation works. It’s fast, cheap, efficient, interactive, cooperative and fully voluntary”. Message oriented towards the benefits of the mediation process vs. using the court system to resolve a conflict.

“O.K., we have a problem. Shall we fight or shall we look for help?” Message oriented towards the cooperative character of the mediation process vs. the confrontational character of the court procedure.

BTC ProMedia developed Radio Public Service announcements and negotiated their carriage with Info Radio and Radio New Europe national networks. The PSA’s were aired by the two networks in an intensive two-week schedule in June 2006.

Local Government, Fiscal Decentralization and Economic Reform

In October’05-September’07 BTC ProMedia continued its media advocacy work in support of strengthened local government. A major highlight of the activities in this sphere was the active participation of BTC ProMedia in the Fourth Annual Meeting of the National Association of Municipalities in Republic Bulgaria (NAMRB) in October 2006, which also celebrated the 10th anniversary of NAMRB. During the event, held at the Kempinski Hotel Hermitage in the resort of Golden Sands, BTC ProMedia presented the 30 minute **documentary film “10 Years NAMRB – 10 Years of Service to Local Government”**, which was shown at the opening ceremony of the event, attended by ministers, ambassadors, mayors an over 1500 representatives of the local government in Bulgaria. The documentary, produced for the 10th anniversary of the National Organization of Municipalities in Bulgaria, outlines the achievement of the organization over the years in strengthening local government and will be used as an advocacy tool for further government decentralization.

BTC ProMedia participated also with its own stand at the exhibition of services available for the development of local government, which was organized as a parallel event to the annual meeting.

BTC ProMedia director Petko Georgiev also participated as a member of the jury for the media competition for best coverage of local government, organized by NAMRB at the end of 2006.

BTC ProMedia helped the National Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria develop the text and outline for the brochure of the Annual Report of the organization, an important tool for improving the image and supporting the vision of strong local government in Bulgaria. The publication presents the work and successes of the Association over the past

year to a vast audience of members, public institutions, Bulgarian and international partners. BTC helped give the report the vision and language fit for the level of achievement NAMRB has achieved over the years. It also helped formulate the major messages covering the major parts of the work of the Association.

In July 2006 BTC ProMedia and the USAID/Counterpart Bulgaria Community Fund and Social Enterprise Program worked together on the final broadcast of the Counterpart Bulgaria Television programs on “social change”. The program is the last part of a series of monthly programs carried on Evropa-TV. The final broadcast, carried live from the new studio of BTC ProMedia, was on “Social Economy”, allowing recapturing aspects of all program components, including: Social Contracting, Community Foundations, and Social Enterprises.

Ethnic and Social Issues

BTC ProMedia and Partners Bulgaria Foundation carried out the “Faces of Bulgaria” project, under which 25 success stories from the work of Partners Bulgaria Foundation, aimed at improved ethnic integration, were turned into 25 TV documentary shorts, which were shown on the morning program of BNT, the national public TV channel. The documentaries cover a wide variety of activities of the Partners Bulgaria Foundation, which took place in the regions of Aitos, Assenovgrad, Smolyan, Samokov, Dupnitsa and Kurdjali. The series are based on human stories of individual achievement aimed at reinforcing tolerance, understanding and positive attitudes towards Bulgarian citizens of different ethnic and social background. The series received excellent viewer feedback and were used by the Bulgarian Government as an example of its policy of increased access of minorities to the media. In its report to the Council of Europe’s STEERING COMMITTEE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS (CDDH) on the access of national minorities to the new media in the information society the Bulgarian government reported that: “Since 2006, “The day begins” (the morning program of BNT) has started broadcasting a series of documentaries under the title “Faces from Bulgaria” showing the personal stories and achievements of people belonging to various ethnic groups. The series are created at the Centre for Radio and Television training, within the framework of the ProMedia project and with the financial support of USAID”.

The “Faces of Bulgaria” series include:

- **Janny** – theater for the handicapped. Janny, a talented young actress from the Kurdjali Theater is a member of a rare ethnic minority, *the millet*, Turkish-speaking, Muslim Roma. Herself an excellent example of personal success against all odds, she’s now teaching disabled kids of Turkish and Roma origin to act...and fight to succeed;
- **The miracle of the bread:** A group of school kids from Isperih, Bulgarians, Turks and Roma, study ethnic traditions in the region. They travel to find out how their communities bake bread. Whose bread is tastier? The series focuses on kids interacting and learning from each other.
- **Beyond the Differences:** School kids from Momchilgrad, ethnic Turks and Bulgarians visit a strange kind of „Sunday school” – they study both Christianity and Islam. With

the support of the local church and the mosque, the kids go to each other's shrines and learn about the two big religions of the region; ;

- **The Modern Ballet of Aitos:** Young girls from all ethnic groups in Aitos have formed a joint dance group. They believe they can at least as good as Spice Girls, since their ethnic mix is just as colorful;
- **The Red Californian Worm:** A very unlikely narrator, a red Californian worm, tells the story of Golyamo Novo village, home to Bulgarians, Roma and Turks. Before being eaten by a hen, the hero shows the uneasy lives of people in the village and of his master, a young Turk, who got a micro credit to grow...Californian worms (whose "end product", it seems, is an excellent fertilizer for florists);
- **The Ho Chi Min Kindergarten:** As the name of the Samokov institution indicates, the kindergarten is a remnant from the Communist past, which was about to shut down when Bulgarian parents found out that the majority of kids attending are Roma. Then Partners Bulgaria interfered and, through an improved curriculum, made ethnic diversity an asset rather than a problem for the institution;
- **One Quite School:** The success story of integrated education for the disabled of different ethnic background
- **Photography of a Roma Wedding:** With „Partners Bulgaria” support, two professional Kurdjali photographers teach jobless young Roma to take pictures and shoot video. The Roma weddings also need photographers and the newly educated kids with cameras can make a good living...;
- **Gizdova Mahala parts 1 and 2:** Gizdova Mahala (Turkish for Neighborhood) is the largest and poorest of the Roma ghettos in Dupnitsa. „Faces from Bulgaria” shows a working example of people helping each other to survive and discovers a unique local arts talent...
- **The Dead and the Living:** The story of a Samokov craftsman, who managed to change his family's fortune with the help of a micro credit from “Partners Bulgaria”. He's learned to turn dead trees into bio-fuel...;
- **The Kolonauts:** Kids from all possible ethnic backgrounds participate in a cycling club in Isperih. With a little help from “Partners Bulgaria” the club teaches kids not just to cycle around, but to visit each other's holy places and historical monuments in the region...
- **Neighborhood World:** The Story of the Bulgarian Atanaska, who fell in love with an ethnic Turk and settled down to live with him and their kids in the Roma neighborhood of Assenovgrad. She now runs an Internet café for the local kids...
- **Love During Old Age:** In an episode, which shows that “Partners Bulgaria” is not only a Roma-oriented project, “Faces from Bulgaria” shows the story of a couple, which met at a Center for old people, fell in love and got married;
- **Marama in Grohotno:** Grohotno is as remote and isolated as it gets, at the end of a battered road high up in the Rhodope Mountains. Its inhabitants, “pomaks” (Muslim Bulgarians), have an old legend about love and a song named after it, Marama. Young kids, who have nothing much to do after school, gather at the local civic center, to learn how to sing and play the song of the village;
- **The Creation of a Bride's Dress:** In Communist days, Assenovgrad had the only factory in Bulgaria, sewing dresses for the brides. After '89 the factory went bankrupt, but dozens of private boutiques took over the trade. In one particular, the

diverse staff offers wedding dresses for Bulgarians, Roma and Turks. They turn out to be quite different;

- **A Wealthy Roma:** Not all wealthy Roma are criminals, as most Bulgarians tend to think. “Faces from Bulgaria” shows the story of a craftsman from Samokov, who has made a small fortune from his talent to work with iron...
- **A school for the disabled:** A day center for work with disabled kids is set up in Samokov with the support of “Partners Bulgaria”. For some kids and their parents, this is the first break they have...
- **Enlightened Shrines:** A network of organizations in the city of Targovishte implement a project called “Svetlina” (“Light”). The project provided the 20th-century St. Ivan Rilsky Church and the 18th-century Saat Mosque with external lighting, thus illuminating the spiritual centers of Targovishte. The Municipality of Targovishte, the church board, the mosque board, and local NGOs joined efforts to develop the proposal and secure funding.

All TV shorts can be seen at

http://bulgaria.usaid.gov/344/news_item.html

For the official closing conference of the “Partners Bulgaria” Foundation, BTC ProMedia also produced two 30-minute presentation films, dedicated to the overall achievement of the project. The films were shown before an audience of over 100 direct participants in the implementation of the ethnic integration initiatives of the foundation. All TV series were also recorded as DVD’s and were given away to participants in the Conference. Several series have been shown on local TV channels in the regions, where Partners Bulgaria were active.

BTC ProMedia Sustainability

In November 2005 BTC ProMedia participated in a financial and operational review aimed at assessing the financial and management capacity of the organization to operate the current USAID program, its capability to sustain operations after the end of USAID and other donors’ assistance, and to achieve long term operational and financial sustainability. The major findings of the review team point out that BTC has sufficient management capacity needed to operate the program. The review team also found out that the BTC chances for sustainability are good due to the “clear market niche occupied by BTC, and the synergistic efforts and proactive thinking of BTC management”.

In the first quarter of 2006 BTC ProMedia developed its first five year business plan aimed at improving the business management and increasing its sustainability after the end of USAID support for its activities.

In 2006 -2010 The Broadcast Training Center ProMedia focuses on developing a sustainable model for its further work with the media in support of the successful conclusion of the transition processes in Bulgaria. BTC ProMedia aims at establishing itself as a financially viable Bulgarian entity able to continue its media training and advocacy programs beyond the end of USAID financial support in 2007. In order to achieve this goal, BTC ProMedia is

strengthening its capacity to work with Bulgarian and international donors, non-governmental and corporate partners, build on its experience as a center for high quality media training and assert its role as an independent producer of professional Television programming.

In order to achieve these goals, the ProMedia Broadcast Training Center works in the following areas:

- Increasing the BTC ProMedia Sustainability
- Independent Production
- Professional Training
- Media Advocacy
- PR Service Provision
- Development of technical & institutional capacity to compete for EU financed service contracts.

Sustainability

BTC ProMedia is focusing on several different financial resources to ensure its survival beyond the end of the current USAID grant:

- Independent production of Television programming sold to Bulgarian Television networks along the model of the “Na Chisto” weekly investigative journalism program;
- Serving as a production facility for other Bulgarian independent producers;
- Increased work as communications and media relations consultants to Bulgarian governmental agencies, NGO’s and corporate clients;
- Improved capacity to work with EU-funded media related programs;
- Strengthened relations with Bulgarian governmental and corporate donors;
- Further development of the professional training component of the program ;
- Increased capacity to work as a service provider of EU-funded service contracts.

Independent Production

In 2006 -2010 BTC ProMedia will continue developing programming for the Television production market of Bulgaria. BTC ProMedia is planning to move to a new location in early 2006, which has the capacity to host professional TV production of several productions at a time, thus increasing the capacity of the institution to generate income. Major planned productions include:

- “Na Chisto” weekly investigative journalism program, launched in 2003
- “Court correspondent”, documentary series about the most interesting court cases of the 90’s;
- “Faces of Bulgaria”, documentary series on inter-ethnic issues,

Professional Training

In 2006-2010 the ProMedia Broadcast Training Center will continue providing professional training to media professionals from the Bulgarian media outlets. BTC ProMedia specializes in training not delivered by other entities in Bulgaria in niches like:

- rule of law;
- reforming the judiciary;
- improving commercial law;
- alternative dispute resolution;

- fighting corruption and organized crime, including human trafficking;
- decentralization of government;
- resolving ethnic tensions;
- helping vulnerable groups.

Training services are provided for a fee, paid for by the media outlets or through donor support for particular courses.

Media Advocacy

In 2006 -2010 BTC ProMedia will support advocacy campaigns aiming to promote reforms in the following areas:

- rule of law ;
- reforming the judiciary;
- improving commercial law;
- fighting corruption and organized crime;
- decentralization of government;
- resolving ethnic tensions;
- helping vulnerable groups.
- fighting human trafficking;
- alternative dispute resolution development;
- covering intellectual property rights.

The campaigns will be paid for by the organizations aiming at influencing public opinion in those areas.

PR Service Provision

BTC ProMedia will act as a PR agency for institutional clients, NGO's and corporate entities providing PR services and training. The services include:

- Developing and implementing media strategies;
- Developing and implementing media plans for covering events and activities;
- Conducting professional media relations training;
- Strengthening the media relations offices of the clients;

Development of technical & institutional capacity to compete for EU financed service contracts

BTC ProMedia has the potential needed to participate in the application / implementation of various service contracts directly oriented to the provision of PR or media related services or containing such component. To be well presented on the market of public procurement BTC ProMedia will develop capacity in the following fields:

- Technical capacity in the fields of Project Design (Project Cycle Management, Logical Framework Approach, (PRAG), knowledge and skills to work with specialized documents and forms of EU service contract, knowledge and skills related to the application and administrative management of the implementation;
- Delivery of news and information for opened tenders;
- Formation and management of wide international consortia for application and implementation of service tenders;

- Service provision to the various institutions/individuals.

In Conclusion:

In 2004-2008 the ProMedia Broadcast Training Center has support the successful conclusion of the transition processes of Bulgaria by building a sustainable model for advocacy and public support for reform through the independent media.

The focus of the program has been providing media support for rule of law reform, fighting corruption, decentralization of government, resolving ethnic tensions and helping vulnerable groups.

At the end of the period the ProMedia Broadcast Training Center has become a self-sustainable Bulgarian entity, able to provide able to continue the mission of USAID support to Bulgaria after the end of USG assistance.

2. Major Results :

In 2005-2007 ProMedia BTC has achieved the following major results:

- **Media advocacy actively supports reform** in key areas of Bulgarian society
- Independent Media generate **public support and pressure for the Rule of Law;**
- Independent media actively involved in **fighting corruption;**
- Media investigate and **expose organized crime and links with international terrorism;**
- Local and national media generate **support for Decentralization of Government;**
- National and local **media, especially in regions with ethnically mixed populations help resolve ethnic tensions**
- Vulnerable groups have increased access to the media;
- Rural communities better served by the local media;

3. Major ProMedia Broadcast Training Center Activities

The program includes two closely related components: training the media professionals needed to conduct active advocacy for reforms, and involving independent media in advocacy campaigns in favor of reform in key areas.

Professional training

The ProMedia Broadcast Training Center has carried out professional training in the following areas:

- Television and Radio news reporting in priority beats;
- Print journalism training in key areas;
- Covering ROL, crime and the courts
- Investigative reporting;
- Exposing corruption;
- Covering local government;
- Reporting on the local budget;
- Business News reporting;

- Reporting on ethnic diversities;
- Documentary production;

Advocacy for Reform in Key Areas through the Media

In 2004-2008 the main goal of BTC ProMedia has been to support the advocacy efforts of indigenous Bulgarian media and civic organizations aiming to promote reform in the rule of law, anti-corruption, decentralization of government, economic development, and ethnic and vulnerable group issues. Reporters trained by BTC have been actively involved in the implementation of this component of the program. All advocacy activities have been coordinated with the respective USAID-funded implementing organizations and aimed at increasing the effectiveness of their reform programs.

Media Advocacy and Support for independent production of high-quality journalism products in key areas of public interest

- Investigating corruption;
- Rule of Law;
- Fighting terrorism and organized crime;
- Researching inter-ethnic and inter-cultural relations;
- Social reform;
- Civil participation;
- Devolution of powers to the local levels of government;

ProMedia Broadcast Training Center Sustainability

In 2004-2008 the ProMedia Broadcast Training Center has expanded its financial base in three directions:

- *providing fee-based training to Bulgarian media outlets;*
- *acting as an independent Television production studio;*
- attracting additional financial support from Bulgarian and international government and private donors.

As a result, having completed the mission of USG support to the independent media of Bulgaria, BTC ProMedia remains ***one of the major USAID legacies*** in the country and will continue to work towards its policy goals - foster free, independent and professional media in Bulgaria, provide the highest standards in professional media training, serve as the leader in high quality independent Television production, strengthen professional media organizations, Identify and train the next generation of media leaders of a new, democratic Bulgaria.