



SUCCESS STORY

Television Show Roots Out Corruption

Over 2 million viewers have tuned in since program first launched



Photo: BTC/ProMedia

“Na Chisto” anchor Daniela Trencheva (right) interviews a guest on a television show that has become famous for exposing corruption in Bulgaria.

“Na Chisto” currently has a 22 to 25 percent market share of the national television audience, said Broadcast Training Center director Petko Georgiev. Approximately 400,000 people view each episode.

“Na Chisto” (roughly translated as “to come clean”) is an apt title for a USAID-funded Bulgarian television program that has been investigating allegations of corruption in the public sector since 2003. The program has increased public awareness about corruption and resulted in concrete actions against corrupt officials.

The parliamentary committee on anti-corruption and several city councils have reviewed cases brought to light on the program. Among specific cases uncovered on “Na Chisto” include the illegal jamming of the only local opposition radio station in the city of Dulovo, in northeastern Bulgaria, before parliamentary elections in 2005; a human trafficking ring that exposed a scheme for selling Roma babies in Greece; and the biased favorable treatment of the former director of the Bulgarian State Shipping Company, whose new company wanted to privatize the shipping firm.

Corruption among university officials also has come under “Na Chisto” scrutiny. In 2003, charges were brought against the president of the University of Veliko Tarnovo after the program discovered that he was involved in establishing illegal educational centers across Bulgaria through his own private companies. The following year, the show revealed that the president of Burgas University received political support for his re-election in exchange for advanced degree diplomas issued to government officials. He was fired, and the evidence gathered by “Na Chisto” was used to bring charges against him.

While corruption remains a serious problem in Bulgaria, “Na Chisto” has helped build popular support for transparency and accountability within public institutions.