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USAID PROJECT REPORT BULGARIA: STRENGTHENING CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

January 1 to June 31, 1993

Contract No: EUR-0017-A-00-1064-00

Project Activity

From January to June of 1993, the National Democratic Institute prepared to launch its assistance program for the Bulgarian Association for Fair Elections and Civil Rights (BAFECR). As part of this effort, NDI staff consulted with the BAFECR leadership and USAID/Bulgaria as an integral part of its NED-funded seminar, "Promoting Tolerance at the Local Level," in late April.

In May and June, NDI negotiated a cooperative agreement with BAFECR. The cooperative agreement, which was originally expected to be for \$25,000, was increased to \$110,000. The agreement has now been signed and drawdowns of \$10,000 and \$15,000 have been transferred to BAFECR.

In addition, during May and June, NDI staff members communicated with BAFECR leaders on the development of a training program for their local leaders. Plans were made to conduct an assessment mission to clubs outside Sofia. A three-person team of experts, accompanied by two NDI staff members, was organized to travel to Bulgaria from July 4 to 12. Three teams consisting of one expert accompanied by an NDI and/or BAFECR staff member will each travel to three cities outside of Sofia. Meetings will be held with local government officials and the local BAFECR chapter to discuss the state of the club, to understand the local concerns and to gain a better understanding of possible BAFECR local club initiatives that can be undertaken to stimulate citizen interest and involvement in the democratic process.

Following this nine-city study, the entire NDI/BAFECR team will reconvene in Varna for a three-day training seminar and the annual BAFECR meeting. After outlining BAFECR's 1992 activities and exploring future BAFECR goals and objectives, the team of experts will conduct a number of training workshops on the skills necessary to promote leadership and stimulate initiative among the club chairpersons. Based on the nine-city visit, the annual meeting and the training program, the team will offer advice to NDI and BAFECR staff about future initiatives they feel are needed to strengthen the national organization and branches in the countryside.





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USAID PROJECT REPORT ROMANIA: PROMOTING CIVIC EDUCATION January 1 to June 31, 1993 Contract No: EUR-0017-A-00-1064-00

Background

NDI has had an almost continuous professional staff presence in Romania since 1990, working primarily with the Pro Democracy Association as well as with the major political parties on voter education for and monitoring of the 1990 and 1992 elections.

The proposal signed under Amendment 4 of Cooperative Agreement No. EUR-0017-A-00-1064-00 envisaged continuing NDI program work with Pro Democracy in the post-election period as well as with the parliamentary parties on such issues as constituency servicing.

The proposal also envisaged the presence of two field representatives in Romania for a period of up to twelve months. Since February 1993 Robin Freedman has been NDI's in-country representative.

Project Activity

Susan Atwood, NDI Senior Program Officer for East and Central Europe, visited Bucharest from April 25 to 28, 1993. The two main reasons for her visit were: 1) to assess the on-going program activities of the Pro Democracy Association; and 2) to hold discussions with leaders of the parliamentary groups with a view to organizing a parliamentary program.

In the post-election period since September 1992, Pro Democracy and NDI have concentrated on a training program for the PDA clubs around the country. These training programs included such topics as strengthening the lines of communication between the clubs, the regional coordinators and the national office and the maintenance of financial records. In addition, PDA clubs have organized a series of nineteen roundtables to discuss draft legislation that is currently before parliament. Deputies and senators from both government and opposition parties attended these roundtables to answer questions from their constituents on the draft legislation.

Building on this work, Robin Freedman and Susan Atwood held a series of meetings with leaders of the parliamentary groups to discuss the organization of a parliamentary dialogue to address issues of constituency servicing.

This initiative was welcomed and from June 22 to 26, 1993, Susan Atwood returned to Romania with Patrick Merloe, a human rights lawyer with extensive experience in Romania, to conduct a more detailed preparation for such a program. The two NDI representatives, Robin Freedman and representatives of PDA visited two judets, Bihor and Dolj, to discuss the draft



program with the mayors, prefects, local party activists and the local councils. Discussions were also held in Bucharest with the deputies and senators from Bihor and Dolj.

Actual Results/Accomplishments

Invitations to the parliamentary dialogue, which will be held from September 2 to 4, 1993, have been sent to parliamentary group leaders, deputies and senators from Bihor and Dolj and representatives of the local parties of both judets. The dialogue will open on September 2 with presentations by the government and opposition leaders of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate. Four nationally elected representatives from Western Europe and North America will discuss with the Romanian participants their respective roles in parliament and in the constituency. The following two days will take place simultaneously in Bihor and Dolj with two international representatives travelling with NDI and PDA representatives to conduct the dialogue in the two constituencies.



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