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Bulgaria: More Transparency, Less Corruption?

'We are working for the utmost transparency, this was the main message by the Minister of State Administration and Administrative Reform' as well as the Heads of Press Centers of the main ministries at a conference on European Standards in the Media and institutions organized in Sofia on July 8 by the Union of Journalists in Bulgaria Podkrepa and the Journalists against Corruption Club. With the implementation of the Code on Access to Documents in 2002 and the pressure by the European Union to work against corruption, organized crime and more transparency in the public institutions, there has been improvement regarding transparency and access to information. 'Journalists gained a lot of freedoms. "Many are now very good professional journalists and we are miles ahead of the politicians. But the relationship with politicians and institutions can still be described by mutual distrust, said a journalist from the daily newspaper *Trud Daily*, which is owned by the WAZ.

An impressive moment was when the Director of the Press Centre and Public relations Directorate of the Ministry of Interior handed out a letter containing the names of journalists who are members of the Journalists against Corruption Club and at the same time had been members of the former Secret Service. It must have taken a long time to get these names, but in the name of truth and transparency this *geste* is a very positive one. European Director Renate Schroeder stressed in her key note intervention Council of Europe acquis with regard to access to information, protection of sources, defamation and press freedom standards.