



**European
Federation
of Journalists**

ARNE KÖNIG
Chair
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Dear Nick, dear Reneta,

Thank you very much again for the successful seminar last weekend. I learned a lot about the situation in Bulgaria and have been very impressed by the openness and level of discussions. I wrote an article in our newsletter, which I add to the text.

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.

Press Officers from the Judicial institutions reported about successes and difficulties in terms of opening to the public the court procedures, making court proceedings understandable for the public and mediating between the judges and the media/society. Good practice has been reported and problems were discussed.

All in all, this was a very interesting seminar and I thank the organisers and the sponsors for this very important opportunity. Only dialogue between the media and the institutions can overcome problems. One should not be defensive, since in all societies there are tensions between the institutions and the media, but best practice from other European countries can help to overcome them. With courageous journalists like the ones present at the meeting and very efficient NGOs, like Transparency International and Access to information programme, an active civil society and efficient government can help overcome problems of corruption and organized crime etc. We hope that the words by the Minister that transparency is priority are taken seriously, not only to fulfill European accession criteria but to create more trust between those who govern and the electorate society. Media has an important role to play and the EFJ is very grateful that the Bulgarian government has supported the Union of Journalists Podkrepa, IFJ and EFJ member and Journalist against Corruption Club in this important initiative.

It would be a very good idea to have a follow-up meeting in 2007 with representatives from other European countries as well.

With Kind Regards,

Renate Schroeder,
European Director.