2014 Annual Activity Report
Bulgarian Helsinki Committee
2014 ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT

March 2015
THE BULGARIAN HELSINKI COMMITTEE (BHC) is an independent non-governmental organisation for the protection of human rights: civil, political, economic, social and cultural. In our work we place a special emphasis on protection of the rights of the most vulnerable groups in Bulgaria: ethnic minorities, underprivileged groups, persons deprived of their liberty, people in institutions, children, women. The objectives of BHC is to promote respect and support the protection of human rights, to lobby for bringing Bulgarian legislation in line with international standards, promote public debate on human rights issues and popularize the human rights cause among the public at large.

BHC was founded on 14 July 1992. The organization is registered at the Central Register of NGOs working in the public benefit at the Ministry of Justice (Certificate No. 001/12.07.2001).

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

BHC activities are governed by a General Assembly which is the supreme governing body of the organisation. In 2014, the members of the General Assembly were:


EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee is elected by the General Assembly and manages the overall activities of the organization. Members of the Executive Committee (mandate March 2014 – February 2016) are: Krassimir Kanev, chair, Antoaneta Nenkova, Dessislava Simeonova, Georgi Bankov, Iliana Savova, Vassil Chaprazov and Yana Buhrer Tavanier.
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In 2014, the spheres of activities in which the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee (BHC) was engaged were determined on the basis of the BHC Strategy Paper 2013 - 2018 and the 2014 Activity Plan.

BHC implemented activities in the framework of its five permanent programmes – one monitoring, two legal and two specialized: Research and Monitoring Programme, Legal Programme, Programme for Legal Defense of Refugee and Migrants, Campaigns and Communications Programme, Programming and Administration Programme. The activities of the different programmes are outlined below.

MONITORING AND RESEARCH PROGRAMME

In 2014, the monitoring programme of BHC conducted monitoring in different spheres, with a focus on closed institutions for adults with mental disorders and their new alternatives – residential social services. Researchers carried out planned monitoring visits to childcare institutions, institutions for people deprived of liberty and ad hoc visits to investigate reports of abuse coming from these institution. They prepared reports on fundamental rights and implemented a number of advocacy activities. In December 2014 the working group at the Ministry of Justice in connection with Article 12 from the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities resumed its work; BHC has representative in the working group.

MONITORING OF CLOSED INSTITUTIONS FOR ADULTS – SOCIAL CARE INSTITUTIONS, PRISONS

In January, BHC carried out its annual survey of closed institutions. 140 inmates were interviewed in four prisons on issues relating to their pretrial detention.

Institutions for adults with mental disabilities, developmental disabilities and dementia were systematically monitored in 2014. Researchers also visited residential social care institutions, sheltered houses and transient houses. On some visits, the teams were accompanied by psychiatrists to assess medical care. A special report on the situation with residential care for people with mental disabilities, including in the community – is under preparation.

The programme continued making visits to prisons, chiefly in connection with reports of abuse. In connection with the pilot case of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), Neshkov and Others v. Bulgaria, researcher engaged in media work in connection with conditions in Bulgarian prisons.

During the year, several serious cases of ill-treatment of inmates by prison guards were established. The most drastic of these came from Sofia Prison; seven foreign national inmates were beaten by several guards. The victims underwent medical certification upon BHC insistence and provided with legal assistance. A complaint was filed with the prosecution and a complaint sent to the National
Preventive Mechanism. Work continued in connection with a 2013 beating of inmates from the same prison. BHC filed an application with ECtHR.

At the end of the year, BHC again requested from the Ministry of Justice that NGOs are allowed to meet pre-trial detainees.

**ACTIVITIES IN PLACES OF DEPRIVATION OF LIBERTY OF CHILDREN**

In 2014, BHC made 47 monitoring visits to 11 types of places for deprivation of liberty of children – all of them within the system of juvenile justice. We also interviewed 104 children deprived of their liberty. The activities were implemented within the EC-funded project “Children Deprived of Liberty: Between Legacy and Reform”.

A comprehensive report was written on the situation in the closed institutions. BHC coordinated the project that was implemented together with partners from Hungary, Poland and Romania.

In December BHC and the Hungarian Helsinki Committee organized a conference in Budapest for the launch of the report. The report was launched domestically on 16 December, and on 18 December BHC organized a stakeholder roundtable to discuss the findings.

In connection with established violations in childcare institutions, BHC undertook advocacy, including: alert to the Ministry of Justice in connection with violations of the rights to privacy and inviolability of the correspondence in the juvenile prison in Boichinovtsi; in response, the Ministry of Justice carried out an inspection and undertook action against a member of staff; letters were sent to the Committee for the Prevention of Torture in connection with violations of the rights of children in reformatory institutions; complaints to the prosecution in connection with illegal placement of a minor in a psychiatric hospital; appeals against refusal of the State Child Protection Agency (SACP) to provide public information in connection with inspections at childcare institutions; alerts were sent to SACP in connection with physical and sexual abuse of children in an institution near the town of Elin Pelin.

**ACTIVITIES IN INSTITUTIONS FOR CHILDREN DEPRIVED OF PARENTAL CARE**

The project was carried out in the period 2013-2014 and its focus was on the quality of care for children under 3 and children with special needs.

The research team visited 26 institutions and 30 community alternatives to research medical care, living conditions, reintegration of children, foster care and listing for adoption of children deprived of parental care.

The final analysis from the research, “The Transformation of the ‘Baby institutions’ – Problem or Potential” – was published in September 2014, made available online, and presented in two public discussions at the Red House. Advocacy was undertaken with Ministry of Healthcare and the State Agency for Child Protection (SACP), as well as UNICEF – Bulgaria.

In connection with reports of irregularities of the process of deinstitutionalization of children from the childcare institution in Doganovo, near Elin Pelin, in January a team of BHC researchers visited the institution and the receiving alternative residential community care centre. Interviews with children revealed reports of abuse; these were sent to SACP and the responsible ministries. An inquiry has been launched.
ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES

During the year the programme provided expert positions on different strategic applications. In connection with the applications on Yordanov v. Bulgaria, part of Neshkov and Others v. Bulgaria we prepared Memorials and Counter-Memorials on the position of the government. Legal staff prepared complaints on behalf of minors in connection with violated direct access to court owing to inability to appeal placement in a juvenile reformatory institution by an underage person, violated right to a family life and lack of an effective domestic remedy.

The programme drafted the complaint of an applicant before ECtHR regarding the violated right to a family and personal life and failure of the state to implement its obligations to return the applicant’s child to its mother.

The programme undertook a series of advocacy acts on behalf of inmates from different prisons in connection with a variety of problems and general health conditions in prisons.

We also carried out an analysis of the relevant practice and international norms regarding nursing in public in connection with upcoming litigation on the issue.

In March 2014 ECtHR delivered M.G. v. Bulgaria, where legal representation was provided by BHC. The court held that the decision of the Bulgarian court allowing for Mr G’s extradition to Russia would have been a violation of the absolute ban on inhuman and degrading treatment of the European Convention on Human Rights.

BHC was invited to submit a third party intervention in the pilot case Neshkov and Others v. Bulgaria. The programme submitted a brief on prison material conditions in Bulgaria.

Lawyers from the Monitoring and Research Programme and the Legal Defence Programme participated in a joint EU research project on the rights of LGBT families and prepared a country report on Bulgaria.

Staff was invited to participate in several working groups at the Ministry of Justice, among them a working group discussing the recommendations of the Committee for the Prevention of Torture to Bulgaria, after their latest report from 2014, and a working group on drafting amendments to the Execution of Sentences and Detention under Remand Act.

In 2014 BHC started work on a European project within the framework of the Prison Litigation Network, financed by the European Commission. The project is carried with NGOs and academic institutions from Romania, Italy, France, Belgium, Ireland, Spain and Bulgaria. BHC is engaged in carrying out an analysis of the case law of ECtHR on relevant provisions of the European Convention. BHC staff started work on preparing a comprehensive country report on the Bulgarian system of protection of the rights of children deprived of liberty.

DATA COLLECTION FOR THE EU FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS AGENCY

In 2014, BHC continued preparing researches commissioned by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights.

We prepared a study on homophobia, the legal mechanisms for fighting it and the effectiveness of the institutions tasked with fighting it. The study established a lack of awareness and identification of manifestations of homophobia among the state stakeholders, and ineffective protection of victims.
We prepared a large study that mapped the child protection system in Bulgaria with an analysis of the legislation and political documents in connection with the problems of children victims of abuse, children with special needs, children from ethnic minorities, unaccompanied migrant children and children victims of trafficking. The study found that there are no effective mechanisms in place for protection of the rights of vulnerable groups and victims of violence and/or crimes, lack of sufficient financing, lack of motivation mechanisms for those working in the system.

BHC conducted a filed research with children heard as witnesses or victims in court proceedings connected with domestic violence, divorce proceedings, custody and crimes. Psychologists interviewed children aged 8 to 18. The right of children to be heard in court and in pretrial proceedings suffers from many violations, according to the conclusions of the study. Children are not informed adequately about the aims of the proceedings, or their role in it, or the final outcome; hearings are not adapted to the age, specific needs of the participants, which leads to their re-traumatisation.

BHC carried out a study to study all institutions and community services for children and adults with disabilities. It analyses the type of service, capacity, type of care that is provided, the financing and length of stay.

We prepared a special research on the legislation and bodies that apply special surveillance means. The main problems, according to its findings, are the lack of effective protection of individuals against illegal and unnecessary use of special surveillance means and the lack of information for their usage.

**PUBLICATIONS**

In 2014, the programme finalized its analysis of the situation in the crisis centres for children and issued the book *Crisis Centres for Children in Bulgaria in 2013*, which analyses the state of human rights of children in the 14 crisis centres across the country. The book studies the state of this social service and the reasons for the lack of coordination between the institutions that create, manage and control their activities. The report analyses whether the measure is preventive or restrictive, connected with overcoming crisis situations or has a social function for lengthy periods of time, resulting in institutionalization rather than supporting children at risk.

In September, we published the report from the monitoring of the ‘baby institutions’ – *The Transformation of the ‘Baby Institutions’ – Problem or Potential*, written as a result of activities in these types of childcare establishments. The report analyses the change in the quality of care in the institutions for children aged 0 to 3 and children with special needs after the start of the deinstitutionalization process in 2010. In follows the effect of DI through personal stories of children taken out of the institutions and being raised in a family environment. It also analyses the “blank spaces” of progress in the DI process and concludes that the risk for children with special needs to be abandoned and remain in institutional care with minimal chances of adoption remains exceedingly high.

*Activities within the program during the year were implemented by: Krassimir Kanev, director. Stanimir Petrov, coordinator, and Elitza Gerginova – researcher – activities in social care institutions and residential*
alternatives for adults with mental disorders. Svetla Baeva – coordinator of activities in places for deprivation of liberty for children, together with the researchers Zhenya Ivanova, and Kaloyan Stanev, Diliana Angelova – legal researcher, and the attorney Daniela Furtunova. Antoaneta Nenkova, coordinator, carried out the activities in the ‘baby institutions’ together with Desislava Simeonova.

Slavka Kukova coordinated the data collection activities for the Agency for Fundamental Rights.

LEGAL DEFENCE PROGRAMME

In 2014, the BHC Legal Defence Programme (LDP) carried out legal advocacy, strategic litigation before the domestic and international legal fora, lobbying for reform of legislation and practice on issues of public interest and monitoring the pre-trial proceedings in the cases of abuse in childcare institutions.

DEVELOPMENTS IN THE JOINT INSPECTIONS BETWEEN BHC AND THE PROSECUTION IN INSTITUTIONS FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

In 2014, LDP continued to monitor the pre-trial proceedings in connection with abuse against children in the institutions for children with mental disabilities. The programme did not receive a response from the prosecutor general regarding the refusal to provide access to the case files from several regional prosecutions. From all 240 pre-trial proceedings, inquiries are being conducted only in 5.

DOMESTIC LITIGATION

In 2014, LDP continued to engage in strategic litigation before the domestic courts aimed at combating discrimination on basic grounds such as ethnicity, gender, religion, disability, etc. Among them:

- **Cases on the grounds of ethnicity and religion:**

  In May 2014, LDP undertook the defense of a coloured woman who had become the victim of an attack by skin head. The case is pending before the Sofia City Court.

  LDP ceased Sofia District Prosecution in connection with calls for eugenics by the journalist Albena Vuleva addressed against Roma, criminals and paedophiles. Another case against the same journalist Islamophobic and xenophobic statements was postponed.

  In early 2015 the first hearing was held in connection with the case against Magdalena Tasheva, MP from the right-wing Ataka party, for anti-refugee discourse on the television’s Alfa TV channel.

  In October 2014, LDP undertook the defence before the equality body of a woman of Vietnamese origin in connection with discrimination on ethnic grounds. Her photograph was used in a TV broadcast to instill a negative stereotype of people of Vietnamese origin. A settlement was achieved between the parties; the case was discontinued.
Pre-trial proceedings are still underway in connection the beating of a racist attack over a Romani man and the anti-refugee xenophobic banners during a soccer game.

In response to a signal sent by LDP in November 2014 the Sofia District Prosecution started a pre-trial investigation against Miroslav Paskalev in connection with calls for violence against Syrian refugees disseminated on Facebook.

LDP is appealing the termination of the pre-trial proceedings against the politician Angel Djambazki, Elena Vatashka and other others in connection with xenophobic statements – calls for violence, based on racial hatred, against refugees in Bulgaria.

In the end of 2014, LDP ceased the Supreme Prosecution of Cassation in connection with the refusal of lower-ranking prosecutions to initiate pre-trial proceedings in connection with the political election campaigns of Bulgarian National Salvation Front and VMRO – Bulgarian National Movement (segregation of Roma in camps where they would be exhibited for foreigners visiting Bulgaria).

- **Cases on the grounds of gender and sexual orientation**

  At the end of December 2014, the Bulgarian equality body found journalist Martin Karbovski guilty of harassment on the basis of “gender” on account of publications degrading to women in two internet sites and sentenced him to pay two fines.

  In April 2014 as a result of litigation undertaken before the equality body against a stereotypical internet publication against non-heterosexual men, the publication was taken off the site and an apology was published.

  In late 2014, LDP undertook the defense of the Foundation GLAS Bulgaria which the courts has refused to register with homophobic motives. The case was terminated, after another court panel registered the association.

- **Cases in connection with mental disability rights**

  Cases undertaken in connection with mental disability rights include: legal work in connection with an established case of sexual abuse against the client of an institution for people with mental disabilities committed by a member of staff; legal work in connection with systematic physical and mental abuse against a client of the same social institution; ongoing work in connection with acts of discrimination against a man with a mental illness who is deprived of his liberty (degrading treatment, lack of provision of medical care after attempted suicide and self-injury).

- **Other domestic litigation**

  In February 2014, LDP started litigation on behalf of BHC against the refusal of the chair of the State Agency for National Security (SANS) to provide public information on the requests made by SANS for use of special surveillance means. The case is pending before the Supreme Administrative Court.

  Among other ongoing litigation is connected with: representation of a participant in the anti-governmental protests before the police; he was fined for not carrying a police order; that same day, however, he was absent from the country; representation of a politician of Turkish origin fined for using his mother tongue during an election campaign; actions in connection
with threats to staff of BHC during a public rally in front of our office; calls for murder and incitement to discrimination of human rights defenders (including BHC staff) disseminated on Facebook.

LITIGATION BEFORE THE EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS

LDP continued engaging in strategic anti-discrimination litigation before the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR). Examples of work include:

In May 2014, LDP started court action in behalf of an LGBTI activist who became the victim of hate speech from an Orthodox priest together with other participants in the 2012 Sofia Pride.

In July 2014 LDP filed an application on behalf of the parents of a diseased child from a mental childcare institution. They daughter died after suffocating from solid food in hospital after being left alone by institution staff, who failed to inform the hospital of her swallowing problems.

In December 2014 LDP started representing a man of Cameroonian origin who was denied asylum in Bulgaria. The Bulgarian authorities denied his claim for asylum on account of persecution on LGBTI grounds claiming he had “changed” his sexual orientation at a later stage in life.

In May 2014 LDP sent additional comments in connection with *Karaahmed v. Bulgaria* (anti-Muslim aggression by members and supporters of the Ataka party).

In September LDP submitted a third party intervention in connection with a case against Poland concerning the group rape of a minor.

In July 2014 in *Campeanu v. Romania*, ECtHR delivered a historic judgement in the case of Valentin Campeanu – an HIV-positive Roma man who died in a psychiatric hospital as a result of institutional neglect. The BHC participated in this historic effort by submitting a third party intervention. ECtHR ruled that a public interest NGO can file applications on behalf of deceased individuals form whom there is nobody to seek justice.

PUBLIC ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES

In April 2014, the prosecution sent a negative assessment to the Sofia City Court in connection with the motion to register the Neo-totalitarian Party of Bulgaria. In it, the prosecution based its position on the signal of 112 citizens that had been logistically initiated and organised by LDP.

In June, the deputy chair of the Supreme Court of Cassation invited LDP director to deliver a lecture before the General Assembly of the Criminal Division regarding the hearing behind closed doors of cases when special surveillance means had been used.

In 2014 the joint project with the national Darik radio and BHC came to an end. In it, BHC and the national media jointly produced a weekly anti-discrimination programme, *Give me the Right!!*

LDP actively worked on women’s rights, including through issuing public positions, writing articles for mainstream dailies, media appearances and lectures. A major aim was to clearly articulate the problems connected with gender-motivated violence, both physical and verbal.
LDP was also engaged in its advocacy on behalf of ethnic minorities. LDP publicly denounced the systematic refusal of the prosecution to enforce the law against political parties using hate speech in their election campaigns, as well as the arbitrary demolition of Roma homes in Stara Zagora’s Lozenetz neighbourhood. LDP also reacted to the racist threat of health minister Moskov from December 2014 to stop emergency medical teams from entering Roma neighbourhoods.

In April LDP sent a position to MPs in connection with a bill for amendments to the Act for Protection from Discrimination in relation to transgender people and people who do not identify to belonging to any sex. Among other instances of LGBTI advocacy were media participations and organized trainings and seminars.

Throughout the year, LDP was an active participant in the debates on the reform and transparency of the judicial system.

**SEMINARS, TRAININGS**

In 2014, LDP participated in trainings, expert meetings and seminars in connection with its work. In March LDP met with young German lawyers and took part in a train-the-trainers training in Ljubljana on the topic of same-sex families in Europe and their right to freedom of movement, among others.

*The work of LDP in 2014 was implemented by: Margarita Ilieva – legal director, the lawyers Adela Kachaunova, Blagovesta Lambreva, Deyan Draganov, Elena Krasteva, Mirela Zarichinova; Radoslav Stoyanov, communications expert; and the volunteers Ani Stoykova, Vassilena Savova, Gergana Yancheva, Diana Marinova and Mariela Bogdanova.*

**REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS LEGAL PROTECTION PROGRAMME**

In 2014, the BHC Refugees and Migrants Legal Protection Programme continued its work, started two decades ago, with the support of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Work is based on several institutional agreements of cooperation (with UNHCR/ State Agency for Refugees/ Border Police/ Migration Directorate).

Activities during the year included monitoring and evaluation of the practice of conducting the proceedings in granting international protection and status on the territory of Bulgaria, border monitoring in connection with securing access to territory and procedure, strategic litigation. The programme engaged in advocacy for the creation of legislation for legal and practical guarantees for fundamental human rights of foreigners.

**MONITORING OF ASYLUM PROCEEDINGS**

As a result of the refugee wave at the end of 2013, UNHCR announced a Critical level 1 for Bulgaria and commissioned the BHC with additional activities until the end of 2014. These included provision
of direct legal aid and legal representation for vulnerable groups among asylum seekers in the context of a lacking institutional capacity of the state to manage the crisis.

The programme provided legal consultations, interventions and representation before the administration through its permanent reception centres in the programme offices in Sofia and Svilengrad and through legal reception offices in the registration centres of the State Refugee Agency. Profilers worked alongside lawyers with the main objective to identify vulnerable individuals and provide legal aid and representation.

**BORDER MONITORING AND MONITORING OF CENTRES FOR DETENTION OF FOREIGNERS**

Permanent border monitoring was carried out in the places for police detention at the border check points. The programme monitored the special institutions for temporary accommodation of foreigners on a weekly basis – these included the institution in Sofia, as well as the ones in Ljubimitis, and the newly-opened centre in Elhovo that functions as a centre for short-term administrative detention of migrants.

**DOMESTIC LITIGATION**

The programme was active in appealing acts of the administration and access to courts for asylum seekers and illegal migrants, as well as in providing pro bono representation before the administrative courts and Supreme Administrative Court in cases of serious violations of material and procedural rights.

In 2014, the programme conducted **279 border visits and provided legal aid in the filing of asylum applications to 4,041 asylum seekers**. The Border Police Directorate General registered 3,046 asylum applications (inasmuch as children are registered together with their parents).

The programme monitored Dublin transfers from and to other EU countries – 184 in total during 2014.

The programme engaged in advocacy before the Prosecution of Bulgaria against the criminal prosecution for illegal entry in the country of asylum seekers. In 2014 the programme established only 0,2% (11 out of 4,041 cases) rate of prosecution for illegal entry in violation of the principle of depenalization; these cases occurred in the prosecutions and courts in Svilengrad, Elhovo and Yambol.

In 2014, the programme monitored the implementation of the principle for access to procedure in the special institutions for temporary placement of foreigners. During the year, we carried out 203 visits to such institutions, as a result of which the programme was able to provide **legal aid for access to procedure of 5,992 asylum seekers** therein; they were assisted in filing asylum applications before the administration. Out of this number, 93% were released and transferred to refugee centres at the State Agency for Refugees with an average duration of detention of 11 days (in comparison to 45 days in 2013).

Teams of profilers and interpreters from the programme interviewed and **profiled a total of 2,856 asylum seekers**. Among them, the programme identified 665 asylum seekers from vulnerable groups with specific needs, of whom 260 unaccompanied children, 233 individuals with refused registration, 72 mandate refugees and 100 separated families. They were provided with legal assistance and
assistance in family reunification.

In 2014, the programme carried out 2,055 legal interventions, of which in 309 cases the programme ensured registration and access to procedure, 279 for issuing of ID documents, 938 representations before the deciding body in charge of evaluating the international protection application, 166 interviews in connection with ensuring social, health and educational rights of asylum seekers, 100 proceedings concerned with family reunification, 187 homeless asylum seekers in connection with accommodation and 4 recognized refugees in connection with applying for Bulgarian citizenship.

In 2014, the programme monitored proceedings conducted by the Satte Refugee Agency with the aim of respecting basic minimal standards for evaluation of the asylum application and for provision of international protection. We monitored the proceedings in four registration centres for a total of 491 beneficiaries.

The programme filed a total of 488 cases before the administrative courts, 6 cases against a decision for a Dublin transfer, 12 cases against refusal provide protection to unaccompanied children, 25 refusals in accelerated proceedings and 445 appeals against decisions in general procedure. The programme ensured representation of asylum seekers in 159 cases before the courts and managed to achieve 88 repeals, which is 55% success rate.

In 2014, the programme filed 311 strategic cases.

Thus, in 2014 the programme provided legal aid, representation and consultations to a total of 18,642 beneficiaries, of which 763 unaccompanied children.

LEGAL ANALYSES, TRAININGS

In 2014, the programme prepared its traditional specialized reports – the Annual Report for Border Monitoring and the Annual Report for Monitoring Statute Proceedings. Both contained recommendations to government and the state bodies for practice and policy reform. The programme also prepared the annual update of the country report on Bulgaria for the AIDA (Asylum Information Database) of the European Council for Refugees and Exiles.

During the year, the programme carried out a training in refugee law of 20 ex officio attorneys with the cooperation of the Centre for Training of Lawyers at the Supreme Judicial Council. We also carried out four trainings of staff of the Border Police Directorate General together with the UNHCR.


In 2014, the programme worked with the interpreters Emilia Mihailova, Ljudmila Yaneva, Maria Nikolova, Vesela Georgieva, Svetla Lekova, Mihaela Mihailevska, Fadi Elias Nami, Ibrahim Djaradat and Ali Djaradat.

Since 1997, a National Asylum Lawyers Network functions at the programme staffed with 18 lawyers.
CAMPAIGNS AND COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAMME

The programme is responsible for BHC communications, developments of advocacy strategies and campaigns, as well as for the design, visibility and impact of all BHC activities.

ACTIVITIES CONNECTED WITH THE VISIBILITY AND IMPACT OF BHC CAMPAIGNS

In 2014, BHC prepared the Obektiv Discussion Club and the monthly information newsletter. A new template for the newsletter was designed in early 2014 to better accommodate the interests of the subscribers; currently the newsletter has 584 subscribers.

The programme maintained the main BHC site www.bghelsinki.org in Bulgarian and English, the special thematic sites and the organisation profiles in the social media (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn). Our Facebook profile has over 5,400 friends (an increase of 1,400 for 2014); our Twitter account has over 760 followers.

The programme organizes all BHC press and special events and is responsible for work with the media. The programme manager produces the official positions, declarations, open letters, press releases published by the committee. In the reporting period, BHC published over 70 such documents.

In 2014, BHC held three press conferences (presentations of annual human rights report, report on ‘baby institutions’ and report on institutions for deprivation of liberty of children), in addition to several other public events.

The seventh annual Sofia Pride was supported by BHC. BHC took part in the organisation committee and the meetings with institutions, and the communication activities.

BHC and the Bulgarian Red Cross co-organised the second campaign part of the international initiative “Walk a Mile in Her Shoes” against violence against women. BHC created the web site of the initiative and took part in the communication activities.

After the refugee crisis from late 2013, a main focus in activities were asylum issues. In March 2014, the programme joined the campaign for support of Syrian refugees and migrants and supported the measures for assistance to refugees proposed by ECRE. Over 100 partners from 34 countries took part. As part of the campaign BHC organized info stands at three events, including TEDxBG.

In April, the programme assisted the public launch of the Human Rights Watch report on push-backs at the Bulgarian-Turkish border.

In May 2014 the programme organized together with Bilitis, in connection with the International Day against Homophobia and Transphobia, a discussion on discrimination of LGBT people in the EU. BHC invited candidates for MEPs from the main parties in Bulgaria.
In June 2014, the programme organized the educational campaign “Meet the refugees” in partnership with Multi Culti on the occasion of the International Day of Refugees. The campaign included a myth-buster series, presented personal stories of refugees, volunteers/individual donors to refugees issues and collected non-financial donations. The campaign was very successful on Internet.

From 12 to 19 July 2014 BHC co-organised the third International Summer Human Rights Cam together with Amnesty International. The initiative was organized as part of the campaign „S.O.S. Europe“. Activists, refugees, migrant and experts in the sphere of refugee issues gathered in Bulgaria with the goal to promotes the protection of refugee rights at the borders. Apart from the logistics, BHC was responsible for the publicity around the camp, liaising with the media, multimedia production, feeding news into the social media.

In August 2014, the programme started work on the organization of the Human of the Year annual human rights awards. This year we created a new, modern site and introduced a more secure online voting platform. The Facebook profile of the award had 1,100 followers.

The programme introduced a platform for support where each nominee could propose specific ways to offer support to their cause, and individuals could support to these causes.

During the year, we continued the campaign to support the rights of parents of stillborn babies to bury them, “Our children are not biological waste”.

The programme produced 17 videos, among them “Between protection and punishment” – on the reformatory institutions in Bulgaria (comprising a 3-video series). The project team filmed a BHC seminar on the right of movement of same-sex couples in the European Union. All videos, incl. on child rights, Human of the Year, are available online on the BHC site.

OBEKTIV DISCUSSION CLUB AT THE RED HOUSE CENTRE FOR CULTURE AND DEBATE

In October 2014 we started organizing the Obektiv Discussion in partnership with the Red House Centre for Culture and Debate. We organize monthly human rights discussions followed by art presentations by various artists.

Between October and December we organised three discussions: on the transformation of the “baby institutions”, on deinstitutionalization, and on refugees in Bulgaria. Podcasts and videocasts of the discussions are available online.
The activities of the programme during the year were implemented by: Svetla Baeva – programme manager, Nia Kiryakova - communications expert, Tsveta Stoeva – communications expert, Andrey Getov – multimedia producer, Radoslav Stoyanov – media analyst, Yana Buhrer Tavanier – special projects consultant. Antoaneta Nenkova is responsible for the Obektiv Discussion Club.

Until February 2014, the Obektiv magazine was produced by: Yuliana Metodieva, editor-in-chief, and Zhana Nikolova – editor.

“HUMAN OF THE YEAR 2014“ ANNUAL HUMAN RIGHTS AWARD

The Human of the Year awards for outstanding contribution to human rights were given out on 10 December 2015 – International Human Rights Day – for the seventh consecutive year. The awards are given out for innovative, constructive acts that are a precedent in the human rights sphere and a factor for public development.

Everyone can nominate a person, group or organization for the award. The eligible nominations in 2014 were 35. The audience could vote for the Audience Award through online voting.

The volunteers and donors during the 2014 floods received the first prize in the „Human of the Year 2014“ awards in recognition of their swift response to a crisis situation in the summer of 2014 when hundreds of people were affected by the floods.

Samaritans Association and Initiative for Help Foundation received second prizes for their work for including underprivileged children and adults in society and maintaining programmes aimed at reducing the harms from drug addictions.

Four special awards were given out: Rossen Tzvetkov – “Journalist of the Year,” Ruslan Trad – “Activist of the Year,” Dr. Boyana Petkova – “Inspiration of the Year” and Roma Matrix – for overall contribution in fighting discrimination. The Audience Award this year went to Ljubomila Krivosheiva, founder and manager of the Wild Animals Foundation for her animal shelter for wild animals in Sofia.

This year’s award had a new, modern site, humanoftheyear.org.

The 2014 Human of the Year Awards were given by a jury composed of: Krassimir Kanev, jury chair, Alexander Kashumov, Ivan Bedrov, Magdalena Maleeva, Marin Bodakov, Maria Cheresheva, Tatjana Vaksberg and Yana Buhrer Tavanier.
In 2014, the award was organised with the support of the French Cultural Institute, the Havas Advertising Agency and the Bulgarian National Television. Havas generously supported the awards by producing a pro bono campaign, including producing banners and TV videos.

**PROGRAMMING AND ADMINISTRATION PROGRAMME**

The programme has the primary responsibility for fundraising and reporting on BHC projects.

The programme supports BHC activities connected with administration and general coordination, human resources management, technical and logistics support, accounting.

Programme staff ensures the initial contacts with individuals filing complaints at BHC; they assist the contacts with journalists in connection with press releases and other BHC publications. They have the primary role in organizing all BHC public events, seminars and conferences.

The programme works with an administrative staff of five people, three of which – part-time. Accounting services are provided by the Accounting Firm “Zhelykova, Staneva and Georgiev” Ltd.

The programme is also responsible for reporting before the Bulgarian financial institutions, donors and the Ministry of Justice in connection with the activities in the public benefit. BHC has introduced a double-tier system of financial accountability and control. Everyday financial operations are performed by an external accounting firm. As a second tier, financial accountability is ensured by the annual audits of income and expenditure performed by an external auditing company - RSM BX Ltd. (ISO 9001:2008 certified by DEKRA Certification GmbH, Stuttgart, Germany). BHC has carried out independent external audits of its finances since 1998.

In early 2014 BHC was subjected to a tax inspection by the National Revenue Agency.¹ In March, the results became public. Not a single violation in the receipt and expenditure of income was established. The inspection covered the period 2007 through to 2012.

**PROJECT FINANCING RECEIVED IN 2014**

Among the largest donors of the BHC is 2014 were: UNHCR, Open Society Institute – Budapest, Oak Foundation, European Commission, Fundamental Rights Agency of the EU. Other traditional donors of the organization were the US-based Leon Levy Foundation that started its support for the organization’s Legal Defence Programme in 2006.

The expenditures and donors on the separate projects in 2014 are listed below:

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¹ The inspection was carried out after in October 2013 BHC addressed the Prosecutor General in connection with unlawful acts and incitement to violence carried out by VMRO-BND and representatives of far right formations against refugees in Bulgaria; the Sofia District Prosecution initiated pre-trial proceedings against the party’s deputy chair. VMRO-BND threatened to require that a tax inspection is carried out in order to scrutinize the sources of financing of the committee.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Donor name</th>
<th>Project name</th>
<th>Project period</th>
<th>Project expenditure in 2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oak Foundation, Switzerland</td>
<td>Core support of BHC</td>
<td>May 2013 – April 2016</td>
<td>229 261,36 BGN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Society Institute, Budapest</td>
<td>Institutional support, strategic litigation and media advocacy of BHC</td>
<td>March 2014 – February 2015</td>
<td>230 540,72 BGN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNHCR</td>
<td>Monitoring and advocacy of borders, places of detention and the refugee determination procedure of asylum seekers in Bulgaria</td>
<td>January 2014 – December 2014</td>
<td>716 207,87 BGN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Society Institute, Budapest</td>
<td>Project for monitoring places of deprivation of liberty</td>
<td>March 2012 – February 2014</td>
<td>15 186,36 BGN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Society Institute, Budapest</td>
<td>Institutional support, strategic litigation and media advocacy of BHC</td>
<td>March 2011 – February 2014</td>
<td>74 223,65 BGN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights</td>
<td>Data collection and research on fundamental rights issues</td>
<td>July 2011 – December 2015</td>
<td>133 156,46 BGN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leon Levy Foundation, USA</td>
<td>Core support for the activities of the Legal Defence Programme</td>
<td>November 2014 – December 2015</td>
<td>6 015,98 BGN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leon Levy Foundation, USA</td>
<td>Core support for the activities of the Legal Defence Programme</td>
<td>May 2013- July 2014</td>
<td>16 338,21 BGN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human European Consultancy</td>
<td>Organisation of training anti-discrimination seminars</td>
<td>January 2013 – October 2014</td>
<td>20 874,82 BGN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Society Institute, Budapest</td>
<td>OSI Internship programme</td>
<td>September 2013 – September 2014</td>
<td>15 715,15 BGN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Konstanz</td>
<td>Development of web platform for services for children with disabilities</td>
<td>February 2012 – April 2015</td>
<td>20 188,26 BGN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Commission, University of Florence</td>
<td>Prison Litigation Network</td>
<td>May 2014 – April 2016</td>
<td>6 626,57 BGN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amnesty International</td>
<td>“SOS Europe” Campaign, Organisation of an International Summer Human Rights Camp</td>
<td>July 2014</td>
<td>35 733,15 BGN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNHCR</td>
<td>Advocacy for the rights of stateless individuals in Bulgaria</td>
<td>January 2014 – December 2014</td>
<td>14 031,74 BGN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EEA Grants</td>
<td>Promoting the fundamental rights of people with mental disabilities in Bulgaria</td>
<td>October 2014 – August 2016</td>
<td>5 914,04 BGN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>Other petty donations</td>
<td>January – December 2014</td>
<td>29 108,46 BGN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total expenditure:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>1 666 017,91 BGN</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Each amount is subject to approval by the respective donor.

The activities of the programme were carried out by: Desislava Simeonova, director, Sibila Borissova, administrative manager, Assya Koleva, Iva Raynova and Krassimir Gegov – technical assistants. Accounting services were provided by “Zhelkova, Staneva and Georgiev” through two people staff based at the BHC office: Veronika Stoyanova, accountant, and Evgeni Kolev, accountant clerk.
INDEPENDENT AUDITOR’S REPORT

TO
THE MANAGEMENT OF
THE ASSOCIATION “BULGARIAN HELSINKI COMMITTEE”

Report on the Annual Financial Statements

We have audited the accompanying annual financial statements of the ASSOCIATION “BULGARIAN HELSINKI COMMITTEE”, which comprise the balance sheet as at December 31, 2014, and the income statement, statement of changes in equity and cash flow statement for the year then ended, and a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory notes.

Management’s Responsibility for the Annual Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with National Financial Reporting Standards for Small and Medium Size Enterprises. This responsibility includes: designing, implementing and maintaining internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error; selecting and applying appropriate accounting policies; and making accounting estimates that are reasonable in the circumstances.

Auditor’s Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing. Those standards require that we comply with ethical requirements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor’s judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity’s preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity’s internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.
We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Opinion
In our opinion, the financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the ASSOSIATION "BULGARIAN HELSINKI COMMITTEE", as of December 31, 2014, and of its financial performance and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with National Financial Reporting Standards for Small and Medium Size Enterprises.

Report on Other Legal and Regulatory Requirements
Under the requirements of article 38, paragraph (4) of the Bulgarian Accountancy Act we should also express an opinion on the Annual Management Report. We took into consideration the contents of the applied unconsolidated Annual Management Report for the period ending on December 31, 2014, prepared by the Management of the ASSOSIATION "BULGARIAN HELSINKI COMMITTEE". The Annual Management Report is prepared in accordance with proclamations of article 38, paragraphs (1) and (2) of the Bulgarian Accountancy Act. Management is responsible for the preparation of this Report.

In our opinion the unconsolidated financial information presented in the Annual Management Report as of 31 December 2014 corresponds in all material respects to the financial information represented in the annual unconsolidated financial statements for the same reporting period.

Specialized Audit Enterprise
„RSM BX” OOD

Managing Partner:
IZABELA DZHALAZOVA

Registered Auditor in charge:
IZABELA DZHALAZOVA

11 March 2015
Sofia, Bulgaria
### Income and Expenditure Statement

**BULGARIAN HELSINKI COMMITTEE**

**2014 ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of costs</th>
<th>Amount/Revenue</th>
<th>Current Year</th>
<th>Previous Year</th>
<th>Name of Revenues</th>
<th>Amount/Revenue</th>
<th>Current Year</th>
<th>Previous Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>EXPENSES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>REVENUES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repagination and Improvement, including:</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Revenues, including:</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repagination and Improvement, Intangible assets, including:</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>Other revenue</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Repagination and Improvement</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Total Revenues, from operating activities</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenditure</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>Total Revenues</strong></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounting profit</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Profit</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profit</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Date:**

Signature: 4th March 2015

**Compiler:**

Alexander Georgiev

**Manager:**

Petar Stanev, BGN
**BALANCE SHEET**

Association Bulgarian Helsinki Committee

### 2014 ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT

#### 31.12.2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assets</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Liabilities</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A. Current Monetary Instruments</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Cash in bank</em></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B. Capital</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Capital reserve</em></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C. Non-current Monetary Instruments</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Accounts receivable</em></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>D. Non-monetary Assets</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Real estate</em></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>E. Liabilities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Short-term liabilities</em></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total**

- **Amount of Assets**: 1 232
- **Amount of Liabilities**: 1 230
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Amount (leva)</th>
<th>Amount (EUR)</th>
<th>Amount (lev)</th>
<th>Amount (EUR)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CASE FLOWS STATEMENT</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2014</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Revenues</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case flows from non-granting</td>
<td>3,520</td>
<td>1,819</td>
<td>726</td>
<td>402</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parties</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expenses</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other costs</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net result</strong></td>
<td>3,420</td>
<td>1,763</td>
<td>682</td>
<td>377</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:*

*Compiler:*

*Manager:*