

## Annex D

### BULGARIA

#### First Impressions

My time in Ukraine and Kiev was all too soon over and I journeyed to Bulgaria and its capital Sofia; the trip was uneventful. Having collected my suitcase and passed through the airport customs I was met outside by my driver, the son of the owners of the hotel I was due to stay in. He had lived and studied in the USA for 18 months and spoke good English. As we drove towards the city he was keen to tell me about his country and the changes that had taken place since 1991. Having described to him why I was in Bulgaria he went out of his way to explain that whilst corruption and crime still existed, there had been a massive change in the last few years. He said that the Government had cracked down on organised crime and Bulgarian mafia leaders had been arrested or in some cases killed; however, he also suggested that much more was necessary. He indicated that drugs misuse was an increasing problem.



#### Back Streets of Sofia

As we drove along I was again struck by the amount of traffic and the dilapidated standard of infrastructure, particularly roads and buildings. Graffiti was very evident. Of all the countries that I had so far visited, this was by far the worst first impression. Equally, as in Kiev, it was clear that a significant building programme was under way, particularly with new flats

and apartments. That said, the standard of workmanship appeared poor. Building blocks were seemingly placed on top of each other with a minimum of mortar. This was re-affirmed throughout my visit in different parts of both Sofia and other towns and villages to the north. Of note, two weeks earlier a building had collapsed in the city centre whilst maintenance work was being undertaken; two women passing by in their car were tragically killed.

On reaching the city centre various tourist sites including Government buildings, churches and the new metro were indicated to me. It was also explained that the centre of the city was where my driver had grown up. Having narrowly avoided colliding with another car that had pulled out in front of him, we eventually began to negotiate the very narrow back streets of Sofia. With cars parked on both

sides it was difficult to negotiate between them without hitting wing mirrors or other parts. The road surfaces and pavements were extremely bad and most buildings in need of extensive external maintenance. I was later told that budgets for ongoing maintenance work were rarely built into construction project costs.

After a few blocks we stopped outside the entrance to the Nicky hotel, a small family run establishment that was to be my home for the next week. The staff were very welcoming and went out of their way to be helpful. I completed my registration and moved to my room where I unpacked and began to settle in.



**Sofia in Sofia**

### **Socio Economic Impressions**

On the Saturday morning, with map in hand, I set off early to explore the city. With the exception of the trams, the main shopping street was a 'pedestrian only' area. After the traffic from the previous day, this was welcoming. The main shopping area was interesting. At street level were numerous well fitted and shinning shop fronts behind which many well known brands of clothing and electronics were on sale. At a higher level the tired condition of the buildings was clear. Interestingly, despite the consumer focussed presentation of goods, over the following week it was noticeable how, apart from the staff, it appeared that most shops were often empty. I was advised that many were thought to be a front for money laundering.



**Sofia's main street early on Sunday morning**

My next challenge was to obtain some local currency. I tried the first ATM that I saw belonging to what appeared a major bank; my card was rejected. I tried 8 different machines with the same result; it being Saturday, none of the banks

were open. I was now becoming anxious, so much so that I decided to telephone my bank in UK to see if there was a problem. I was assured that all was well and that I should be able to access funds via any machine showing the relevant signs. With this I tried again and was successful at the first attempt. Whether there had been a problem with my coding into the system or whether all the bank computers in Sofia had been temporarily down, I still do not know.



As I walked around the city its history was clearly evident with the late 19<sup>th</sup> century once again being prominent in the more classic styles.

#### **Sofia's Classic Opera House**

Closer to the town centre was another park with fountains and paved areas. This was undoubtedly more popular and many people seemed to use it as a meeting point close to the city centre.

Typically there were also numerous statues and monuments from the previous Soviet era. Most appeared very tired and were not well kept. Notably, the front area of one had been converted into a skate board park with various obstacles for young people to negotiate and jump off.



#### **Former Monument now used for Skate Boarding**

Nearby was a large wooded park that with some good grounds maintenance could be a very pleasant space. It too had a number of statues celebrating past leaders, all of which had again been abused and left to fall into disrepair.

The following day I travelled with a German couple, who were also staying in the hotel. We took a taxi to the base of the nearby Sofia ski area. The German husband was working for the EC and involved in arranging and supervising various development and infrastructure contracts with companies from around Europe and elsewhere. Having been doing the work for some time and in various countries, he had a very good understanding of such work. He suggested that corruption was still rife, but that Bulgaria's strategic position on the Black Sea made its membership of the EU important, particularly with the

need to access future oil and gas reserves from beyond the Caspian Sea area and central southern Asia. Of note, the USA is about to build a large naval base on Bulgaria's Black Sea coast.



On our arrival at the ski lift further building work was evident, this time a mixture of a new hotel complex, apartment blocks and large private houses. The views back towards Sofia were good and it was obvious why it was popular. Once again, I noticed the standard of workmanship was poor. Fortunately, the ski lift was relatively modern and we were content to put our trust in its structure.

#### **New Apartments and Hotel under construction at the start of Sofia's Ski lift**

The lift took some 10 minutes to reach the top station. Here we stepped out into fog and very much colder temperatures. We proceeded to find a hotel that we were advised would be open for coffee and food. It was about 400 meters away down a badly made up road. Upon entering the building I was left with a sense of incredulity. In its hay-day the hotel was probably one of the places that wealthy members of the Party regularly frequented. Now, it was in desperate need of complete refurbishment. The lady in the bar spoke good German and a little English. She was friendly and eager to serve us. We were eventually given a glass jug containing what was supposed to be glue-vine! Whilst in the hotel we took a look around and came across a group of men in another bar talking and playing cards. Although in working clothes and the property desperately needing attention, they were obviously not of a mind to undertake the work.



On moving outside the weather had improved and we proceeded up the road. Here we came across another former hotel, this one now closed and effectively falling down. My German friend described how back in the 1970s he had visited this hotel during a conference. Then it was apparently seen as a place of some standing and frequented by the wealthy local leaders of the Socialist era. Now it was only fit for demolition.

#### **Once a popular Ski Resort Hotel**

Of note, we were advised by a local Bulgarian that an Austrian Ski company had just bought the ski lift and surrounding area for development.

I describe this detail, not because it has anything directly to do with youth crime, but rather because it is indicative of what I believe are some of the socio-economic weaknesses that exist, all of which undoubtedly do have an influence upon crime and the States ability to deal with it.

In discussions with different Bulgarian citizens, a number of more general social issues were raised. It was suggested that since 1991 standards in education had deteriorated. Even private schools are struggling to maintain standards. Discipline amongst young people is lower and the subject of 'lacking respect' was frequently highlighted. When compared to the socialist era, there had apparently been a significant social breakdown. Drugs misuse is now common place and increasing. Graffiti is everywhere and people lack what was described as a sense of social responsibility. Critically, teachers and university lecturers are very poorly paid and this lack of investment in young people's education is considered by many to be a serious omission which is contributing to the falling standards.

A new generation of independent young women are also beginning to make their mark within society and the system; they clearly have different outlooks from those of previous generations. This too is having an impact upon the young men as they are increasingly less sure as to their position and role in life. That said, the women are still not being paid the same salaries as their male equivalents. This was a common thread that I found in other countries on my trip.

Some people expressed their concerns about the wider economic situation in the country. There are few industries of any significance and most of the previously state owned structures and factories have been closed or given away. Many industrial sites can now be seen turning to areas of waste, particularly in the more rural areas. This in turn is driving more people into the cities and away from the smaller towns and villages. As I mentioned earlier, corruption is still a major problem. It has been suggested that, because of the low wage bill, international private companies will be keen to open production lines in Bulgaria. Whilst that may be so, in the short term the low level of associated skills is likely to pose a problem, particularly if those with skills decide to immigrate to other EU countries.

### **Changes within Bulgaria's Criminal Justice System**

Having alluded to what I saw as a weak socio-economic situation, I will now focus upon the problems of youth crime and the State's efforts to address it. My main point of contact in Bulgaria was Steve Pitts. Steve has a Probation Service background and is seconded from the Home Office National Offender

Management Service to Bulgaria to deliver a European Union PHARE Twinning programme. Steve and a colleague, Graham Johnson from the Prison Service, work within the Bulgarian Directorate of Penalty Enforcement and are assisting with the development of new structures and provision. I was heartened by Steve's optimism and how he thought the authorities were making progress in embracing the necessary changes. This was endorsed by two other UK Probation colleagues who were conducting training with Bulgarian staff during my visit. I confess that from my brief time and discussions with others outside the Service, some scepticism seems to exist; however, that is where Steve was at an advantage in that he had been undertaking the work for over 12 months and was able to see the changes first hand.

The Bulgarian Government intends the new Probation Service to be fully operational by the end of 2007. They plan to have recruited 600 new staff by then; about 400 have already been recruited. A major staff training programme is under way for staff and managers. This has been enthusiastically embraced by the service and assessed by 14 trainers and 100 staff so far trained as of very high quality. All 128 teams are now deployed. It is also worthy of note that courts are keen on the new provisions - more than 10,000 community orders have been made so far, including more than 3,000 community service orders. The new service will work within Administrative Court areas – 28 District / High Courts and 112 Regional / Local Courts. The headquarters of both the Prison and Probation Services are co-located in the one Directorate with the Head of Probation retaining responsibility for the Prison Service.

Like the UK, partnership is being stressed as an essential feature of the new structure, particularly between Regional Boards, Municipalities, other Government Departments, Justice Services and NGOs. Similarly, inclusion and a reduction of re-offending are key objectives with the concept of case management being tailored to the OASys assessment tool used in England and Wales.

### **The Role of NGOs**

During my time in Sofia I visited two NGOs. The first was the Criminal Policy and Prevention Institute (CPPI), an organisation that looks at criminal policy and the prevention of crime. Here I met the President, a wonderful lady called Petya Shopova. She is a senior lecturer in criminology and has worked in politics for 15 years. She described to me how, during this time of change for Bulgaria, the CPPI has endeavoured to promote debate surrounding the process and reality of criminal policy.

It was interesting to hear her description of a planned Bulgarian 3 year programme linked to the global foundation 'Open Society'. This was aimed at developing community provision for offenders and involved 6 Bulgarian NGOs, one of which was the CPPI. The British Embassy and British Council also

provided support. Following a year of recruiting and training volunteers, the concept aimed to support 18 – 25 year old offenders released on Parole or conditional sentences. The Police are supposed to supervise offenders through the Regional Courts; however, it was realised that this was not happening. Many offenders had lost identity papers, been excluded from the health system and had no access to accommodation, employment or support from families. Where had I heard this before? The new programme was to help meet these needs.

As with all such work, the outcomes depended upon the relationship between the offenders and the volunteers. In year one the volunteers were recruited and trained. Many were students of law, others were older people from different backgrounds including the church, both Christian and Islamic. One of the key problems had been the media. Efforts were therefore made to engage journalists and to provide them with increased understanding of the work and the issues.

In year two, 25 offenders were selected at random. Most had drug problems and were from the city centre. Interestingly, two volunteers were allocated to each offender. It has apparently been difficult to assess the success, but it is estimated that rates of recidivism were between 20 - 30%. The project was working in partnership with the Police and other authorities with the Labour offices helping with access to employment.

It was explained to me that there are to be 121 new Probation Boards in Bulgaria, all of which will include the various associated agencies. The CPPI is heavily involved in working with the various Boards to implement the sentences. Unfortunately, owing to limited finances, the Open Society project has not continued. Petya suggested that there was a need for an international EU programme. I suggested that through agencies such as the EOEf this was already happening in different areas and between different countries; however, there is a requirement for much more.

Petya went on to describe how, whilst organised crime is a serious problem, it all starts with juveniles becoming involved and caught up within the criminal justice system (CJS) at an early age. Many Bulgarian boys start their criminal careers between 11-12 years. For girls it is often 14 years. Bulgaria's age for criminal responsibility starts at 14. Sentencing options and prison periods vary as age increases. In order to try and divert young people away from the CJS before this age, various Regional and District Commissions are attempting to use the equivalent of an ASBO as an alternative to custody; this was introduced in 1957. Whilst experimental Probation centres are gradually expanding, legislation is lacking to promote the agenda. The CPPI is working with the new Probation Directorate in an effort to improve the situation; however, the State and Society do not as yet recognise the contribution that NGOs can and do make. Petya suggested that until that improves such work will always be limited.

She went on to explain that the CPPI is disappointed by what they see as a lack of common EU strategy and priority given to juveniles. She suggested that, because juveniles do not have a vote and are in effect a 'silent' group with no reliable voice, issues surrounding their offending, exclusion, abuse and 'rights as a child' are largely ignored. There is no common understanding of the issues and no direction from the European Commission as to what is required. She stressed this was a common problem and that there was a need for an EU integrated agenda and directive. Without this she felt that there would be insufficient focus on juveniles and their continued involvement in crime would remain. *(Of note, during my subsequent visit to Chile, I was told how, following massive protests last year by students, other young people and children, the Chilean Government was now recognising the power of the young persons vote and that there is now increased interest in their issues)*

She went on to explain how the successful practices of the Third sector and NGOs need to be promoted more widely. I suggested that this is where ACEVO's International programme is beginning to play a role - <http://www.3rdsectorleaders.org/> . It will provide for the exchange of ideas and methodologies as well as a network of like minded organisations.

In asking what her prognosis was for Bulgaria, she said it was not good. The current system simply does not work. Whilst Regional and District Commissions exist and are supposed to work positively with juveniles, there are major weaknesses including a lack of consistency, incentives, quality control, resources and methods of evaluating and gathering statistics. The aim of the Commissions was to divert young people; however, they often tended to do the opposite. Critically, Commissions are allowed to send juveniles to closed institutions which are in effect prisons. Here there are apparently poor conditions, limited resources and a lack of professional consistency. Having visited a juvenile prison I can confirm her views on the conditions – more later.

Prior to regime change, life was more disciplined and levels of crime were lower. She described how the public is apparently becoming increasingly more aware and has been shocked by the current situation. There are proposals for reform enabling appeals to be made against the Commissions, but this is yet to be implemented. Importantly, the details of the situation are not reaching Government and there is still a belief that harsher punishment is the solution. The concept of restorative justice for instance is not yet recognised.

All this said, although I am not sure how this is measured, a survey of public opinion showed that Bulgarian people are less punitive than other Balkan states. Similarly, community policing is gradually being accepted and adopted with reform within the Police in an effort to improve performance.

My next NGO was the Institute of Social Activities (ISA) run by Professor Nelly Petrova. ISA struck me as being a very dynamic organisation that is engaged in

numerous CJS and Social Service activities. It employs approximately 70 volunteers in towns and cities around Bulgaria, all of whom are available to work with Child Protection agencies and Probation centres. Volunteers are university students studying associated subjects as part of their degree courses. Projects currently include: -

- a. Social work support to families at risk and offenders plus others who demonstrate challenging behaviour.
- b. Research into the mental health of prisoners in Bulgaria.
- c. A report for UNICEF on child protection.
- d. Attitudes of Bulgarian society towards foster parents.
- e. Training in social work aimed at offenders - using OASys as the risk assessment tool.
- f. A pilot programme with Probation centres dealing with young offenders.
- g. A new assessment process for juveniles.
- h. Child welfare reform funded by the World Bank and Bulgarian Government.
- i. New training for staff in 6 cities who are working with single parent mothers.
- j. More recently they have submitted a tender for 5 years funding by LAS to provide offender case management, supervision and continuing support to single mothers and children.

I asked what the re-offending rates were like and was told that any form of reliable and meaningful statistics were difficult to acquire.

Nelly went on to describe how the aim was for programmes to be based upon individual action plans and specialist needs. Importantly she stressed that staff training was going well and that they now needed to increase the number of programmes.

She suggested that this could only be achieved by developing the capacity of NGOs and enabling them to be autonomous. Apparently models in France, Switzerland and the UK were being used to promote such development. Encouragingly, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy was promoting this; however, at a local level progress was limited.

Following regime change, the issues of respect and social values was again highlighted as a growing problem, suggesting that there is an increasing tension between 'political and human' values vs 'democratic and human' values. Such tensions are of course somewhat inevitable and part of the whole process of change.

### **An Introduction to Bulgaria's Criminal Justice System**

The following day I was taken by Steve Pitts to call on the Director General of Penalty Enforcement. His office is located within the main local prison. Although juvenile crime is not strictly his brief, this being the responsibility of the Commissions, he kindly provided me with an outline of how the Bulgarian sentencing system worked with young people. He described how between 7 and 14 years of age the focus was on providing behavioural interventions rather than using the criminal justice system (CJS). After 14 years of age the CJS took over with varying levels of punishment being delivered; those aged 14 – 16 could be given a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison, whilst those aged 16 – 18 could be given 12 years. After 18 years of age a young person is normally transferred to an adult prison.

The Director General stressed that prison was considered the last resort. From an average of 3,500 convictions each year of young people up to 18 years of age, 50% are given prison sentences; however, only 250 apparently actually go to prison. The remainder are given a conditional or deferred sentence with the final outcome being dependent upon whether they re-offend. Accurate statistics on re-offending rates are not available.

Recent figures show that 130 – 140 young people were placed in institutions (prisons) during the last year. In 1985 the number was over 400. Within the institutions the focus is apparently on education and behaviour. Two such establishments exist, one for boys and one for girls. The number of girls in custody averages between 4 and 8.

For lower levels and types of offending, Bulgaria also provides 18 separate correctional homes where again the focus is on education and behaviour. These are viewed as special schools and sometimes linked to community based sentences where work is undertaken as a form of punishment. Some individuals can remain in these schools until 20 years of age.

Other community based sentences can include periods in special boarding schools. The sentences are awarded by local Commissions with the schools being run by the Ministry of Education.

As the Director General continued his brief I sensed that once again there was recognition for more effort to be given to diversion away from the CJS with increased supervision and support from multi-disciplinary teams. He also

appeared to suggest that for those less than 16 years of age Commissions would work more with parents and guardians, encouraging them to take greater responsibility for the behaviour of their children. In the future, he saw the Probation Service supervising 16 -18 year olds offenders whilst still working closely with the Commissions.

I again asked the Director General about statistics. He explained that from a total Bulgarian population of 8 million, currently 11,600 people are in prison. In 1986 it had apparently been 17,000. By the year 2000 the numbers had fallen to 10,000. Unfortunately, the last 4 years have seen a continuous rise to the current level. This type of increase is anticipated to continue. Current detailed figures for recidivism were not available but he suggested that they had improved and that for juveniles it was about 40%.

Of note, the Probation Service, as a new organisation, is only just beginning its involvement with juveniles. The EU has agreed to fund a new project at the Bulgarian Probation Service's request which will include developing assessment and interventions with young offenders, drawing on European practice. They have already made arrangements to adapt ASSET for the service's work with juveniles.

My next visit was to Bulgaria's only institution / prison for juvenile boys. It was located in a rural area in the North West of the country, about 3 hours from Sofia.

My first impressions were of a former military barracks, which indeed I later established it was. Having been used only very briefly for that purpose 50 years before, it appeared that little had been done to it since. The infrastructure was extremely tired and in desperate need of serious work and improvements.



**Bulgaria's rural countryside**

At the time of my visit there were 61 sentenced and 32 remand prisoners held there. At one time in the previous year there had been 153 prisoners. I estimated that well over 80% were of those currently held there were from a Roma background.

The Director was a very pleasant lady who indicated that I could see anything I wished and ask any questions. Following her introduction her deputy then took me on a guided tour and introduced me to both staff and the young men.

Having been sentenced to the institution, all prisoners are held in a reception wing for 30 days. Here they are apparently assessed on their offending behaviour, risk, current attitude, personal background and future needs. It is also during this period that they learn the rules. Case management plans are agreed and each offender is encouraged to take ownership of their own personal plan. These are reviewed every six months and goals and targets adjusted accordingly. After the assessment period they are sent to different blocks of accommodation known as houses. Here the young men are allocated a very basic bed in bare dormitory type barrack room designed to take up to 7 boys. Some are lucky to have very small square lockers, but not all.

The staff is a mix of security guards, social workers, psychologists, psychiatrists and teachers. One Social Worker works with 6-7 boys. The other staff members undertake specialist group or one on one work. There were two positive observations that I made during my visit. The first was the commitment by the staff to the young men. I sensed that despite the difficulties of poor infrastructure and inadequate resources, they did care about the boys. The second was that there was no high wall surrounding the prison. The boys and the staff could see through the fence and therefore retain at least some vision for what lay outside and beyond.

The daily routine is based around education in the morning and social needs in the afternoon. There is a library that the young people have access to twice each week. The books appeared to be very old and the library somewhat dark and uninviting.

The recreation and sports area was quite large with a soccer ground, military assault course and small open air swimming pool. There was also a room described as a gymnasium where small pieces of old equipment urgently need replacement. Physical exercise is strongly promoted and the staff member responsible was himself very enthusiastic. That said, on looking at the boys, I did not sense a high level of overall physical well being.

The classrooms were what I can only describe as extremely basic with an old wooden painted back board, simple wooden chairs and desks and little else. Interestingly, my interpreter told me that they were no worse than in a normal rural state school.

Vocational training is based upon carpentry, basket weaving and simple cane furniture making, and sewing. The carpentry workshop is equipped with machinery donated by the British Embassy some years before. The staff who work here are all skilled people and I believe that the young men who attend the classes learn some good basic skills. Of note, I saw new lockers being made that were due to be moved into the accommodation blocks. I was told that Ministry of Education certificates / diplomas are earned in both academic and vocational training.

In the past, every two weeks the boys used to be taken out on various forms of excursion, including the theatre. Because most risk assessments are now considered to be higher, this has been reduced significantly.

Approximately 3 months before release, the boys are given a new plan aimed specifically for their return to the community. During this time a new risk assessment is made and various identity documents provided. Letters are also written and efforts made to access jobs and accommodation and the support of the Community Commissions, Police, Social Services and Probation. I was advised that the Commissions are suppose to have overall responsibility for the support of the young men back in the community. Depending upon the new risk assessment and family background the Commission can also apply to the Court for early release or parole.

When I asked about the reality of providing the necessary post release supervision and support, I was told that it rarely happened; local Commissions simply do not have the capacity or funding to undertake the work or provide accommodation. Currently there is no meaningful joined up activity between the prison staff and those agencies in the community with the responsibilities to deliver support.

I again asked about recidivism and was told that officially there were no statistics; however, from experience the rate was considered to be much higher than the Director General of Penalty Enforcement had suggested when I met him the previous day.

A number of the boys were very willing to speak to me and were interested in why I was there and where I was from. The few who did speak some English spoke well of the staff and suggested that they were looked after. My overall impression was that of an establishment and group of young people who were out of sight and out of the minds of those with the responsibility to address their needs. Certainly the prison was no where near the standard expected for EU member states.

### **International Crime**

My final meeting was at the USA Embassy. Here I was given another insight into some of the challenges facing Bulgaria. As one might expect, America's involvement has tended to focus on regional issues rather than just Bulgarian.

Corruption at all levels has apparently been of major concern and the US has been working with the EU in an effort to eradicate it. Problems associated with people trafficking, financial fraud, cyber crime, individual and property rights, drugs and organised crime were highlighted as being of real concern. The key drive has therefore apparently been in respect of implementing new civil and

commercial laws and establishing national structures capable of dealing with it. This work has been carried over into procurement procedures and contracts.

As in Ukraine, criminal organisations are still involved in people trafficking with Bulgaria used as a transit state, a point of origin and a country of destination. Thousands of young girls aged 16 -28 years are apparently moved into Black Sea resorts and employed as prostitutes for the increasing numbers of tourists. The cultural differences, poor levels of education skills and poverty make the Roma and poorer Turkish groups particularly vulnerable. Some hotels have signed a protocol with an NGO saying that they will not allow this on their premises; however, others refused. The Roma community is particularly vulnerable with some girls being paid to traffic unborn babies. As of October this year it has become a criminal offence for mothers to knowingly participate in such trafficking.

In respect of wider criminal justice issues, it was suggested that there is a slow process of change. Although many in society still do not fully understand the role of Probation in monitoring and supervising offenders, there is a growing acceptance that punishment and prison should be primarily aimed at those committing serious crimes of violence. Anything associated with drugs is viewed as serious. A first offence is likely to be awarded a heavy fine with a second offence, no matter what level it may be, resulting in a term of imprisonment. Prison for drug offenders is strongly supported by the Government and the concept of rehabilitation centres is not yet a common theme. As with many other countries, the underlying causes of drug and alcohol misuse are still not being addressed.

## **Summary**

Unlike some of the other former Soviet block countries, Bulgaria's transition has barely begun. Undoubtedly, most people are hoping that membership of the EU will deliver increasing prosperity, opportunity and regulation. That said, as I looked back over my brief visit I was left questioning just how long the process will take. Although there are clearly many highly motivated, positive, clever and energetic people in all sectors of the country who are working to support the transition, corruption is clearly still an issue. Equally, the level of new infrastructure work and investment needed in both urban and rural areas is enormous and will take many years and millions of Euros to achieve. As for youth crime, the principles are undoubtedly being addressed and UK seconded staff are assisting greatly.

As for future implementation, it will be interesting to observe how the situation evolves over the next two decades and whether, like Poland and elsewhere, Bulgaria sees many of its educated and skilled people migrating to other parts of the EU.