



## *Advocacy for Access to Information – Achievements and Challenges* Conference

**June 15-16, 2012**  
**Sofia City Hotel, Sofia**

### **Short Information about the Panelists**



**Mr. Toby Mendel** is the Executive Director of the Centre for Law and Democracy, a Canadian-based international human rights NGO that focuses on providing legal expertise regarding foundational rights for democracy, including the right to information, freedom of expression, the right to participate and the rights to assembly and association. Prior to that he was for 12 years Senior Director for Law at ARTICLE 19, a human rights NGO focusing on freedom of expression and the right to information. He has provided peak level expertise on these rights to a wide range of actors including the World Bank, various UN and other intergovernmental bodies, and numerous governments and NGOs in countries all over the world. Before joining ARTICLE 19, he worked as a senior human rights consultant with Oxfam Canada and as a human rights

policy analyst at the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). He has published extensively on a range of freedom of expression, right to information, communication rights and refugee issues, including comparative legal and analytical studies on public service broadcasting, the right to information and broadcast policy.



**Ms. Helen Darbshire** is founder and Executive Director of the Access Info Europe, a Madrid-based NGO, established in 2006 to promote the right of access to information in Europe and globally. Helen Darbshire is a human rights activist specialising in the public's right of access to information (freedom of information), and the development of open and democratic societies with participatory and accountable governments. She has worked for over 20 years as a human rights professional, focusing on issues of freedom of expression and information, media freedom, civil society development, and democratisation. Prior to setting up Access Info Europe, Helen worked as a campaigner and project manager at Article 19 (1989 to 1998) based in London and Paris, and for the Open Society Institute (1999-2003) where she directed programmes on freedom of

expression and freedom of information, based in Budapest and New York. Helen has provided expertise to a wide range of non-governmental and inter-governmental organisations, including UNESCO, the Council of Europe, the OSCE, and the World Bank. She is a founder of the global [Freedom of Information Advocates Network](#) and served two terms as its chair (2004-2010). She holds a degree in History and Philosophy of Science and Psychology from Durham University, UK.



**Mr. Tony Bunyan** is Director of Statewatch, a non-profit-making voluntary group founded in 1991. It is comprised of lawyers, academics, journalists, researchers and community activists. Its European network of contributors is drawn from 18 countries. The efforts of Statewatch are focused on encouraging investigative journalism and critical research in Europe in the fields of the state, justice and home affairs, civil liberties, accountability and openness. The European Voice newspaper, Brussels, announced twice Mr. Bunyan as one of the fifty most influential people in the European Union – in 2001 for Statewatch's work on access to documents in the EU and in 2004 for Statewatch's work on civil liberties and the "war on terrorism." Tony Bunyan & Statewatch were given a Liberty Human Rights Award "LONG WALK" 2011 for its work over the

past 20 years.



**Mr. Krzysztof Izdebski** is a lawyer providing legal consultations on access to public information, drafting legal opinions and representing the Association of Leaders of Local Civic Groups (SLLGO), Poland, in court proceedings. He has been working in one of the SLLGO's key programmes - The Non-Governmental Centre on Access to Public Information



**Ms. Gergana Jouleva, PhD** is the initiator, one of the founders, and the Executive Director of the Access to Information Programme (AIP). Since 1995, Ms. Jouleva has been professionally involved in freedom of information issues. She is a member of the Steering Committee of the Freedom of Information Advocates Network, a member of the editorial board of Freedom.info, one of the founders and a member of the International Advisory Board of Access Info Europe and a member of the Advisory Board of Privacy International. She has a number of publications on freedom of information, including the case study *The Access to Information Programme: Fighting for Transparency during the Democratic Transition* (July 2002); *The Year of the Rational Ignorance* (results from a sociological survey) (2002). She has been a co-author and

editor of the 2001 - 2012 Annual Reports *Access to Information in Bulgaria*. She has international lecturing experience on access to information issues.



**Mr. Ivan Pavlov, JD, PhD (Jurisprudence)** is the Founder and Chairman of the Freedom of Information Foundation or FIF (also known as Institute for Information Freedom Development), Russia's largest NGO dealing with FOI rights and governmental openness. Mr. Pavlov has authored more than 70 analytical publications on access to official information and governmental openness, and served as an adviser in the drafting and promotion of Russia's first-ever law on freedom of information (in force since 2010). He serves on a number of advisory boards and is actively engaged in work promoting transparency in government including Co-chair for Transparency in Government workgroup of the U.S.-Russia Civil Society to Civil Society Summit (2010) and human rights expert for the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Mr. Pavlov

was also recently appointed to serve as an expert for the Russian governmental working group on Open Government. A qualified attorney, he has participated as legal counsel in a number of court cases on information access issues, most notably in precedent-setting court cases compelling federal government bodies to launch and update their official websites (2005). Mr. Pavlov has also served as legal counsel in a number of high profile cases on FOI, state secrets and access to state historical archives.



**Mr. Gevorg Hayrapetyan** is the lawyer of the Freedom of Information Center of Armenia since 2005. In 2007, Gevorg Hayrapetyan graduated the study in the Law Faculty of Yerevan State University, and in 2006 he graduated the study in Legal Clinic of the Law Faculty of YSU. The theme of his final work was "Freedom of Information in the Republic of Armenia." He has passed trainings in Short-term Courses on Freedom of Information in Ukraine (2005, Kiev) and in the Check Republic (2006, Prague). Gevorg Hayrapetyan is a FOI expert. He is an author of 4 books on FOI. He also has published more than 30 articles on FOI.



**Mr. Levan Avalishvili** is a co-founder and chairman of the board of the Institute for Development of Freedom of Information, Georgia. His academic background has a strong focus on American Studies and Soviet Studies. He holds a Bachelors Degree in History of International Relations and Diplomacy and a Masters degree in Modern and Contemporary History of Europe and America, both by Ivane Javakhishvili University. He is also a board member of the Georgian Association of American Studies at Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University and of the Center for Strategic Research and Development of Georgia. He is author and co-author of a number of publications. Levan Avalishvili is now a Phd candidate at the Department of History at Tbilisi State University. Levan is fluent in Russian and English.



**Mr. Alexander Dunchev** graduated from the University of Forestry in Sofia in 2007, majoring in Forest Management. Since then, he has been working as an expert in forest and protected areas conservation at the Association of the Parks in Bulgaria. He has been involved in a number of environmental projects of the *For the Nature in Bulgaria* Coalition which have contributed to enhanced access to public information by the member-organizations of the coalition, as well as the development of the web site of the coalition by launching an archive section with documents obtained under the Access to Public Information Act for all environmental cases in Bulgaria.



**Mr. Petko Kovachev** is the Executive Director of the Green Policy Institute. He actively uses the Access to Public Information Act to obtain information related to the energy sector, the EU funds, the transport, and the environment protection. Currently, Petko Kovachev is involved in civil monitoring of the European Funds.



**Ms. Antoaneta Tzoneva** is the Chairman of the Board of Institute for Public Environment Development. In the period 2001 -2004, she was the Ombudsman of the Sofia Municipality. She has managed advocacy projects for amendments in the election legislation and independent election monitoring; corruption risk assessment in the management of public structures; open budget process and monitoring of public policies; introduction of web based tools for open government; and is an open data advocate.



**Mr. Hristo Ivanov** is the Program Director for the Bulgarian Institute for Legal Initiatives (BILI) and the Transparent Judicial Appointments Initiative (Judicialprofiles.bg). Before helping to establish BILI (2007), Hristo practiced as an independent consultant for projects in the Rule of Law reform field. From 1998 to 2002 he was a staff-attorney for the Bulgarian office of the American Bar Association's Central and East European Law Initiative (currently renamed to Rule of Law Initiative). Hristo holds a law degree from Sofia University and has taken part in various specializations. In 2010-11, he specialized National Security Law with the US Senate and Judicial Appointments with the Federal Judiciary Centre.



**Ms. Kalina Pavlova** is an architect from the Black Sea town of Varna. She has been extremely consistent and persistent during the past several years in seeking information related to the Urban Development Plan of Varna and the allegedly illegal construction of a seaside alley (the so called First Alley). Kalina Pavlova's active demand for public information was important for citizens' participation in the decision making process regarding this issue. She has also systematically reverberated on the case via media outlets. She was acknowledged with the *Golden Key Award* on the 2012 Right to Know Day Awards Ceremony, held by AIP.



**Mr. Ivan Mihalev** is a managing editor of the web site Capital.bg. Before that, he has worked as an investigative journalist in *Capital* weekly. He has 15 years of experience in journalism. He is a recipient of the 2008 *Chernorizets Hrabar Award* for investigative journalism and of the 2009 Award for Journalistic Contribution to the Protection of Human and Civil Rights given by the Ombudsman of Bulgaria. Ivan Mihalev holds a PhD from the Sofia University *St. Kliment Ohridski*, the topic of his dissertation being *High Quality Journalism in the Internet Era – Innovations in the Business Model of the High Quality Newspaper*. He is an author of the book *The Newspaper in the Internet Era*, 2011.



**Mr. Hristo Hristov** is an investigative journalist and a researcher of the archives of the communist regime with 23 years of experience. He is an author of 7 books and 3 documentaries. He is a recipient of a number of awards for investigative journalism, among which Access to Information Programme Awards for outstanding contribution to the freedom of information.

**Ms. Lora Fileva** works as a journalist for *Dnevnik* daily since 2007. She is currently studying Law in the Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski." She is fluent in English and French.



**Mr. Rossen Bossev** is a journalist for *Capital* weekly since 2005. He covers judiciary and law-enforcement bodies. He is interested in penitentiary policies, investigation of hate crimes, and protection of human rights. He has been published by the French *Courrier international* and the Portuguese *Expresso*. He has been acknowledged three times by the Access to Information Programme for using the Access to Public Information Act. He has specialized in investigative journalism in Belgium and USA.



**Mr. Zarko Marinov** is the publisher and the chief editor of *Otzvuk (Reverberation)* newspaper, region of Smolyan, since the establishment of the newspaper in May 1993 to present. He is an author of a number of journalistic investigations, analyses, and comments focusing on local authorities. He uses actively the Access to Public Information Act. He is a graduate from the Veliko Tarnovo University in Bulgarian Philology.



**Mr. Tsvetan Todorov** is a journalist from the town of Lovech. Since 2000 to present, he is the chief editor of the regional newspaper *Naroden Glas (People's Voice)*. From 1985 to 1999, he worked as a correspondent of the Bulgarian National Television in Lovech. He is an AIP coordinator in Lovech since 2007. He is a recipient of the 2008 *AIP Coordinator of the Year Award* and an Honorary Diploma for the 2008 Right to Know Day as a journalist who has actively used the Access to Public Information Act in his work.



**Mr. Alexander Kashumov** is the head of the legal team of the Access to Information Programme, Bulgaria. He has rich experience in access to information litigation. He is a co-author of AIP publications. Mr. Kashumov has participated in working groups for drafting and amendments to the Access to Public Information Act (APIA), the Protection of Classified Information Act, the Personal Data Protection Act, the Penal Code, the Act on Access and Disclosure of Documents and Declaration of Affiliation of Bulgarian citizens to the State Security Services and the Intelligence Services of the Bulgarian People's Army. In December 2008, the magazine "Legal World" awarded Mr. Kashumov as the "Lawyer of the Year."



**Ms. Marija Petrovska** holds a PhD in Legal sciences in the area of Labor and Administrative law. Her extensive 10-year working experience includes the business sector (audit and consultancy), the higher education sector and the non-governmental sector. She has been teaching at the New York University Skopje in Skopje, Macedonia and on the business programs at Staffordshire University, United Kingdom. She has been working as FOI Project Coordinator at the Foundation Open Society-Macedonia since April 2012.



**Mr. Kiril Terziyski** has been working as attorney-at-law in the Access to Information Programme legal team since 2003 and has rich experience in access to information litigation. He also provides legal help in cases of request of information and refusals of its provision, prepares monthly reports with legal comments on cases submitted by AIP coordinators from the countrywide network. He has an experience as a lecturer in the field of freedom of information – legislation and practice – in trainings for civil servants, NGOs and journalists. Mr. Terziyski is a co-author of AIP publications.



**Ms. Ilke Dagli** has studied European and International Politics in Newcastle and completed her MSC in Bristol on Security and Development. Since 2006, she has been working closely with CSO and SMEs in Cyprus as a project coordinator, project developer and consultant. As a young Cypriot who was interested in peace and reconciliation work, she has found herself in the middle of bi-communal initiatives. She co-authored and coordinated many bi-communal projects such as The Civil Society Dialogue Project, Cyprus Community Media Centre initiative, Access Info Cyprus Project and Play for Peace Project and is closely



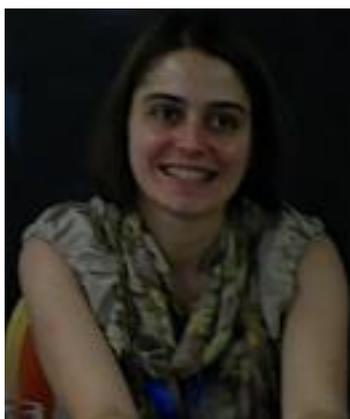
involved with the ENGAGE Do Your Part for Peace project. Currently, she is working as a freelance consultant and facilitator for CSOs, SMEs and the ENGAGE project as well as acting as the founding member of Centre for Migration Identity and Rights Studies, founding member and the governing board member of Cyprus Community Media Centre, the Vice President of Cyprus EU Association and the member of Cypriots' Voice. Ms. Dağlı will start her PhD on Securitization of Migration in Contested States and its Implications on Reconciliation Efforts in Warwick University this fall.



**Ms. Katarzyna Batko-Toluć** is a sociologist by education, graduate of Warsaw University. She is currently serving as a Programme Director at the Association of Leaders of Local Civic Groups (SLLGO), Poland. Katarzyna is an author of several SLLGO's initiatives aimed at engaging citizens to support actions, to get involved and to make use of their rights.



**Mr. Nikolay Ninov** is a founder of the Access to Information Programme country network of journalists and is currently its coordinator. He worked as a deputy chief editor in the newspapers *1000 Days* and *Standard*. He was an executive editor in *Sunday Standard* newspaper and *Business Week Bulgaria* magazine. He is a recipient of the Annual Award of the Union of Bulgarian Journalists (1996). He is an author of the books *Tax for the Summer* (1987), *Nine Men's Dramas* (1991), *Without Black Tie at the Cesars Ceremony* (1994), *Gigolo* (2000), *French Connection* (2007). He is a screenwriter of the documentary *Perpetuum Mobile* (1987) presented at the XV International Movie Festival in Moscow.



**Ms. Diana Bancheva** is the Communications Officer at the Access to Information Programme, Bulgaria. She is a graduate of the American University in Bulgaria, majoring in History and Political Science. Since 2004, she has been actively involved in the preparation and organization of the Right to Know Day Awards Ceremony in Bulgaria, held by Access to Information Programme on September 28. She is maintaining the special web site of the Right to Know Day Campaign: [www.righttoknowday.net](http://www.righttoknowday.net) and coordinates the awards selection process. She also maintains the official web site of AIP: [www.aip-bg.org](http://www.aip-bg.org) and the special Access to Information and Investigative Journalism web site: [www.ati-journalists.net](http://www.ati-journalists.net).



**Mr. Oldřich Kužilek** has been an artist, a regional leader of the Civic Forum in “Velvet Revolution,” a member of the Parliament of Czechoslovakia and of the Parliament of the Czech Republic, a journalist. Since 1996, he is actively involved in the freedom of information area. During the period 1996 – 1999, he drafted and enforced the adoption of the Freedom of Information Act for the Czech Republic. In 1999, he organized a number of FOI trainings – cca 6000 clerks and public servants trained. Since 2001, Mr. Kužilek provides the web server <http://www.otevrete.cz/> (for Open society p.b.a. Praha) about freedom of information and public administration openness; monitors enforcement and implementation of the right to information and good practices, provides counseling services on freedom of information. He is also an

author of 3 comprehensive [publications](#) focusing on free access to information and public administration service openness.



**Ms. Liana Doydoyan** is a founder member of the Freedom of Information Centre of Armenia, ([ww.foi.am](http://www.foi.am)). Now she is a project director of the “Technical Support to Information Disputes Council” project financed by OSCE office in Yerevan. From September 2005 to present she is a Professor at Journalism Department, Yerevan State University, Courses: E-Governance and Civil Society. She is an author more than 30 articles and analyses on FOI issues. She presented Armenia civil society in OECD annual meeting in Paris, 2011. Also she was a representative of Armenian civil society in Open Government Partnership Annual Meeting, in April, 2012, where she presented Armenian Action Plan.



**Mr. Giorgi Kldiashvili** is the director and a co-founder of the Institute for Development of Freedom of Information, Georgia. He has extensive experience in archive management and documents classification, both in Georgia and in the United States. His academic background has a strong focus on American Studies and Soviet Studies. He holds a Bachelors Degree in History of International Relations and Diplomacy and a Masters degree in Modern and Contemporary History of Europe and America, both by Ivane Javakhishvili University. He works as a professor of American Studies at the Institute for American Studies at Tbilisi State University. He is author and co-author of a number of publications. Giorgi is fluent in Russian and English.



## Access to Information Programme



Supported by a grant from the Trust for Civil Society in Central and Eastern Europe



**Mr. Codru Vrabie** is a trainer and consultant in the field of good governance, public administration and public service reform from Romania. He has international experience in non-profit and public management, administrative capacity and institution building, strategic development, fighting corruption and transposing provisions of *acquis communautaire*. Currently, he serves on the FOI Advocates Steering Committee, as well as on the National Integrity Council in Romania.