

# Administrative Court – Yambol BULGARIA



*“Everyone is equal before the law,*

*but not everyone is equal before the language”*

Promoting clear communication between the Courts and citizens



CRYSTAL SCALES  
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# Promoting clear communication between the Courts and citizens

- Trust in the judicial process among EU citizens, in Bulgaria and elsewhere, running at **critically low levels**.
- The main reason? A **lack of transparency** within the Court system itself.
- The solution? Yambol Administrative Court's new **action plan**, designed to help make citizens feel equal in terms of language and before the Law.
- How? By devising a **strategy** to ensure that information for the media and citizens is **clear and open**.
- The Court's aim: to have its magistrates and officials communicate with citizens in **plain language**.



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## 2 main target groups

- Media – three-pronged strategy: 1) procedures for working with the media; 2) media information; 3) a blueprint for future media relations.
- Citizens – special emphasis on disabled people and young persons interested in studying law.

### **The Bulgarian project's overriding objective?**

*“To use language which citizens and the media can understand.”*



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## Results

- At the time of writing (September 2010), universally positive feedback from both citizens and the media in relation to information quality and the overall activities of Yambol Administrative Court.
- Two opinion surveys confirm that public perceptions of the Court's activities are now greatly improved.

## EU-wide potential

- The project's programmes and strategies are ripe for development and implementation in the courts of all EU countries (in line with calls for the use of understandable language by the Courts from both the Consultative Council of European Judges and the Council of Europe).



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## Success factors

- New media plan: outlined for the period January to December 2010, complete with specific timings and targets for individuals.
- PR: Judges and Court officials instructed in how to communicate when addressing ordinary citizens (clear and open language).
- Disabled people: Yambol Administrative Court's workplace improvement plan for the period 2010-13.
- Young persons: young people and students with an interest in legal studies invited to the Court to meet its judges and study the Court's inner workings at first hand.



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## Innovative aspects

- Recruitment by Yambol Administrative Court of a full-time PR specialist – a key to clear communication.
- Scrutiny by the media itself of progress made in applying the Court's media plan.
- Clients' Charter – a written undertaking from the Court to cooperate with all citizens by presenting its administrative services in an understandable, open and precise style.

