

## Andrey Momchilov, Bulgaria

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Sustaining Probation Officers'  
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## Rationale of participation in the project

- To continue the support and cooperation with the GD “Execution of Sentences”
  - Through combined research efforts to look at the issues of professional stress and resilience of probation officers in Bulgaria
  - To develop a National Action Plan to improve probation officers’ resilience



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## Local Research Report

- Questionnaires (n=64) reveal that Bulgarian probation officers are rather resilient, intent on staying in the job and able to detach themselves. At the same time they feel less empowered and having limited impact.
- Focus groups (2 with front line workers and 1 with managers) revealed prevalence of activity based coping strategies, focused on the individual's free time and contacts and activities outside of the office.



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## Difficulties and opportunities

- Challenges and obstacles in the research process
- Key problems: interference between the political and the expert agenda, lack of funding, coping strategies are mostly related to the “external” environment.
- Opportunities: recognition of the problem by the senior management, steps already taken.



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## National Action Plan

- Key characteristics of the NAP
  - Employment in the PS seen as a dynamic process
  - Variety of actions, targeting both the organization and the individuals
  - Recognition of the key role of managers
  - NAP yet to be formalized...



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## Conclusions (or Questions?)

- Bulgarian probation workers
  - Resilient or resigned?
  - Resilient or responsible?
  - Resilient or routined?



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## How will the future look like?

- Stakeholder support
  - Stability expected at the senior level management
  - Recognition of the problems by the GD
- Sustainability
  - NAP is rather practical and focuses on shorter term, achievable outputs
  - Priority focus on interventions that cost little or nothing



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## Sharing the lessons learned

- Resilient staff = Less staff turnover => Stable teams => Improved relations => Improved resilience.
- The Manager – friend or foe?
- If sources of resilience are so often found outside of the work environment, how do we bring them inside?





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**Thank you for your attention!**

[office@iga-bg.org](mailto:office@iga-bg.org)

[www.iga-bg.org](http://www.iga-bg.org)



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