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EU Council Confirms Excessive Deficit Procedure for Bulgaria, Sets 2029 Deadline for Fiscal Correction

Brussels - The Council of the European Union has formally confirmed the European Commission's early June recommendation to open an Excessive Deficit Procedure (EDP) against Bulgaria, calling on the Bulgarian government to take measures to curb public spending. The decision was published in the Official Journal of the European Union.

Under the Council's recommendation, Bulgaria should ensure that the nominal growth rate of net government expenditure does not exceed 4.2% in 2026, 3.4% in 2027, 3.4% in 2028, and 3.2% in 2029. Compliance with these expenditure ceilings is expected to bring the country's budget deficit below the 3% of GDP threshold by 2029, thereby ending the excessive deficit procedure.

The Council set October 15, 2026, as the deadline for Bulgaria to take effective action and submit the necessary corrective measures together with its draft 2027 Fiscal-Structural Plan, which is to be presented to the European Commission and the Eurogroup.

Bulgaria will also be required to report on progress in implementing the recommendation at least twice a year – by April 30 through its annual progress report and by October 15 through its draft budgetary plan – until the excessive deficit has been corrected.

The recommendation allows Bulgaria to temporarily exceed the prescribed expenditure growth ceilings through 2028 if the additional spending is related to defence and does not exceed the limits by more than 0.6 to 0.9 percentage points.

After 2028, Bulgaria may also be permitted to exceed the expenditure ceilings if the additional spending is linked to deliveries of military equipment contracted before the end of 2028.

To ensure proper accounting of these additional costs, the Bulgarian authorities are required to provide actual and projected data on total defence expenditure, including defence investments and any spending financed through loans under the SAFE programme.

On Wednesday, Bulgaria's Finance Ministry published the draft 2026 State Budget, projecting a general government deficit of 5.7% of GDP. According to the draft, the consolidated fiscal programme envisages deficits of 5.7% of GDP in 2026, 3.8% in 2027, and 3.0% in 2028.

The budget framework for the 2026-2028 period has been designed, to the extent that adjustments can already be made in 2026, in line with the European Commission's proposal to launch an excessive deficit procedure and with the need to stabilize Bulgaria's public finances over the medium term, the draft says.

Bulgarian President Expresses Solidarity with Venezuelan People after Devastating Earthquakes

Sofia - Bulgarian President Iliana Iotova on Friday expressed her deepest condolences and heartfelt sympathy to the people of Venezuela over the loss of life and widespread destruction caused by the devastating earthquakes in the country, the President's Press Secretariat said.

"Bulgaria stands in solidarity with the people of Venezuela in this difficult time. The Bulgarian people share the grief of the families who lost loved ones, those who were injured, and all those awaiting news of their relatives. We express our appreciation to the rescue teams, medical workers and volunteers who are working tirelessly to save lives," Iotova said.

She wished strength, courage and a swift recovery to all those affected by the disaster.

Democratic Bulgaria Urges Government to Withdraw Draft Budget, Find Common Solutions

Sofia - The budget presented by Progressive Bulgaria is one of the worst and most alarming in recent years, as there has not been a 5.7% deficit since the Zhan Videnov government in 1995-1997, MP Martin Dimitrov of Democratic Bulgaria said in a statement from the parliamentary rostrum on Friday. On Wednesday, Finance Minister Galab Donev presented the main parameters of the [draft budget for 2026](#), which envisages a deficit of 5.7% of GDP, or just over EUR 7.2 billion.

"Now the government is becoming the main cause of a new surge in prices in Bulgaria because of your budget deficit and your debts," Dimitrov said. He added that the operating expenses increase of EUR 1.3 billion over five months was a waste of money and that the government should look at specific analyses to assess what can be saved.

Dimitrov also said that EUR 9 billion in capital expenditures from August to December was a new national record, and that not even GERB had reached that level. The MP raised the questions where the reform plan was, why hospitals were not holding tenders, why critical public procurement contracts had not been reviewed, and why vacant positions were not being removed.

"Your entire budget procedure is marked by discontent, self-righteousness, and a reluctance to engage in dialogue - yet dialogue is essential. If you allow a deficit of 5.7%, it will be very difficult to recover," Dimitrov said.

"You should withdraw the budget. We are open to constructive dialogue, if you want to find common solutions. The budget must be withdrawn, and we're ready to work on a better one," the MP said.

Progressive Bulgaria Rejects Opposition Criticism of Draft 2026 Budget, Attacking Predecessors

Sofia - Progressive Bulgaria (PB) Friday rejected the opposition's criticism of the draft 2026 budget put forward by the Cabinet, and attacked its predecessors. PB deputy Konstantin Prodanov said in a declaration to Parliament on Friday that the 2026 draft budget proposed by the GERB-dominated Cabinet - now in opposition - planned spending that was lower only "on paper" because there were hidden unpaid obligations.

[The government unveiled](#) its budget draft on June 24.

Prodanov said the opposition had planned spending of EUR 54 billion for 2026, compared with EUR 57 billion under the current draft budget. He argued the EUR 2.7 billion difference reflected EUR 2.2 billion in unpaid and unfunded commitments to municipalities and the Road Infrastructure Agency carried over from 2024 and 2025.

He said that without changes, the real budget deficit for 2026 would have reached 7.4% of GDP because of rising spending without matching revenue. According to Prodanov, reducing the deficit while increasing expenditure at the same time is impossible.

Prodanov rejected opposition claims that the government was freezing the minimum wage, saying it would increase by 12.6% to EUR 620 from January 1. He added that more than EUR 1 billion had been allocated for pensions, family benefits had been expanded and a new allowance for the Easter and Christmas holidays had been introduced.

He also dismissed claims that the government planned to purchase new vehicles, saying maintenance spending covered hospitals, schools, kindergartens, police patrol cars, ambulances and social care homes.

Prodanov argued EUR 5.3 billion of the planned EUR 9.3 billion in capital expenditure for 2026 came from the Recovery and Resilience Facility and therefore could not be reduced to lower the national deficit. He added that EUR 225.4 million had been allocated to measures to cushion electricity price volatility for households and businesses.

He said the government would focus on investment rather than boosting consumption through borrowing and would tighten controls on public spending by limiting advance payments and ending discretionary funding for municipalities.

Bulgarian Athletes Win Eight Medals at European Biathlon, Triathlon & Laser Run Championships in Portugal



Bulgarian athlete Todor Mihalev (BTA Photo/Nikola Uzunov)

Madeira, Portugal - Bulgarian athletes won a total of eight medals at the European Biathlon, Triathlon & Laser Run Championships held in Madeira, Portugal.

Biathlon and triathlon are sub-sports of modern pentathlon. Triathlon combines swimming, running, and shooting, while biathlon involves running and swimming.

Todor Mihalev was crowned European champion in triathlon and claimed the bronze medal in the men's individual biathlon event.

Georgi Iliev won the European under-21 triathlon title, while in the women's under-21 triathlon competition, Yoana Rumenova earned the silver medal and Nikol Tonkova took bronze.

Rumenova and Iliev also won gold in the under-22 mixed relay biathlon and triathlon events.

A second Bulgarian relay team, consisting of Nikol Tonkova and Stivan Georgiev, won the bronze medal in the under-19 mixed triathlon relay.

Prime Minister Radev: Deficit Cannot Drop Sharply to 3%



Prime Minister Rumen Radev speaking to the media at the Holy Synod, Sofia, June 26, 2026 (BTA Photo/Dimitrina Vetova)

Sofia - Prime Minister Rumen Radev told reporters on Friday in response to a question about [criticism of the 2026 draft budget](#), which was published by the Ministry of Finance on Wednesday that the government had consulted leading economists who say there's no way the deficit could drop sharply from 7.5% to 3% in just a few months.

"I see a pattern here - those who bear the greatest responsibility for this deficit and for the state of public finances are the ones shouting the loudest and, in fact, speaking out against their own budget," Radev added. According to him, this is the budget of those who are now criticizing the proposed budget.

"We are, in fact, continuing their policies and, as far as we can, trying to make up for everything that has accumulated over the past five years," Radev added.

Radev spoke to journalists after [his meeting with Bulgarian Patriarch](#) and Metropolitan of Sofia Daniil.

Speaking about the budget, Radev said he had [met with stockbreeders](#). "They are struggling to survive, and the dairy industry is dying," he said. According to him they are thinking about the mass slaughter of the animals they breed, Radev said. "We'll be left without Bulgarian milk," he warned.

Radev explained that the Finance Ministry will allocate "170 million for aid, otherwise, this sector will die".

"We have over 60 million in incentives for investors," Radev added. "We cannot send the wrong signals to investors," he said. The completion of municipal projects is the other important sphere that needs the government's support,

Radev noted.

Regarding the [planned protest by the Podkrepa Confederation of Labour](#) over the plan for civil servants to begin paying their own social security contributions, Radev stated that he had heard opinions that this "is in the interest of civil servants". Because starting in 2028, they will be insured based on higher salaries, "What does that mean?" he said. "They will have higher pensions and higher benefits," Radev added. "I think a very balanced approach has been achieved," he noted. In his words, there is also fairness, because there will be no reduction in civil servants' incomes.

"This is a budget grounded in reality, everything is laid out on the table," Radev said, adding there will be no manipulation. "With sensible policies, we will achieve a budget of 3% or less within the set timeframe," he said. According to him, "all absurd expenditures" going to party "black cashboxes" and oligarchs will also be cut. "It's clear who they are, but they have many intermediaries, those oligarchs," Radev replied when asked who were the people he was referring to.

Budget Allocation for Agriculture Will Be Sufficient, Agriculture Minister Says

Sofia - Funds for agriculture in the 2026 budget will be sufficient, and the resources for an aid scheme, intended to compensate up to 70% of the difference in prices of fertilizers and fuels, have been secured, Agriculture Minister Plamen Abrovski told journalists on Friday on the sidelines of a Sofia-hosted international conference on EU's honey market, organized by independent MEP Elena Yoncheva.

"There is money in the budget. I will not tell you the exact figure, but it is more than sufficient," the minister said. According to him, two options are considered for supporting producers in the sector, based either on actual incurred costs or on technological cost models. He said he preferred aid to be provided according to real expenses in order to avoid distortions between different sectors.

The minister also announced that Bulgaria is already preparing analyses in order to request from the European Commission the activation of the crisis reserve to support agricultural producers.

Regarding reports of unauthorized additives in butter, the minister said he had ordered an inspection of companies that imported the relevant quantities in January 2025. He explained that ongoing border control is currently

implemented, with every shipment of butter entering Bulgaria, both from EU member states and third countries, being checked, and that this practice has been in place since July 10.

Abrovski also announced that increased control in the dairy sector is already producing results. According to him, by June 23, dairy processing plants had received nearly 26,000 tonnes of Bulgarian raw milk, compared with about 1,400 tonnes of raw materials from other countries. He said that for the first time the ministry has real-time information about the quantities and origin of raw materials, which will allow tracking of the entire production process.

The minister added that once order is established in the dairy sector, a similar approach will be applied to the control of meat processing enterprises. According to him, the goal is to ensure full traceability of raw materials and finished products.

Of inspections related to missing animals that were eligible for livestock subsidies in the Sliven region, the minister said they are ongoing, and so far, inspections of cattle have found an average of around 10% discrepancies. He said that inspections will continue in other regions of the country as well.

Tripartite Council to Discuss 2026 Draft Budgets on Monday, Trade Unions Call Protest Rally

Sofia - The National Council for Tripartite Cooperation (NCTC) will hold an extraordinary sitting at the Council of Ministers building on Monday to discuss the draft 2026 State Budget Act, the draft 2026 Public Social Insurance Budget Act and the draft 2026 National Health Insurance Fund Budget Act, the Cabinet's press centre said here on Friday.

At the same time on Monday, the Confederation of Independent Trade Unions in Bulgaria (CITUB) and the Podkrepa Confederation of Labour have called a protest rally in front of the Council of Ministers building over the proposed changes in the 2026 draft budget, which will lead to cuts in personnel expenses and require civil servants to pay their own social security contributions, the two trade unions announced.

The demands of the protest include the repealing of the Civil Servants Act and related subordinate legislation so that all public administration employees have equal rights and obligations. And the reversing of planned cuts to the budget for salaries and the wage freeze.

The [draft 2026 State Budget](#) Act was presented on Wednesday by Finance Minister Galab Donev.

MRF Slams Planned Closure of Secret Police Files Committee



Stanislav Anastasov MP of MRF reads a declaration on behalf of his parliamentary group, Sofia, June 26, 2026 (BTA Photo/Minko Chernev)

Sofia - "The Movement for Rights and Freedom (MRF) strongly condemns the Government's intention to quietly shut down the communist-era secret police files committee [officially the Committee for Disclosing the Documents and Announcing Affiliation of Bulgarian Citizens to State Security and to the Intelligence Services of the Bulgarian National Army]," MRF MP Stanislav Anastasov said in a declaration, addressing Parliament on Friday.

"These actions constitute an anti-democratic attempt to erase the memory about events and processes from the dark days of the communist regime, as well as about the people involved in them," the MP said.

In a [Facebook post on Thursday](#), MRF Floor Leader Delyan Peevski described the Government's intention to close on the communist-era secret police files committee as "a scandalous attempt to erase the memory about events and processes from the dark times of the communist regime, as well as about the people involved in them".

"This will be yet another attempt from the successors to senior officers of State Security to obliterate all evidence and monuments that bear witness to their crimes against fellow citizens, regardless of their ethnic or religious identity. We at the MRF hope that this is an ill-considered mistake that will be corrected swiftly, as befits Bulgaria as a NATO and EU member," Anastasov added.

"This is a sensitive subject as far as we at the MRF are concerned, as the non-governmental organization Sofia

Platform is currently continuing its attempts to wipe out the authentic look of Site Two on the Danube island of Persin - the former Belene forced labour camp, and to build a bogus museum. Andrey Gurov's caretaker cabinet actively backed all actions of Sofia Platform by endorsing long-expired building permits. That is why we are entering a series of questions on the legitimacy of the steps taken by the organization and by Belene Municipality," the MP said.

Anastasov said that while for 36 years the democratic community had failed to expose the links held over from the secret services of the communist regime, the MRF is doing so within its own ranks. "Not a single State Security agent, nor a candidate for Parliament with such links, is part of the MRF. Our party was born out of the pain caused by the greatest crime of the communist regime, and we owe the truth to the few who survived that repressive system," he further specified.

He was apparently referring to an internationally condemned campaign conducted by Bulgaria's communist regime in late 1984 and early 1985 to assimilate the local Muslim minority by forcing its over one million members to adopt Slavic names, limit their religious activity, and refrain from speaking Turkish in public.

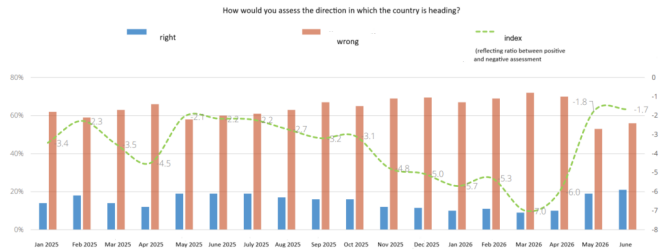
"We call for a broad public debate on the future of the secret police files committee and a discussion of the proposal by the Union of the Repressed by Communism to establish a Museum of Totalitarian Regimes and an Institute for National Memory, which would complement the work of the files committee," the MP said.

"Immediately withdraw the proposal to close the files committee, because we at the MRF will continue to work to preserve memory, protect the rights of those who suffered repression, and ensure they have a dignified place in Bulgaria's democratic history," Anastasov insisted.

According to the 2026 state budget bill published on the Finance Ministry's website, a motion for legislative amendments must be drafted by September 15 for closing down the communist-era secret police files committee and for transferring its activities to the Archives State Agency.

In a Facebook post on Thursday, MRF Floor Leader Delyan Peevski described the Government's intention to close on the communist-era secret police files committee as "a scandalous attempt to delete the memory about events and processes from the dark times of the communist regime as well as about those who participated in them".

Public Enthusiasm for Radev Government Begins to Fade, Poll Finds



The curve of assessment of the direction this country is headed two months into the Radev Cabinet tenure, based on Market Links/bTV poll, June 2026 (BTA Image)

Sofia - Trust in the Cabinet in June is 45% and mistrust is 30%, according to a MarketLinks/bTV poll whose results were made public Friday. One and a half months after the Rumen Radev cabinet took office, the first visible signs of waning public enthusiasm for the new government and the majority party supporting it are beginning to emerge, the analysts say.

It is a nationally representative poll taken during the June 13-21, 2026 period among 1,005 respondents aged 18 and over via in-person and online interviews.

The public assessments of the country's direction "have reached a plateau", to use the analysts' words, following the sharp improvement following the April 19 snap general elections where Progressive Bulgaria of former President Rumen Radev won a landslide and now controls a majority in Parliament and a government headed by Radev himself.

According to the survey, 41% of respondents believe that "the government is trying to restore order after a period of chaos," while 21% say "the government appears unprepared." Another 19% say "the government is making mistakes, but it is too early to judge," while 11% believe the cabinet is "continuing the old model with a new face." 8% of respondents said they have not been following the issue closely enough to express an opinion.

The analysts say that these observations are valid even before the government announced how much new debt it intends to take out (, and before it unveiled its 2026 budget draft.

The draft budget has a strong focus on spending restraint and has already drawn strong reactions. As regards the public debt, it is expected to increase by EUR 2.2 billion in 2026, in addition to the already approved ceiling of EUR 3.8

billion, reaching EUR 37.7 billion, or 31.1% of GDP, by the end of the year. In 2027, public debt will rise to EUR 44.7 billion, or 33.2% of GDP, while in 2028 it is projected to reach EUR 50.5 billion, or 35.2% of GDP.

The first weeks of the regular government have left mixed impressions among the public, with around 60% expressing a positive overall view. These attitudes are largely shaped by party affiliation, the analysts say. Even so, around 10% of Progressive Bulgaria voters believe the government is making mistakes, while one in ten agrees with the claim that the current administration will continue the same model of governance it had pledged to replace.

What Market Links calls "the populist measures" introduced so far do not appear to be producing the expected results. The government's "Care Basket" initiative for affordable groceries, is dividing society rather than uniting it, while the argument that the Radev Cabinet has inheriting a difficult fiscal situation appears to convince only about half of the public and around 30% believe it is being used merely as an excuse by the new administration.

Over the past month, the government has lost 11 percentage points in its net approval rating. The decline comes despite the government's decision to maintain wage levels in the public sector, introduce measures against high prices, and largely refrain from implementing reforms with clearly defined fiscal objectives.

Parliament is showing a positive trend in restoring public confidence during a period in which the government is losing support. Trust in the cabinet is 22% and mistrust is 52%. Market Links believe this may be due to the normalization of political conduct and rhetoric among parliamentary parties following the absence of anti-system and radical-leaning smaller political formations.

The political leaders and electoral potential

Prime Minister and Progressive Bulgaria leader Rumen Radev remains the country's most highly approved politician, with 53% expressing trust in him and 28% saying they distrust him.

Vazrazhdane leader Kostadin Kostadinov enjoys the trust of 14% of respondents and 65% do not trust him. GERB leader Boyko Borissov has 13% trust and 79% distrust, while Continue the Change leader Asen Vassilev gets 12% trust and 74% distrust.

Among the Democratic Bulgaria (DB) co-leaders, Ivaylo Mirchev receives 12% trust and 63% distrust, Bozhidar Bozhanov 11% trust and 61% distrust, and Atanas Atanasov 9% trust and 71% distrust.

Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF) leader Delyan Peevski has the lowest approval rating in the survey, with 6% of respondents expressing trust in him and 90% saying they distrust him.

The analysts comment that the poll shows Prime Minister Rumen Radev to be losing public trust, while distrust is increasing. "It is evident that respondents who had previously been neutral are shifting toward negative assessments rather than remaining undecided," say the analysts. The youngest voters appear to be the most disappointed. This is neither an urban nor a party-specific phenomenon, but one that is evenly distributed across different types of settlements and affects part of the electorate of the main political force.

Despite declining public trust, Progressive Bulgaria has marginally increased its electoral potential by attracting respondents who had previously been undecided about whom to support. Its electoral backing is about 2 percentage points higher than a month earlier.

GERB, Continue the Change, and Democratic Bulgaria (DB) are not gaining new supporters, but they are consolidating their existing electorates around a shared negative assessment of the government.

If parliamentary elections were held now, 39.1% of respondents would vote for Progressive Bulgaria, 13% would back GERB-UDF, 11.8% Continue the Change-Democratic Bulgaria, 4.9% MRF and 4.2% Vazrazhdane.

Another 9.8% of respondents would vote for another political formation, 15.5% remain undecided, and 1.6% said they would not support any party.

Bulgarian citizens continue to show a high willingness to participate in elections. This may be interpreted positively as a sign of increased engagement with the political process and the development of a stronger civic culture.

Parliament Reshuffles Membership of Standing Committees

Sofia - Parliament approved member changes in several standing parliamentary committees on Friday. The item was added to the agenda at the start of the plenary sitting.

Evgeni Dyankov (GERB-UDF) was relieved of his duties as member and deputy chair of the Committee on European Affairs and Oversight of the European Funds. Hristo Gadzhev (GERB-UDF) was elected to replace him.

Vladislav Goranov (GERB-UDF) was released as a member of the Defence Committee, with Hristo Gadzhev elected in his place. Goranov was subsequently elected to the Energy Committee.

Tihomir Totev (Progressive Bulgaria) was relieved as a member of the Energy Committee and replaced by Zdravko Markov (Progressive Bulgaria). Evgeni Dyankov (GERB-UDF) was also elected as a member of the committee.

Zdravko Markov was released from the Defence Committee, with Tihomir Totev taking his seat.

Pavlina Kovacheva (Progressive Bulgaria) was relieved as a member of the Labour, Demographic Policy and Social Policy Committee and replaced by Vaska Milusheva (Progressive Bulgaria).

Milusheva was, in turn, released from the Committee on Direct Citizen Participation and Interaction with Civil Society, where Kovacheva was elected as a member.

PM Radev Says He Wants Religion of All Orthodox Christians to Be Respected after Meeting with Patriarch Daniil

Sofia - Prime Minister Rumen Radev said Friday after a meeting with Bulgarian Patriarch and Metropolitan of Sofia Daniil that what matters to him is that the religion of all Orthodox Christians be respected.

"I made it clear that I am not interested in [Patriarch Kirill](#) as a person. What matters to me is that the religion of all Orthodox Christians be respected," Radev told journalists.

He added that he did not want the Church to become involved in politics, just as he did not want politics to interfere in religion.

Radev said he and Patriarch Daniil also discussed the proposed [Virtues and Religion](#) school subject. He stressed that he considered the proposed Virtues and Religion school subject to be very important and said the State, the Bulgarian Orthodox Church and the Ministry of Education and Science should work together to ensure that it is introduced in schools with broad public consensus.

"We all need young people to receive not only knowledge at school, but also an upbringing based on sound moral values," he said.

Asked about the Serbian Orthodox Church, Radev said he did not wish to interfere in the affairs of any church. He added that whatever contentious issues might arise, he would prefer to discuss them at the highest political level with Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic, with whom he is due to meet in the foreseeable future.

Forged Notary Deeds Used in Scheme to Seize Public Property in Varna, Democratic Bulgaria Says



Democratic Bulgaria floor leader Bozhidar Bozhanov speaks to reporters at the National Assembly, Sofia, June 19, 2026 (BTA Photo/Blagoy Kirilov)

Sofia - A criminal group in Varna (on the Black Sea) used forged notary deeds to seize numerous municipal and state-owned properties, Democratic Bulgaria floor leader Bozhidar Bozhanov told reporters in Parliament on Friday.

Bozhanov said the General Directorate for Combating Organized Crime had investigated the case, detained suspects and prepared it for prosecution. However, he alleged that former prosecutor general Borislav Sarafov transferred the case from the Varna District Prosecution Office to the Sofia City Prosecution Office, where it "disappeared and died". Bozhanov described the case as another example of lawlessness being tolerated.

Democratic Bulgaria MP Stela Nikolova said she had asked the Sofia City Prosecution Office whether any progress had been made on the case after it was transferred, but she was told the prosecution was not obliged to provide such information as the Constitution separates powers.

Nikolova argued that the scheme could not have operated without assistance from officials at the Geodesy, Cartography and Cadastre Agency, who identified properties that had not been registered as state or municipal ownership. She said some of the properties had

become subject to statutory limitation periods and others had already been developed with residential buildings.

According to Nikolova, two notaries certified the transactions.

Bulgarian Police Detains 25, Targets Illegal KYB Settlement



Interior Minister Ivan Demerdzhiev, June 26, 2026 (BTA Photo/Nikolay Venkov)

Veliko Tarnovo, Central Bulgaria - A total of 25 people have been arrested so far in a police operation in Varna's Primorski borough, Interior Minister Ivan Demerdzhiev told reporters near Veliko Tarnovo on Friday.

Five of those arrested are municipal employees, with the identities of those arrested to be confirmed once formal charges are filed, as investigators are continuing their work to identify higher-ranking officials involved in the corruption network. Demerdzhiev said some of those detained will face criminal charges and added that authorities are investigating not only the creation of the illegal KYB settlement but also other unlawful practices within Varna Municipality.

Dozens of witnesses have been questioned, and investigators have gathered extensive evidence, Demerdzhiev pointed out, stressing that those responsible will be referred to the prosecution. The minister noted that the investigation covers the [past two to four years](#), focusing on documents used in attempts to legalize what authorities consider clearly illegal construction. The evidence indicates that municipal employees and senior officials were involved in similar schemes unrelated to Oleg Nevzorov and KYB Corporation.

Nevzorov has been [questioned](#) in detail and provided extensive testimony, including information about the activities of Bulgaria's State Agency for National Security, Demerdzhiev said. Asked about the origin of Nevzorov's

investment, Demerdzhiev commented that it is being examined in a separate, broader investigation tracing financial flows linked to KYB Corporation, including transactions outside Bulgaria.

Parliament Sets October 17 as Deadline for Election of Judicial Council Members from Professional Quota

Sofia - Parliament on Friday adopted final amendments to the Judicial System Act requiring the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) to organize elections for members from the judges', prosecutors' and investigators' quota by October 17, 2026.

To meet the deadline, the SJC will be allowed to shorten statutory deadlines by up to one month for two-month periods, seven days for 14-day periods and four days for seven-day periods, except for deadlines related to appeals and court rulings on appeals. Parliament also shortened the deadline for adopting election rules to ten days and the deadline for convening general assemblies to three days.

The draft amendments were presented in plenary by Progressive Bulgaria MP Nikoleta Todorova, who said they were intended to resolve as quickly as possible the situation in which the SJC continues to operate with an expired term in office. She said the October 17 deadline applies to the vote itself and that the timetable is achievable.

Parliament also decided that voting for the professional quota will be conducted with paper ballots. Polling stations for judges and prosecutors will correspond to the number and location of district courts, while those for investigators may correspond to the appellate courts.

The amendments also limit acting terms for the presidents of the Supreme Court of Cassation and the Supreme Administrative Court, as well as the Prosecutor General, to a cumulative maximum of six months. The Prosecutor General will be allowed to have up to three deputies.

In addition, courts will be required to overturn disciplinary sanctions imposed without first hearing the person concerned or requesting written explanations, unless the person refused to be heard or to provide such explanations.

On Thursday, Parliament also approved final amendments to the Judicial System Act introducing new eligibility [criteria for SJC members](#). Under the changes, former presidents of the Supreme Court of Cassation or the Supreme

Administrative Court, as well as former prosecutors general, who served during the previous composition of the SJC will not be eligible for SJC members.

Judicial Council Reallocates Judges' Positions Across Bulgaria, Expands Staffing in Sofia Regional Court

Sofia - The Plenum of the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) approved Friday the opening of 15 new judicial posts in the Sofia Regional Court, while simultaneously eliminating 15 vacant positions across 11 courts in the country.

The abolished positions were previously vacant posts in the Varna District Court, Pleven District Court, Sofia Court of Appeal, Sofia Military Court, Sofia District Court, Blagoevgrad District Court, Pernik District Court, Dobrich District Court, Shumen District Court, Burgas District Court, and Sliven District Court.

The agenda item was linked to efforts to optimize staffing levels within the judiciary in connection with the expiration of the appointment term of junior judges under Article 240 of the Judiciary Act, expected in 2026. A debate took place over whether the matter should be postponed due to upcoming legal amendments and the forthcoming election of a new SJC composition, but the majority decided to proceed with a vote.

On Wednesday, Justice Minister Nikolay Naydenov [called on](#) the current Supreme Judicial Council, whose term in office has expired, to stop making personnel changes, including closing and opening new permanent positions in the courts.

At its Friday session, the SJC also discussed the draft 2026 judiciary budget, issuing a negative opinion. The objections were linked to the proposed changes in how the base salary of the lowest-ranking judges, prosecutors, and investigating magistrates would be calculated, warning that this would have a cascading effect on the remuneration of all magistrates. The council said that other positions within the judiciary would also be affected by the reform.

Justice Ministry Proposes Making Violations of EU Restrictive Measures a Criminal Offence

Sofia - Violations of European Union restrictive measures, as well as attempts to circumvent them, would become serious criminal offences punishable by imprisonment, substantial fines and, where applicable, deprivation of certain rights, under amendments to the Penal Code proposed by the Justice Ministry and published for public consultation, the Ministry said on Friday.

The proposed amendments would fully transpose the requirements of Directive (EU) 2024/1226 of the European Parliament and of the Council of April 24, 2024, on the definition of criminal offences and penalties for the violation of Union restrictive measures. The deadline for transposition expired on May 20, 2025, and the European Commission has launched an infringement procedure against Bulgaria.

The draft legislation provides for a new chapter in the Penal Code entitled "Crimes against European Union Restrictive Measures". The new offences would include violations of asset-freezing measures, restrictions on the entry of designated persons into Member States, prohibitions or restrictions on concluding or continuing transactions, including public procurement and concession contracts, as well as bans on the provision of financial services or the carrying out of financial activities.

The proposal sets a threshold of EUR 10,000, below which violations involving funds, economic resources, goods or transactions would not constitute criminal offences.

The draft also stipulates that providing humanitarian assistance to people in need in accordance with the principles of impartiality, humanity, neutrality and independence would not constitute a criminal offence.

Access to Information Programme Urges Bulgaria to Join CoE Convention on Access to Official Documents to Broaden Transparency

Sofia - Bulgaria should become a party to the Council of Europe Convention on Access to Official Documents, also known as the Tromso Convention, in order to broaden transparency, Access to Information Programme (AIP)

Executive Director Alexander Kashumov said on Friday while presenting the organization's annual report at the BTA National Press Club.

Kashumov said the convention provides broader guarantees for access to information than Bulgaria's Access to Public Information Act because it also covers preparatory documents, which are subject to restrictions under the national legislation. The report also recommends that information related to draft legislation, national strategic and programme documents be publicly accessible, allowing interested parties to participate in consultations.

Lawyer Kiril Terziyski of AIP's Legal Department said the programme provided legal consultations in 139 cases involving denied access to public information in 2025. Of those, 126 concerned institutions' failure to comply with obligations under the Access to Public Information Act, while 13 involved the broader right to seek and receive information.

Citizens and non-governmental organizations sought assistance most frequently, followed by journalists. Most cases concerned local authorities, followed by central executive bodies and territorial administrations. The most common grounds for refusing access were that the requested information was not public or was unavailable.

Another concern highlighted in the report is a 2025 legislative amendment restricting access to the public register of notarial act and other real estate transaction documents to lawyers and certain other privileged professions.

Kashumov called for additional training of public administration officials on the proper application of the Access to Public Information Act, including the public interest test (PIT), the broad interpretation of public information and the handling of electronic requests.

The report further recommends that the Judges' College of the Supreme Judicial Council and the presidents of the Supreme Court of Cassation, the appellate, district and regional courts publish online the transcripts of open criminal, civil and commercial hearings, as well as all court judgments and rulings delivered in open court.

The report is the 26th annual review published by this non-governmental organization since the adoption of the Access to Public Information Act in 2000. According to the annual report on the state of the administration, [18,753 requests](#) for access to public information were submitted in 2025.

Bulgaria, Vietnam Exchange Expertise on Mediation

Sofia - Representatives of the National Association of Mediators (NAM) met with a Vietnamese government delegation led by Deputy Justice Minister of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam Nguyen Thanh Ngoc and Ambassador Nguyen Thi Minh Nguyet at the headquarters of the Union of Bulgarian Jurists in Sofia.

Milena Guncheva, a member of the management board of NAM, said that mediation is the shortest path to people's hearts. She presented the association's work, noting that mediators and mediation organizations view mediation not only as an alternative dispute resolution process but also as a means of educating mediators, students, and pupils.

Guncheva stressed the importance of further developing out-of-court mediation in Bulgaria, following the State's support for court-connected mediation. She also outlined the association's role in preparing legislative amendments in the field and collaborating with public institutions.

Deputy Minister Nguyen Thanh Ngoc highlighted the warm hospitality of the Bulgarian people, as well as the strong cooperation between the two countries. He noted that Bulgaria and Vietnam have dedicated mediation laws and explained that the purpose of the visit was not only to strengthen bilateral cooperation but also to learn from Bulgaria's experience in the field of mediation.

He added that Vietnam has both court-connected and out-of-court mediation. The latter is community-based and voluntary, carried out by mediators elected by local residents. The Deputy Minister added that mediation helps reduce litigation costs for the parties involved and saves time.

Demonstrations Held Across Bulgaria in Memory of Children Killed in Road Traffic Accidents

Sofia - Citizens gathered in Sofia and other Bulgarian cities on Friday to express their dissatisfaction with what they described as the long-term inaction of institutions and to honour the memory of all children who have died in road traffic accidents. Demonstrations were called in front of palaces of justice across the country. The action was organized through the Facebook page of the Angels of the Road Association.

"We are gathering against the long-standing inaction of

institutions that promise to prevent fatalities but do not do so. We will light candles. We will release balloons and white doves. We will bow our heads in memory of those who will never hug their parents again," the association wrote.

Police teams were deployed in the area around the Palace of Justice in Sofia. Traffic in the area was stopped and public transport was suspended.

Paris Business Conference Highlights Growing Bulgarian-French Economic Partnership

Sofia - A business conference aimed at strengthening economic ties between Bulgaria and France was held in Paris on June 24, the French-Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) announced in its newsletter on Friday.

The event was organized by the Embassy of Bulgaria in France in cooperation with the French-Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI), the Bulgarian-French Chamber for Economic Cooperation (BFCEC), and the Invest Bulgaria Agency.

The conference brought together representatives of public institutions, employers' organizations, and leading companies from both countries, providing a platform to present Bulgaria's economic outlook and investment opportunities for the 2026-2030 period.

FBCCI President Stephane Delahaye took part in a panel discussion on Bulgaria's attractiveness as a destination for French investment and the success stories of French companies operating in the country. FBCCI Executive Director Vessela Mosettig presented an overview of the French business presence in Bulgaria, as well as the country's rapidly developing technology ecosystem.

Speakers, including Deputy Minister of Economy, Investments and Industry Krasimir Yakimov, Bulgarian Ambassador to France Radka Balabanova, and representatives of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Invest Bulgaria Agency, MEDEF-France's leading employers' federation, and Bulgarian-French business organizations, highlighted Bulgaria's key competitive advantages. These included macroeconomic stability, a favourable tax environment, accelerating economic convergence, access to the European single market, and the country's progress toward OECD membership.

Participants also emphasized the positive momentum of

French investment in Bulgaria and the country's growing role as an industrial, energy, and technology hub in Southeast Europe.

Representatives of companies including Saint-Gobain, Veolia, and EnduroSat, alongside the Confederation of Employers and Industrialists in Bulgaria (KRIB), shared examples of successful Bulgarian-French partnerships. Discussions focusing on industry, the energy transition, and innovation reaffirmed Bulgaria's potential as a strategic destination for French investors.

The conference concluded with participants noting Bulgaria's ambition to join the OECD by the end of 2026 or early 2027, a prospect that was described as highly favourable for the country's long-term economic growth.

Bulgaria and Poland Agree to Accelerate Industrial Cooperation



A snapshot of the meeting between Bulgarian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economy, Investments and Industry Alexander Pulev and Polish Minister of State Assets Wojciech Balczun (Photo courtesy of the Bulgarian Economy Ministry)

Sofia - Bulgarian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economy, Investments and Industry Alexander Pulev met with Polish Minister of State Assets Wojciech Balczun in Gdansk to discuss ways to deepen industrial and economic cooperation between Bulgaria and Poland, the Bulgarian Economy Ministry said in a press release on Friday.

During the meeting, Pulev referred to the talks held a day earlier between Bulgarian Prime Minister Rumen Radev and his Polish counterpart Donald Tusk, during which the two leaders outlined the main priorities for expanding bilateral cooperation.

Pulev identified industrial manufacturing, innovation, artificial intelligence, transport connectivity, energy, and the defence industry as key areas for future collaboration. He

also underscored the importance of a planned bilateral agreement that will establish an institutional framework for cooperation in areas of mutual interest, including technology transfer, innovation, and technological development.

Pulev invited Polish companies to expand their investment presence in Bulgaria, stressing that the government is keen to encourage strategic partners such as Poland to explore new investment opportunities in the country.

"We want to encourage our strategic partners, such as Poland, to discover new investment opportunities in Bulgaria. You can count on our country as a predictable and reliable partner," he said. He added that there is considerable potential for joint projects in sectors including energy, transport connectivity, high technology, and innovation.

Pulev also expressed Bulgaria's interest in drawing on Poland's successful experience in implementing economic reforms. "Poland is an exceptionally successful development model. The country's economic growth between 1990 and 2025 has been truly impressive," he noted.

The ministers also discussed the development of public-private partnerships and the management of state-owned enterprises.

"You have succeeded in building an efficient and professional approach," Pulev told his counterpart, voiced readiness for an active exchange of expertise between the two countries.

For his part, Balczun said Poland was prepared to share its experience and supported closer bilateral cooperation. "Bulgaria has a very bright future. We can share our experience, and that will benefit all of us," he said.

The two ministers also explored ways to support small and medium-sized enterprises through dual listings on both the Bulgarian Stock Exchange and the Warsaw Stock Exchange, with the latter seen as a strong partner offering significant opportunities for business growth.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Pulev and Balczun agreed on the need to continue expert- and political-level dialogue and to organize a bilateral business forum aimed at strengthening contacts between companies and creating new opportunities for investment, industrial partnerships, and technological cooperation between Bulgaria and Poland.

Energy Ministers of Bulgaria, Turkiye Discuss Expanding Cooperation



Minister of Energy Iva Petrova (left) and the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources of the Republic of Turkiye Alparslan Bayraktar, June 26, 2026 (Photo: Energy Ministry press centre)

Istanbul - Minister of Energy Iva Petrova held a bilateral meeting with the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources of Turkiye Alparslan Bayraktar during her visit to Istanbul, the Ministry of Energy reported on Friday. The two agreed on the need to expand energy cooperation between Bulgaria and Turkiye in a number of areas in the short term.

Petrova stated that the agreement with Botas played an important role in ensuring the security of gas supplies during a period of unprecedented uncertainty in European energy markets. She was referring to a 2023 agreement with Turkish energy company BOTAS under which the Bulgarian side booked capacity of 106.4GWh/day on the Turkish LNG regasification terminals and agreed to pay for this EUR 512,000 daily for a period ending in 2035.

During the meeting, opportunities for deepening cooperation in the field of energy connectivity were also discussed, including the development of regional energy corridors, which are of key importance for the diversification of supplies and strengthening energy security in Southeastern Europe.

On June 20, Minister Petrova [expressed](#) her expectation that the agreement with the Turkish company Botas and its parameters would be completely renegotiated within one or two months in the context of new market conditions. Expert talks are currently underway to renegotiate the agreement, she explained at the time.

Parliamentary Tourism Committee Chair Meets with Ambassador of Moldova



Parliamentary Tourism Committee Chair Rositsa Kirova (left) meeting with Ambassador of Moldova to Bulgaria Emil Jakota, Sofia, June 26, 2026 (Tourism Committee Photo)

Sofia - Parliamentary Tourism Committee Chair Rositsa Kirova met with Ambassador of Moldova to Bulgaria Emil Jakota, the Committee said in a press release on Friday. The sides discussed opportunities for deepening cooperation in the field of tourism, as well as Bulgaria's support for Moldova's EU integration.

The discussion also addressed the issue of preserving the Taraclia administrative district as a key guarantee for safeguarding the linguistic, cultural, and historical identity of the Bulgarian community in Moldova, in the context of the administrative-territorial reform proposals put forward by the Moldovan government. It is of strategic importance for the Bulgarian community in the country that the Taraclia district be preserved as an independent administrative-territorial unit.

Jakota assured that the option proposed by the Moldovan government preserves territorial integrity, the powers of the local administration, and the possibility of direct political representation for the district's citizens.

He expressed his support for Bulgarian National Radio's broadcasts from Taraclia, which include local content related to Bessarabian Bulgarians. He stated that the Romanian national television channel - Moldova - is already broadcasting in Moldova and that he will facilitate the launch of Moldova channel broadcasts on Bulgarian National Television, where the content and local news will be combined with programmes in Bulgarian. That will help preserve the national and cultural identity of the Bulgarian community in Moldova.

Kirova said that the work on the idea of broadcasting on Bulgarian National Radio has been underway since last year

in collaboration with the Culture Ministry under the government of Rosen Zhelyazkov. "I am convinced that the Bulgarian national interest comes first, and our compatriots abroad will continue to feel the support of the Bulgarian State through such initiatives. For me, the rights of Bulgarians abroad are a cause, and I will continue to contribute to the implementation of such policies in their support," she noted.

Tourism Ministry, Consumer Protection Commission Intensify Joint Inspections along Bulgarian Black Sea Coast



Tourism Ministry and Commission for Consumer Protection launch intensified joint inspections along the Bulgarian Black Sea coast (Photo: Tourism Ministry)

Sofia - The Tourism Ministry and the Commission for Consumer Protection (CCP) are launching intensified joint inspections along the Bulgarian Black Sea coast throughout the summer season to ensure high-quality tourism services, the ministry announced on Friday.

"These inspections are not a crackdown on the tourism industry, but a tool to protect legitimate businesses and clearly distinguish them from practices that tarnish the image of the entire sector," Tourism Minister Ilin Dimitrov said.

In Sozopol on Friday, experts from both institutions inspected beach areas, restaurants, and retail establishments. What the inspections found was that beaches were in good condition, and the majority of the inspected retail establishments were operating in compliance with regulatory requirements.

To date, the Tourism Ministry conducted 97 inspections of supervised beaches and two of unsupervised beaches. It monitors the fulfilment of obligations by beach concessionaires and tenants with regard to safety, beach maintenance, and the quality of services provided. So far, inspectors have issued five warnings, primarily related to the lack of medical personnel and the provision of lifeguard services.

The Commission for Consumer Protection conducted over 130 inspections along the Black Sea coast, covering more than 70 beach areas and nearly 60 food and entertainment establishments. Eleven violations were identified, primarily related to incorrect price labelling, discrepancies in the dual pricing in levs and euros, the absence of required price lists and menus, as well as other violations of the Tourism Act and the Consumer Protection Act.

The Commission has requested information from businesses offering beach services regarding the prices of umbrellas and lounge chairs compared to previous periods. If an increase is found, they must provide evidence justifying it in accordance with the legal requirements related to the introduction of the euro.

Inspections are proceeding according to schedule, with immediate action taken in response to reports received from citizens and tourists.

The overall goal of the Tourism Ministry and the CCP is to ensure a safe environment for tourists and to reinforce Bulgaria's positive image as a preferred destination.

The violations identified by the Commission account for less than 10% of the total scope of inspections along the Black Sea coast, Chair of the Commission for Consumer Protection Alexander Kolyachev said at a meeting of the Parliamentary Tourism Committee earlier this week, speaking about the inspections currently being carried out in Bulgarian resorts.

Bulgarian Government Unveils Measures to Prevent Water Restrictions in Pleven, Lovech

Sofia - Regional Development and Public Works Minister Ivan Shishkov said on Friday that the government had identified a package of short- and medium-term measures aimed at minimizing, or entirely avoiding, water restrictions in the cities of Pleven and Lovech during the current year. Speaking to journalists in Sofia after a working meeting at the Council of Ministers dedicated to water shortages, water supply infrastructure, and irrigation systems, Shishkov said the government was launching an intensive campaign

to reduce the impact of potential water rationing in the two cities.

He voiced hope that, even if water restrictions proved unavoidable, they would be kept to a minimum, adding that the authorities were optimistic that no water rationing would be necessary at all.

According to the Minister, the action plan agreed at the meeting, together with the government's decisive response, should allow residents of Pleven and Lovech to experience a substantially different summer compared with previous years. He said he was confident the planned measures would achieve that goal.

Asked whether other parts of the country were also facing a potential water crisis, Shishkov said a comprehensive nationwide assessment was currently underway. He said that the government was holding a series of meetings to identify all areas at risk and assess potential problem zones.

According to data compiled by Bulgaria's regional water and sewerage operators for the period June 15-21, 13 municipalities are currently under water supply restrictions, affecting a total of 14,976 residents.

At end-May, Plamen Nikiforov, Chair of the Management Board of the Scientific and Technical Union of Water Management, [said](#) Bulgaria's water shortages were not solely the result of climate change, but also stemmed from poor management, aging infrastructure, and a lack of institutional coordination.

Cabinet Calls Off "Outrageous Public Procurements", Crash Barrier Contract for EUR 500 Mln Is Among Them

Sofia - The Cabinet is calling off all "outrageous public procurements" and a crash barrier contract for some EUR 500 million is among them, Prime Minister Rumen Radev told journalists on Friday, taking an opportunity to attack his predecessors. "We are ending all outrageous public procurements, we are ending theft. The squandering of public funds was huge. Poor planning was widespread. We are cutting all absurd spending, particularly where public money has been flowing into party coffers and the pockets of oligarchs. From now on, it should be clear that anyone carrying out construction projects will be subject to rigorous inspections to ensure the quality of the work," the Prime Minister said.

There will be a full inspection of the crash barriers on the section of Trakia Motorway where the severe crash occurred a few days ago, he said. He specified that the inspection would focus on crash barriers manufactured in 2024 during the large-scale replacement programme.

According to Radev, the problem is comprehensive and does not concern crash barriers alone but involves everyone - road users, state institutions and local authorities. The Prime Minister said inspections would be carried out on newly manufactured crash barriers and that other technical solutions, such as concrete safety barriers, would also be considered. Radev stressed that it is impossible to have police officers at every junction and on every inter-village road. "This is a long-term process and many things need to change - from education in schools and upbringing in families to all supervisory bodies, the Road Infrastructure Agency, and the proper design and construction of roads. Everyone knows the slogan that corruption kills," he said.

"That is why we are stopping all these scandalous public procurement contracts concluded without any financial backing and subsequently financed through Council of Ministers decrees with large amounts of public money," Radev said. He argued that from now on, anyone involved in construction would be subject to "draconian inspections of construction quality". "Many people in the construction sector have been pressured to return money, and the quality of the roads has suffered as a result. No one will pressure them from now on, but we will pursue them over quality," Radev said.

He noted that the Government is halting a BGN 1 billion public procurement procedure for crash barriers because the price is unrealistic and the tender will be reviewed. Radev also commented on medium-sized public procurement contracts, citing as an example a BGN 47 million contract at the National Railway Infrastructure Company for cutting tree branches. He also highlighted a contract awarded to a company that mowed three decarees of land during the winter for BGN 250,000. "Wherever you look, there are hundreds of such cases," Radev commented. He announced that the 2027 budget would contain even stronger policies aimed at curbing unreasonable and long-term expenditure.

Two days earlier, on June 24, three people, including two nine-year-old boys, were killed in a severe crash on Trakia Motorway involving a lorry and a passenger car. The driver of the heavy goods vehicle lost control, crossed through the crash barriers and entered the opposite carriageway towards Burgas, colliding with a car carrying five people.

Later on Friday, Regional Development Minister Ivan Shishkov told journalists that, following the recent road

accidents, he had ordered an inspection to assess the quality of the materials used in the crash barriers in the affected sections. He added that a new ordinance introducing updated crash barrier standards had been adopted in 2024, noting that the law allows a 10-year period for the replacement of existing installations.

Food Sovereignty Is Matter of National Security for Bulgaria, Prime Minister Radev Says

Sofia - Prime Minister Rumen Radev discussed with representatives of the dairy farming sector ways to promote domestic production, the cabinet's press office announced on Friday.

During the working meeting at the Council of Ministers, Radev reaffirmed the cabinet's support for Bulgarian producers and emphasized the importance of ensuring the country's food sovereignty through Bulgarian-produced goods.

Radev noted that opportunities to support the sector are being sought despite serious challenges to public finances caused by flawed budgeting practices in previous years. Options for reducing the administrative burden are also being considered. At the same time, the government is committed to protecting producers' interests from unfair trade practices through measures to increase transparency throughout the entire pricing chain.

During the discussion, the actions taken to strengthen control on raw milk imports were positively assessed. The measure was introduced to ensure high-quality and safe raw materials for the production of dairy products. Radev stated that he would require the Bulgarian Food Safety Agency to conduct even more rigorous inspections and controls regarding the quality of food offered to Bulgarian citizens.

Participants also discussed the national Care Basket initiative, which supports consumers and Bulgarian producers. One of the initiative's priorities is to stimulate Bulgarian production by encouraging the inclusion of products from Bulgarian farmers and processors in the selected consumer basket.

Bulgarian Defence Minister Inspects Stryker Assembly Progress at TEREM Plant in Veliko Tarnovo



Defence Minister Dimitar Stoyanov visits TEREM-Ivaylo Ltd. in Veliko Tarnovo, North Central Bulgaria, June 26, 2026 (Defence Ministry Photo)

Veliko Tarnovo, North Central Bulgaria - Defence Minister Dimitar Stoyanov visited TEREM-Ivaylo Ltd. in Veliko Tarnovo on Friday to inspect progress on the final assembly of Stryker combat vehicles for the Bulgarian Army. The plant is currently assembling five vehicles, which are expected to be completed within the next few months.

During the visit, the Minister toured the facilities for receiving, assembling, painting, washing, testing and delivering the vehicles. Company officials said the infrastructure fully meets all project requirements.

Stoyanov noted that the plant is fully prepared to carry out the work, but the project has been significantly delayed due to late deliveries from the manufacturer. He stressed that government funding is secured and that the Defence Ministry monitors progress on a daily basis. The Minister also met with representatives of TEREM Holding to discuss the financial performance and future development of the group's companies, urging management to pursue more partnerships and contracts.

The meeting also covered plans to certify TEREM-Ivaylo for post-warranty maintenance of Stryker vehicles. According to Stoyanov, the facility has the infrastructure and expertise to become a regional Stryker service centre, ensuring long-term support for all 183 vehicles ordered under the contract.

Bulgaria Interested in Restoring Full Membership in Institute for Nuclear Research and Nuclear Energy, Deputy PM Hristov Says

Sofia - Deputy Prime Minister Ivo Hristov said that Bulgaria has an interest in restoring its full membership in the Institute for Nuclear Research and Nuclear Energy, where most Bulgarian experts in nuclear sciences received their education. During Friday's Question Time in Parliament, Hristo said that the political will to do so exists, but the Government is currently working to resolve the related financial issues.

Hristov recalled that the Bulgarian State had funded the scientific organisation for 70 years, but in April 2022, during the tenure of then education and science minister Nikolay Denkov, the country's participation in the Institute was suspended. Despite this, Bulgaria has remained liable for membership contributions, the Deputy Prime Minister added.

"As a result of unpaid obligations accumulated between 2023 and 2025 under successive governments, Bulgaria now owes approximately USD 5 million in membership fees. Formally, the country remains a member of the Institute, but in practice it is failing to meet its financial commitments," Hristov said.

Hristov said that the consequences directly affect 26 Bulgarian scientists currently working at the Institute, as Bulgaria is failing to provide the funding needed to cover the costs related to their residence and professional activities there.

Central Bank Expects Real-Terms GDP to Slow Down in 2026-27, Rebound in 2028

Sofia - The Bulgarian National Bank (BNB) expects a slowdown in Bulgaria's real-terms gross domestic product (GDP) in 2026 and 2027, followed by growth acceleration in 2028, the institution said in the June edition of the publication that appeared on its website Friday.

According to the forecast's baseline scenario, Bulgaria's real-terms GDP growth will slow to 2.8% in 2026 and 2.7% in 2027 before accelerating to 2.9% in 2028. The growth rate of private consumption is expected to decelerate in the second half of 2026 and in 2027 due to the adverse impact of higher inflation on households' real disposable income.

Nevertheless, private consumption will continue to be a major contributor to economic growth throughout the period, according to the forecast.

Average annual inflation, as measured by the Harmonized Index of Consumer Prices (HICP), is projected to speed up to 5% in 2026 and reach 5.9% by the end of the year, with the acceleration primarily reflecting higher energy prices.

In 2027 and 2028, average annual inflation is expected to slow to 3.5% and 2.9%, respectively, while year-end inflation is projected to be 2.7% and 2.6%, respectively.

Risks to GDP growth and inflation forecasts are related to the possibility of higher economic growth and lower inflation in 2026 and 2027. This is mainly due to the ceasefire agreement reached on June 17 between the US and Iran, as a result of which international oil prices plummeted compared to the time the forecast was finalized, the report reads.

Compared with the March 2026 macroeconomic forecast, GDP growth is currently expected to remain steady but low in 2026 and 2027, and higher in 2028.

Energo-Pro Launches Its First Battery Energy Storage System in Bulgaria

Gorna Oryahovitsa, North Central Bulgaria - Czech energy group Energo-Pro has commissioned its first Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) in Bulgaria, built in Gorna Oryahovitsa (Northern Bulgaria), the company said on Friday. The project marks an important step in the development of a modern and sustainable electricity infrastructure and will contribute to the more efficient management and balancing of the power system, the press release added.

The facility is the first of its kind for the ENERGO-PRO Group in Bulgaria. It was built by Energo-Pro Bulgaria and will be operated by Energo-Pro Energy Services.

The system's main function is to store electricity during periods of surplus in the grid and feed it back into the system during periods of higher demand or supply shortages. In practice, the energy storage facility will be charged from the electricity distribution network during periods of the day when electricity prices are lower and discharged during hours when prices are higher. In this way, it will support the balancing of the power system, improve its reliability and security, and contribute to the more efficient use of available energy resources.

The investment amounts to EUR 4.23 million and was implemented with co-financing under the Low Carbon Economy Programme of Bulgaria's National Recovery and Resilience Plan. The facility has an installed capacity of 10.75 MW and a storage capacity of 24.31 MWh.

The battery's expected operational lifespan is 10 years or more than 7,000 charge-discharge cycles.

Local Governments Fail to Update Their Properties' Value, National Audit Office Finds

Sofia - Municipal properties are often recorded at their lower tax-assessed value instead of a fair value, closer to the market price. This is one of the most common systemic weaknesses identified in the annual financial statements of municipalities, according to the 2025 National Audit Office's consolidated report on the financial statements of public sector organizations for 2024.

The report has been published on the Audit Office's website and submitted to the Minister of Finance, as well as to the chairperson and members of the Parliamentary Budget and Finance Committee for consideration.

According to the report, the financial impact of the National Audit Office's audits amounted to nearly BGN 2.205 billion in corrected accounting errors in municipalities' annual financial statements. Although there is a positive trend toward a reduction in the overall number of errors, the Audit Office notes that municipalities' financial reports continue to show significant systemic deficiencies that distort the true picture of financial management.

The consolidated report does not specify the total number of municipalities that made errors specifically in the revaluation of municipal properties. However, this issue has been identified as a systemic weakness in the financial audits for 2023, 2022, 2021, and 2020 as well.

In 2024, seven municipalities accounted for 55%, or approximately BGN 555.056 million, of the total value of improperly recognized assets in municipal balance sheets.

The tax assessment value, at which properties are recorded in accounting balance sheets, may be used at the initial recognition of assets, but only as long as it serves as a reliable indicator for determining the so-called fair value of the respective property, based on market criteria, in line with the regulatory requirements of the Ministry of Finance, the National Audit Office says.

Under the Municipal Property Act, municipal properties cannot be sold at a price lower than their tax assessment value. However, when that value is too low, it could potentially create conditions for assets to be purchased at artificially low prices.

Another systemic weakness in the annual financial statements is the incorrect accounting treatment of municipalities' equity participation in commercial companies. Errors are also made in recording changes in the share of investments. As a result, municipalities' financial statements inaccurately present shares, stocks, and related revenues. This issue has been identified in audits of financial statements since 2016.

Another of the most frequently occurring errors is related to asset depreciation, including incorrect calculation of expenses, omissions in charging and derecognition, and incorrect parameter settings.

Eight municipalities account for 42% of the total amount of incorrectly reported expenses in the Statement of Revenues and Expenditures (SRE) for 2024, where depreciation accounts for a major share. The incorrectly reported expenses in the SRE for these eight municipalities alone amount to nearly BGN 141.4 million. This specific systemic weakness has been officially identified and reported by the National Audit Office in audits of annual financial statements for 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023.

Thanks to the audits of the National Audit Office, corrections totaling BGN 1.130 billion were made in municipalities' 2024 financial statements, including BGN 909 million in assets and BGN 221 million in liabilities, the institution notes. These corrections ensure a fair representation of the financial position of each municipality. Complete and accurate financial reporting enables sound management decisions at both local and national level.

The National Audit Office also recalls that it does not only identify violations but also actively assists in their correction through several mechanisms: adjustments during the audit process, methodological support and recommendations, notification of competent authorities, and monitoring of new systems.

Agriculture Minister Calls for Stronger Action against Honey, Rose Oil Counterfeiting

Sofia - Agriculture and Food Minister Plamen Abrovski on Friday called for more effective European mechanisms to protect authentic agricultural products and for the establishment of laboratories capable of detecting counterfeit honey and rose oil. He was speaking at the international conference "The EU Honey Market: Fighting Fraud" in Sofia, organized by independent Member of the European Parliament Elena Yoncheva.

Abrovski said Bulgaria's natural conditions allow for the production of high-quality honey, but stressed that effective control mechanisms are needed to protect the product.

He argued that the fight against honey counterfeiting is closely linked to European Union rules and the future Common Agricultural Policy. According to him, recent EU reforms have failed to improve the competitiveness of European producers and have instead intensified competition among Member States within the single market.

The minister also highlighted the lack of a specialized laboratory to detect counterfeit honey, describing it as a serious problem. He drew a parallel with Bulgaria's rose oil industry, noting that the country also lacks a laboratory capable of conclusively distinguishing between natural and synthetic rose oil.

Abrovski added that areas such as the Rhodope Mountains offer excellent conditions for producing high-quality honey because of limited agricultural activity and the absence of intensive pesticide use.

Nearly 15,000 Balkan Trout Released Into Iskar River in Samokov

Samokov, Western Bulgaria - A traditional fish stocking of the Iskar River took place near Lago Park in Samokov on Friday. Students, Samokov Municipality employees, as well as members of the Hunting and Fishing Association released about 15,000 fish of the Balkan trout species into the Iskar River.

The supplier of the fish is from the village of Iskrets, while the initiative was organized jointly with the Hunting and

Fishing Association, the Municipality said.

Cardiovascular Disease Is Leading Cause of Death in Bulgaria in 2025

Sofia - The main causes of death among Bulgaria's population in 2025 are diseases of the circulatory system, the National Statistical Institute (NSI) said on Friday. These account for 60.9% of all deaths. The mortality rate is 942.2 per 100,000 population.

A reference to NSI data shows that in 2024, diseases of the circulatory system were also the leading cause of death, accounting for 60.7% of all deaths.

In 2025, neoplasms (tumors) were the second leading cause of death, at 266.8 per 100,000 population, compared with 265.8 per 100,000 in 2024. As in the previous year, the rate is higher among men – 312.4 per 100,000 men compared to 224.6 per 100,000 women.

Bulgaria Makes Chickenpox Vaccine Mandatory from July 1

Sofia - Vaccination against chickenpox (varicella) will become mandatory in Bulgaria from July 2026, according to the country's immunization ordinance published in the State Gazette in January. The vaccine will be provided free of charge.

A total of 14,570 cases of chickenpox have been registered in Bulgaria since the beginning of the year, compared with 14,594 cases reported during the same period in 2025, according to data from the National Centre of Infectious and Parasitic Diseases as of June 21, 2026.

WHO recommends introducing routine chickenpox vaccination where the disease is an important public health problem and where high vaccination coverage can be sustained.

Mandatory immunization against varicella will apply to children born after January 1, 2025, under a two-dose schedule. The first dose will be administered at 12-15 months of age, while the booster dose will be given at four years of age. Children who develop chickenpox after receiving the first dose and have medical documentation or laboratory confirmation of the disease will not be subject to the second dose.

Varicella is one of the most contagious diseases, infecting about 90% of people who come into contact with an

infected person if they have not developed specific immunity, according to the online platform Plus Men, created by the Health Ministry to promote the benefits of vaccines. Children aged 5-9 are the most affected group. The varicella vaccine can also be administered after contact with an infected person, provided this is done within 72 hours of exposure.

Navy Destroys Drifting Drone near Kranevo

Varna, on the Black Sea - The Bulgarian Navy destroyed a drifting drone in the Black Sea seven nautical miles east of the coastal village of Kranevo, the Navy Headquarters in Varna reported on Friday.

The information about the presence of an unmanned aerial vehicle in the sea off Kranevo was submitted earlier in the day by the Border Police Directorate. The reconnaissance of the site was carried out by a rescue ship from the Varna Naval Base. The drone was destroyed on site, as there was a concern about residual explosives. All safety measures were taken during the operation, the Navy press centre reported.

[On May 5](#), a specialized team from the Varna Naval Base carried out a reconnaissance and transport task of an unmanned aerial vehicle found on the beach in Byala, on the Black Sea. A few days earlier, a team from the Burgas Navy Base [destroyed](#) the remains of a drone thrown from the sea in the area of the beach, northeast of the Elenite complex.

Russian Drone Attack Injures One, Cuts Power to Towns in Odesa Region

Odesa, Ukraine - One person was injured, and several towns were left without power as a result of last night's Russian drone attack on the Odesa region, Oleh Kiper, Head of the Odesa Regional Military Administration, said on Telegram.

"The enemy has once again attacked energy and civilian infrastructure in Izmail district. Several towns were temporarily left without electricity as a result of damage to an energy facility. The attack caused a fire in a residential building. Unfortunately, one person was injured," Kiper reported.

Bulgarians in the Odesa region number more than 150,000 and are the third largest population group in Ukraine,

according to official census data. About 50,000-60,000 Bulgarians live in the city of Odesa itself. The largest compact Bulgarian population is concentrated in the Bolhrad, Izmail and Bilhorod-Dnistrovskiy districts.

New Russian Drone Attacks near Romanian Border Trigger Alert Warning in Tulcea

Bucharest - Residents of Romania's Tulcea County received an alert from the RO-ALERT system, after new Russian drone attacks in Ukraine near the Romanian border.

An IAR 330 Puma helicopter of the Romanian Air Force took off at 3:57 a.m. local time and monitored aerial targets 31 km east of Sulina, the Romanian Defence Ministry said. The air alert ended at 4:23 a.m.

The ministry said it had kept allied structures informed in real time and remained in constant contact with them.

Romania, an EU and NATO member, shares a 650 km land border with Ukraine. Since Russia began attacking Ukrainian ports on the Danube River, drones have repeatedly violated Romanian airspace.

In late May, [a Russian drone struck](#) a residential building in Galati. Romania subsequently declared the Russian consul in Constanta persona non grata. In response, Moscow announced on Thursday that it was expelling Romania's Consul General in St Petersburg and closing the country's consulate there.

Turkiye Dispatches Rescue Team to Earthquake-Hit Venezuela

Ankara - Turkiye will send a search and rescue team to Venezuela following the 7.5-magnitude earthquake that caused extensive damage and claimed 235 lives, according to the latest official figures reported by Turkish state broadcaster TRT Haber.

The rescue team is scheduled to depart from Istanbul Ataturk Airport on Friday. Preparations for the deployment have been coordinated by the Disaster and Emergency Management Authority in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of National Defence, the Ministry of Health, and the General Directorate of Security under the Presidency of the Republic of Turkiye.

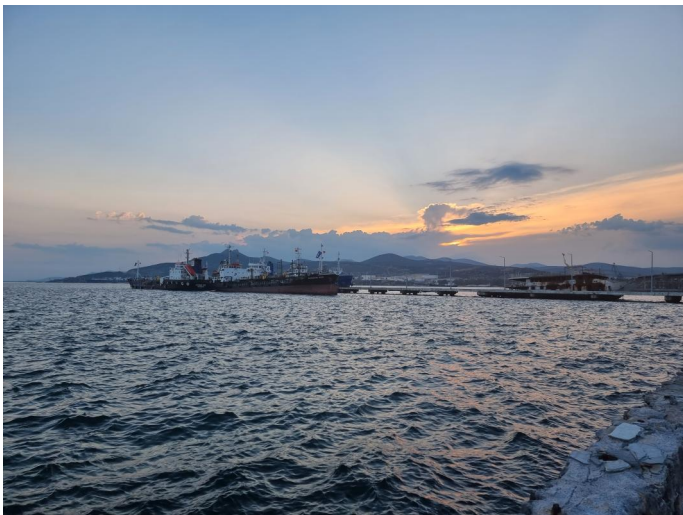
An A400M military transport aircraft has been provided in

coordination with the Turkish General Staff. The 37-member search and rescue and emergency medical team will be drawn from AFAD's provincial directorates in İzmir and Denizli.

The Turkish Ministry of Health will deploy six medical rescue teams, while the Turkish Red Crescent will contribute two personnel, two search-and-rescue dogs, and three vehicles equipped for rescue operations.

Meanwhile, the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, through the country's embassy in Caracas, continues to monitor the situation closely and assess Venezuela's humanitarian needs in the aftermath of the earthquake.

Greece Allocates EUR 15 Mln for Water Supply Management Projects on Nine Islands



View of Elefsina, Greece, July 5, 2023 (BTA Photo/Melina Hristova)

Athens - Greece will allocate more than EUR 15 million to finance 10 projects aimed at improving water supply and addressing water shortages in nine island municipalities, the newspaper Kathimerini reported.

The decision to include the municipalities in the national water management programme was signed by Environment and Energy Minister Stavros Papastavrou. Funding will be allocated to the islands of Naxos, Skopelos, Amorgos, Astypalaia, Rhodes, Leros, Alonissos, Zakynthos and Crete.

The projects include the repair and modernization of aging water supply networks to reduce water losses, as well as the construction of new distribution networks.

The programme also provides for the construction of new

seawater desalination plants and related infrastructure to ensure adequate water supplies in areas facing shortages, Kathimerini said.

In mid-June, authorities declared a state of emergency over water shortages on the Aegean islands of Tinos and Alonissos. Karpathos was later added to the list.

Red Code for Dangerously High Temperatures Across Serbia Issued for Saturday

Belgrade - A Red Code extreme weather alert for dangerously high temperatures has been issued for Saturday, June 27, throughout Serbia, where an even more intense heat wave is beginning and is expected to continue into the beginning of next week, with temperatures ranging from 35 C to 39 C. The official warning was issued on Friday by the Republic Hydrometeorological Service of Serbia.

An orange alert for dangerous temperatures was issued for Friday in most regions (Backa, Banat, Srem, Western Serbia, Sumadija, Pomoravlje, Eastern and Southeastern Serbia), while a yellow alert was issued for the remaining areas, according to local media. Maximum temperatures for the day reached between 32 C and 36 C.

Authorities issued warnings of an extreme risk of wildfires due to the severe drought.

Exercising increased caution and following medical advice due to the high temperatures and high UV index readings has been recommended.

The high temperatures that have hit Serbia in recent days have led to a sharp increase in the number of emergency room visits, and doctors were particularly concerned about the case of a 17-year-old boy who suffered a heart attack, presumably due to heatstroke, and is currently being treated at the Belgrade Emergency Clinical Centre, state broadcaster RTS reports.

The heat wave is seriously straining the healthcare system, with emergency teams responding to over 300 calls in the past 24 hours.

Experts warn that high temperatures pose additional risks, especially for people with cardiovascular diseases.

Foreign Ministry Checking All Facts Related to Processing of North Macedonia's Diplomatic Note within Ministry

Sofia - The Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs told BTA on Friday that it has ordered a check to establish all facts related to the processing of North Macedonia's diplomatic note within the Ministry. The circumstances around the note, which concerns events of January 6, are still being clarified, the Ministry told BTA.

The Foreign Ministry also said it attaches the utmost importance to the protection of diplomatic correspondence and condemns any actions that violate the strictly established international rules and practices in this area.

On June 24, North Macedonia's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade Timco Mucunski told a news conference that he expects Bulgaria to apologize for making public a diplomatic note with information about family members of Prime Minister Hristijan Mickoski travelling to Bulgaria's Pamporovo mountain resort. A photo of the note, which provides a transportation route for Mickoski's wife and son and requests, if possible, a police escort for the duration of the guests' stay, has been circulating on social media for several days. In reaction, the Bulgarian [Foreign Ministry said](#) it has not disclosed a diplomatic note or other formal correspondence related to the visit to Bulgaria of family members of an official representative of another country. The Ministry specified that the information circulating in the last days concerns a note verbale of January 6, 2026 about events long past.

On June 25, Mucunski commented that he was "extremely disappointed" in the reaction of the Bulgarian Foreign Ministry. In an interview with TV Channel 5, he stated that the June 24 response of the Ministry did not contain a "clear denial" that the document had been leaked from the Ministry. "The response essentially was that it happened a long time ago," he noted. At the very least, the Ministry could have condemned the diplomatic note's publication, Mucunski argued.

Also on June 25, North Macedonia's Prime Minister Mickoski told MRT1 what happened was a "diplomatic scandal." In his words, Bulgarians do not respect conventions and international rules. Given these signs, improving the bilateral relations is impossible, he commented.

Photo Exhibition by Vihra Velkova Dedicated to Sea Opens in Skopje



Bulgarian Cultural and Information Centre in Skopje Director Antonia Veleva at the opening of Vihra Velkova's exhibition "Sea of Colours, or the Secret Life of the Visible" at the Centre in Skopje, June 25, 2026 (BTA Photo/Vladislav Tentov)

Skopje - The photography exhibition *Sea of Colours, or the Secret Life of the Visible* by Vihra Velkova opened at the Bulgarian Cultural and Information Centre (BCIC) in Skopje on Thursday. It is the latest joint project of the Centre and the State Cultural Institute under Bulgaria's Minister of Foreign Affairs.

"The exhibition presents the work of Vihra Velkova, an art historian by education and a photographer with more than 20 years of creative experience. She combines the professional perspective of an art historian with the language of photography, drawing attention to details of the surrounding environment that often go unnoticed," BCIC Director Antonia Veleva said.

The exhibition features 18 large-format photographs dedicated to the sea. It also marks the start of the Centre's summer series of creative workshops, *After Sunset*, which will take place over the coming months. The Centre's autumn programme will include a series of socially oriented cultural initiatives.

HELLO, SPACE | Bulgaria Calling Festival Showcases AI-Generated Avatar of Former BTA Director General Maxim Minchev



An AI-generated avatar of former BTA director general Maxim Minchev at HELLO, SPACE | Bulgaria Calling Festival, Sofia, June 26, 2026 (BTA Photo/Blagoy Kirilov)

Sofia - An AI-generated avatar of former BTA director general Maxim Minchev (in office 2003-2020) congratulated the attendants of HELLO, SPACE | Bulgaria Calling Festival's sixth edition which takes place on Friday and Saturday at Sofia Tech Park.

The President of Atlantic Club of Bulgaria, Solomon Passy, inaugurated the event and introduced the recording of Maxim Minchev's avatar. Passy defined the usage of AI to revive a team member "an unprecedented moment". In his opening speech, he underscored that space should serve as uniting platform for science and innovations.

This year's festival, held by the Atlantic Club under the title Ahead of the Future, is the forum's first edition to take place in two days. The opening ceremony was attended by numerous special guests, including BTA Director General Kiril Valchev.

A leading accent of the festival will be the live appearance of retired NASA astronaut Timothy Kopra – former International Space Station commander and a two-time spaceflight pilot, currently a Chief of Manned Space Exploration at Voyager Technologies.

The Counselor for Public Affairs at the U.S. Embassy in Sofia, Nicole Fox, stressed that the next chapter of space future will not be written by a single country, but by cooperation of scientists, engineers and students from all around the world.

On June 27, the initiative will continue festival's pilot edition HELLO, SPACE | STEAM Careers in partnership with Sofia Technical University and SofiaTalks and will feature topics related to students' career orientation and professional development in STEAM disciplines. Lectures, interactive exhibitions, workshops and networking activities are part of the event's programme.

Maxim Minchev (1953-2020) was a Bulgarian journalist and traveler, as well as BTA director general for 17 years - the second-longest serving head in the Agency's history. During his term in office, BTA established a network of national press clubs and held global meetings of Bulgarian media, attended by journalist from more than 20 countries.

Culture Ministry Aware of High Historical Value of Archive of Bulgarian Diaspora in North America - Minister Miloshev



Culture Minister Evtim Miloshev addresses MPs from Parliament's rostrum, Sofia, June 26, 2026 (BTA Photo/Minko Chernev)

Sofia - Taking part in a Question Time session in Parliament on Friday, Culture Minister Evtim Miloshev said that his Ministry is aware of the high historical value of the archive about the Bulgarian diaspora in North America and Ilia Gadjev's role in preserving it and making it available to the Bulgarian academic community. Miloshev took a question from Aylin Nuridin MP of Continue the Change regarding measures to safeguard the archive of the Dr. Ilia Todorov Gadjev Institute for the History of the Bulgarian Emigration in North America in the southwestern town of Gotse Delchev. Gadjev founded the Institute in Detroit, Michigan, in the 1970s and later established its Bulgarian branch in Gotse Delchev by constructing a purpose-built facility and transferring the archive there, providing Bulgarian society with a valuable collection of historical documents for research and public use, the Minister noted.

Miloshev said that in recent years the government had held discussions with Theodore Gadjev and reached a preliminary agreement, before his unexpected death, for the State to purchase the Institute's building, archive, library collection and museum holdings. Experts from several state institutions participated in inspecting, cataloguing, assessing and identifying the archive's materials. Following the acquisition, the archive was intended to be managed by professionals and made fully accessible to researchers. Following his passing, the talks now have to continue with his heirs, who have also expressed their agreement in principle to finalize the negotiations and transfer ownership of the archive to the Bulgarian State, Miloshev said.

The Culture Ministry plans to secure funding after updating the archive's valuation and work with the Foreign Ministry to establish contact with the heirs. So far, the Culture Ministry has sought the assistance of the Interior Ministry and the Gotse Delchev municipality to ensure the security of the property and the archive. The Archives State Agency and the local authorities have also been kept informed of developments.

Miloshev called on all parliamentary groups to support the effort, adding that the archive could also be considered an asset of national security, as it contains documents and historical evidence related to Bulgaria's historical development, international relations and cultural heritage. The archive includes irreplaceable documents, rare publications, photographs and artifacts documenting the history of the Bulgarian diaspora in North America, the preservation of Bulgarian national identity abroad, and the participation of Bulgarians in key social and political developments, the Minister noted. The significance of these materials extends far beyond their monetary value and reaches into the realm of national memory and identity, he said, adding that the building and its contents are secure.

Completing the acquisition of the archive before the conclusion of inheritance proceedings was a particularly sensitive matter and was being handled at the highest level of government, Nuridin said. The process is being coordinated directly by Deputy Prime Minister Ivo Hristov, and the necessary consultations and negotiations with the interested parties are currently under way, the MP added. She noted that if the negotiations conclude successfully and the necessary factual and legal preconditions are met, the government would take the appropriate steps to provide targeted funding and safeguard the public interest.

23rd International Festival of Amateur Historical Films Begins in Shumen



The XXIII International Festival of Amateur Historical Films kicks off in Shumen, June 26, 2026 (BTA Photo/Antonii Dimov)

Shumen, Northeast Bulgaria - The 23rd International Festival of Amateur Historical Films in the northeastern town of Shumen began on Friday with an official ceremony and a symbolic lighting of a fire in front of the Dobri Voynikov - 1856 Community Centre. The festival is organized by the community centre and the Madara Horseman Cinema Club, with the support of the Shumen Municipality, the Ministry of Culture and UNICA.

Guests, participants and residents of the city were welcomed by the Mayor of Shumen Municipality, Prof. Hristo Hristov, who emphasized the importance of the festival as one of the established cultural events in the city's calendar.

"This festival brings together people who, through cinema, preserve historical memory and make it accessible to new generations. This is its greatest value," the mayor stated in his welcome speech.

Hristov said that it is no coincidence that Shumen hosts such an event because of its rich historical and cultural heritage and emphasized the role of the city as one of the leading centres of the amateur cinema movement in Bulgaria.

A special highlight of this year's edition is the celebration of 100 years since the beginning of the aforementioned amateur cinema movement in Shumen. According to the mayor, the anniversary is a symbol of a centuries-old tradition, built with consistency, enthusiasm and dedication by generations of cinema lovers.

"Today, authors from different countries are meeting in Shumen. They come with different experiences and

different perspectives, but they are all united by respect for history and the desire for it to be told honestly and accessibly through the language of cinema," said Hristov.

The mayor also expressed gratitude to everyone who had contributed to the development of the festival and the strengthening of the good name of Shumen for more than two decades.

After the official opening, the festive programme continued with a performance by the Vasil Abrashev Brass Orchestra, based in Targovishte, and screenings of films by Shumen authors in the community centre's concert hall.

According to the organizers, 67 films from Bulgaria and abroad were submitted, 52 of which were selected for the competition programme of this year's edition of the festival.

Authors from Sofia, Varna, Ruse, Dimitrovgrad, Belogradchik, Berkovitsa, Zlatograd, Karlovo, Kaspichan, Popovo, Shumen and other settlements participated, as well as representatives from North Macedonia, Spain, Portugal, Moldova and Russia. The youngest participant is 14 years old.

The festival continues until June 28 with screenings, creative meetings and an awards ceremony.

Bulgarian News Agency, Harlequin Association Sign Partnership Agreement

Sofia - The Bulgarian News Agency (BTA) and the non-profit Harlequin Association signed a partnership agreement at the BTA National Press Club in Sofia on Friday. The agreement was signed by BTA Director General Kiril Valchev and Rositsa Zhablyanova, Chair of the Association's Board of Directors.

The Harlequin Association was registered on December 18, 2009 in Sofia. It organizes the Harlequin International Children and Youth Media Art Festival, which will celebrate its 15th edition this year. The festival will take place from June 30 to July 2 at the Nu Boyana Film Studios in Sofia.

The BTA Director General said that over the years, the festival had more than 11,000 participants aged 8 to 29 from over 21 countries. More than 100 Sunday schools have participated over the years with over 1,800 projects. This year's edition of the festival covers several areas - film and television, radio and podcasts, animation, digital arts and photography, and the Cinema - My Love, My Song signing

contest.

"I should note, however, that although we have covered the festival in the past 15 years, the news pieces have been limited to one or two stories a year - most often about the start and end of the festival. Now we hope that we will begin to receive regular updates, including profiles of the participants, who come from Bulgarian communities in a number of countries," said Valchev. He noted that this is yet another festival with which BTA is signing a partnership agreement, as the Agency already has over 30 such agreements.

The Director General proposed that the best participants in the festival be given the opportunity to intern at the Agency.

Zhablyanova thanked BTA for its support over the years. She noted that the festival's goal is for Bulgaria to establish itself as a global youth media hub.

She also noted that three songs will be created during this year's festival, the last of which will be produced using artificial intelligence and will be dedicated to peace. In this regard, the Director General proposed that participants with media and film projects incorporating artificial intelligence be invited to join the activities of the BTA Institute (BTA I), which is currently being established.

After signing the agreement, Valchev presented Zhablyanova with photographs and publications from the BTA archives related to the history of the festival, as well as an issue of the *LIK* magazine dedicated to [its 60th anniversary](#).

Sofia Choristers' Union, BTA Sign Partnership Agreement

Sofia - The Sofia Choristers' Union Prof. Dr. Adriana Blagoeva signed a long-term partnership agreement with the Bulgarian News Agency (BTA) on Friday.

The agreement was signed on behalf of the union by its Board Chair, Alexander Dragovski. It covers the concert activities of the Sofia Men's Choir, which the union represents.

The Union was established in 2025 by former members of the Sofia Boys' Choir at the Tsar Boris III - 1928 Community Centre, together with members of its youth ensemble, both founded by Prof. Dr. Adriana Blagoeva (1960-2025), a distinguished conductor, educator, and public figure. The founders created the organization to carry forward her

legacy and preserve and promote the traditions of Bulgarian men's choral singing, support the development of young singers, and encourage the exchange of experience and best practices among choirs. The organization also upholds the artistic and educational principles established by Prof. Blagoeva.

Through its work, the organization is also bringing to life one of Prof. Blagoeva's unfulfilled ambitions, namely the establishment of the Sofia Men's Choir.

Prof. Dr. Hristo Krotev has been invited to serve as conductor of the Sofia Men's Choir. A conductor, composer, educator, he has made significant contributions to the Bulgarian and international choral scene for more than 40 years. He holds a Ph.D. in musicology and is Professor of Music at the American University in Bulgaria. Throughout his career, he has directed numerous choral ensembles and led concert and artistic projects both in Bulgaria and abroad. The choir also works with pianist Zornitsa Getova, who is well known for her long-standing work with the Sofia Boys' Choir, while Yassen Zerdev serves as choirmaster.

June Issue of BTA's LIK Magazine Dedicated to 85th Birth Anniversary of Opera Singer Ghenia Dimitrova



The cover of LIK's June issue, "The Incomparable Ghenia" (BTA Photo)

Sofia - The June issue of the Bulgarian News Agency's *LIK* magazine is dedicated to world-renowned opera singer Ghenia Dimitrova (1941-2005). This year marked her [85th birth anniversary on May 6](#).

Among the highlights in the June issue of BTA's magazine about literature, art, and culture are renowned Bulgarian sopranos Raina Kabaivanska, Anna Tomowa-Sintow, Krassimira Stoyanova, and Sonya Yoncheva, who are building their music careers on the world stage.

Titled "The Incomparable Ghenia," the June issue of be presented at the Richard Wagner Opera Club at the Sofia Opera and Ballet on July 9. The event will be held jointly via video link with BTA's national press clubs in Bulgaria and abroad.

LIK Editor-in-chief Georgi Lozanov says in the publication that the June issue is dedicated to Bulgaria's famous female opera voices, specifically the most powerful one - that of Ghenia Dimitrova, on the occasion of her 85th birth anniversary. The issue also raises the broader topic of national pride, to which these exceptional singers give cause in Bulgaria.

"Ghenia Dimitrova's Star-Studded Journey" is the title of an article by musicologist Prof. Boyanka Arnaudova. She explains that Dimitrova "throughout her brilliant career consistently emphasized that she had achieved everything through relentless study and a commitment not only to singing professionally and beautifully, but to delve deeply into the musical character in order to master and convey the essence of her heroines - women with complex fates, experiencing tragedies and catharsis." According to Prof. Arnaudova, for three decades Dimitrova - without seeking self-promotion for its own sake - has sung, acted, studied tirelessly, developed her craft, given her all, and conveyed the messages embedded in the works of Verdi, Bellini, and Puccini with dedication, passion, and purpose.

"The Great Bulgarian Sopranos on the World Stage" is the topic on which music editor Tatyana Ivanova of Bulgarian National Radio (BNR) writes for *LIK*. "The history of Bulgarian opera is relatively brief. Barely more than a hundred years have passed since the first attempts at professional opera performances in our country. And yet, this brief historical period has given rise to a phenomenon that has impressed the music world - an unusually large number of world-class singers whose careers have flourished on the most prestigious stages," writes Ivanova. According to her, when it comes to sopranos, the achievements of Katya Popova, Ghenia Dimitrova, Raina Kabaivanska, and Anna Tomowa-Sintow are particularly noteworthy, and the baton was then passed to Darina Takova, Krassimira Stoyanova, Alexandrina Pendatchanska, and Sonya Yoncheva.

The magazine recalls statements by Raina Kabaivanska, Anna Tomowa-Sintow, Krassimira Stoyanova, and Sonya Yoncheva covered by BTA in the last 30 years at various events or in interviews with BTA's reporters.

LIK's June issue also presents statements by Dimitrova preserved via recordings in BNR's archives. In an interview in the 1990s, she said: "I think I have had a few standout performances that are on par with those of the world's

greatest singers who have performed this repertoire, and that I have had memorable moments in many theaters. And professionally, I think I have left something behind for the colleagues who come after us (...) When a person leaves, they look back to see what remains. I think the mark I have left is a bright musical legacy.”

Sofia Opera and Ballet Director Plamen Kartalov says in an interview with LIK that great artists are always remembered; their recordings are a living testament to their talent, as well as lessons for generations of young opera artists. He adds that Dimitrova’s voice is inimitable and one of a kind. “Her colleagues all over the world still speak highly of her. She remains a recognized Maestra in the careers of many of them,” says Academician Kartalov. He tells BTA how the Sofia Opera is marking Dimitrova’s 85th birth anniversary and how she is remembered by audiences who saw her in roles from *Don Carlos*, *Nabucco*, *Aida*, *Turandot*, and the other operas in which she performed throughout her career. He also describes the distinctive traits of her character that made her an incomparable opera prima.

Dimitrova’s niece Milena Stoykova says in an interview with LIK that offstage, she was “very natural, emotional, warm - never indifferent, never mean.”

LIK magazine recalls how Dimitrova’s memory is cherished in her hometown of Pleven (Northern Bulgaria).

The magazine also recounts a meeting with Dimitrova that left a deep mark on the life of opera singer Milena Yotova. As a soloist with the Sofia Opera, she had the opportunity to participate in a production of Giuseppe Verdi’s opera *Un ballo in maschera*, in which she sang on stage alongside Ghenă Dimitrova in 1996. The experience was unforgettable for Yotova, who was 27 years old at the time. In her words, the excitement of being on stage and the extraordinary opportunity to collaborate creatively with the incredible Dimitrova remain among the most emotional and fulfilling moments of her artistic career.

Opera singer Ivan Momirov, who met Dimitrova when he was in her second year at the Music Academy, says that she was a phenomenon as a person. “She was incredibly direct, incredibly candid. She could tear you down, but she did it with love; she did it in a very motherly way,” he notes.

Dimitrova’s remarkable creative career and the legacy she left behind are also reflected in the BTA’s news coverage over the decades. The archives contain hundreds of news pieces covering her performances not only in operas across the country but also on various international stages. *LIK* features highlights from these articles, recounting the international acclaim for her remarkable voice, talent, and

stage presence; the love of the Bulgarian audience; about her colleagues, who know her as a person and an artist; and about her - in her own words - on opera, art, and life in its entirety.

BTA’s magazine also features quotes from some of the international reviews that have reached Bulgaria over the years - they begin with Dimitrova’s very first steps on the world’s stages at the start of her career and confirm her triumph with every subsequent performance thereafter - on different continents, in different countries and cities. For example, the Italian *Gente* magazine reports: “Ghenă Dimitrova is the queen of La Scala.”

Since January 2024, BTA’s literature, art and culture monthly magazine has been freely accessible online. All *LIK* issues since its relaunch can be downloaded in electronic format [from BTA’s website](#).

Over 10,000 Books and Pamphlets Published in Bulgaria in 2025



Books by Bulgarian authors showcased at a book festival in Bucharest, June 7, 2026 (BTA Photo/Illko Valkov)

Sofia - Some 10,267 books and pamphlets were published in Bulgaria in 2025, marking an increase of 1.2% from the previous year, according to a Friday press release of the National Statistical Institute.

According to the ISBN registry, 8,939 books and 1,328 pamphlets were published in 2025. Of the books, 7,889 were new titles and 1,050 reprints, while pamphlets included 1,211 new titles and 117 reprints.

By genre, publications were distributed as follows:

- Fiction for adults - 2,743 titles;
- Scientific literature - 2,663 titles;
- Popular literature - 2,066 titles;

- Educational literature - 1,325 titles;
- Literature for children and juveniles - 1,160 titles, of which 723 titles were fiction literature for children;
- Other - 310 titles.

The titles published in their original language, including Bulgarian, numbered 9,287, or 90.5% of the total. The remaining 980 were translations, 36.1% of which were from English, followed by Russian (9.8%), French (7.9%), and German (4.9%).

Sofia remained the country's publishing centre with 6,527 titles, followed by Plovdiv (876) and Varna (519).

Newspaper publications marked a steady decline over the past six years, falling from 223 in 2019 to 167 in 2025, which is 11 fewer than a year earlier. Nearly 44% of newspapers are published in the capital.

In 2025, Bulgaria had 19 daily newspapers and 76 were published once a week. Some 65 were issued less than once a week and 7 were issued 2-3 times a week.

Magazines registered a 9.9% year-on-year increase in 2025 reaching 447 publications.

Kyustendil Kicks Off Three-Day Cherry Festival



Cherry Festival in Kyustendil in 2025 (BTA Photo)

Kyustendil, Western Bulgaria - Kyustendil's annual Cherry Festival opened on Friday and will run until June 28, featuring a three-day programme of cherry-themed art and culinary exhibitions, the organisers said.

During the festival in Bulgaria's top cherry producing

region, the Institute of Agriculture will present new cherry varieties.

The programme on Friday includes performances by Trio Bulgarina, ETNOTIX, and Molets, while on Saturday Kristian Yankulov, Bilyana Dobрева, ELIZABET, VENIAM, and Dara Ekimova will take to the stage.

The festival concludes on Sunday with a live cooking demonstration by chefs Petar Petrushev and Nikola Simeonov, a performance by the National School of Dance Arts in Sofia, and free guided city tours in both Bulgarian and English.

Weightlifter Karlos Nasar Joins Tourism Ministry Campaign to Promote Bulgaria



Weightlifter Karlos Nasar (left) and Tourism Minister Ilin Dimitrov (Photo: Bulgaria Ministry of Tourism)

Sofia - Olympic, world, and European weightlifting champion Karlos Nasar has accepted an invitation by Tourism Minister Ilin Dimitrov to take part in a campaign promoting Bulgaria internationally. Along with Eurovision 2026 winner, Dara, he is the next prominent Bulgarian to

join the initiative, whose goal is to showcase Bulgaria through successful and inspiring Bulgarians serving as goodwill ambassadors of Bulgarian tourism, the Ministry of Tourism said on Friday.

During the meeting, Minister Dimitrov presented Karlos Nasar with a statuette featuring the Bulgarian rose, which will be part of the message to international audiences.

"Let the world see our country not only as a beautiful destination, but as a nation with history, spirit, and personalities who tell its story," said Minister Dimitrov.

Karlos Nasar said that he will proudly support this mission in the name of Bulgaria. "Our country is dear to all of us who carry it in our hearts. It is beautiful and deserves to be seen by more people around the world," he said.

The winner of the Eurovision Song Contest 2026, Dara, accepted on Thursday the invitation of the Minister to join a large-scale campaign promoting Bulgaria internationally. The Ministry's project envisions the production of videos and promotional materials featuring well-known Bulgarians, artists, athletes, scientists, young talents, and high achievers, who can speak about Bulgaria in a personal and compelling way.

Association of Bulgarian Sports Federations Calls for More Funding for Sector, Threatens Protest Action

Sofia - The Association of Bulgarian Sports Federations (ABSF) called for "the rescue and support of Bulgarian sport" due to insufficient funding for sports federations in the 2026 sports budget, the ABSF press centre said on Friday. The organisation held an emergency meeting, after which it announced that it was seeking urgent meetings with Prime Minister Rumen Radev, Finance Minister Galab Donev, Youth and Sports Minister Encho Keryazov, and others.

"Since its establishment, ABSF has succeeded in securing assurances from three previous governments and legislatures that the sports budget would increase by 30% annually until it reached the minimum levels of sports funding in the European Union, and this increase was in fact implemented in the first year," the statement said.

"In the following months, ABSF showed understanding of the political situation and the adoption of an extended budget and patiently waited for the promises made to be fulfilled. ABSF expected that, given the considerable number of MPs in the current Parliament who come from

the sporting community, there would be an adequate and concerned approach towards the future of Bulgarian sport," the organisation added.

"The signals and information received by ABSF to date indicate that the 2026 sports budget submitted to Parliament for consideration contains no increase whatsoever, despite inflationary pressures. This places federations in a position where they are unable to achieve the objectives set out in the programmes approved by the Sports Ministry in the pre-Olympic year and on the eve of the Youth Olympic Games. To date, the new Youth and Sports Minister, Encho Keryazov, has not sought contact or a meeting with ABSF, the only organisation that is fully aware of the problems facing the sector and defends the interests of youth and sport," the association said, calling for immediate measures.

"In this regard, we insist on urgent meetings with the Prime Minister of the Republic of Bulgaria, the Finance Minister, the Youth and Sports Minister, and the relevant parliamentary committees - the Budget and Finance Committee and the Youth and Sports Committee. Should there be no understanding and dialogue, ABSF reserves the right to take protest action in defence of Bulgarian sport," the organisation's statement concluded.

June 26, 2026: Sixty Years since Opening of Transport Museum in Ruse



A view of the old railway station in which a Museum of Transport and Communications was inaugurated on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the start of the Bulgarian State Railways, Ruse, June 26, 1966 (BTA Archive Photo/Dimitar Yanev)

Sofia - The National Museum of Transport and Communications - the only one of its kind in this country, was opened in Ruse (North Central Bulgaria, on the

Danube) on June 26, 1966. The ceremony was held 60 years ago on Friday as a tie-in with the centenary of the launch of the first railway in the Bulgarian lands, between Ruse and Varna (on the Black Sea).

The Museum is housed in the building of Bulgaria's first railway station, located in the Youth Park on the bank of the River Danube.

The indoor part of the Museum, called "the Old Train Station", presents milestones in the development of rail transport in Bulgaria and the link between this mode of transport and passenger shipping on the Danube. The exhibits include scale models of locomotives, wagons and ships, original communication equipment such as Morse telegraphs, postage stamps, seals, and parcel boxes.

The outdoor display, named "Park Museum", features rolling stock dating from the 1860s to the 1950s. Here visitors can see the oldest surviving steam locomotive in Bulgaria, manufactured in Manchester, England, in 1848. Especially interesting is the collection of unique parlour cars used by royalty: the Sultaniye passenger car, manufactured in Brussels in 1866; a passenger car manufactured in Breslau, Germany, in 1894, for Bulgarian Prince Ferdinand I; and a sleeping car for the royal train, manufactured in Goerlitz, Germany, in 1902. Distinguished travellers in these carriages included Ottoman Sultan Abdulaziz, Empress Eugenie of France, Prince Ferdinand's mother Princess Clementine, Ferdinand's predecessor, Prince Alexander I, and Ferdinand's successor, King Boris III.

The building that was converted to accommodate the Museum was constructed in 1864-1866 from the designs of two British civil engineers, brothers John and Henry Barkley. It was used as a railway station until 1954 and is complete with a water tower for steam engines, a passenger waiting room, a cabin for pointsmen, and a first aid room. In 1974 the station was designated an architectural and historical landmark.

The station was inaugurated on November 7, 1866 by the Governor of the Danube Vilayet, Midhat Pasa, as the Ruse-Varna railway went into service. The construction of the 224 km line was awarded to the Rustshuk-Varna Railway Company, a consortium in which the Barkley brothers managed the local operations while future British Prime Minister William Gladstone and his associates served as the core financial backers and political managers of the corporation.

Building began on May 21, 1864 and involved some 15,000 workers. The company obtained a 99-year operating concession for the line from the Ottoman government. Trains stopped at eight locations: Chervena Voda, Vetovo,

Razgrad, Yasenovets, Kaspichan, Provadia and Beloslav. A trip between the two terminuses took some eight hours. Locomotive sheds were built in Ruse, Kaspichan and Varna.

In 1874, the British company transferred the operation of the line to a company owned by a German industrialist, Baron Maurice de Hirsch. The 1878 Treaty of Berlin obliged the Bulgarian principality to buy out the railway. After a decade of tense international and British diplomatic pressure, Stefan Stambolov's Bulgarian Government officially bought out the Rustshuk-Varna Railway Company on August 10, 1888. The final liquidation and transfer cost 46,777,500 gold francs, funded by Bulgaria's very first major foreign state loan (contracted from Great Britain).

Following is an English translation of extracts of a news item by which BTA's Home News Desk bulletin covered the opening of the Museum in 1966:

VINF 212

Exciting Celebrations at Cradle of Bulgarian Transport

Ruse, June 26 (BTA) - One hundred years ago, a small steam engine with several carriages pulled out of old Rustchuk on Bulgaria's first Ruse-Varna railway line. It was also then that a small workshop and a shed for maintenance and repair of the then railway stock were opened. The port of Ruse also went into operation.

The occasion was ceremoniously marked here today.

The observances were honoured by the presence of the First Secretary of the Central Committee [CC] of the Bulgarian Communist Party [BCP] and Chairman of the Council of Ministers Todor Zhivkov, the member of the Politburo of the CC of the BCP and Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers, Army General Ivan Mihaylov, the candidate member of Politburo of the CC of the BCP and Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers Pencho Kubadinski, the Secretary of the CC of the BCP, Minister [without portfolio] Lachezar Avramov, the Minister of Transport Marin Vachkov, the Secretary of the Permanent Committee of the Bulgarian Agrarian National Union Stoyan Tonchev, the Chairman of the Central Committee of the Trade Union of Transport and Communications Workers Georgi Torlakov and others. The Counsellor at the Soviet Embassy, Nikolay Maslenikov, was also in attendance.

[. . .]

The Museum of Transport and Communications was solemnly inaugurated in the afternoon. It is housed in the Ruse East Station, which is the first railway station in Bulgaria. Declaring the Museum open, Comrade Todor Zhivkov wished that it help the patriotic upbringing of the people and youth, to inspire the residents of Ruse and the Bulgarian people in building

socialism.

The guests toured the museum display tracing the emergence and development of rail transport and shipping and of communications in this country, as well as transport workers' revolutionary struggles.

[. . .] RA/DT

Observances: June 27-28



On June 28, 1914, the Sofia Stock Exchange held its constituent meeting, marking the beginning of organized stock trading in Bulgaria. This photo was taken on January 5, 2026 (BTA Photo/Minko Chernev)

JUNE 27

The world:

- World Fishing Day;
- National Day of Djibouti: Independence Day (1977).

On this date in Bulgarian history:

1877: Russian troops cross Danube River at Svishtov during Russo-Turkish War of Liberation (1877-1878).

1879: In Tarnovo (today's Veliko Tarnovo), Prince Alexander of Battenberg proclaims he is ascending the throne.

1946: National Assembly nationalizes insurance companies, imposing state monopoly on insurance sector. State Insurance Institute (DZI) is set up.

1985: Bulgarian Football Union is set up.

JUNE 28

On this date in Bulgarian history:

1858: First Bulgarian comprehensive secondary school outside country's territory, Sts Cyril and Methodius People's Central School (now G. S. Rakovski Bolhrad Secondary School), is established in Bolhrad (Bolgrad), Bessarabia (now in Ukraine).

1887: Government headed by Konstantin Stoilov is formed (in office until August 20, 1887).

1903: Adrianople Revolutionary District of Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization holds congress in Petrova Niva locality of Mt Strandja and decides to organize uprising against Ottoman rule.

1914: Sofia Stock Exchange holds constituent meeting, marking beginning of organized stock trading in Bulgaria.

1968: Chemical Combined Works inaugurated in Vratsa (Northwestern Bulgaria) (privatized as Chimco in 1996, ceased operation in 2003, declared bankrupt in 2006).

1995: National Assembly passes Act to Amend and Supplement Environmental Protection Act, establishing National Trust EcoFund (NTEF).

2000: In Plovdiv, South Central Bulgaria, Bulgarian Red Cross opens country's first social care institution, set up with assistance of Spanish Red Cross.

2004: First participation of Bulgaria as NATO full member in Istanbul summit. Bulgaria is represented by President Georgi Purvanov and Prime Minister Simeon Saxe-Coburg-Gotha.

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