

ЗА БУКВЕНИТЕ

КИРИЛО МЕТОДИЕВСКИ ВЕСТНИК

О ПИСМЕНАХЪ



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National Board of Tourism



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The National Board of Tourism is a non-profit organization with 10 years of history, which represents and defines the interests of the leading companies – investors in the tourism and related business activities in Bulgaria accounting for a significant part of the GDP. Overall, the organization has always supported for statehood and sound economic sense.

The NBT was the first national cross-sector interest group with the aim of improving the quality of national tourism standards and communication between the sectors. The association serves as a unique platform uniting all stakeholders of the Bulgarian tourism industry across the country. This includes, for instance, hotel and restaurant facilities, tourism complexes and resorts, associations, and scientific institutes. The second main task of the association is to further the development of international relations with other non-profit organizations at the European and world level. The objective is to achieve better communication with the world experts and professionals in the field of tourism, more transparency with regard to consumer protection and a fairer competition in European and World tourism.

THE NBT MISSION

Our aim is to achieve syn-

ergy between the central administration, local self-government and the business community in a drive to improve local economies and create new job opportunities.

The National Board of Tourism formulates problems and general issues of common interest, the solution to which will lead to an increase in the competitiveness and the capacity of the Bulgarian tourist product related to regional development, infrastructure, concessions, promotion of new tourism products, development of new markets, training of staff, construction of a network of tourist agencies abroad.

THE NBT VISION

The NBT vision 2030 for the Strategic Positioning of Destination Bulgaria includes:

- Security for the ecosystems and the services they provide.
- Accessible environment.
- Offering traditional products in a traditional setting.
- Well-known local quality brands.
- Tourist attractions – cultural and natural landmarks and intangible cultural heritage with friends in this country and abroad.
- Substantial contribution of tourism to the improvement of local economies and creating new job opportunities.



A Journey through the Living Heritage



The Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe under the auspices of UNESCO with the support of the Ministries of Culture and the Museum Institutions from the Member States of the Regional Centre, presents an exhibition showing more than a hundred photographs, representing diverse elements of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) in the countries of South-Eastern Europe. These visual testimonies make us aware of the need to safeguard the rich and varied examples of folk customs, oral traditions and expressions, knowledge and skills, and the associated objects, artifacts and social practices recognized by communities as their cultural heritage.

The purpose of this photo exhibition is to show the Member States' profiles in the field of intangible cultural heritage through a journey in their living heritage. Many of these traditions are customs and practices that result from the encounters of different civilizations in the region during distant historical epochs. The communities, groups and individuals that support them today and the state policies that facilitate their safeguarding, are these bridges to Europe's modern outlook and its future as a multicultural continent.

In 2003, the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) was adopted. The purposes of this Convention are: to safeguard ICH; to ensure respect for the ICH of humanity; to raise awareness of the importance of ICH; and to provide international cooperation and assistance for its safeguarding.

For the purposes of the 2003 Convention, the intangible cultural heritage includes: oral traditions and forms of expression, as well as language as the bearer of the intangible cultural heritage; artistic performing art; social customs, rituals and celebrations; knowledge and customs relating to nature and the universe; knowledge and skills related to traditional crafts.

Since 2011, the only one of its kind in Europe Regional Center for Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe under the auspices of UNESCO has operated in Bulgaria.

On 25th October 2010 in Paris, an Agreement was signed between UNESCO and the Government of Republic of Bulgaria regarding the establishment in Sofia of such a Centre. On 16th March, 2011, the Bulgarian Parliament adopted the Law on Ratification of the Agreement and then it entered into force. Co-founders of the Regional Centre are the Ministry of Culture of Republic of Bulgaria, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria, and the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.

The Regional Center is one of the seven UNESCO World Centers whose work is dedicated to the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage of humanity. Its mission is to promote active cooperation in the field of ICH at national, regional and international level and to implement initiatives for its preservation and promotion in the countries of South-Eastern Europe.

For the seven years of its existence the Regional Centre has been developing a wide network of 16 Member States: Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey and Ukraine. In November 2021, during the last GA session of the Regional Centre, Sofia approved the membership of the Republic of Azerbaijan to become the 17th member state of the Regional Centre.

The exhibition is created with the active participation of the Member States of the Regional Center for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe under the auspices of UNESCO.



The Temple of Bulgaria's Literature and Spirit

Since ancient times, the mission of libraries has been to preserve the spirituality, identity and culture of each nation. The very concept of the "library" is based on the idea of knowledge, its preservation and transmission from generation to generation. For millennia, knowledge as a collective memory of humanity passed down from generation to generation, has ensured continuity in the world history of human culture. The library as a symbol of wisdom and a treasury of knowledge has always been a center of attraction to writers, artists, bibliophiles, scientists from all fields of knowledge. It has been compared to a mausoleum /Stefan Mallarme/, a universe /Jorge Luis Borges/, a semiotic model of the world /Umberto Eco/. Such definitions and metaphors give it a hint of sacredness in which knowledge has always been revered as the highest value.

The National Library "St. St. Cyril and Methodius" in Sofia is the oldest cultural institute in Bulgaria and the largest public library in the country. It was founded on 17th June, 1879 as a state institution called the Bulgarian People's Library. From the very beginning, its mission has been related to those values and achievements that are important for the nation and the state.

The National Library "St. St. Cyril and St. Methodius" is a repository of all documents published in Bulgaria and at the moment the collection of the literary treasury of Bulgaria numbers more than eight million library units. During all the years of its existence, the National Library has grown as an institution that strives to follow all new trends in the development of national libraries in other countries. In general, the library can be characterized as: a central scientific library for the country, a custodian of Bulgarian literature and an information center for its multifaceted current and retrospective bibliographic cov-



erage, a historical archive of documents from the the Bulgarian Revival and the Ottoman-Turkish rule in the Balkans, a national bibliographic agency, a coordination and methodological center for the organization of libraries in a unified library system, a research and publishing center for library science, bibliography and book science, UN Depository Library (since 1956) and European Depository Library.

In its collections, the library stores unique collections of Bulgarian, Slavic, Oriental and other foreign manuscripts, archival documents, rare and valuable old print books, collections of special editions, etc.

The National Library "St. Cyril and Methodius" is the largest literary repository in Bulgaria, as well as one of the richest libraries in the Balkans and for more than 143 years it has guaranteed the preservation of Bulgarian culture and its transmission between generations. Its history during this long period of time is

parallel to the real history of Bulgaria.

The library has also been an institution open to providing services to citizens, being able to constantly adapt to a future filled with scientific, technological and cultural social changes. It is the guardian of the memory of the Bulgarian state, preserving knowledge and disseminating knowledge. Its collections reflect the evolution of Bulgarian literary creativity, thought, art, music and science.

The history of the institution points us to the present, because in the XXI century the National Library "St. St. Cyril and Methodius" has a respectful presence in the cultural life of Bulgaria. A temple of literature, it has something to show to Europe and the world, and its contribution to the promotion of Bulgarian culture deserves recognition and admiration. And the use of modern digital technologies supports both the transfer of information and the possibility for better storage of the invaluable wealth of the Library.

Today and in the future, the National Library is called to continue its specific mission in a context of technological change and constant innovation, to harmonize with the environment, radical changes in the way of creating, publishing, disseminating and accessing culture, which provoke new forms of storage, preservation and transmission of knowledge in a world where content increases, not the basis.

The responsibility for maintaining the national spirit and identity demands that we redefine the mission of the national library in the present and maintain a modern vision of a national cultural institute. And if our vision can be defined as participation in the creation of an information society for culture, education, science and economy, then our mission is to enrich the cultural space for knowledge and information.

The National Library "St. St. Cyril and Methodius" purposefully develops and enriches its policy of openness to citizens, promoting its

collections through the development of cultural programs oriented towards different audiences.

Throughout its long period of existence, the National Library has gone through various stages of development. It is the institution where the Bulgarian written and graphic culture is stored, disseminated and transmitted. Its collections – of immeasurable national value – include manuscripts, old books, engravings, photographs, audio recordings, scores, maps, periodicals, magazines and so on. These collections continue to grow through mandatory deposit, purchases, donations and exchanges.

The national library of each country is perceived as a kind of indicator of the culture of the nation. Built as a temple of the spirit in 1878, the National Library of Bulgaria still preserves traditions, culture and history, because "He who does not know his past, cannot make the best of his present and future".

The National Museum of Military History



in Bulgaria and the world missile systems “SS-23”, “Scud”, “Frog”, as well as the anti-aircraft missile system “Dvina” - symbols of the block division of the world during the Cold War.

The richest collections of weapons, uniforms and accolades

The four collection halls, which present the richest and most complete collections of

The hall dedicated to the Bulgarian accolades with the presentation of the rare issues of medals of the highest degrees and unique medals with prototype samples. And those tempted to study history through the language of diplomacy can understand how the world and Europe view the Bulgarian state in the last 140 years in the hall with accolades presented to the heads of state of the country.

Chronological expositions

With more than 27,000 original exhibits inspired by the personal stories of the participants in the wars, the chronological exposition of the National Museum of Military History is a kind of time travel. History begins with a story about the Bulgarian lands from antiquity with the oldest exhibit of the museum

in the two world wars and its situation during the Cold War, in order to complete the development of the Bulgarian army during the long transition from communism to democracy and its modern existence. And one of the merits of the museum is its ability to interpret the latest history – the one we still experience.

Temporary exhibitions

The exhibitions organized by the National Museum of Military History stand out with a bold choice of topics in the urge to encompass wide ranges of viewpoints and with the successful experiments combining different expositional approaches. They definitely rank the museum among the innovators in Bulgaria not only with the skillful incorporation of modern technological solutions, but also with the

If you happen to visit Bulgaria, visiting the National Museum of Military History is a must. Right at the heart of the capital Sofia, it is one of the places that will make you experience history, think about the past and make a parallel with the present.

The museum was established exactly 105 years ago in the midst of the First World War with the idea to preserve the legacy of the conflict and for



weapons, uniforms and awards in Bulgaria, are a kind of guide through time and valuable material for learning about history.

The Cold and Firearms Hall presents unique samples, masterpieces of the art of weapons for the period from the 15th century to the 20th century, including jewelry and Bulgarian experimental weapons.

The dignity of the collection of Bulgarian military uniforms



future generations to remember the victories of the Bulgarian Army. It turns out that triumph and loss go hand in hand, and the history of the country is intertwined with that of the whole world. Therefore, more than a century later, the museum presents the different faces of history – with victories and trials, with enemies and friends in the face of other countries, who often reverse their roles, and with a focus on the personal history of individuals.

The National Museum of Military History has been the only general history museum in Bulgaria since the 1980s. Today, in many respects, the museum is one of the most impressive in Bulgaria and deservedly is the Museum of the Year for 2020. It is the only museum in the country with three exhibitions – outdoor, chronological and collective. It is often when describing it that we use the superlative “most”.

The largest outdoor display

In a park environment of over

40 decares, the outdoor exposition of the museum attracts both with unique exhibits and the opportunity for a leisurely walk in the outdoor exposition, which turns out to be attractive not only to history lovers, but also to anyone who decides to escape from their hectic daily life.

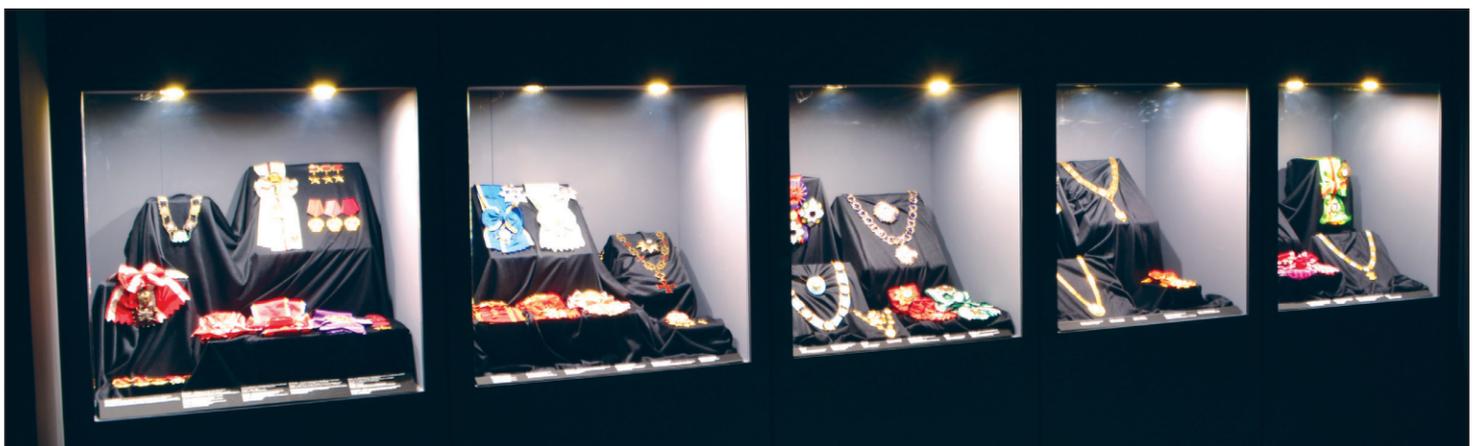
Tanks, planes, cannons and other examples of military equipment in the Bulgarian army in the last more than 140 years are part of this landscape-like scenery. Only here can be seen the only preserved



lies in the presence in it of all specimens from the Liberation of Bulgaria in 1878, as well as of the very rare military uniforms and test specimens.

– a unique Corinthian helmet from VII – VI century BC, which traces the struggle and wars for national liberation and unification, the role of Bulgar-

desire for these exhibitions to be spaces for experiencing the past, where one is not only a spectator, but a real participant.



In a Democracy There is a Place for Everybody and Freedom is its Governing Principle



H.M. King Simeon II

However, in a democracy – as the name suggests – the majority rules. There are instances, though, when minority social or political groups attempt at pressing their own criteria and ambitions on the general public.

There was a recent example of this with a local political leader whose asocial demeanor was brought to the public attention and the people were compelled to comment and reflect on an unacceptable act which would have brought consequences for everybody else. It seems that aggression and public fuss have become tools for gaining electoral support that is missing

from the ballot-boxes. This is a classic example of a dictatorship of the minority, when a political party of insignificant following attempts to impose its own standards. More similar political parties have emerged lately, when a small group of people start a party in order to be voted into the Parliament, eventually take office and thus consume resources and influence. It is more than obvious that the national interests are of lesser value to them. We end up with a similar result when we refuse to vote. The community then walks on its own right into the trap of being governed by minor parties of lean public support.

It is not a unique example for our country or the world when a minority would get out of hand and try to overrule the majority. It occurs elsewhere too. Barricaded behind the principle of tolerance and political correctness, many eccentric phenomena force their way through and even if they may go against any common sense they would still impose their dictatorship. An illustration of this is the Dutch pedophile party which even received state financing. Another less drastic example was the draft bill on the prohibition of abortion submitted in the Spanish Parliament by the governing People's Party, which provoked the reaction of the European Parliament. Apart from the moral and ethical aspect of the matter, which is not the purpose of this commentary, the example illustrates how a political party aims at imposing its views on the entire population in the pursuit of carrying out the more conservative demands in its election programme.

When a government takes the side of a minority for its own political ends rather than for specifically defending the minority's rights, or for the sake of adorning itself with the label of modernity circumventing the existing legal and moral norms, it actually discriminates against the majority.

Oftentimes just idealistic causes degenerate as a result of hypersensitivity. Oftentimes their champions, while demanding tolerance, become aggressive and press their norms on everybody. Tolerance is not enforced. It can only be cultivated in the community with good practices and models.

The specific fashion of protests is yet another example in this regard. In our global world and its media overexposure we witness protests about everything. This fashion often does not correspond to the real public mood. Yelling does not always amount to rightness. When patterns of social behavior are copied, one can always find a noble and just cause to defend in the street. There are other ways to show that something is wrong with an institution – you don't have to storm it and impose your own views on the employees there.

The apprehension of being accused of political incorrectness, the fear to confront a vocal minority often turns the politicians into their hostages. This results in making policy of the day or expediency policy which lacks long-term perspective of defending the interest of the entire community. The correct approach would be to seek for solutions to problems through dialogue and consensus.

A young democracy like ours should keep away from leaning into fashionable trends that distort or destabilize social values. We must boldly designate aggression, vandalism, hooliganism, xenophobia for what they truly are. We must not be afraid to denounce the political cynicism of transient political characters pretending to stand for highly moral or patriotic causes. Deep down they are intolerant and discriminating. We should better be guided by lasting ethical norms, look for the rational and the useful for the good of the majority who are silent and less fussy. And first and foremost, we must vote to avert the rule of the minorities that are not representative of the interests of the majority. Electoral apathy or silent indifference can hardly be balanced out with street clamor between elections.

The Bulgarian pavilion at Expo Innovations, Folklore and Art

The world Expo Dubai 2020 was opened 2 months after the delay of its edition in 2020.

The concept for Bulgaria's representation at Expo 2020 Dubai, as well as the organizer of the cultural and business program within the next 6 months, is a consortium of several Bulgarian companies.

What is the significance of Bulgaria's participation in Expo2020 Dubai?

Bulgaria is a mobility hub between the East and the West, a center of connections and an engine to the future. Our objectives are to increase the knowledge of mobility and its links to sustainability and opportunity. We want people to understand the potential of innovation as a way for creating a brighter more sustainable future together. We aim to attract a wide range of tourists by presenting the spectacular Bulgarian nature and our rich history. We want to put emphasize Bulgaria's presence as a technological hub on the Balkans and attract investments in the digital sector.

As we know the national symbol of Bulgaria is the flower, can you tell us more about it?

The Rose is the symbol of Bulgaria. Rose picking, one of the oldest and traditional customs of Bulgaria and has become primarily a tourist attraction.

The Bulgarian Rose has a deep and strong aroma and from its flower we produce the finest rose oil.

Other important part of the Bulgarian culture and traditions are folk music and national dances, such as the horo and rachenitsa. Instruments typically used to perform Bulgarian national music are the fiddle, the mandolin, the kaval (flute), the gaida (bagpipe), the pipe, the dvoynka (double pipe), the drum and the taranbuka, another percussion instrument.

Bulgaria was a cradle of some of the earliest civilizations in Europe – the oldest gold ornament ever discovered, unearthed in the Chalcholite necropolis near Varna, is evidence of that.

Can you explain the architectural design of the Bulgarian pavilion and how did you want to represent Bulgaria through the design?

The pavilion, the logo and the accompanying program present the role of Bulgaria as a mobility hub for the Balkans, Europe and the Middle East. They showcase Bulgaria's role as a center of connectivity, which stimulates the movement of people and goods.

Accents in the Bulgarian pavilion are the replicas of the Panagyurishte gold treasure, dated to the end of the 4th, beginning of the 3rd century BC, and the gold treasure from the Varna necropolis - the oldest technologically processed gold. These are two of the most significant archaeological discoveries not only in our country but also in the world. A video installation created specifically for Expo 2020 covers the floor and walls of the pavilion. The structure is made up of



Galina Raycheva
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a multi-projection system that transforms the space into a monumental exhibition which message is that of a "shared experience". The video installations: "Traditions and Art" and "Science and Achievements", are presented on a multi-screen, which includes six modularly mounted vertical monitors with a total height of 350 cm and a width of 180 cm. The videos are composed and integrated for the size and design of the pavilion.

Tell me about the tourism in Bulgaria and how do you promote it?

Bulgaria is a country with thousands of years of history and a cultural heritage that embraces ancient civilizations. The Bulgarian Black Sea coast is a wonderful place for a summer holiday. The coastline is 378 km long, with 209 beaches that have a total area of 16 square kilometers.

About 30% of Bulgaria is mountainous. The ski season in the medium-high and the alpine resorts last about 130 days each year, while during the summer months enthusiasts may hike in centuries-old forests.

What are the most important innovations/inventions Bulgaria has presented in EXPO2020 Dubai?

In the first month of Expo 2020, emphasis was placed on Bulgaria's achievements in space. Visitors of the pavilion were introduced to the Bulgarian greenhouse on



FIALA

A gold treasure found in the town of Panagyurishte, Bulgaria

A Similarity has been Found Between the Logo of Expo 2020 Dubai and the Bulgarian Gold Treasure

Tourists who visit the Bulgarian pavilion are extremely impressed by the replicas of the Bulgarian gold treasure. The similarity between the logo of Expo 2020 Dubai and the Bulgarian gold treasure is a topic of discussion. The logo of Expo 2020 Dubai depicts the sun and is displayed as a replica in the pavilion.

Such questions are also asked by local journalists. Galina Raycheva, the executive director of Bulgarian participation in Dubai, was pleased to see the similarity between the Bulgarian gold treasure. Archaeologists have found a similar logo of the world expo and one of the Bulgarian gold treasures.

Expo 2020 Dubai – Ancient History

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EGE, SCOTLAND. She graduated from
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ow. For many years, she has been in the
ss of food trading with the Arabic world
untries like Qatar and Saudi Arabia.
is Executive Director of Bulgaria Expo
the consortium that is in charge of the
rian participation in Expo 2020 Dubai.

the International Space Station in 1979.
Dr. Bozhidar Zahariev presented the
country as one of the very few countries
in the world producing space food. The
guests of the first business conference in
the pavilion were familiarized with the in-
novative Bulgarian antenna for receiving
data from nanosatellites. Another inter-
esting part of our business program is the
presentation of innovative cars invented
by young talented Bulgarians, including
a sports electric car and a hydrogen-pow-
ered car. Bulgaria will also be represented
by individuals with a global contribution
to innovation and mobility, including the
creator of the first computer, the inventor
of the airbag and answering machine, the
discoverer of the sixth heart tone, the cre-
ator of automatic transmissions and many
others.

How are you going to introduce and present the Bulgarian culture and folklore throughout EXPO2020?

We have also developed a rich cultural program with an emphasis on Bulgarian folklore. We will present individual artists, ensembles and creative teams. We have planned not only to get the visitors acquainted with the Bulgarian folklore and traditions from all folklore areas but also to have jazz, bulls, rock and classical concerts take place.



Sound between Expo 2020 Bulgarian Gold Treasure

at the World's Expo 2020 in Dubai are
Bulgarian gold treasure. They are interested
function. The Bulgarian team is often asked
the golden phial discovered in Panagiuirshite

journalists. In an interview for Abu Dhabi
ctor of the consortium that organizes the
santly surprised by the interest of the hosts
logical discoveries in Bulgaria are a real at-
y believe that the resemblance between the
Bulgarian gold artifacts is no accident.

We Need to Ensure the Respect for Human Rights, Since They are of Utmost Importance for Achieving Security, Prosperity and Peace

I would like to begin by quoting the late former UN Secretary-General Kofi Anan: “More than ever before in human history, we share a common destiny. We can master it only if we face it together. And that, my friends, is why we have the United Nations.”

The raging COVID-19 pandemic in many parts of the world, and several, mostly unprecedented global challenges we are facing at the very same time, have given rise to the need for all countries to support a more effective and coherent rules-based multilateral approach with the United Nations system at its core. Multilateralism is the key to our future and it has no alternative. For Bulgaria, this is a high priority, and we support the deepening of EU's strategic partnerships around the world, as well as its more active engagement with third countries and regional organizations.

The most urgent tasks ahead of us are:

- to prevent the spread of the coronavirus
- to focus on the global economic recovery, decreasing growing economic disparities;
- to accelerate progress in climate change and sustainable development;
- to combat terrorism and trans border crime, as well as enhancing cybersecurity.

It is vital that we all stand in support and solidarity with the most vulnerable countries and people around the globe, under the guidance of the United Nations and the World Health Organization. My country, Bulgaria, has joined the efforts to provide vaccines to those in need by sharing its excess supplies through EU mechanisms and on a bilateral basis.

COVID-19 pandemic and climate change combined resulted in wasting an entire decade of progress in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in many parts of the world. There is no doubt that the sustainability cannot be achieved without dealing with the effects of climate change, environmental degradation, and loss of biodiversity.

To maximize our collective response, we must build resilience. We have to enhance the security of our supply chains, the critical infrastructure, the energy networks, as well as our preparedness for pandemics and natural disasters. Our efforts must be directed against the increasingly frequent and severe malicious cyber-attacks exploiting vulnerabilities of our democratic societies.

Bulgaria is deeply concerned by the persisting threats to security and stability in numerous parts of the world. The situation in Afghanistan, the Middle East, the continuing crisis in Ukraine, are only some of them.

We share the grave concern over the deteriorating security situation in Af-

ghanistan after the Taliban takeover, threatening to jeopardize the political, economic, and social achievements by that country over the past 20 years. The risk to the stability and security extends to the whole region and far beyond. Bulgaria condemned the attacks near the International Airport in Kabul on 26 August 2021. The attacks, claimed by Islamic State in Khorasan Province, resulted in the death and injuries of over 300 civilians, including women and children, and military personnel. Terrorism in all its forms and manifestations constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security. All States must combat terrorism through concerted multilateral efforts, and by all means, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and other obligations under international law.

As EU Member State Bulgaria supports EU's commitment to work with international partners on durable solutions for Afghan refugees and address the needs of countries hosting large numbers of them. As a sign of solidarity, we took a decision to receive up to 70 Afghan citizens who have worked for Bulgaria, EU or NATO missions, and their families.

Let me now turn to the Middle East. We condemn the missile attacks on Israel and the unproportioned use of force in retaliation while we fully recognize Israel's right to self-defense. We are deeply concerned by the violence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory since the deadly escalation between Israel and the militants in Gaza earlier this year, and the continued loss of life and serious injuries as reported to the Security Council by the UN Special Coordinator on the Middle East Peace Process.

The solution of the conflict between Israel and Palestine through the revival of the Middle East Peace Process has no alternative. We call on both sides to use maximum restraint, refrain from unilateral acts and provocations, and give a chance to negotiations and dialogue as well as to confidence-building measures.

In accordance with the fundamental principles of international law, Bulgaria continues to call for resolving the crisis in Ukraine on the basis of full and comprehensive implementation of the Minsk Agreements.

In the context of the ongoing pandemic, we need to ensure the respect for human rights, since they are of utmost importance for achieving security, prosperity and peace. Protection of children's rights is a key priority of my country with regard to human rights, with a strong emphasis on the inclusive education for children with disabilities and the process of deinstitutionalization. Further, we insist on the empowerment of women and girls, the promotion of rights of people with disabilities, as well as the fight against antisemitism,



H.E. Rumen Radev
The President of the Republic of Bulgaria

islamophobia and hate speech.

To promote these priorities on a global level, Bulgaria supports all relevant UN funds and programs, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, and actively engages with the UN system, currently as member of the Human Rights Council.

We need a revitalized United Nations to effectively address the numerous challenges the world is facing today. To this end, Bulgaria will continue to work for efficient United Nations, adequately prepared to respond to the needs of humanity in the 21st century. We support the comprehensive reform in all areas of activity of the Organization.

Bulgaria welcomes the report of the Secretary-General “Our Common Agenda”. We especially commend the fact that it is future-oriented with a strong focus on youth, since the decisions taken today will shape life of future generations.

Bulgaria is strongly committed to its financial obligations to the United Nations and is concerned about the persisting liquidity challenges, which undermine the ability of the Organization to implement its mandates and to carry out its work.

In concluding, let me be optimistic. At the very outset of the World Organization, Ralph Bunche, a renowned American political scientist and diplomat, a leading civil rights activist and Nobel Peace Prize laureate for his mediation in Israel in the late 1940s, said: “The United Nations is our one great hope for a peaceful and free world.” I would like to add – the United Nations is our one great hope for safely steering the boat of our common destiny through the troubled and uncharted waters of our future, and we all must stand as one in its support.

Excerpt from the Speech of His Excellency President Rumen Radev before the United Nations General Assembly during its 76th session.

Effectiveness, Transparency and Benefits for Our Partners in Business, Culture and Political Cooperation

Dear friends,

I am extremely happy to be able to give you and your readers an idea about 'Bulgaria in UAE'.

Amity with the UAE

UAE is home to one of the largest Bulgarian communities in the Middle East. There are no official statistics from the local institutions, but according to our unofficial data, taking into account the liberalization of the visa regime, we can talk about up to 7,000 of our compatriots in the UAE. The largest community remains in Dubai, followed by Abu Dhabi and the other emirates.

Effectiveness, transparency and benefits for our partners in business, culture and political cooperation. These are the three main principles my team follows in our work. Our main priority is to create the necessary conditions for steady bilateral growth in economic exchange and investments, tourism and cultural exchange, while upgrading on the bilateral political achievements and cooperation that will bring added value and a better quality of life for both Bulgaria and the UAE. Due to our efforts we have managed to intensify political and economic dialogue, but there is a huge untapped potential for the development of bilateral relations. Bulgaria can and should be a door of the UAE to the EU and the Eastern European region. We now observe a rapid increase in the levels of bilateral trade, as well as in the representation of Bulgarian companies willing to enter the regional market through establishing regional offices in Dubai. A number of Emirati companies are setting up businesses in Bulgaria.

On the political vector, 2017 was a breaking year as both the UAE and Bulgaria settled up embassies in Sofia and Abu Dhabi. For just a few years we managed to sign a number of bilateral agreements in the fields of economic and business cooperation, culture, education, security and others. Our institutions are partnering in many areas. We exchanged ministerial visits, the Bulgarian Prime Minister visited Abu



His Excellency Bogdan Kolarov, Ambassador of the Republic of Bulgaria to the UAE

Dhabi on a multiple occasions. Unfortunately, the first official visit of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the United Arab Emirates Armed Forces, whom we value as the driving force of UAE's friendly policy towards our country was postponed last year due to the Covid pandemic. Now, we look forward to seeing it happening in the course of the next year. Such visits send a strong political message and should help encourage further economic and trade relations.

Strengthening Ties – 30 years of diplomatic relations. 1991 – 2021

Emirati-Bulgarian ties have traditionally been friendly. Now, both sides are doing their best to make them even closer. The intensification of the political dialogue can be noted as a success in the last few years. Both Sofia and Abu Dhabi do have a steady interest in further development and expansion of this cooperation built upon partnership. We can provide a solid base for Emirati investors to enter the European market. Priority is given to strengthening the trade and economic ties, attracting Emirati and Gulf investment and stimulating the tourist flow. Aside from the general trend, I can focus on the significant number of Emirati and expat students

from the UAE in our medical universities, the Bulgarian IT and AI companies operating in UAE and the growing trend for small Emirati direct investments in different economic sectors in Bulgaria.

Steadily Making a Statement

Our priority is the support of the Bulgarian businesses in UAE and the access of Bulgarian products to the local market. This is directly linked to our image as a country, the foreign investments in Bulgaria and the economic growth.

These days you can easily find cosmetic and organic products of Lavena, Refan, Bio Derma, dairy products of Lakrima, Kondov, Kaval, chocolate products, honey, sunflower oil and others in the shops around UAE. The problem is that many of the Bulgarian products are sold under local brands for a number of reasons – lack of funds for advertising, high competition from local chains or the absence of a representative office.

If we look back – for the last five to six years there has been an increased interest on the part of Bulgarian business in the direction of UAE. Given the strong competition from various European and global manufacturers, the high quality of Bulgarian products and services is the most important condition for their market presence here, which is very

attractive with its procuring potentials.

A positive sign was the opening of the Office for Trade and Economic Relations (STI) in Dubai. This became possible due to the increased trade, the desire and attitude of the Bulgarian government to intensify trade and economic ties, Bulgarian exports and attracting investments. With STI, Dubai Chamber and the Chamber of Commerce of Abu Dhabi we created a database of companies, both local and Bulgarian aiming to facilitate partnering between the businesses.

At the same time, over 7,000 Emirati and expats from the UAE visited Bulgaria as tourists in 2019, before the pandemic. Our commitment is to furthering these results and making this a sustainable trend – mainly in spa and mountain tourism, as well as short weekend packages.

The image of Bulgaria that we managed to create is of a preferred year-round destination, offering a high-quality tourist product and attracting a greater number of tourists. At the same time, our target is also to attract more Emirati businesses and investors in the tourist industry.

Challenges

Everything here is a challenge. I think that in the last six years we have managed to change many things both in the representation of Bulgaria

in the UAE and in the way the Bulgarian representation works.

Unfortunately, Bulgaria was not well known in the UAE and this was the main problem we faced in 2015. We have highly qualified specialists – doctors, engineers, financiers, pilots and others who perform well at work and in the companies they work for, but unfortunately there was no common view of Bulgaria and the Bulgarians. Some Bulgarian products – cheese, cosmetics and rose oil were also well known here, but not connected with the country. This is due to the passivity of Bulgarian institutions, the fact that compared to other communities the Bulgarian one is relatively small, and there is great competition locally from countries that invest in their advertising – both at the state and business level.

The connection.

The EXPO.

We are trying. Hard. It all comes down to budget constraints and funding. Although difficult, in recent years we have managed to attract like-minded people and supporters in the face of Bulgarian business. With their help we managed to organize events for the national day, for presenting our universities, for cultural and other initiatives, exhibitions that were attended by high-ranking representatives of local institutions, the governments of Ras Al Khaimah, Sharjah, Dubai, Abu Dhabi and the diplomatic representations. Numerous friends of Bulgaria from the academic circles, the cultural elite, the media, the business were also present.

Now we have the unique opportunity to present Bulgaria through Expo 2020. It's the stretch to draw the attention of local people to Bulgaria – an exceptional time to use in order to open fully the doors of our country to the Emirati business and vice versa, as well as to share our unique Bulgarian culture and art with the people of this country through the interaction between various cultural, educational and business events and workshops organized at the Bulgarian Pavilion.

The United Arab Emirates Views the Republic of Bulgaria as a Strategic Partner and Ally in the Region of Eastern Europe

Dear Friends,

Over the last fifty years, the foreign policy of the United Arab Emirates has contributed to strengthening and consolidating the country's global position. This active role has led to a multiplication of the UAE's positive influence around the world through the country's bilateral relations with different countries around the world, based on the principles of mutual respect, common interest and joint action to address international challenges in all their forms.

The relations of the United Arab Emirates with the Republic of Bulgaria come within the process of development and growth, which the country has witnessed in the last five decades. This is one of the factors influencing the renaissance and prosperity, ground on the consistent political vision of wise leadership based on wisdom, moderation, respect and protection of rights. This leadership has worked hard to consolidate the position of the state in the international arena and it has been successful in building relations of international cooperation with friendly countries, including the Republic of Bulgaria. In other words, Emirati diplomacy has become a model of outstanding results aimed at promoting and developing cooperation, effective communication and successful influence to achieve the common national interests of the two countries.

In this context, the United Arab Emirates views the Republic of Bulgaria as a strategic partner and ally in the region of Eastern Europe, united by common interests and many regional and global issues.

In a short period of time, the UAE managed to achieve remarkable development and growth in relations between the two countries in different sectors, due to the country's desire to strengthen relations with different states, in a way that contributes to the inter-



His Excellency Ambassador Sultan Rashid Al Kaitoob
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United Arab Emirates to the Republic of Bulgaria

ests of peoples, supports the conditions of states and leads to overcoming the crises to which they are exposed, with the presence of the active role of the Emirates, which holds on to the prosperity and happiness of mankind.

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the UAE and Bulgaria on October 19, 1991, relations between the two countries have gone through a number of stages and points that have contributed to their strengthening and development. These steps can be generalized, as follows:

- Opening of diplomatic missions at the level of an embassy in the two capitals – Sofia and Abu Dhabi.
- Intensification of high-level mutual visits in the recent years. Relations have witnessed numerous visits of Bulgarian political leaders and high-level officials to the United Arab Emirates, including the Prime Minister, the

Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Tourism, Bulgarian Prosecutor General, the Minister of Interior, the Minister of Economy, the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Culture, the Chief of Defence and other. On the other hand, in 2019, His Excellency Minister Ahmed Al-Sayegh paid a working visit to Sofia, during which he met a number of Ministers (Foreign, Finance, Economy, Transport, and Culture) and took practical steps to further develop bilateral relations.

- The success of building a strong political ground between the two countries has been reflected in the mutual coordination and support at the international arena within the framework of international organizations and the United Nations bodies.

- Signing of a number of MoUs and agreements that serve to strengthen relations between the two countries,

including an agreement to strengthen and deepen trade and economic relations, an agreement on cultural cooperation and an agreement on a roadmap for cooperation between Bulgaria and the United Arab Emirates for air services, effective communication and building trade relations.

- Preparations for the meeting of the Joint Intergovernmental Committee for Economic Cooperation, which was scheduled to take place in 2020 and was postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. It is expected that a number of other MoUs and agreements will be signed, including the agreement on mutual protection and encouragement of investments, the MoU on cooperation in the field of education and science, a MoU in the field of tourism, another one in the field of security will be signed by both sides.

- An agreement for strategic cooperation between the two countries will put the re-

lations between Bulgaria and the UAE at the beginning of a new phase of cooperation, developing and intensifying relations in all political, economic, security, investment, cultural and sport areas. It is expected to be signed after the formation of a new Bulgarian government.

There is no doubt that the current political situation in the Republic of Bulgaria, the lack of a stable government, in addition to the Covid-19 impact, affect the level of relations. However, we hope to witness deepening, further development and strengthening of bilateral cooperation in the near future, especially at the level of trade exchange and economic relations. Our aim is to make them reach the level of political relations, as the two countries have great potential that has not yet been fulfilled and it is our mutual goal to make this happen as soon as possible.

KRIB – The Voice of the Bulgarian Business

MR. KIRIL DOMUSCHIEV IS A MAJOR SHAREHOLDER AND HOLDS HIGH EXECUTIVE POSITIONS IN COMPANIES AS A:

- Major shareholder and Chair of the Supervisory Board of Navigation Maritime Bulgare (NAVIBULGAR®)
- President and CEO of Huvepharma inc.
- Co-founder and partner at Advance Properties Ltd.
- Chair of the Board of Directors at Huvepharma N.V., Belgium
- Member of the Board of Directors at Huvepharma Inc., The USA
- Member of the Board of Directors at Huvepharma Holdings B.V., the Netherlands
- Member of the Board of Directors at Huvepharma International B.V., the Netherlands
- Chair of the Supervisory Board of Biovet Plc.



Mr. Kiril Domuschiev holds a Master's Degree in Industrial Management and Marketing from the Technical University, Sofia. He is a graduate of the Spanish High School Miguel de Cervantes in Sofia.

KRIB is “the voice of the Bulgarian business” that: produces three quarters of the country's GDP; provides jobs to over 900 000 people; unites over 12 000 companies, which are members through individual or collective membership, among them the biggest companies in Bulgaria; accounts for more than three quarters of the exports of Bulgaria. **KRIB has a mission** to raise the competitiveness of the Bulgarian economy and the companies operating in Bulgaria; to be most effective in the process of improving the business climate in the country; to assist its members in sharing best business practices, benefiting from the EU membership, going regional and global; to encourage the corporate social responsibility best practices of its members. **KRIB is an active partner in the social dialogue:** has representatives in the social dialog on national, sectoral, regional and European level; presents opinions on draft laws in the Bulgarian Parliament; is a member of the National Council for Tripartite Cooperation and its commissions; its Chairman is Deputy-Chairman of the National Council for Tripartite Cooperation. **KRIB has strong regional and branch structures:** operates 128 regional representations all over the country; unites 80 branch

organizations in all economic sectors; has 11 intersectoral committees that coordinate the interests of its members. **KRIB has adopted measures against the economic crisis:** helps its members to cope with the global financial and economic crisis; introduced to the attention of the government a complete platform for mitigating and overcoming of the economic crisis as well as a package of measures to boost the “law abiding” economy; designed a socio-economic platform and a vision for the development of Bulgaria within the present election cycle “Project 2018: Allied in the Crisis, Strong in the Success!”. **KRIB works with the EU funds:** assists the business to work effectively with the European funds; participates with own representatives in the Monitoring committees of all Operative programs. **KRIB formulates policies for the labour market:** drafts particular policies for overcoming the lack of qualified labour force and creating conditions for a developed, flexible, deregulated labour market; prepares together with the World Bank and the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy analyses and recommendations for increasing the employment, boosting flexsecurity of the labour market and the quality of human resources. **KRIB**

court of arbitration: is effective and reliable alternative in the resolution of commercial disputes; provides the opportunity to resolve disputes outside the system of the state courts, which ensures equality of the parties, promptness, efficiency and predictability.

KRIB acts internationally: member of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) as a founder of the Bulgarian National Committee of ICC; supports the Bulgarian business abroad.

KRIB incorporates foreign businesses: collective members of KRIB are bilateral chambers such as the German-Bulgarian Industrial Chamber (DBIHK), the Bulgarian Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Confindustria Bulgaria, the Italian Chamber of Commerce; the American Chamber of Commerce in Bulgaria and the British-Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce are main partners of KRIB; partnership with the International Financial Corporation – IFC, of the World Bank Group, and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

KRIB wins, because it is: politically and financially independent; supported only by the membership fee of its members; managed and controlled solely by its members.



THE BULGARIAN INDUSTRIAL CAPITAL ASSOCIATION

Founded in 1996, the Bulgarian Industrial Capital Association (BICA) is the most extensively represented organization of Bulgarian employers. It is also the most dynamically developing organization of Bulgarian businesses represented at national level.

Members of the Association are over 90 branch chambers, representing more than 75% of the economic activities in this country, and over 10,000 enterprises that employ almost 500,000 people. BICA has a network of regional chambers in 2/3 of the municipalities in the country.



Vassil Velez
The Management President of
the Bulgarian Industrial Capital
Association Board

The Bulgarian Industrial Capital Association has earned itself the reputation of a speaker of the actual manufacturing sector. It protects the interests of its members before the executive and legislative authorities at national and European level, it influences the preparation of the normative base and the policies in the economic sector, makes systematic efforts for improving the competitiveness of Bulgarian enterprises and for creating a favorable business environment as well as enhancing the Bulgarian economy in general. Throughout the years the Association has implemented consistent policies and taken systematic action; it has built on the achieved success and has been equally unbiased and independent of all political parties.

The Bulgarian Industrial Capital Association is the only organization that incorporates public companies and providers of services of general interests in the country. The Association is permanently committed to the capital markets development and makes constant efforts for the positive perception of issuers' statute. The Association works in this direction in close collaboration with the investment community and with institutions at national and European level.

BICA is the only Bulgarian nationally representative organization of employers that is member of CEEP – The European Centre of Employers and Enterprises providing Public services (www.ceep.eu)

The development of services of general interest reflects the European model of society, playing an important role in ensuring social, economic and territorial cohesion within the European Union. They are vital for the sustainable development of Europe in terms of higher levels of employment, social integration, economic growth and environmental quality.

With this membership BICA provides its members with the opportunity to participate directly in the process of formation of the European business environment and at the same time benefits from the experience and contributes to the Bulgarian social-economic environment with the best practices of the European economic model.

The influence on policies development is also achieved through BICA's participation in the European economic and social committee, as well as in the Economic and social council of the Republic of Bulgaria.

In 2017 BICA was in charge for the 4th time for the rotating presidency of the Association of the Organizations of Bulgarian Employers (AOBE) which unites the employers' organizations represented at national level – a significant responsibility to coordinate all the efforts of employers' organizations in their dialogue with the government and the trade unions. The Bulgarian Industrial Capital Association successfully coordinates the common positions of the Bulgarian business on important issues for improving the social-economic environment, and has established itself as a useful moderator during the negotiations between social partners.

Guided by its work principles, the Bulgarian Industrial Capital Association will continue its active efforts to support the implementation of policies for ensuring macroeconomic stability and budget discipline, for improving the business climate and for sustainable economic growth, for supremacy of law and implementation of the contracts for business security and property inviolability.



Union for Private Economic Enterprise

The Union for Private Economic Enterprise (UPEE) was established on the 22nd December 1989 as the first non-governmental association of private entrepreneurs and employers in the Republic of Bulgaria aiming to unite the private business in the country and to support its activities and successful development.

UPEE has been a nationally representative employers' organization since 1993 and according to the latest data from the National Social Security Institute, it represents more than 10,500 enterprises with over 120,000 employees,

dialogue with its members and encourages their involvement and participation in all forms of tripartite dialogue in accordance with their priorities and areas of interest. The mechanisms of interaction in the tripartite dialogue provide ample opportunities to seek ways of solving business problems, and the high expertise and active position of the organization are key to achieving a number of socially significant solutions.

The Union of Private Economic Enterprise has established itself as an employers' organization with a focus on the needs and problems of

Of great importance is the activity of UPEE to assist in organizing specific business meetings in order to conclude transactions between its members and foreign business partners, organizing and/or assisting in the organization of national or international delegations, symposia, conferences, exhibitions, fairs, etc., establishing contacts with related associations, unions and other similar initiatives. That is why UPEE works actively to promote national and international investments, facilitate access to bank and non-bank financing, security funds, insurance and other services, know-how, innovation, information massifs and registers.

The organization promotes the observance of the ethics and morals of the honest entrepreneur and the rules for loyal and honest market behavior in accordance with the modern European and world standards.

The Union for Private Economic Enterprise has established itself as the most important partner of the state and business in the fight for a clean internet space and in providing the necessary level of cybersecurity. Taking care of its members, the organization creates opportunities for the use of preferential prices for cybersecurity services to ensure affordable and quality protection of the members' businesses.

UPEE is also aware of the important role of creating a synergy between science, education and business for the development of innovations and training according to the needs of employers, working closely with all leading universities and research institutions in the country.

The Union for Private Economic Enterprise is a member of a number of international organizations – the European Association of Craft, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEUnited), the European Small Business Alliance (ESBA), the European Cyber Security Organization (ECSO), the European Alliance for Apprenticeships (EAfA), Pact for Skills and in partnership with ADAPT International and other European and international organizations and institutions, with which it actively interacts to achieve its goals for protecting the business and fostering growth.



Left to right – Mrs. Violina Nakova – President of the Union for Private economic enterprise (UPEE) and Mr. Iliya Lingorski – Chief Economist at Bulgarian Development Bank

66 branch and 103 municipal bodies throughout the country.

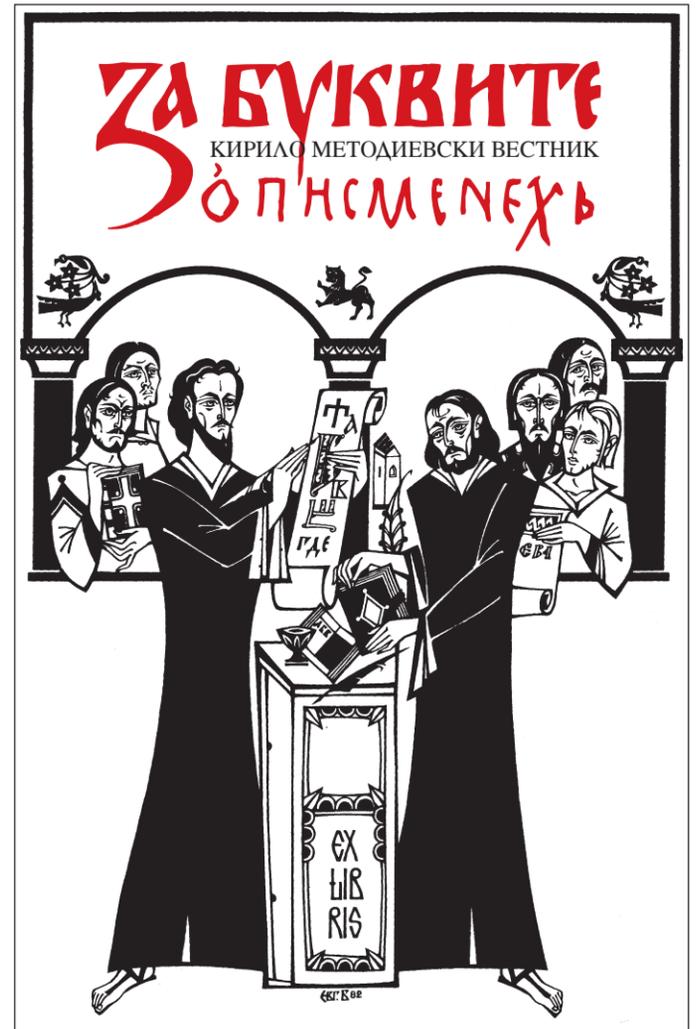
The organization members are large branch organizations in the land transport sectors; construction of buildings and facilities; production of timber, wood products and furniture; cement industry; insurance services; security and safety activities; information and communication technologies; cybersecurity; hotel and restaurant management; crop and livestock production, forestry and fisheries, as well as in the food industry; human medicine and veterinary medicine; sports activities; craft activities, locksmith services and so on.

UPEE is a dynamically developing organization that meets the daily challenges of the business. As a reliable partner, UPEE actively supports its members' activities through developing adequate and appropriate tools, policies, solutions and initiatives. The organization is a proven partner of entrepreneurs and employers in the Republic of Bulgaria, which represents and protects their interests in the tripartite dialogue – business, unions and the state. The organization conducts an active

its members. The mission of UPEE is to support the business development of its members, to foster the entrepreneurial spirit and the establishment of new enterprises and jobs, new business contacts and opportunities for realization and growth, to work actively for the economic and social progress of the country.

To achieve these goals, UPEE conducts research on the conditions for business and prepares systematic analyses, establishes business contacts with foreign partners, makes proposals for improving the business climate in the country, develops proposals for amendments to laws and regulations.

The organization informs and consults its members on the market opportunities in the country and abroad, the tendencies in the technological development, the requirements to the management of the quality and efficiency of the economic activity and other activities for promoting the development and growth of the Bulgarian business. UPEE has a team of specialists-consultants with extensive experience who can provide support in clarifying business opportunities in Bulgaria.



A bookplate, Evgeniy Bosyatski

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