

**PLATFORM  
OF THE POLITICAL PARTY  
“DIRECT DEMOCRACY”**



**BULGARIA**  
as we want it to be  
and we can make it

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Political party DIRECT DEMOCRACY, 2022

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# I. CREED

**Our society is sick**, suffering from an increasing process of degradation and de-professionalization to the point that it is already going off the tracks of its own history. It is losing its notion of the world and the time in which it is living and has no idea how to extricate itself from the hole it has fallen into.

Proof of this can be seen in the demographic catastrophe, unstoppable emigration, literal and allegorical rise of Gypsy culture, depopulation of entire regions, the destruction of village life, the collapse of industry, the slaughter of the natural environment, abnormal higher education, ignorance of parents about how to educate and raise their children, moral degradation, a sense of doom, mass corruption, mutual aggression, ubiquitous coarse language and manners etc., etc.

Such a **catastrophic decline** has always existed when one of the two indispensable factors for survival and development is missing. These are enlightened visionary leaders and a society fit and ready to understand the reforms they propose and implement them.

Bulgaria is collapsing on a daily basis and its people are falling apart. It is marching with broad strides towards what thousands of peoples in history have experienced – collapse and eradication or at the very least – complete transformation. It is unlikely that our country will cease to be called Bulgaria, but there is a tendency towards drastic changes in the population, for other nationalities to appear and ours – to be erased. Most of our traditions, worldview, and relationships will disappear and our language will become even poorer and disjointed.

Whether this will be for better or worse, no one knows. There are no objective criteria for this. However, according to the subjective cri-

teria of everyone who has been nourished with love for his country, it is an irreparable misfortune. Because despite all our flaws, we are a very kind, sympathetic and high-quality people – and because such periods of loss and transition have always brought people nothing but suffering and bitterness.

At this critical historical moment for the future of our country, there is a need for **radical and painful reforms**, aimed at:

- restoring justice in society;
- achieving prosperity for all Bulgarians;
- tackling organized and domestic crime;
- stopping the catastrophic tendencies in the demographic development of Bulgaria;
- return to the Revival dream of an educated, enlightened and cultural nation;
- drastic improvement of the health status of all Bulgarians;
- stimulating the economic and civic activity of the whole society;
- revival of the declining and depopulated regions;
- building the governance of the state on completely new foundations by introducing direct democracy;
- elaboration of a vision for the Bulgarian ideal;
- defending Bulgarian interests within the EU and a foreign policy which is open to all directions;
- optimising Bulgaria's defence capabilities through close links between highly qualified army officers and a well-trained population.

**Our main aim** is to unlock the energy of our people:

- entrepreneurial energy – by abolishing at least two-thirds of the licensing and authorisation regimes; by means of quick and easy lend-

ing to small and medium-sized businesses; developing domestic high-tech industries, without relying on known and unknown foreign investors with ambiguous capital or failed businesses in their own countries; by eradicating domestic crime which in a number of regions has become a major obstacle to economic activity; by state aid to exports, by eradicating the creeping monopolization of the economy;

- civil energy – by introducing a comprehensive voting system on all important issues. This will be based on new information technologies in the aim of achieving effective DIRECT DEMOCRACY;

- spiritual energy – by prioritising education, culture and science, their respective funding and legislative support;

- physical energy – by means of effective and accessible health care, the development of mass sports and constant efforts to create an ecological and healthy environment

- moral energy – by cleansing politics of corruption, demagoguery, lies, clandestine deals, partisanship, ruthlessness and vulgarity, in order to set an example to society of morality and culture in everyday life at all levels.

**We want** to begin the cleansing of the Augean stables of corruption, in order to achieve the revival of statehood and public spirit.

We want to send the criminals where they belong. This is especially true for the political-economic clique which has choked us for more than 74 years, 31 of which in a system of governance called ‘democracy’, but which has little in common with this concept.

We want to put Bulgaria on the path of intensive economic development with at least 7–8% annual growth of gross domestic product.

We want to pursue an honest and open policy, fulfilling the will of the Sovereign, but not impose our own views which are not shared by society.



We want to heal our morals and provide our children with excellent education, a healthy value system and perspectives for development.

We want to create a new, comprehensive public health system with budget funding that is accessible to everyone, not just those who pay their health contributions – without a valid health card there is no access to healthcare. Hospital capacity should comply with the principle of bed = number of citizens according to European standards.

We want the state to invest seriously and meaningfully in the declining and depopulated regions of the country.

We want laws, rules and order to be the same for everyone, from the Prime Minister to the doorman.

We want to reduce by at least half the burden of the state and municipal administrations through the implementation of e-government.

We want to encourage the police to work to the maximum to benefit society, not those in power.

We want a small, but tight and very capable army, not cannon fodder and lackeys for foreign armies.

We want a sensible social policy and to purge it of all the hypochondriac sick and fraudulent pensioners, the child-bearing mothers who have turned motherhood into a business, the parasitic strata, who have no intention of getting a job.

We want our country's natural resources to contribute to the well-being of the population, not to be exported for minimal costs.

We want a clean country without harmful technology, restoration of the national legacy of beautiful and wonderful places arrogantly owned by a handful of unscrupulous individuals.

### **Is it possible?**

It is entirely possible. Because we believe in ourselves and in mutu-

al cooperation with the society we intend to build.

Because **we are not**:

- party parasites,
- stooges or yuppies,
- a branch of the mafia,
- hungry mouths wanting to be spoon fed and grow rich at the expense of society,
- ambitious parvenu, wanting to gain power and fame
- agents, conduits of foreign interests
- a creation of former party and power structures

**We are:**

- specialists in the widest spectrum – from economics to ethnology and from education to military affairs
- like-minded people who believe in our cause
- convinced democrats and reformers
- patriots
- people who want to live with their children and grandchildren in a prosperous and orderly country
- individuals who do not lack the determination and courage to achieve their goals.

We are part of our nation and we perceive what is happening around us a personal and social catastrophe.

We continue to live in the hope that the revival of our people is entirely possible.

**Time is working hard against us, but we believe we will overcome all the negative trends.**

## II. The world in the post-industrial era and yet another cycle of globalisation

### Post-industrial society

#### 1. Post-industrial society – characteristics

**A post-industrial society is not a society where there is no industry!**

It is a society whose economy is no longer dominated by the industrial sector but one dominated by services, the most important of which are information services, telecommunications, finance, education and health services.

If in the middle of the 20th century the ratio of employees in industry, agriculture and services in developed countries was approximately 50–25–25, today it is 20–4-76. The trend over the next two, maximum three decades, is that the ratio will be 7–3-90 in favour of services. People employed in industry and agriculture will not exceed 10% of the workforce.

Post-industrial society is therefore not so much an economic category as a social one.

**The main feature** of the post-industrial society compared to the industrial society is the exceptionally high level of labour productivity, the predominant sector of the innovative economy with high technologies, and international corporate business.

It prioritises investment in human capital and a drastic increase in its quality, including quality of life. However, this applies to a very thin stratum of people who have been carefully screened for their high potential and who have received the best possible education. They are

the ones who are called upon to ensure the scientific elevation and improvement of social technologies. The masses are experiencing a period of gradual degradation and are increasingly becoming a substratum for the ensured prosperity of the higher order. Some are already referring to a new social class called the “precariat“ (a combination of the Latin adjective precarius – “insecure”, “transitional”, “dubious”, and “proletariat”). They use it to denote the rapidly growing de-professionalized community characterized by unsustainable employment, frequent changes of activity, organization and workplace, and therefore ambiguous social self-identification.

## 2. Some consequences of entering the post-industrial era

### A. DEINDUSTRIALIZATION

In the last 50 years, there has been a fall in the relative share of industrial workers in all developed countries (with the exception of China, Germany and, to some extent, Russia). Of 50% employment in the industrial sector in the middle of the 20th century, it has now fallen to 21%. This employment tends to be close to 2.5–4% in agriculture for developed countries.

Deindustrialisation primarily affects economically developed countries and industries. The closure of factories has led to increased unemployment and the emergence of regional socio-economic problems. In parallel, but at a much slower pace, there has been a process of reindustrialization – or the development of new, high-tech industries to replace the old industries. They are characterised by high productivity and very low labour participation.

Land and underground resources, water sources and forests alone

do not bring additional dividends. Moreover, if part of your territory is not formally inhabited or cultivated, then in the near future it may informally cease to belong to you. This happened to the non-Russian territory of Russian Alaska, since it simply lacked the strength to hold on to it and proved more politically advantageous to sell it. Profits are ultimately generated when, natural resources are used to one extent or another.

## **B. THE BALANCE OF KNOWLEDGE OVER CAPITAL**

In the first stages of industrial society, a businessman with capital has in practical terms always been able to organise the mass production of a given commodity and occupy the relevant niche in the market. With the development of competition, especially international competition, the amount of capital does not guarantee protection from failure or bankruptcy. Innovation is needed for success today. Capital cannot automatically ensure the emergence of the new know-how needed for economic success. Conversely, in the post-industrial economy, the availability of know-how allows for the necessary capital to be attracted easily, even in the absence of own capital funds. An important factor, however, is the elevated price of the new know-how. Such high costs hinder nascent business from developing manufacturing and force it to concentrate on trade and services. In order to be competitive in the new environment and apply beneficial know-how, you need to make significant capital investments in advance, either in patents or in your own development. This means that in almost all industrial spheres, small and medium-sized businesses are displaced by large businesses or corporations. This process can also be observed at the current time. For example, the share of small and medium-sized

businesses as a percentage of US gross domestic product from 2000 to 2010 fell from 51% to 42%. The middle class in all advanced industrial countries is diminishing at a rapid pace.

We would like to draw attention to the most important consequence of entering post-industrial society – the tacit and often open struggle for national labour markets worldwide.

### C. MOVING TO A NEW TECHNOLOGICAL PHASE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF HUMANITY

In the most important areas of the new technological phase the trends are already evident: information technology, nanotechnology, biotechnology and cognitive technologies (so-called NBIC – Revolution). The advantages over the previous technological phase are expected to be in the sharp reduction of energy consumption and material intensity, in the construction of materials and organisms with predefined qualities. The beginning point is believed to date back to 2010; and its widespread dissemination will take place around 2025. By 2040, there will be a significant slowdown in economic growth associated with new technologies and a gradual move to the next technological phase.

One of the most important aspects in the convergence of the above-mentioned technological areas is expected to be the development of **transhumanism** and the achievement of the metaman (post-human), characterized by the symbiosis between organic and inorganic matter, with practical immortality, with predefined qualities and with incomparably higher levels of intelligence.

### 3. Struggle for national labour markets

Unemployment has risen across the developed world since the early years of post-industrial society: it is currently over 8% for the EU as a whole, and in some countries, such as Greece and Spain, it ranges from 13–15% to 25–27%. . The demands of the knowledge economy are leading to an exacerbation of social problems in the backward countries of Africa, Asia and South America, where unemployment fluctuates between 40% and 60%. This is causing large waves of migration to rich countries.

In an era of increasing economic cycles, accompanied by their inherent crises, during a recession a number of services cease to be used and people reduce their expenditure to the essentials. This drives entire sectors out of the market and leads to a sharp increase in unemployment. For this reason, over the last two decades, a tacit (and sometimes overt) struggle for national labour markets has begun. **Therefore, every responsible national economy must develop such industries which will be in demand and necessary in times of crisis.** Such industries are food, energy, medicines and information.

### 4. Socio-political life in the post-industrial society?

Post-industrial society leads to a general change in public and political life, its characteristics and the problems facing societies. If the problems facing societies are completely different, then the current classifications and concepts of political life must also be different.

Let us take, for example, the problem of left and right. If we leave aside the matter of their emergence after the consolidation of powers in the Paris Convention during the Great French Revolution, these concepts were developed in relation to the class struggle during the

industrial era. They were related to the fact that the working class numbered almost 50% of society. As the percentage of this burden has decreased and the nature of work changed, such a division becomes an anachronism.

## 5. Left and right

The left and right in essence have as come as close to each other as possible. Convergence began after the Second World War, when governments realized the causes of the last two catastrophic wars and created the **social state within the framework of liberal democracy**. Peoples were given a number of privileges, rights and opportunity for a comfortable and good life. The business class decided to accumulate money through innovation, turnover and competitiveness, rather than exploitation. Legislation was adopted in this respect. This included the Charter of Human Rights, new principles of world trade, and steps were taken to eliminate centuries of national feuds (e.g. between France and Germany). During this entire time, there remained the threat of the Soviet Union and the communist theory that had taken over the minds of Western intelligence. This is how the left defeated the right.

Today, when we are constantly wondering why the right behave like the left and vice versa, we must understand that this is not a matter of political betrayal or incompetence, but of the spirit of time. Proof of this convergence are the periodical “broad coalitions” that emerge in European countries. One of the most recent examples are the left- and right-wing government in Germany, where they still are divided in the archaic way, but work together. It is only a matter of time before this outdated pattern of opposing one part of society against the other will change.



The division of left and right parties is a matter of inertia and political short-sightedness. The world has become different. Parties cannot pursue policies to the benefit of the socially weak at the expense of business or vice versa. The choice of policy is either to go with the flow or carry out reforms leading to modern politics.

Modern politics is a complex of measures which guarantee inclusion in the modern global, regional and national trends, development of domestic production, the waging of a skilled and long-term struggle for a share in the world distribution of labour. This also involves the drastic increase of the educational status of the population in view of what has been said about new trends, etc., etc.

**Modern parties can be parties of the status quo or parties of progress.** This does not depend on the way they promote themselves but on their actual programme intentions and actions.

## Globalisation

### The Essence of globalisation

In the broad sense of the concept, modern globalization is a process of internationalization which affects all spheres of life – the economy, culture, technology, finance, communications, population migration, etc.

The main reason for this phenomenon is the turbulent growth of international trade which has been observed during the different historical eras. For example, in the 19th century alone, the volume of international trade increased almost 40 times. This phase of globalisation came to an end in the late 1920s, when all developed countries, trying to overcome the consequences of the Great Depression, intro-

duced intensely protectionist measures that led to a sharp decrease in international trade.

Globalization is not a new phenomenon at all – it has existed in other eras, including in Ancient times. Such processes were observed in Mesopotamia during the prosperity of Babylon and Assyria (3rd-2nd millennia BC) in China after the creation of the Empire (3rd century BC). The best documented globalisation cycles are as follows:

Epoch	Region	Country with a trade monopoly
2 <sup>nd</sup> mill. BC.	Eastern Mediterranean	Crete (Minoan Kingdom) (Talasocracy)
5–4 c. BC.	Eastern Mediterranean	Athens
5–3 c. BC.	Western Mediterranean	Carthage
2 c. BC – 3 c. AD.	Mediterranean	Rome
12–14 c.	Mediterranean	Venice, Genoa
15–16 c.	The New World (America)	Spain
15–16 c.	Africa, South and South-East Asia	Portugal
16–17 c.	Baltics, North Sea	Netherlands
18 c.	The New World, Africa, Asia	France, United Kingdom, Netherlands
19 c.	The New World, Africa, Asia	United Kingdom.

History allows us to trace the periods of globalization, as well as to define the areas of its action. We can thus see that there are often successive periods of globalisation in the same region. Hence the conclusion that **globalisation is a cyclical phenomenon.**

## Features of globalisation

### **GROWTH IN TRADE OUTPACES INCOME OF THE POPULATION.**

In each cycle of globalisation, the first phase sees sharp rises in international trade volumes with relatively little change in economic development (GDP, income levels, etc.). For example, the volumes of Dutch commercial maritime transport from the beginning of the 16th to the end of the 17th century increased 10 times (cycle II of Western European globalisation). However, they did not reflect a particularly large growth in the economy or the standard of living of the population. On the contrary, according to specialists in economic history, in the initial phase, the standard of living of the population in a number of European countries (Spain, Italy, the Holy Roman Empire, Poland) fell significantly. There is even a special term for this phenomenon: “the crisis of the 17th century”.

Globalisation cycles usually take place in three stages. They start with a boom in international trade with weak GDP growth, followed by a certain level of convergence, and the cycles end with a collapse of international trade. This usually hits the largest exporters the worst, while those economies which cope the easiest are those with the highest degree of autarky or self-sufficiency.

### **INFLATION AND CYCLICAL CHANGES IN GOLD PRICE (MONEY).**

Another interesting logical principle in globalization cycles is the general rise in prices (inflation) and its natural continuation – the

devaluation of gold and silver. In the 13th-17th centuries in Western Europe there was a significant increase in prices expressed in terms of silver and gold.

Globalisation cycles do not always alternate smoothly. *Sometimes they end with a deep crisis and decline, rather than the beginning of a new cycle.* This happened in Antiquity after the 3rd century and in Western Europe in the period of the Great Depression and the 2nd World War. The price of precious metals rose sharply, leading to intense deflation. This process was observed in the United States during the Great Depression, and despite the efforts of the government, which in 1933 in an effort to deal with this phenomenon, even banned its citizens from buying gold. In fact, in the first years of the depression gold price doubled. The same was observed at the end of Antiquity, when the price of gold versus bronze coins increased 80–90 times.

Similar trends can be observed in our modern times. Although the connection between money and precious metals was eliminated by the Breton Woods system, the general principles of globalization are fully apparent in the current cycle. During the first phase (1967–1982), there was serious inflation. Between 1949 and 1965, inflation in the United States was 29%, while between 1965 and 1982 it was 100%. Other currencies, such as the Italian pound and the English pound, were devalued not just in terms of percentage, but in times. However, in the middle of the cycle, the high level of inflation ended, as in previous globalisation cycles.

The dynamics in the price of gold (although no longer tied to national and international currencies) also accords with the logical principles of the globalization cycles. In the first period of the cycle (1967–1982) its price increased significantly. In the second (1982–2002) it remained stable and even slightly declined (from 330 to 300 dollars per troy ounce) despite annual dollar inflation of about 4%, ris-

ing dramatically 6-fold between 2002 and 2011 with a dollar inflation rate of about 1.5 times.

## **REDUCTION IN THE PROFIT RATE AND PRICE EQUALISATION**

Globalisation inevitably also leads to two more economic phenomena: the abundance of goods lowers the profit margin; while cross-border turnover causes prices to equalise in the territories of globalisation.

These processes can also be observed in Antiquity, in the Middle Ages and in our days. As far as prices are concerned, we can assess these processes by observing changes in the most valuable and universal commodity in human history – wheat. At the end of the 16th century, the difference in wheat prices in different countries reached 7–8 times, in the middle of the 18th century it was only 2 times. This is a natural process in which markets in individual countries cease to function at national level and become part of a larger market.

## **ENHANCING INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION**

The increase of international competition due to a violent expansion of international trade can be regarded as an unprovable axiom. The phenomenon is visible to the naked eye. Another convincing example of our times is the proliferation of Chinese goods. This has led to a sharp fall in the production of similar goods (shoes, clothing, household appliances, etc.) in the US, Western Europe and other regions.

## **MASS POPULATION MIGRATION AND THE**

## EMERGENCE OF NEW CENTRES

Mass population migration is a natural consequence of globalisation at the beginning of a cycle. For example, during the 4th cycle of Western European globalisation (from the beginning of the 19th century until the Great Depression) there was colossal emigration from Western Europe. Between 1821 and 1924, 55 million people emigrated from Europe, more than half to the United States and the rest to Latin America, Canada, Australia, etc. Most of them (about 19 million) came out of Britain. As the English historians Millward and Saul have shown, the main reason is not the attractiveness of America, but the dissatisfaction with life in their own homeland.

Today, in the era of the **5th cycle of Western European globalisation**, which itself has become a global phenomenon, the number of immigrants in the US and EU countries has already reached tens of millions of people. Undoubtedly, the main reason is the poor quality of life in their homelands and the pursuit of a richer and more orderly life.

The phenomenon of mass emigration is explained by the economic logic of global competition, undermining the quality of life of huge masses of people. If we exclude cases of natural cataclysms, migrations in human history have always taken place in times of globalisation and have always been directed from areas of low competitiveness to places of high competitiveness. Therefore, today migration is directed at countries with well-developed economies, institutions and education, where there is higher employment, and therefore it is much easier to find work. We can now add the generous social system in these regions, which allows a decent life even without working.

## CHANGES TO THE ECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC LANDSCAPE

Another consequence of globalisation is the acute change in the demographic picture. It has led to the depopulation of vast areas and the extremely high concentration of population in others. This can cause violent and hypertrophic urbanization and to the formation of areas of stagnation and destruction. This phenomenon has become widespread in the highly developed countries since the second half of the twentieth century. It is now assuming increasingly ugly and uncontrollable forms.

A similar phenomenon took place in Antiquity, when during a period of globalisation, the populations of the major cities reached gigantic proportions for the era. Rome in the 1st century had more than a million inhabitants, Carthage before its destruction numbered about 700,000 people, cities like Alexandria and Antioch – over half a million. Population growth occurred not only in the emblematic cities, but also in areas which provided access to key commercial arteries.

Conversely, when a globalisation cycle passes and serious protectionist customs barriers are introduced, the reverse processes immediately begin. Populations spread much more evenly throughout the territory of a country. In the 21st century, the picture reflects that of 1st half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century: hypertrophic population clusters in the south and around London, problems with construction, infrastructure, transport, etc., along with depopulation and desertification of its northern areas. With the difference that now the general population of the country is about four times as many.

This brings us to the most important summary: *globalisation generates extremely uneven development not only in towns and regions*

*in a given country, but can doom entire countries and parts of continents to the same.*

Moreover, the results of such uneven developments are fully predictable. Not only do **countries with more favourable climatic conditions** profit, but also **those with a more favourable strategic position** in terms of trade routes. Other winners include countries **with the highest population density** at the time of the latest explosion of globalisation.

Classic examples of the latter are Northern Italy and the Netherlands from the period of the 1st (13–14 c.) and 2nd (16 – 17 c.) European globalization cycle. At that time both had the highest population density in Europe which was to predetermine their leading role. Their populations were believed to be about 80 people/sq. km, while in France it was about 35 people/ sq. km, and in other countries of Europe – even less.

## The consequences of globalisation

### ECONOMIC INSTABILITY

Frequent wars, mass emigrations, inequalities in the development of countries and regions are sufficiently indicative for us to imagine the impact of globalisation on individual societies. Another, no less important consequence is growing economic instability. This stems from growing competition and the influx of cheaper new goods; something which encourages the population to constantly change their consumer habits, and also their personal involvement in the labour process. This leads to hundreds of millions of people changing their lifestyles and participating in the international division of labour. In many indus-



tries where they previously participated only as consumers, they are now becoming producers, and vice versa. The result is a huge tectonic process in the supply and demand of a number of goods and constant, logical unexplained changes in their prices.

Thus, since the beginning of the current **5th cycle of globalization** (the end of the 1960s), there has been a sharp increase in global price volatility. Oil prices, which until the early 1970s were practically unchanged, have begun to fluctuate astonishingly and do not succumb to any forecasting. The attempts of economists and traders to explain their movement on the basis of given trends in the world economy are unfounded and are always post-factum. The same applies to almost all other raw materials and metals – their price amplitudes are not comparable to those of the decade before globalisation.

Economic instability and development inequalities in the age of globalisation affect not only individual industries, commodity prices or provinces, but also entire countries. For example, after the turbulent period of prosperity of the Netherlands in the 16th-17th centuries, there was a sharp decline and degradation. According to some evidence, at the beginning of the 19th century, half of the population of Amsterdam lived in poverty. Previously, in the 17th century, a similar fate was achieved by the glittering Italian cities the republics of Venice, Florence, Genoa. The unprecedented development of Britain's economy in the 19th century, when it was considered the "workshop of the world", was replaced by economic stagnation. Within just a few decades Britain lost its leading role in the world economy. The reason for this is the renunciation of protectionist policies and the transition to a free trade policy.

With the development of the current phase of globalization, we can see the beginning of the decline of countries as unconditional leaders of the world economy (the United States, Great Britain,

France, Spain, Italy) and the emergence of new leaders (China, Japan, South Korea, India), who until recently were a peripheral and highly backward part of the world economy.

## **DEMOGRAPHIC COLLAPSE IN DEVELOPED COUNTRIES**

Economic instability, as well as increased competition in the age of globalisation, is detrimental to the birth rate and demographic picture in all countries that started out as leaders in the globalisation cycle. However, due to their displacement by the new leaders, they are experiencing economic stagnation and entering a permanent crisis.

## **SPECULATIVE TRANSACTIONS AS A GENERAL REGULATOR AND OBSTACLE TO ECONOMIC GROWTH**

Another consequence of globalisation – alongside the increase in global competition and instability – is the sharp increase in speculative transactions. The growth in foreign trade itself is by its very nature highly speculative, because, as has already been said, it exceeds many times the growth in production. In fact during certain periods this takes place against the background of apparent decline.

Thus, a distinctive feature of the first 5 centuries of Western European globalization (13–17 c.) is acute price fluctuation (with the exclusion of force majeure circumstances of natural disasters or wars). In the space of a single year grain prices could rise or fall 4–5 times, and according to French historian Jean Delumeau (*Renaissance et discordes religieuses*, 1515–1589, p. 388) in the 16th century the growth reached 27 times the basic price. It is this abrupt price fluctuation that

caused the periodic mass famine in Western Europe. With such price increases, it became very difficult for the people to plan their spending and economic activity. Naturally, bankruptcy was a frequent consequence of such an economic atmosphere. Speculators always win since the price competition is their profession. Such acute price fluctuations allow them to accumulate huge profits from buying in some regions at low prices and selling in others at ultra-high prices. Of course, large-scale speculation can only be undertaken in conditions of intense foreign trade, allowing the transfer of large masses of goods from one country to another.

As already mentioned above, the introduction of protectionist measures in Britain and Germany at the end of the 17th century significantly limited both price fluctuations and mass hunger, while in countries like France and Spain, which continued to pursue free trade policy, these phenomena persisted.

During the last two cycles of globalisation, in addition to commodity speculation, there has been widespread financial speculation. It is no coincidence that the Great Depression that ended the 4th Western European cycle began with the collapse of the New York Stock Exchange in October 1929. This in turn was the result of the unprecedented increase in speculative financial operations in history.

An even greater boom in financial speculation can be observed in the era of current global globalisation. The world is already entering a period of permanent crisis due to the rise of fictitious capital overvalued many times above its real value.

Since the 1970s, that is, at the very beginning of the current cycle of globalization, the pace of economic growth in the developed Western countries has declined two-fold. This trend of minimal growth continues today. Unemployment in these countries rose from 1–2% in the 1960s to 10% after the crisis in the 1980s. 20 years later an unem-

ployment level of 10% is already considered normal. In some countries (Spain, Portugal, Greece) 20–25% unemployment is already becoming a permanent and irreversible phenomenon.

At the same time, in the most developed countries since the beginning of the cycle there has been widespread deindustrialisation and transfer of industry to other countries. All economic growth in these countries over the last two decades has been created in the “virtual” sectors: services, finance, the Internet, telecommunications, etc.

If we are talking about the global economy as a whole, we can see *a declining pace of economic growth* here as well. If the annual growth rates of world GDP per capita in the 1960s were about 3.5%, in the 1970s – 2.4%, in the 1980s – 1.4%, in the 1990s – 1.1%, in the 2000s these rates have decreased even more.

It can therefore be inferred that globalisation and liberalisation of the economy contribute to the rise of international trade and speculative transactions to the detriment of economic and industrial growth. Immanuel Wallerstein, Joseph Stiglitz, David Harvey and other writers share this view.

## GROWTH OF MONOPOLISM

There is hardly any need to justify this conclusion. It is obvious and represents a common truth.

### Features of current globalisation

Modern globalization generally develops according to the same laws as previous cycles. Nevertheless, there are certain features:

1. The scale and spread of modern globalisation far outweighs anything that has existed over the centuries. Before there were always

countries and regions that remained unaffected. No such countries exist in the modern world. The dimensions of international trade flows, as well as migration masses, far exceed anything that has been seen in history.

2. Financial transactions and speculation have reached unimaginable proportions. For example, the aggregate volume of financial transactions worldwide has increased almost 60 times over the years between 1983 and 2001, while global GDP volumes for the same period have increased about two-fold. According to David Harvey (*A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 2005) the total volume of financial transactions amounts to \$40 trillion. Only 0.8 trillion (2%) are needed to sustain trade and investment, while the remaining 98% of financial transactions are purely speculative transactions. Thus, the world economy is now entirely in the power of speculative financial capital, the volumes of which are incomparable with the capital concentrated in the real sector.

3. International payments use currency units (dollar, euro) that are not attached to gold, as was the case in previous cycles of globalisation. On the one hand, this contributes to the faster growth of international trade, but on the other hand, the use of unsecured money creates a potential threat of the collapse of the entire system of international payments and the collapse of international trade.

4. In previous cycles, globalisation spread widely through colonization in African, Asian and Latin American countries through the British, French, Spanish and other colonial empires. In a modern world without colonial systems, globalisation is spread through a system of international organisations (WTO, World Bank, IMF, etc.) and through the direct political and military intervention of the United States, the EU and NATO (“colour revolutions”, military interventions, bombardment of “inconvenient countries” etc.). This

threatens to lead to a further expansion of military conflicts and to the creation of ever more areas of political instability in the world. In fact, there is barely a region in the modern world that is not affected by social turmoil, revolutions and the growth of terrorism: the Middle East, North Africa, Europe, Latin America, the countries of the former USSR.

5. The decline of the former globalisation centres (USA, Western Europe) and the imposition of new ones (China, India, South Korea) is moving apace compared to the previous cycles; something which threatens to exacerbate the military-political situation. World War I began as a result of the rapid rise of Germany as a new centre of the global economy and the rapid decline of the old centres – Britain and France.

## Globalisation and globalism

We need to make a very clear distinction between **globalisation**, which is a natural process of technological development, and **globalism**, which is an ideology.

Globalization, as we described above, is the dramatically increased ability of people to move in space and communicate in real time, no matter where they are, which seems to shrink the planet and unite it. We could call this phenomenon “natural globalization,” or “planetary interconnection.”

Globalism, however, as an ideology, implies significant relinquishing of national sovereignty and the transfer of a number of national powers into the hands of non-elected supranational structures, mainly related to banking capital and transnational corporations (TNCs). Globalism is working towards a new, post-industrial structure of the world, a new political and economic order, subordinated to the world's

power elites, in which, if implemented, there would be too little room for democracy.

In globalisation, there is room for strong countries with their originality, history and culture; in globalism, such a thing cannot exist.

### **III. Direct democracy as an alternative to modern trends**

#### **Representative democracy and its weaknesses**

##### **THE SYSTEMIC NATURE OF THE PROBLEMS OF DEMOCRACY**

From the brief historical experience gained in the years after the collapse of the totalitarian regime, as well as from observations of foreign experience, it is clear that the problem of state government is not a matter of substituting elites. The new elites when entering the old system of government, and more importantly, becoming captives of previous or new dependencies, become like the previous ones, if not worse.

It is commonly said in Bulgaria that the current power is corrupt and unfit and that the government should be assumed by pure and untainted people. This thesis was a leitmotif of the protests in 2007, 2013 and now, in 2020. Unfortunately, people do not want to recall that such changes have take place 3 times in 20 years:

- The first time with the emergence of the UDF (Union of Democratic Forces) power was assumed by unknown individuals with beards and unfashionable suits removed from mothballs, as well as serious and fierce expressions on their faces.

- The second time with the arrival of the Tsarists – all kinds of yuppies, expert crooks, doyens of the Law Faculty of Sofia University and many innocent women, aka Panaiotki, who got their hands on power.

- The third time with the arrival of Boyko Borisov and his entourage – made up of officials from the World Bank gathered from



who knows where, descendants of former prominent activists from the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party or other structures of the former government, “businessmen” and “business-women”, as well as numerous representatives of the former police or armed services and even of the underworld.

As you can see, as time passes, things get scarier. The system immediately digested the new faces and shaped them in its own image. The new ones become just like the old ones. However, this phenomenon is not accidental. What we today call ‘representative democracy’ is not designed at all as a democracy. The Fathers of Enlightenment, whose followers drafted the American Constitution or carried out the French Revolution, never spoke of democracy, but **of power of the representatives**. The word “democracy” is not in the Constitution of the United States. It was not used by the people of the Great French Revolution. The idea is not that power belongs to the people, but to the elites as before. With the correction that those in power are no longer taken from within the elites, but are elected by citizens from among rival factions of the elites at the suggestion of these same elites. Most importantly, absolutist monarchical power is eliminated and its prerogatives pass to the new elites, composed of nobles and new wealthy.

The new system is a great step forward and is due to new ideas about the value of the individual and natural equality between people. The fundamental rule is that all posts in the country are mandated and elective. **This rule is based on the axiom determined by the activists of the Western European Enlightenment – that the Sovereign identifies with all citizens, not with the monarch, and that power derives from this Sovereign.** However, the title “democracy” is far from adequate for this system named in the 1930s after the brilliant work of the French philosopher and thinker Alexis de Tocqueville “On Democracy in America”. Although not at all a supporter of de-

mocracy, in his writing he compares the American political system to that of Ancient Athens. The attractiveness of the term “democracy” and his admiration for the Ancient World of intellectuals during that era, contribute to its rapid spread and it becoming a symbol of the modern age, and concealing the essence of the political systems applied in many countries around the world.

Let us begin by saying that, in the way it is widely accepted today, the dominant system of government in the world is a variety of democracy called “representative democracy”.

The system is present everywhere in the countries with democratic governance (with the exception of Switzerland) and everywhere exhibits a few (albeit extremely significant) imperfections:

The representative body thus elected is broken away from the body of Sovereign and begins to lead its own life. This sometimes may be in complete contradiction with the interests of those who elected them, i.e. those who have no rights or opportunities to influence it, whether its electors are working in the interest of the people, or in the interest of their party, other groups and cliques, or in their own self-interest. In the case of Bulgaria, we have the worst version of representative democracy, where all the mechanisms of power are obsessed with the governing chamber and the Sovereign, no matter what it does, has no choice.

2. In principle, there is no public mechanism under which voters can empower the ideal candidate. It is never possible for candidates’ promises to coincide 100% with voters’ wishes. Usually this coincidence rarely exceeds 50–60% and in the most common cases, voters choose a given part of the candidates based on whether they like them or other peripheral criteria. Then, however, when their elected representatives do things they disagree with, voters have no mechanism to influence them and put an end to their indulgences.

3. The independent nature of the three main types of power (legislative, executive and judicial) is not ensured because they elect one another. Nor are they capable of exercising mutual control, according to the well-known rule for the three powers of state. It is logical nonsense to be subjected to control by a subject of equal power. It is impossible for independent structures to control each other. This can only be done by that civil body from which power derives. As we have pointed out, and as it is written in every modern constitution, including ours, this power is the Sovereign (all citizens with voting rights). In practice, these three types of authorities almost everywhere represent one entirety which is subordinate to the parties. Thus we have a version of hidden partocracy. We may never know what lies behind partocracy. There are secret forces at work defending their interests.

4. In representative democracy, the Sovereign in principle performs a single election of its representatives, thus exhausting its opportunities for political influence. It cannot make political decisions, give policy guidance both in general and in individual sectors, nor can it rule on specific cases, nor on strategic and long-term policies.

Since no one can predict the future, events can take place during the term of office that were not discussed during the election campaign. For this reason, the elected representatives have the full freedom to react as they wish without consulting their constituents, because there is no consultation mechanism. As a result, it is often the case that voters for the most part want one thing and their representatives do the opposite. And there's nothing anyone can do about that kind of behaviour.

In fact, we do not believe that representative democracy is a real democracy. We believe it is a covert oligarchy ruled from behind the scenes by what was recently been termed the "Deep State". True de-

mocracy is that which we intend to implement. The appropriate name for the modern political system widespread through the developed world should be “**crypto-oligarchy with elements of democracy**”.

## **RULES FOR THE PROPER FUNCTIONING OF DEMOCRACY**

This is the place to indicate the six most important rules for the proper functioning of democracy in general. This help us see whether the political system in Bulgaria (and elsewhere in the world) complies more fully with these rules:

1. No person or group of people should in any way exercise more than one of the three types of authorities, i.e. the three types of authorities should be entrusted to different persons.

2. None of the three types of authorities should have more powers than the other two, so that none of the Sovereign’s representatives can achieve dominance in government.

3. Power must be granted on a temporary basis so that no one can retain the powers granted to him for a longer period of time and thus seize sovereignty.

4. None of the three types of authorities should be exercised without control, i.e. no one to whom the Sovereign has delegated certain powers can unrestrictedly and irresponsibly enforce them.

5. No authority should participate in the creation of the other two, since such practice would constitute a violation of the principle of equality and independence of the authorities. This means that the representatives of the executive and judiciary should not participate in the formation of the legislative power; the representatives of the legislative and judiciary should not participate in the formation of the executive power; and finally, the judiciary should not be composed of

representatives of the legislative and executive power. The sovereign is the source of all power and therefore constitutes the bodies of each authority individually.

6. The Sovereign must transfer his powers individually and not to a group of people, since legal group responsibility does not exist, and therefore, the Sovereign cannot hold its proxies to account for their acts during their term of office. Furthermore, control is always personal. This means that a group of people should not exercise power because it cannot be effectively controlled.

It is evident that within the model of modern representative democracies, only points 1 and 3, and partly point 6, are properly implemented. The most serious issue is key point 4, to which representative democracy in principle is unable to find an answer to. It simply does not have a mechanism for such control.

If we assume that the media, public opinion, NGOs, sectoral organisations, foundations and other public bodies are able to exercise effective control over governmental power, this is tantamount to an unforgivable naiveté bordering on stupidity, or deliberately misleading society.

## **Direct democracy – the last and highest stage of democracy**

Historically, forms of democracy have always suffered from some shortcomings:

– Ancient Greek city state democracy is partial and discriminatory, since civil rights were concentrated only in the enfranchised male population (demos), while women, slaves and metics (free but politi-

cally disenfranchised population) did not participate in the political process.

- The Roman Republic was in practical terms an oligarchic government of the Senate aristocracy with elements of democracy exercised through the various forms of participation of the National Assembly when electing magistrates and changing legislation.

- The shortcomings of representative democracy were analyzed a little above.

- Direct democracy in Switzerland is largely concentrated in the cantons. However, these formations are very small, and direct democracy is cumbersome and expensive since it is carried out in the traditional way by means of ballot voting. This requires a large surplus of public energy and a lengthy preparatory period, rendering it incapable of reacting quickly to the changing situation.

At the same time, there are growing opinions that modern representative democracy, in those places where it is practiced, does not reflect the Sovereign's views and that it is a means by which citizenship can be manipulated. Evidence of this can be seen in sociological surveys in the United States, where the degree of support for the value of the democratic system has dropped from 79 to 56% in the last 20 years.

There is clearly an emerging need for a key reform of democracy itself and taking it to a new, more perfect and adequate level. Democratic reform is aimed at overcoming the handicaps of representative democracy and to exercise real, not false, authority.

This can only be achieved by moving to forms of modern direct democracy.

**The term “direct democracy” means that the Sovereign has at his disposal a mechanism by which he can effectively elect and remove his own representatives (individual and collective bodies**

**of government), as well as impose political decisions of his choice and his elected officials will.**

In ancient times such a mechanism was the National Assembly, since democracy existed in small polises where the entire population could gather in the square. In large countries such as those which exist today, this mechanism can only be created using new technologies providing the ability to vote effectively, quickly and often by the entire population, without being too expensive, taking lot of time and requiring large teams.

It could have been assumed that with the advent of IT technology, the democratic world could have achieved, understood and begun to implement variations of direct democracy system in 15–20 years. Using such technology, the virtual realm could have become a national and even global agora where political debates could take place, state authorities could be elected and important political decisions taken.

The process is slow and has in practical terms been stalled due to the natural resistance of the ruling cliques. Through the media and their proxies, they constantly bombard the electoral body with theories aimed at rejecting the possibility of implementing such a system. The simplest insinuation is that people are simple, ignorant and have neither the experience nor the knowledge to manage the processes in the country. Naturally, this apparent lack of preparation does not apply when it comes to electing and empowering the cliques themselves. Not to mention the ignorance of most of the “elected representatives” in power. The other main argument against electronic voting on the Internet is that it is unprotected and can lead to major abuse. However, the proponents of this argument forget that global world banks use internet channels to transfer tens, if not hundreds of billions of dollars on a daily basis and the security of these transfers does not worry anyone. At the same time, for unknown reasons, voting by post is consid-

ered sufficiently secure and protected against manipulation.

Events of recent years have shown that people are increasingly willing to take their fate into their own hands – examples of this are Brexit, Donald Trump’s election, and the referendum in Italy, as well as the separatist referendums in Catalonia and Venice, and Occupy Wall Street, etc. **In fact, all types of protests can be seen as a spontaneous manifestation of the desire to impose popular sovereignty.** They are based on the idea of building a common belief that ordinary citizens can impose their will on the cliques and cabals, upon the all-encompassing power of the transnational corporations and international banking capital, in order to take their own destiny into their own hands. People should understand that until this happens, no one should have any illusions that anything in our country or elsewhere in the world will change!

## **An idea for direct democracy**

**So direct democracy is a mechanism by which the Sovereign:**

1. Selects its representatives to the executive, legislative and judiciary, controls their activities and, if necessary, recalls them (what it does at the moment is only to select its representatives in the legislative power, who then through the relevant mechanisms elect both the executive and the judiciary, without the Sovereign having any capacity to control them, and even less to recall them);

2. Identifies solutions to the most important internal and external problems of the country (for example changes in the structure and organisation of the EU; the degree of integration in the EU and NATO; attitude towards GMOs or shale gas drilling; strategic gas pipelines, construction of a new nuclear power plant, etc.);



3. Approves key laws or provisions within them: for example, on the budget, on education, on health, on organ donation, land swaps, gambling, prostitution, etc.

Take, for example, the current situation: the entire electoral body, not the partocrats, should decide how we feel about EU reforms; about huge new credits; about the crisis in Ukraine; about EU sanctions against Russia; about the construction of Balkan Stream gas pipeline; about the war in Syria; about the purchase of fighter jets and other weapons for the military, etc.

Direct democracy in no way **abolishes parties or parliament** – they are the public bodies called upon to formulate and implement policies. **It does not mean that the Sovereign will discuss and pass any law, statute and amendment to the law.** However, it subordinates the parties, parliament and magistrates to the will of Sovereign and deprives them of the opportunity to become cliques who protect private or corporate interests to the detriment of the Sovereign.

Direct democracy can be applied in different options. It can easily function in both presidential and parliamentary republics.

**Here is what our chosen option looks like – the one which we would offer to the Bulgarian society:**

1. Election of executive power.

The parties put forward their own programme and their own pre-specified cabinet. The party that wins the most votes (even below 50%) is granted power for a 4-year term and the obligation to implement its programme. Coalitions are forbidden.

2. Election of legislative power.

Representative members are elected on a majority basis as independent individuals and not as party candidates, declaring beforehand

that they have no dependence on any party. The person who receives the most votes without a second round shall be considered elected. In this way, the legislature is formed completely separately and independently of the parties. Legislative initiative is granted to the government, groups of at least 20% of MPs, as well as citizens, if they have received a minimum of 10% of the votes of the entire electoral body in advance (for the voting mechanism see below).

### 3. Election of the judiciary.

The Sovereign (electorate) also elects judges and prosecutors from a certain level upwards (city, district and supreme courts, city, district and supreme prosecutors' offices, SJC – Supreme Judicial Court).

### 4. Election of chairmen of important state institutions.

The chairmen of the following institutions are elected by direct vote, who appear in the elections with a pre-specified team and development program:

– State media and BTA – Bulgarian Telegraph Agency (former Council for Electronic Media – CEM)

- National Social Security Institute
- National Statistical Institute
- State Agency for National Security
- EWRC (future State Agency for Energy and Water Regulation)
- CEC Central Electoral Committee

### 5. Recall of elected representatives (individuals or entire authorities):

The Sovereign has the right at any time by means of a given procedure to recall each of its elected representatives, including Members of parliament, individual ministers or the entire cabinet, individual judges and prosecutors.

Voting takes place mainly by electronic means, each citizen has his

or her own electronic signature and electronic certificate. This is what we call “Digital Direct Democracy (DDD)”. For those who do not own computers or are unable to operate them, a “dark room” with the simplest machine voting device should be set up in the town hall.

There is a permanent electoral commission that organises, conducts and reports on all elections.

Matters to be voted on can be formulated either by the government or by a certain number of voters. Voters can formulate their own questions or requests in the way petitions are now organised online. The electronic portal of the Electoral Commission shall provide a special resource with the option to formulate a question or request on which a certain number of votes must be collected (for example 10% of the electoral body). The Public Council of the Electoral Commission has the right to edit the issue, which in its revised form must receive again 10% prior approval. The question or request is then put to a popular vote: it is accepted if it wins more than 50% of the votes, but not less than 20% of the electoral body.

All concerns about a controlled vote or electoral manipulation must be allayed. There are sufficient mechanisms to ensure the security of voting systems. Such experience exists in a number of democratic countries. As mentioned above, one such example is the international banking system, in which huge sums of money are transferred electronically. **Another very important thing: manipulating and buying voters must be equated in the Penal Code with the most serious of crimes – CRIMES AGAINST THE REPUBLIC – and punishable by imprisonment of ten to twenty years, life imprisonment or life imprisonment without parole.**

An extremely important issue is cooperation between government and opposition. This takes place in two spheres – the media and par-

liament. When submitting and discussing any law, regardless of who submits it, those opposition parties which exceeded the 4 per cent threshold in the last election have the right to submit well-argued proposals for a complete rejection of the law or its parts, as well as to submit their partial or complete version. Discussions in committees and plenary are attended by representatives of both the submitting party and the opposition. **In this way, MPs become arbitrators of those theses submitted by the government or the opposition.** This system also provides much greater opportunities for opposition bills to be passed by parliament. The same applies to debates on issues of national and international importance. At the beginning and end of each session, representatives of those parties that have exceeded the 4 per cent threshold in the last elections have the right to make declarations assessing the state of the country and its processes. Parliament can also announce debates on certain issues initiated either by groups of MPs (at least 20% of the plenary) or by the above-mentioned parties. For this purpose, parliament must approve these debates by a simple majority. **Parliament continues to justify its name – it remains a territory for debate, disputes, the launching of ideas, arguments around every law, but also of discussions about the state of the country, its problems and how to solve them.**

The proposed model of direct democracy provides an adequate solution to another imminent problem which inevitably arises in a representative democracy. In such a system, parliament consists of several party factions, one or more of which form a majority capable of forming a government. The logic of this model always leads to the merging of the party with state authority without any corrective either at parliamentary or executive level. Furthermore, in the conditions of representative democracy there is no control by the Sovereign.

In our proposed model of direct democracy combined with the principles of governance (see V, 2–3) the problem of party and crony appointees together with their entourage of legal advisers, public relations advisers, drivers, security guards, etc., is radically solved.

This is in general form. Naturally, there are many details that need to be clarified. For example, who should offer the ruling mandate to the winning party – the chairman of the CEC, parliament or the president? Following the official announcement of the election results, the CEC chairman submits the protocol to the president who appoints the future prime minister by decree. Likewise, the prime minister presents his resignation to the president, who immediately appoints an interim government of the second largest political power.

The proposed percentages and the degree of electability of the judiciary are, of course, debatable (in extremis, all judges and prosecutors can be elected). However, these are the principles. They need to be further developed in the smallest detail.

This achieves a true separation of powers and leads to the election of rulers entirely dependent on their Sovereign. Under such legislation, society acquires authorities which will not dare to engage in illegal transactions or take decisions contrary to the public interest. If doing so, they would run the immediate risk of no longer occupying the position they did just moments ago. Having once been dismissed for corruption, politicians and civil servants will be banned for the rest of their lives from working in public office or holding a political post. Of course, they also become clients of the justice system. The same goes for judges.

## **Direct democracy as the kingdom of the word.**

**Democracy is the kingdom of the word.** It functions not by coercion, but by persuasion, by various kinds of seduction of huge masses of people. Since the Word is an extremely malleable category, it can be used throughout the spectrum between Good and Evil. Human history knows an infinite number of examples of both one and the other. That is why the institutions of the Word (media, educational institutions), as well as the science of public speech – rhetoric – must also start using other standards.

They must undergo a basic purification, so that they are not longer instruments of manipulation, large-scale brainwashing or creating a parallel reality, which is the quintessence of today's use, but a means of achieving an adequate explanation and accurate assessment of events, trends, problems and developments. They must form a well-functioning system to inform society and provide it with the truth of reality, so that it can in turn make the right decisions for the future of its country. In this context, accurate information, the spectrum of ideas on one issue or another, clear argumentation, convincing speech, accessible messages, responsible proposals are key to the good functioning of the state.

This requires the elaboration of new rules under which the media, NGOs and the Internet operate. Of course, this list should also include schools that teach children the use of good verbal language and, for example like in France, require high school students to constantly write in different genres and develop theses. There will be new requirements for politicians, who, in order to become politicians, will have to show an impeccable mastery of a whole set of rhetorical skills. In short, all institutions related to the Word.

And lastly:

For a system of government to function properly, it must not be susceptible to any impact detrimental to its most important mechanisms. The best system is one that **self-purifies**. This can only happen if the user of this system is the entire citizenship with its inherent universal human values. This can also only happen if it has the opportunity to avail itself of full and most importantly – **two-way (multidirectional) communication with all factors in society**.

## **Advantages of direct democracy**

The model briefly described here represents the development of a number of principles, which were practically implemented in the Ancient World and which led to the astonishing achievements of a small nation state of about 20–30 thousand enfranchised citizens over a period of about a century about 2500 years ago. Especially astonishing given the deplorable state of Athenian society, which was on the verge of collapse on the eve of Solon's reforms. To conclude, we can summarise its advantages:

– this model is not a system of frequent or infrequent referendums and plebiscites, nor is it e-government, but a comprehensive, all embracing system of direct participation by the Sovereign in all policy areas. In this sense **it is quite far from the current concept of “direct democracy”**.

– It does not require daily participation on the part of the Sovereign in the forms of power or political guardianship over the actions of its delegated representatives. It intervenes only in key moments of the political process or in actions which the citizenship finds controversial, incorrect or harmful. In this sense it **does not invalidate the**

**role and influence of any of today's existing institutions**, nor does it undermine the role of expertise in decision-making.

- It is an extremely **effective system for resolving political controversy** (for example: if it had been available in 2013 or even last year, no protests would have been needed. Within the short space of only 2–3 weeks, the prevailing attitudes in society would have been made clear and there would have been no need for opposition and dissipation of public energy).

- It provides the **Sovereign with control over its representatives** to whom it has delegated power, something for which representative democracy by definition does not possess the mechanisms and means.

- It is a universal system and works equally well **in both parliamentary and presidential governments.**

- Virtually all **elections are on the majority principle**, but at the same time they do not suffer the shortcomings of majority parliamentary elections around the world, which have once again emerged in recent years in the elections in France and England.

- It ensures **genuine equality and independence of the authorities.**

- It enables **the initiative of the Sovereign**, which has not existed since the Ancient Athens until today and therefore constitutes a **school of political education for the citizenship.**

- It inevitably leads **to a radical cleansing of political relations** since it provides extremely effective and fast-acting mechanisms for punishing acts of corruption, acts of personal or group gain, lying and dishonesty, behind-the-scenes dealings and machinations. This model guarantees the **imposition of genuine morality in politics.**

- It imposes a **completely different style in international relations**, because it does not tolerate collusion and agreements with dubious morality, when any concealment of information from society



would be immediately punished. The imposition of direct democracy in more countries strikes a severe blow to the current policy of internal strife or agreements between international elites; something which nations become aware of decades later and of which they often have to pay for with their own welfare and sometimes with their blood. Situations in which the small peoples are always on the disadvantaged side. In this sense it is a **education of honesty and integrity for the international elites.**

## IV. Ideology of EQUILIBRIUM and interaction

We are entering an era of deficit. Recently, there has been talk of “death of history”, “death of ideologies”, “death of religions“ (this is primarily understood as Christian religion), even the “death of art”.

Talk of the death of ideologies began soon after the collapse of the USSR and communist ideology in its opposition to capitalism. However, talk of the death of ideologies has not prevented the expansion of the ideology of extreme liberalism both in the economy and in public life and even in art. Over the last three decades, liberalism has served above all the objectives of globalisation, behind which the transnational corporations (TNCs) stand. These are circles which are interested in blurring national borders and laws, limiting national sovereignties, eliminating all obstacles to the interests of the largest banking and productive capital.

In recent years there has been a serious crisis in this ideology, expressed in such phenomena as Brexit, the coming to power of Donald Trump, the increased thrust towards strengthening the nation states.

Marxist theory had staggered to one extreme by removing private property; something which it perceived as the main source of exploitation. This meant depriving people of all economic entrepreneurship, and economies being managed by a bloated state bureaucracy and all economic life being controlled. It was this model of economic governance that led to the death of the communist ideology.

Liberalism – on the contrary – wants as much deregulation as possible, full freedom of economic operators and excludes any long-term planning. This gives great opportunities to the strong to destroy the weak and for the economy to turn into a jungle without rules where the strong dominate.

Therefore, we are striving for a model of political structure which – **working for the benefit of all citizenship** – has the capabilities and mechanisms to balance the interests of the main classes and strata, to ameliorate contradictions, while using their strengths to achieve social harmony, high economic indicators, progressive development of man and the human individual, and the protection and preservation of all natural resources.

Our views are aimed at achieving the protection of interests and balance of opportunity:

- Between private and public (state and municipal) property;
- Between elites and citizens (distribution of responsibilities for election and control);
- Between powerful and small countries;
- Between capital and waged labour;
- Between religions;
- Between races and ethnicities.

Balance and interaction do not require entities to lose their characteristics and identity, but allow them to use their strengths in joint cooperation to achieve higher common objectives of mutual benefit.

Only the most important elements of a doctrine which has yet to be developed, justified, formulated, discussed and disclosed to the public are highlighted here.

## V. Principles of government

Should the Direct Democracy Party win at elections, it intends to govern in accordance with the following principles:

1. Building a fully-fledged “e-government” where citizens have little interaction with the administrative apparatus, receive almost all the necessary services and documents electronically without the intervention of functionaries, and documents are administered through official channels.

2. All governing structures implement the program and platform of the winning party in accordance with the laws, generally accepted moral standards, international conventions to which Bulgaria is a party, entirely and only for the benefit of Bulgarian citizens.

3. The structure of all government units is a maximum of three levels. For example, ministerial structure is as follows:

1. Political leadership (Minister, Deputy Ministers, Secretary General);
2. Directorates;
3. Departments.

The Executive agencies and institutes under their authority, as well as most of the administrative structures established by law or by decree of the Council of Ministers, are transformed into directorates or departments of ministries according to the importance of their functions. Where possible, a switch to a two-tier structure is recommended.

4. The first level of government units is political and is formed either on the basis of national elections (ministers, heads of key institutions and agencies) or party appointments. All second and third level units in all governing structures are based on competitions in the event of a change in party leadership after the elections for executive

power. Competitions are based on a point system without exceptions. Former officials from the previous administration and new candidates may take part in these competitions. These levels of government are thus formed exclusively on a professional basis.

5. The apparatus of the government institutions is small, and composed of specialists with a high level of professional and managerial training. It administers government at base level. When complex, difficult and labour-intensive profile, legislative, regulatory and legal problems arise, they are resolved ad hoc with the help of external teams selected by a competition. For this purpose, experts' salaries are at least 3–4 times higher than the national average salaries. Any increase of the number of posts in a government unit is allowed only in the case of long-term trends requiring increased management capacity.

6. After a transitional period, the state support agencies are reduced, with the exception of the National Social Security Institute – all salaries and pensions must cover the subsistence level in the state, and people with special health and social needs are supported by decisions of the commission for ability to work. All unemployed persons perform community service until they find a job according to their specialty. For de-socialized people – vagrants, the homeless, beggars – shelters will be set up to ensure full nutrition, clothing, sleep and residence. For drug addicts, compulsory treatment centres will be built.

7. The structures of the state administration are simplified as much as possible. Of the current structures enjoying partial or complete autonomy, such as:

1. Government agencies (13);
2. State commissions (5);
3. Executive agencies (29);
4. Administrative structures established by law (45);

5. Administrative structures established by a decree of the Council of Ministers (15),

19 entities with the status of state agencies remain in operation as autonomous units. All others are either reduced or transformed into directorates or departments of the respective ministries.

8. Duplicate agencies, such as the Ministry of Environment and Water and the Environment Agency; the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and the Forestry Agency; the 2 European Funds Audit Agencies: “Audit of European Union Funds” and “Certification Audit of European Agricultural Funds”, etc., are abolished.

9. A number of executive agencies will be transformed into research institutes, which will allow, on the one hand, to apply a high level of expertise in their decisions and, on the other, to implement excellence in their field, as well as to carry out their own development activities.

10. The current status of officials in ministries and other governing structures, which supposedly guarantees their irreplaceability when new parties come to power, shall undergo legislative change. Their status will be preserved only if all those working in the governing structures sign a declaration that they will work for the winning party’s (coalition) programme. This is because in the past on frequent occasions there have been hidden reactions or improper leaking of official information from the structures in question.

## VI. State administration

1. The administration of the Bulgarian state must be carried out by a small, tight system of government:

1. National Assembly with 90 MPs – 10 for the 6 districts (see below), 15 – for Sofia-city and 15 – for the Bulgarian diaspora abroad. Such a division would go some way beyond the ideal distribution of parliamentary mandates according to the same number of votes, but would give additional weight to the regions and would be a sign of respect for them and their interests;

2. The Council of Ministers with 11 ministries, the ministers of which will be announced before the elections;

3. A 30-member expert advisory council to the Council of Ministers, 30% of whose members are to be politically appointed and the remaining 70% through a competition;

4. 7 regional governments (three for Southern and Northern Bulgaria, and one for Sofia-city)

5. 140 district officials – 20 for each district – appointed by the district governors;

6. Municipal administrations with no more than 10,000 people in total, directly electable by municipality.

The central administration of the executive branch consists of the following units: ministries (11), state agencies (19).

**1. Ministries (shown both as ministries with portfolios, as well as part of previous executive agencies and administrative structures which will be transformed into directorates or departments of ministries):**

- 1. Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade (MFA)**
  - State Agency for Bulgarians Abroad;
  - Diplomatic Institute under the Minister of Foreign Affairs.
  
- 2. Ministry of Interior (MoI)**
  - State Agency for Refugees;
  - General Directorate “Security”
  
- 3. Ministry of Justice (MoJ)**
  - Registry Agency;
  - National Institute for Conciliation and Arbitration;
  - Directorate General for the “Imposition of Custodial Sentences.”
  
- 4. Ministry of Finance (MoF)**
  - National Customs Agency;
  - National Revenue Agency;
  - Agency for State Financial Inspection;
  - Financial Supervision Commission;
  - Commission for Supervision of Registered Auditors.
  
- 5. Ministry of Defence (MoD)**
  
- 6. Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Youth (MESCC)**
  - National Inspectorate of Education;
  - National Institute for Immovable Cultural Heritage (NIICH);
  - State Agency for Research and Innovation.
  
- 7. Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Policy (MHLSP)**
  - Executive Agency for Medicines (becomes the Institute of Medicines);



- Executive Agency for Transplantation (becomes a scientific institute of transplantology);
- Executive Agency Medical Audit (becomes the Medical Audit Department of the Health Directorate);
- Council on prices and reimbursement of medicinal products;
- Agency for Persons with Disabilities (special directorate combining the competencies of the Health Directorate and the Social Policy Directorate);
- Food Safety Agency;
- State Agency for Child Protection;
- Commission for Protection against Discrimination;
- Consumer Protection Commission;
- Agency for Social Assistance;
- Employment Agency;
- Executive Agency “General Labour Inspectorate”.

#### **8. Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF)**

- Executive Forest Agency;
- State Agriculture Fund;
- Executive Agency for Variety Testing, Approbation and Seed Control;
- Executive Agency for Veterinary and Phytosanitary Control;
- Executive Agency for Hail Control;
- Executive Agency for Vine and Wine;
- Executive Agency for Fisheries and Aquaculture;
- Executive Agency for Selection and Reproduction in Animal Husbandry.

#### **9. Ministry of Economy, Energy, Tourism and Trade (MEETT)**

- Agency for Public Enterprises and Control;
- State Commission on Commodity Exchanges and Markets;

- Commission for Protection of Competition;
- Consumer Protection Commission;
- Energy and Water Regulatory Commission;
- Patent and Copyright Agency;
- Bulgarian Investment Agency.

## **10. Ministry of Transport, Roads and Communications (MTRC)**

- State Agency for Road Safety;
- Road Infrastructure Agency;
- Railway Administration Executive Agency;
- Executive Agency Maritime Administration;
- General Directorate of Civil Aviation Administration;
- Executive Agency “Automotive Administration”;
- Commission for the Regulation of Communications;
- Executive Agency for Research and Maintenance of the Danube River.

## **11. Ministry of Regional Development, Environment and Ecology (MRDEE)**

- Agency for Geodesy, Cartography and Cadastre;
- Executive Environment Agency;
- Road Infrastructure Agency;
- Directorate for National Construction Control.

### **2. State agencies**

1. National Statistical Institute;
2. National Social Security Institute;
3. State Agency for Management of Public Property;

4. State Agency for State Media and BTA (former Council for Electronic Media),
5. State Agency for Electronic Government;
6. State Agency for National Security (SANS);
7. State Agency for Energy and Water Regulation (former EWRC);
8. State Agency for Nuclear Regulation;
9. State Agency for Metrology and Technical Supervision with the Institute of Metrology;
10. State Agency “Archives”;
11. State Accreditation Agency;
12. State Agency “State Reserve and Wartime Stocks”;
13. State Commission on Information Security;
14. Institute of Public Administration;
15. State Agency for Personal Data Protection;
16. Executive Agency European Union Funds Audit;
17. State Agency for Export Insurance;
18. State Agency for Support of Small and Medium Enterprises;
19. Central Electoral Commission CEC.

## **VII. Sectoral policies**

### **1. FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

#### **1. ACCENTS**

The accents in the field of foreign policy are as follows:

1. Establishing friendly, partnership relations with the maximum number of countries in all latitudes and all continents.
2. Emphasizing relations with all countries mainly on trade and economic relations (maximizing the economization of our international relations).
3. Sharp optimization of the activities in them.
4. Unconditional compliance with the principle of professionalism.
5. Introduction and unwavering compliance with the principle of parity in the number of diplomatic corps and assistants to embassies and consulates with each country.

#### **2. CONDITION AND PROBLEMS**

1. Bulgaria is not pursuing a sovereign and nationally responsible foreign policy. The dependence of the various regimes and governments has varied, but the most recent government is highly mercantile and frequently disloyal to Bulgarian interests, leading to billions in economic losses.
2. The behaviour of the Bulgarian authorities in the EU is servile, without any authority, without vision and without the skills to defend national interests. Bulgaria is behaving like a third rate country.
3. The recent governments have sacrificed decades of relations

with Russia, with countries in the Muslim world, and are now about to spoil relations with China, just to please their new mentors and fit in with yet another policy trend.

4. The government of Boyko Borisov did nothing to defend Bulgarian interests when the EU started negotiations with Northern Macedonia for membership, nor did it formulate Bulgarian requirements towards North Macedonia. This consisted mainly in claims of North Macedonia to Bulgarian territories and populations, as well as with regard to the attitude of the authorities in our western neighbour to the history and population with Bulgarian ethnic awareness in these lands.

5. Over the 30 years of the post-socialist period, Bulgarian governments have not resolved the issue of visas for the United States, which is our strategic ally.

6. The national budget allocated approximately BGN 140 million in 2019 and 2020 for foreign policy. This amount is spent inefficiently and ensures the replication of a passive and disorganised foreign policy.

7. Bulgarian diplomatic missions are full of personnel appointed on the principle of party affiliations and friendships without the necessary knowledge and qualifications. Certain Bulgarian representations in some countries and regions are insufficient and in others bloated.

8. Bulgarian diplomacy contributes nothing to strengthening trade and economic relations with foreign partners.

9. The foreign ministry has not developed suitable policy and clear criteria for communication with the Bulgarian diaspora around the world.

### 3. A REFORM PROGRAMME WITHIN A SINGLE TERM (4 YEARS) AND MEDIUM-TERM PERIOD (10 YEARS)

#### Policies by area

##### *EU*

The EU is Bulgaria's strategic partner. For the past 13 years Bulgaria has been a full but not equal member of it. In this context, it is worth recalling that every union is entered into with one most important objective: to increase the benefits and reduce the damage to the Member State. With regard to Bulgaria, however, this has not yet been observed.

Recently, there has been more and more talk about the future of the EU and, rather, about the future disintegration of the EU. In our opinion, the EU will not collapse as a result of action within EU structures. It will only collapse as a result of the conscious will of the peoples of individual countries to defend their national identity and sovereignty. This is part of the internal development of individual countries. There are too many significant obstacles to such a radical policy:

- First of all, the position of the two major founding countries, Germany and France, is important. As long as they care about the EU, disintegration will be very difficult.

- Secondly, there are a number of small countries in the EU which, once they emerge from under the protection of the EU, will feel weak, small and exposed to all dangers in a hostile and ruthless world. We are one of these countries.

- Thirdly, there are several large countries, such as Italy and Spain, which are so mired in economic problems that they may quickly be-

come insolvent outside the EU. This is why they care about European unity.

– Fourthly, the people of the EU member states are still under the influence of the magic of Western Europe from the second half of the 20th century – the most attractive, cultural, free, beautiful, diverse and pleasant place to live in the world. Despite its rapid degradation, Western Europe – the core of the EU – continues to possess a magnetic force, especially for the peoples of Central and Eastern Europe, former members of the so-called socialist camp.

– Fifthly, many still believe that the EU is able to compete with the powerful economic rivals, such as China and the United States, in its unified form, and that with its disintegration it will free up a large economic space that will be quickly absorbed by the big economic giants.

However, in addition to the centripetal forces mentioned above, the centrifugal forces are also increasing. There are several of them:

– The drastic difference in the development of the center and periphery, which is not decreasing but increasing.

– Ideological contradictions between the liberal policy centre and conservative societies, mainly in the Catholic part of Europe.

– All-encompassing bureaucracy, hindering economic development due to its clumsiness, slow and inefficient procedures, inability to formulate and implement large-scale pan-European projects.

– The ever weakening position in the economic competition between the three Great Economic Powers – China, the USA, the EU, leading to the relative, and in the future absolute, impoverishment of the European peoples.

– The centre's inability to find a solution to large-scale problems such as "migration", forcing countries to forget about European unity

and seek a solution to the problem on their own.

- The growing distrust in the construction of the EU and doubts about the democracy and accountability of its institutions.

- The ongoing processes of shrinking globalization and returning to the model of sovereign nations.

In the presence of such contradictory trends, it is logical to conclude that there will be no dramatic collapse of the EU. Moreover, global development shows that some form of interaction between countries will necessarily persist. This is mainly due to the opportunities for easy movement of people, capital and goods. i.e. for multilateral customs and visa agreements. The tendency to reduce visa restrictions is obvious – today more and more countries, even from different continents, are entering into visa-free agreements. The same applies to capital and trade. So, we can expect the construction of today's EU to retain some form of unification such as the Common Market of the 1960s and 1970s – albeit with the removal of pan-European structures such as parliament, the EC and all other bureaucracy, as well as the abolition of much of the European legislation restricting decision-making within the national states.

On the other hand, it is logical to expect that the collapse of the EU will take place like the division of cells in biology. Within the enlarged cell (EU), one or more nuclei are formed, which grow and divide into separate structures. Then the big cell bursts and new cells emerge from it. Are we observing the processes of forming similar nuclei in the large cell? Yes. For example:

1. Core No. 1: The Visegrad Four, uniting some Catholic countries from Central and Eastern Europe. We start with it because this structure has already been implemented.

2. Core № 2: the periodically emerging and hotly debated idea



of a 'Europe at different speeds'. The main element is the core of the "high speed countries" occupying the territory of the former Carolingian Empire, which formed under Charlemagne and united much of Western Europe under a single power joined by Christianity: today's France, Germany, Northern Italy, Austria, Switzerland, Belgium and the Netherlands. These are, in general, the founding countries of the European Union, taking into account, of course, the neutral status of Switzerland and Austria.

3. Core No. 3: The Scandinavian countries (Denmark, Norway, Sweden) which have centuries of historical experience of coexistence. The three countries in 1397 joined the Kalmar Union, which Sweden left in 1523, but the other two continued to live in union for 434 years – until 1814.

It should be expected that these will be loose alliances with the main aim of facilitating solutions to emerging problems and developing joint policies on certain issues, as today in the Visegrad Four, but without much influence on national sovereignty.

However, there remain two categories of countries – those from the Iberian Peninsula and, to some extent, Italy (PIGS), on the one hand, and the Balkan Peninsula countries – on the other, with Greece occupying an intermediate position because, like the others, it belongs to the Mediterranean area of Southern Europe.

It can be assumed that the "Carolingian" countries, albeit reluctantly, will include Spain, Portugal and all of Italy, while the Visegrad Four will grow to six with countries such as Croatia and Slovenia.

The Balkan Peninsula countries, successors of the Ottoman Empire, will remain unable to achieve any unification. Regardless of the will of our people (or its elites), in the event of an expected breakup of the EU, Bulgaria will remain alone and defenceless, given the state of the economy and the military, on the one hand, and the declining

sense of nationality in today's population of Bulgaria. Whether the trend towards the disintegration of the EU reaches its logical conclusion, or whether the European nations find a *modus vivendi* in a reformed union with minimal bureaucracy, our society should be aware that a very negative scenario is also possible and we need to be ready to face it. Because in the event of disintegration, our country will most likely fall under Turkish influence and not, as many prophecies predict, under Russian influence. We should not forget for a moment that Bulgaria is part of the post-Ottoman area which Turkey has never given up.

What should our society do to avoid being swept away by a possible geopolitical storm?

- First, to maintain excellent relations with its European Balkan neighbours.
- Secondly, to constantly prepare and update plans for cooperation and interaction with its neighbours in all possible scenarios of the European crisis.
- Thirdly, be aware that the only real protection against such severe shocks is a strong state. A strong state in the modern world can only exist in a very developed and strong democracy. Direct democracy.

### *Bulgaria's accession to the Euro zone*

The Direct Democracy Party does not support rapid accession to the Eurozone until a most detailed and accurate analysis of the short-term and long-term consequences of such a move has been made. Our economic specialists fear that the adoption of the Euro will lead to a new outflow of national income by powerful European economies, a phenomenon that has been observed more than once since the adoption of the euro in other countries.

### *Neighbouring countries*

Good relations with neighbouring countries are a key element of foreign policy. Two of them – **Romania and Greece** – are also our partners in the EU and the policy we pursue is in line with European standards.

We have “good” relations with **Turkey** thanks to Boyko Borisov’s lackey policy towards President Erdogan and a number of unjust actions, such as the handing over of foreign citizens seeking asylum in Bulgaria to the Turkish government. Our relations with Turkey must be maintained at a high level, but certain principles must be followed:

1. Non-interference in Bulgaria’s internal affairs through support and funding of political parties of the Turkish ethnic minority, such as MRF or DOST.

2. Stopping the policy of sending religious emissaries to cultivate fundamentalist Islam or for the alienation of the Muslim population in Bulgaria, especially the Bulgarian-Muslims from the Rhodope region.

3. Ending ideological pressure of foundations working for “Greater Turkey” who spread Pan-Turkish ideas and publish books and maps depicting different areas of Bulgaria as part of a dream future state – Great Turan from the Adriatic to the Pacific.

4. Continuation of the work of the Joint Commission established in 2009 on outstanding issues, such as the compensation of Thracian refugees as a result of the 1913 Balkan War.

Relations with **Serbia** are quite complex and our country should never forget that Serbia contains native Bulgarian territories, the so-called “Western territories”. They have been subjected to systematic Serbianisation and oppression, and are therefore perhaps the most backward part of Serbia. The Bulgarian state must make every effort to support the Bulgarian population there, so that they can defend

their cultural and ethnic identity, even under the conditions of a foreign state. Bulgaria must build schools and cultural centres there, and invest in order to improve the living standards of the local population. The current policy is a policy of indifference and betrayal towards the Bulgarian population cut off from their homeland.

In the case of **Northern Macedonia**, our relations have long been unprincipled and opportunistic, inconsistent with the fact that with the Bulgarians and Macedonians are one people living in two countries. This principle should also form the basis for all our efforts for deep and developing cooperation in economic, political, cultural, infrastructure plan to build a spirit of respect, affection, mutual assistance and partnership, to overcome the enmity between the two peoples, “brothers in blood but bitterly loathing each other”. For this purpose, new, principled agreements are needed which correspond to the interests of both peoples, not such agreements (like those entered into by the government of Boyko Borisov), which shortly after being signed proved completely unfit for the resolution of problems between the two countries.

### *USA*

Our relationship with the United States has recently taken the form of a suzerain-vassal type of subordination from ancient history. The reason for this is, on the one hand, the global hegemony of the United States, and, on the other, the mercantile and lackey behaviour of the Bulgarian elites.

The Direct Democracy Party envisions putting these relations on an equal footing and drastically deepening them. The United States remains the economic and technological leader in the world and a close cooperation with this country would only benefit Bulgaria. To this end, joint committees will be set up to develop investment pol-

icies by sectors and the US will be given privileged investor status. We hope this will lead to a manifold increase in US investments in Bulgaria.

However, non-market and economically vicious practices such as those with Maritza-1 and Maritza-3 will be discontinued.

Bulgaria will remain faithful to the transatlantic partnership and will continue to respect its principles in the interest of peace, stability, safety and progress in the Southern Balkans region. This policy will be pursued mainly in the areas of politics, economy, defence, energy, culture and education, etc.

A key priority in the relations between Bulgaria and the United States, however, is the abolition of the visa regime for Bulgarian citizens. This in Bulgaria is perceived as unjustified unequal treatment, inconsistent with the level of our bilateral relations, which are described by both countries as strategic, allied and friendly.

### *Russia*

We envisage a significant expansion and deepening of our relations with Russia, which have not been developing in line with our national interest. Our people have a special attitude towards Russia as our liberator from 5 centuries of Ottoman rule and as the creator of our modern state with all its institutions. Politicians must comply with this attitude, without questioning our belonging to the EU or NATO, but also without turning this sense of belonging into hostility or animosity in their political actions. Bulgaria will maintain its negative attitude towards the presence of a permanent NATO fleet in the Black Sea, as this will be a destabilising factor in the region.

It is imperative that we work hard with Russia on a number of issues on the international agenda, such as the fight against terrorism and extremism, Syria, ISIL, etc. We believe that Russia plays a con-

structive role in finding comprehensive and mutually acceptable solutions in these areas.

We consider there is a need to give a powerful boost to a number of priorities in economic relations with Russia (trade, energy, tourism, transport), as well as in the fields of education, science and culture, labour and social policy.

### *The Arab World*

Relations with the countries in the Middle East are key to world politics and for Bulgaria too. This region has been an arena of violent clashes, wars, radical Islamic fundamentalism, and a source of international terrorism. With the defeat of ISIL and the gradual return to peace, the countries of the region are gradually starting to recover, which is always a good opportunity for foreign investment and new trade niches. Bulgaria has decades of experience in relations with the Arab world. It enjoys a good reputation and should seriously consider participating in the reconstruction processes of Iraq, Syria, Libya and others.

### *China*

China is the fastest growing country in the world and a potential new global hegemon in economic, technological and military terms. Bulgaria should strive to achieve far more developed economic, trade and cultural relations with China, since many opportunities have already been missed. There is a huge area for development in the areas of tourism, agriculture and food, communications and transport. Bulgaria should also be an active initiator of the project for an ultra-fast train connecting China with Europe and passing through our territory.

### *India and the Far East*

India is a dynamically developing country. It has enormous human potential and an ancient culture. India is expected in the medium term (after 20–25 years) to take second place in economic power after China, taking the place of the US. With India, there is a wide area for co-operation in agriculture and tourism, education and culture.

A characteristic feature of almost all Asian countries – and those in the Far East, and India, and Pakistan, and Indonesia with the Philippines in the southeast of the continent – is their dense population. This immediately raises the question of their nutrition and participation in the international food trade. This is also a huge niche for Bulgaria. On the other hand, some of them (Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, etc.) are technologically overdeveloped and Bulgaria could be a bridge to the EU for the production and trade of their goods. This in turn would lead to rapid progress of our economy in advanced technology and science.

### **Resolving the problems of the migration processes**

The absolute priority of the Bulgarian foreign policy, both in the national and pan-European frameworks, should be to stop the influx of migrants not only along the borders of the European Union, but also in the more remote approaches to Europe, e.g. the Maghreb countries in relation to the migration flows from sub-Saharan Africa. It will also be important to maintain arrangements with Turkey, in order to prevent the refugees it accepts from being referred to Europe. We will insist that the EU improves re-admission treaties with countries which create the largest sources of migration, such as Afghanistan and Pakistan, and the entering into of readmission treaties with Syria, Iraq, Libya and others.

## **Optimisation of the administration**

We envisage significant cuts in the personnel of Bulgarian embassies and consulates, as well as a significant optimization in their activities. This will include the widespread introduction of e-government and online services from Bulgaria.

We will adhere unconditionally to the principle of professionalism. We will clear out our institutions abroad of all political, friendly and corporate appointments.

### **4. FINANCIAL PARAMETERS OF THE REFORMS**

We envisage cutting administration spending in the area of foreign policy by about 30%, i.e. bringing it down to about 100 million per annum with about 40 million per year savings compared to current levels.

Within one term, the economic effect of savings alone should reach BGN 200 million, and the activation of international trade – over BGN 1 billion.

## **2. INTERNAL AFFAIRS**

### **1. ACCENTS**

The accents in the field of home affairs are as follows:

1. Reduction in the number of management services in the Ministry of Interior and a dramatic increase their efficiency, without affecting the regular police, fire fighters, gendarmes, border guards, etc.



2. Making the fight against conventional crime an absolute priority, both in cities and in every population centre.
3. Absolute prioritisation of the fight against the trafficking and spread of drugs and psychotropic substances.
4. Sharp improvement in the work of the economic police.
5. Drastic change in the methods of traffic control. Accent on working with technical resources, installation of cameras all over the country and creating an effective system for collecting fines.
6. Zero tolerance for any violations of public order.
7. Turning the police into an assistant and protector of every citizen, not a scarecrow and soulless institution.
8. The complete re-equipping (fixed and mobile) of all units in the Ministry of Interior.
9. Significant improvement of the qualification of all units in the Ministry of Interior by training in the most modern methods and technologies.
10. Ensuring adequate pay and full social security for all Ministry of Interior employees and their families.
11. The aggressive fight against corruption within the Ministry of Interior through administrative, technical and legislative means.
12. Improving investigative activity through the implementation of state-of-the-art methods, technical means, and information systems.
13. Improving the structure and interaction of the services. This will involve taking the National Investigation Service away from the control of the Prosecutor's Office and introducing the figure of the Judge Investigator.
14. Change in a number of laws for improvement of the activity of the Ministry of Interior.

## 2. CONDITION AND PROBLEMS

The problems of the security services within the Ministry of Interior are chronic and ongoing:

1. The insufficiently effective structure of the services (for example, the investigative service is separated from the police departments and is directly subordinate to the prosecutor's office, which is not an executive power by law).

2. Low motivation of the lower ranks to engage in dedicated and effective work due to a number of factors: low pay, insufficient social protection, indiscriminate actions of superiors, low public prestige, etc.

3. Outdated equipment, poor working conditions, cumbersome administration and low qualification.

4. Significant level of corruption at both low and especially high levels.

5. Almost total absence of police work in villages and small towns.

6. Unsatisfactory prevention of cybercrime.

7. Passivity, poor training and conflicts of interest amongst the sector's senior officers when investigating economic crimes which have become the scourge of small and medium-sized businesses.

8. Dependence on those in power, who in the last 10 years have become the main racketeers in the seizure of promising businesses.

9. Weaknesses in evidence gathering, witness protection and investigation strategies. These are the main reasons for the unsatisfactory results in the work of the Criminal and Economic Police. At the present moment, operational officers of the criminal and economic police do not have good coordination with investigative police officers in the initial phase of evidence gathering activities. There is often a lack of a common initial investigation strategy. There is also a lack of

specialisation among the investigators. This can lead to paradoxes, such as one and the same officer conducting pre-trial proceedings on drug production and on the detection of economic crimes – two radically different criminal acts requiring strictly specific knowledge. This can lead to insufficient evidence for the trial phase, collapse of cases in court and the lack of convictions.

10. Connections, nepotism and patronage. Many of the personnel of the Ministry of Interior seem to believe that success and career advancement is ineluctably related to connections. It is imperative to have the patronage of someone who is already part of the system and knows someone else, who is a factor in arranging your appointment in a given position. This leads to a lot of problems, for example, that a lot of incompetent and lazy people are employed and good people are rejected. This also leads to the appointment of more corrupt officers – for example – yet another traffic policeman in the family. Appointment of the “right” people in the “right” posts – a practice not only in the Ministry of Interior, which facilitates the operation of various illegal schemes for making money at the expense of maintaining order and preventing serious crimes.

11. Going to the “dark side” – the current practice is for officers to be retired (very often forcibly when they are inconvenient) at the height of their career, i.e. when they have gained the most practical and theoretical experience. These people are dismissed by the Ministry of Interior authorities at a relatively young age and their knowledge and qualifications are thereafter not used. This very often benefits private structures, whose activity is unfortunately sometimes not legitimate.

12. Protection of criminals for profit. One of the more widespread schemes for making money among senior police officers is when a criminal pays relatively large sums of money over a period of time to avoid being harassed by law enforcement. Very often when a police-

man who is not involved in the scheme arrests a criminal or someone important, that person is released from custody after only one phone call. The officer is then punished as a warning that if he continues to do his job properly, he will suffer a worse fate. Thus, the few capable people in the Ministry of Interior are pressured by their superiors, while the faithful “puppies” and the swindlers progress. Even if a good officer manages to achieve a high rank, he may very well receive an offer to become part of one these schemes, and if he declines, he is slowly forced out of the service.

13. Lack of sufficient respect on the part of citizens. This is due to two main reasons: the perception of corruption (mainly among traffic police officers and in the higher echelons of the institution) and a lack of interest (mostly in the investigators investigating domestic crimes such as theft, disturbance of order or silence). The poor external appearance of policemen should not be ignored. For years, uniformed officers have had to put up with poor quality, dysfunctional, ugly work clothes, which the officers themselves often wear improperly, unbuttoned, and with civilian clothes underneath with their belts hanging down and their caps tilted to one side.

### **3. CONCEPT FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT**

The main function of the Ministry of Interior is to protect the rights and property of citizens, national security and public order and to counter crime. It does so by maintaining public order and enabling all members of society to exercise their rights. On the other hand, every police officer in the exercise of his legal powers is obliged to strictly respect human rights and freedoms.

Despite the ongoing reforms in the judiciary and law enforcement, the capacity (technical, physical and intellectual) of the available staff

is not at the requisite level to counter the high crime rate in the country.

In 2020 the total number of employees in the Ministry of the Interior, as published on their website, was 53,060, of which 4537 are vacant. It should be noted that the general public do not distinguish between employees of the Ministry of Interior and police officers. Most often they imagine an army of police uniforms and batons lurking on the roads, hence the mass negative attitude.

In fact, about a third of the number quoted above is administration, part of which is specific, e.g. personnel in the 112 telephone service and the directorate for identity documents. The total number of police officers and fire fighters is about 35,000.

Despite this impressive potential in terms of personnel, scientific officer and structural personnel, and the huge budget – the results of the main activity of the Ministry of Interior, namely fighting conventional and organized crime, remain unsatisfactory. This has a negative effect on the welfare of citizens, opportunities to do business in Bulgaria, the economy, as well as the overall image of the country before the world.

In order to overcome these issues and sharply improve the quality of police work, we envisage the following measures:

### **Ministry of Interior as a whole**

1. A 40% reduction of administration through measures of e-government, optimization of activity, automation of a number of processes using artificial intelligence.
2. Increase in the salary of regular staff by no less than 50% in real terms within one term in office.
3. Resolving the difficult domestic problems of personnel.

4. Database optimization.

5. Development of algorithms for prediction and prevention of crimes.

6. Drastically improving the work of the Internal Security Directorate by strengthening its personnel, provision of ultra-modern equipment, using the latest technologies in forecasting, detecting and tracking internal corruption, non-compliance with laws and regulations, protecting criminals and obstructing investigations against them, deliberately preparing non-objective employee attestations, etc.

### **National Police**

1. The fight against conventional crime has been declared a **main priority**. For this purpose, a police presence shall be ensured in each population centre by redistributing the existing police resource and employing additional staff where necessary.

1) In each village with more than 200 people (2341 villages), a police station with a staff of 2 shall be established, equipped with 2 motorcycles and 2 offices in the town hall or an adjacent building.

2) In areas dominated by villages with fewer than 100 people, central units staffed with 10 officers and a 15 km radius of activity shall be created. They shall be equipped with a police station with 4 offices and a police car.

2. Complete replacement **of vehicles** of all units in the Ministry of Interior with the exception of the senior officers' official cars.

3. Widespread video surveillance coverage of the entire country (by municipalities) and the main arteries with criminal potential. This will be determined on the basis of the minimum technical parameters set by the Ministry of Interior, ensuring access to the existing video surveillance equipment of the security companies and specific com-

mitments of these companies under the prevention and countering of conventional crime.

#### 4. Reform of the **administration**:

1) The numerous administrative directorates within the Ministry of the Interior will similarly be transformed into departments or separate sectors within an “Administrative Directorate” – the benefit of this will again be a reduction of costs with reserved administrative capacity.

2) Moving a number of activities outside the police structures. This includes services related to the issuance of identity documents, registration of motor vehicles, tel. 112, etc.

3) Accompanying activities, such as servicing of official cars, building maintenance, site security and others, which are currently carried out by full-time personnel of the Ministry of Interior, will also be outsourced to private companies with the necessary potential outside the Ministry of Interior. This will inevitably lead to cost reductions and cuts in units such as the Directorate for Property Management and Social Activities.

Such a dissection could be done to almost all non-operational units in the Ministry of Interior and the results will inevitably be the same.

The conclusions so far are that with the right changes in the administration of the Ministry of Interior, a large part of the budget can be saved. This will also allow a focus on improving the quality of work in the operational services directly engaged in the fight against crime, as well as in the units dealing with public order protection, and this is ultimately one of the main tasks of the Ministry of Interior.

5. Creation of **interactive maps** of places in cities and throughout the country with an increased criminal environment, to which special attention shall be paid.

6. Comprehensive monitoring of all suspicious **bank transfers**, in order to deprive organized crime of financial resources. To this end, we shall make improvements to the legal and regulatory framework, development of mechanisms for cooperation with the banking system and training of the necessary staff.

7. **Collection of evidence, protection of witnesses** and investigative strategies:

1) Investigative police officers (investigators) are subordinated to the heads of operational units in order to use their legal knowledge in the initial phase of gathering evidence and give them the opportunity to develop their knowledge in the specific field in which they will work. This reform of pre-trial proceedings is aimed at improving the capacity, skills and equipment of investigating police officers, as well as to remedy the lack of integrity and violations of official duty in evidence gathering activities. This will increase court convictions.

2) Decisively improving the work with agents and in the field, which, together with the data collected by the electronic surveillance significantly increases the effectiveness in the fight against illegal acts.

3) Enhancing communication between police officers and the prosecution to a new level. Paradoxes such as those where Ministry of Interior officials appear in court in cases without communicating for a second with the supervising prosecutor should disappear completely.

8. Work to raise **respect among the public for the personnel** of the Ministry of Interior:

- uncompromising anti-corruption measures,
- periodic attestations with final grades, depending on the work and achievements of the individual police officer, on which his salary also depends,
- periodic courses to increase the psychological training of police



officers for effective communication, conflict resolution and accurate assessment of suspects,

- provision of new better quality, attractive and functional uniforms

- improving the principles of public order organisation by eliminating foot patrols and providing all law enforcement officers with patrol cars, motorcycles or, where necessary, horses.

9. Minimizing contacts with citizens.

- Road traffic violations shall be confirmed by technical resources and the appropriate penalties shall be imposed in the divisions of the Ministry of Interior and fines shall be collected by bank transfer.

- Mobile cameras should be placed in each patrol car, the recordings of which should be used both against illegal and unregulated actions of employees and against citizens committing illegal acts against police officers.

- Review of the principles of speed limits, which in most cases are ridiculous and not followed by anyone

- Traffic police officers should sit in one place, but should constantly be on the move in traffic

- Police cars to be leased for two years and then sold at public auctions

- Documents submitted by the general public to the regional police departments should be accepted at the “counter” without direct contact between the employees and the person submitting them. This is particularly important for the work of the traffic police, private security activity, control of hazardous materials and other activities related to licensing regimes.

- Document procedures shall be placed entirely online, if possible, through e-government and e-signatures, without members of the public having contact with representatives of the Ministry of Interior.

## Fire department

1. Complete technical re-equipment of fire trucks and other equipment.
2. Replacement of PPE for fire fighters and rescue teams:
  - respiratory and other specialized protective equipment,
  - lifting equipment, including ladders,
  - equipment for testing the fire resistance of construction materials.
3. Provision of fire-fighting helicopters and aircraft – minimum 5 helicopters and 2 aircraft during the first term.
4. Continuous training of the teams, which, in addition to fire fighting, are called to deal with all sorts of other emergencies, catastrophes and disasters.
5. Development of a system of special incentives for fire fighters involved in extinguishing large and complex fires or significant accidents and disasters.
6. Adoption of a law on volunteering to regulate the relations between volunteers and central and local authorities in dealing with the consequences of disasters and accidents, as well as their rights and obligations when participating in such operations. Such a law has been maturing in the National Assembly for a long time.

### *Academic research units*

There are research units in the system of the Ministry of Interior:

1. Research Institute of Criminality and Criminology,
2. Institute for special equipment, which produces specialized equipment;
3. Institute of Computer Technology, which supports the system servers;
4. Institute of Psychology.

These institutes could be restructured into scientific units under a single management without reducing their functionality. This again would lead to reduced costs and administration.

### **DOTO (Directorate for Operational and Technical Operations) and GDOC (General Directorate for Organised Crime)**

The only services in the system of the Ministry of Interior whose organizational and staff structure are classified due to the specific nature of their activities are DOTO (Directorate for Operational and Technical Operations) and the GDOC (General Directorate for Combating Organized Crime).

These directorates hold a great deal of information from all other services, as well as from similar services abroad. This secrecy inevitably evokes an analogy with totalitarian structures dating back to before the 1990s. These services have always attracted particular interest in different segments of society, from politicians to criminal groups. In this sense, it is extremely important that civil control be imposed on them, in order to preserve information and use it only for its intended purpose.

Good practices in developed European countries show that the fight against organised crime is a sector within the Criminal Police. The greater resources of the entire national police can undoubtedly be used in this area.

### **Academy of the Ministry of Interior**

The Academy of the Ministry of Interior is the Higher School in the Republic of Bulgaria for the training of state officials for the needs of the Ministry of Interior. The training at the Academy is organized in accord-

ance with the Law on Higher Education, the state requirements for Bachelor, Master, Doctor degrees and the modern needs of academic practice. However, the criticism addressed at this institution by almost all students is that despite the serious scientific teaching potential, the connection between theory and practice is often broken. Many of the lecturers worked in real active structures many years ago and are not familiar in detail with the current trends in the areas in which they teach. Thus, students emerge with only theoretical preparation. Former or retired officers with the necessary experience and qualifications could be recruited as part-time trainers or lecturers. This will create the foundations for important continuity; something, which is definitely lacking at the moment.

### **The Medical Institute of the Ministry of Interior**

The Medical Institute of the Ministry of Interior is a medical institution providing healthcare in the Ministry of Interior. By decision of the Council of Ministers, the Medical Institute of the Ministry of Interior was designated as a university hospital for the duration of its accreditation assessment. The medical institutions for hospital care of the Medical Institute of the Ministry of Interior work under contract with the National Health Insurance Fund and the National Social Security Institute. In addition to the persons entitled to be treated in the Ministry of Interior under the Regulations for the Implementation of the Law on the Ministry of Interior, other members of the public can use this hospital for highly qualified medical care. This very often leads to the paradox of the Ministry of Interior officials waiting during working hours to be seen by a doctor, queuing after members of the public who have nothing to do with the Ministry of Interior services.

It is also a paradox that very often officers are unable to receive specific assistance at the Medical Institute of the Ministry of Interi-

or, requiring them to visit other medical institutions and pay out of their own pocket even though they are insured. The most common ailments are sports injuries received by employees in connection with their specific functional duties.

The needs of the Ministry of Interior could be met by a specialized laboratory carrying out strictly specialized research, and the medical insurance of the Ministry employees should comply with the general procedure established for all health insured persons in the country. This makes the existence of this institute unnecessary.

There will be in-depth debates on this issue both within and outside the Ministry of Interior.

#### **4. CALENDAR OF ACTIONS AND LEGISLATIVE MEASURES**

During the first 4-year term, all legislative, administrative, financial and personnel changes will be made to implement the reform in the Ministry of Interior.

#### **5. LAWS SUBJECT TO ADOPTION OR AMENDMENT**

1. Law on the Ministry of Interior;
2. Law on Volunteering;
3. Road Traffic Act;
4. Disaster Protection Act;
5. Regulations for the structure and activities of the Ministry of Interior;
6. Program for modernization and technical provision of the territorial units for fire safety and protection of the population in the Republic of Bulgaria;

7. National Program for Disaster Risk Reduction 2021–2025

## **6. EVALUATION OF THE REFORMS IN THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR**

### **Investments:**

#### **Material assets:**

1. 10 million – new uniforms
  2. 60 million – new fire trucks
  3. 50 million – new police cars
  4. 20 million – criminal laboratory equipment
  5. 10 million – other fire fighting equipment
  6. 200 million – 5 fire-fighting helicopters
  7. 200 million – 2 fire fighting aircraft
  8. 30 million – 2 police helicopters
  9. 50 million – improving the environment in the police stations
- Total: BGN 630 million per term**

#### **Personnel training:**

**BGN 48 million per term**

#### **Increase in salaries:**

**900 million per term**

**Total investments: BGN 1,578 million per term**

## **Return on Investments (RoI)**

1. By reducing the number of personnel– BGN 864 million per term.
2. By increasing efficiency and preventing crime and damage – BGN 100 million per year = BGN 400 million per term.

**Total return: BGN 1264 million**

## **3. JUSTICE**

### **1. ACCENTS**

The accents in the area of justice are as follows:

1. Changes in the structure of the judiciary with a view to enhancing its independence.
2. Achieving a real division of the three powers and cutting off any possibility of mutual interference.
3. Significant acceleration of court proceedings.
4. Preventing any possibility for repeated adjournment of cases and their procrastination until the moment when they are terminated by prescription.
5. Ensuring the freedom of judges to give fair decisions and sentences, building a system to prevent external interference in the judicial process.
6. Fight against corruption in the courts.
7. Improving the training of judges.

### **2. CONDITION AND PROBLEMS**

The administration of justice in Bulgaria is one of the sick topics in our society:

1. Courts and judges do not enjoy the necessary public trust be-

cause they are widely believed to be corrupt and often not free to make decisions.

2. The governance of the judiciary is based on vicious principles of election. It depends not on the Sovereign, in whose name its representatives work, but on the legislature in the person of parliament and on the internal election in the judiciary itself. This leads to a violation of the democratic principle of separation of powers.

3. The process of administration of justice is extremely slow and cumbersome, and does not correspond to the dynamics of the modern era.

4. The modernisation of the administration of justice through the use of new information technologies is slow and sabotaged by the authorities. Despite promises to introduce e-justice as part of e-government, the process has been partial, incomplete and dependent on the will of magistrates. This creates conditions for unfair court proceedings, and corruption.

5. Magistrates are not sufficiently protected from pressure and even attacks by organised crime or the administrative power.

6. The workload of magistrates in the major cities and the rest of Bulgaria varies widely; something which contributes to its inefficiency.

7. Cases of formalism, disinterest and superficiality on the part of magistrates are a common phenomenon. This further undermines the prestige of the institution.

8. The legal and regulatory framework in the area of justice is designed in such a way as to allow people who have committed serious crimes to evade justice with the help of skilled and experienced lawyers. In practice this is a rejection of the principles of justice.



### **3. A REFORM PROGRAMME WITHIN A SINGLE TERM (4 YEARS) AND MEDIUM-TERM PERIOD (10 YEARS)**

#### **1. Constitutional reform of the judiciary**

1. The chairmen of the Supreme Court of Cassation, the Supreme Administrative Court and the Prosecutor General should be elected by direct elections from Sovereignty.

2. The chairmen of the Supreme Court of Cassation, the Supreme Administrative Court and the Prosecutor General may be dismissed by a decision of the Constitutional Court based on a proposal of 1/4 of the MPs, adopted by a majority of 2/3 of the MPs, or by a popular vote in the introduction of DIRECT DEMOCRACY.

3. Changes in the practice of the Constitutional Court regarding the reform of the judiciary (Decision No. 3 of 2003), in such a way that meaningful constitutional reforms can be carried out by an ordinary National Assembly.

4. The Prosecutor's Office with its agencies should be separated from the judiciary and established as an independent body with a special constitutional and legal status, which is publicly accountable for its activities.

5. The National Investigation Service with its agencies should be separated from the judiciary and subordinated to the Ministry of Interior.

6. The procedures for promoting or demoting magistrates should involve discussion of the opinions of civil society organizations with expertise in the field of judicial reform and human rights protection and which perform civil monitoring functions.

7. There should be provision in the Constitution enabling citizens to refer requests to the Constitutional Court for assessment of

the constitutionality of a given law which may affect fundamental rights and freedoms (individual constitutional complaint).

8. The election of constitutional judges from the quota of the National Assembly shall be by a majority of 2/3 of the Members of the National Assembly, or by popular vote with the introduction of DIRECT DEMOCRACY.

## 2. Criminal justice

*Adoption of amendments to the Criminal Procedure Code aimed at:*

- Limiting to the greatest extent possible the possibility of cases being delayed in the pre-trial and judicial phase or such cases being referred back to the prosecution by the court;
- Introducing strict deadlines for the completion of a case after its initiation;
- Detention of convicted persons immediately in the court building after the final decision of the court;
- Introducing strict deadlines, as well as a “complaint about delay” in the criminal process as a means of legal remedy for unjustified delays by the prosecution and the court;
- Establishment of rules for operational “fast-track proceedings”, which must be applied to certain types of crimes – theft of personal property, causing personal injury, robbery, etc.;
- Expanding the circle of crimes in which criminal proceedings can be commenced on the initiative and decision of the victim (so-called private proceedings);
- Amendments to the structure of coercive measures and enforcement of sentences in order to eliminate the opportunities for flight from justice;

- Maximum simplification of the rules for gathering evidence in order to reduce the possibility of acquitting the perpetrators due to formal violations.

### *Amendments to the Criminal Code:*

- Enhanced protection of personal property and privacy, including the right to use weapons at the discretion of the owner when an offender enters enclosed premises;

- Identification of new types of crime in the areas of corruption, terrorism, computer crime, money laundering, trading in influence, etc., and increased penalties for these types of crimes.

- Increased penalties for transport offences committed after the use of alcohol and narcotics;

- Criminalisation of serious breaches of environmental legislation leading to major environmental damage;

- In order to eliminate corrupt practices we will amend certain texts in the PPA (Public Procurement Act), such as: we will clearly and specifically define the elements of “substantiality” and “unforeseen circumstances” which serve as a basis for changing public procurement contracts;

- We shall make vote buying in elections a crime equivalent to “Crimes against the Republic”. Punishment for a first offence shall be imprisonment for ten to twenty years and in case of recurrence – life imprisonment.

### **3. Amendments to the Code of Civil Procedure and the Code of Administrative Procedure**

Work will continue on amendments to procedural laws, in order to achieve adequate and effective litigation, to better manage the

workload of courts, including improving and simplifying procedures and resolving inconsistencies between them. We are prepared to propose balanced amendments to the executive and order procedures for all parties (participants)

#### **4. Optimisation of the judicial map**

There is a need for the judicial map of Bulgaria to be optimised. It currently includes 113 district courts and 28 district courts. The attempt by GERB at the end of its term in office to reduce the 113 district courts to 28 and to transform the remaining 28 district courts based on ambiguous parameters must be decisively rejected. The structure of courts and prosecutors' offices must take into account the workload, population, distances, transport structure, demographic and economic prospects of the region. This requires a multilateral dialogue that our party undertakes to initiate.

#### **5. Real introduction of e-justice**

As part of e-government, e-justice must be implemented with all its components and capabilities. The concept means that all interested parties will be able to examine the entire case electronically, to receive subpoenas by email (not finding the parties at an address will not cause delays in the processes) from anywhere and without personal presence, to receive high-quality and timely advice and consultations based on this information in order to protect their interests to the greatest extent possible. Furthermore, judges and prosecutors who delay their cases and motives unjustifiably will be visible to all and will be held accountable.

## **4. CALENDAR OF ACTIONS AND LEGISLATIVE MEASURES**

During the first term in office of the Direct Democracy Party, we will implement amendments to the Criminal Procedure Code and the Criminal Code in the aims of faster, efficient and well-organised justice, and in the second term we will try to implement constitutional reforms as well.

## **5. LAWS TO BE AMENDED**

1. Constitution;
2. Electoral Code;
3. Criminal Procedure Code;
4. Penal Code;
5. Judiciary Act;
6. Law on the Constitutional Court.

## **4. DEFENCE**

### **1. ACCENTS**

The accents in the field of defence are as follows:

1. Turning the Bulgarian Army back into a fighting force.
2. Defining the correct geostrategic opponent – in our view this is much more likely Turkey, not Russia.
3. Development of a “Plan B” in the case of the disintegration of the EU.
4. Re-equipping the army within 2 terms.

5. Greater participation of society, in particular youth, in military activities.

## 2. CONDITION AND PROBLEMS

Our country missed out on seven years before opting for NATO membership. The time spent in pointless discussions about where the direction of so-called military reform, the size and nature of the Bulgarian Army, and which model of defence construction has taken three times longer. History will not forgive such oversights. Delayed reforms are usually far more expensive.

The only action that all governments since 1989 have implemented, only too “successfully”, has been to **cut army numbers**. This included: dismissals of personnel and not filling vacant posts, removal of structures and entire types of troops; cutting modern and efficient systems, weapons and equipment; and cutting future prospects, opportunities, and innovative solutions. This has all but dashed hopes of building a modern, small but flexible, capable, highly motivated Armed Forces united around national interests and ideals.

The condition of the Bulgarian Army today is alarming. The estimated number of personnel of 26,000, subsequently increased to 29,000, and the total number of armed forces – 39,500, is the result of a financial shortage, rather than scientific, military-strategic and government research and insights. Over the past ten years, three governments have postponed the purchase of a modern fighter just, without which, as textbooks clearly show us, modern combat, either on land or at sea is impossible.

Our army has lost the only real war which it has waged in our recent history: the war against domestic politicians. The military is doomed

to defeat because they were left to fight alone against the powerful of the day. As a result of meaningless cuts and “transformations” they have lost their last bastion of support – public opinion and the caring attitude of the people towards the army, passed down from generation to generation.

The reasons for the decline are obvious:

- Failure of governance, a lack of statesmanship and the colonial mentality of the ruling cliques.
- The intellectual and moral degradation of the so-called political elite, which for more than 76 years has survived to reproduce itself at the expense of the Bulgarian nation.

Academics, political observers and experts have already made an accurate diagnosis of our country’s chronic disease: unfit, corrupt, self-centred, cowardly and mercantile politicians.

The history of the disease can be traced back to **institutional fragmentation and national irresponsibility in military construction.**

**1. The leading role of the National Assembly is limited to a formal vote on the budget, on certain governmental documents and fictitious parliamentary control.**

**A.** The National Assembly and its leading commission examine the problems in the Armed Forces from a distance. They have no competent, active, or concerned attitude towards national defence.

**B.** As in all previous configurations, the National Assembly has voluntarily accepted the role of a transmission shaft for the legislative, governmental and strategic initiatives of the Council of Ministers. The National Assembly lacks self-image. There are no parliamentary inquiries, investigations, or visits to military units. There is a lack of a living

connection with servicemen or genuine attitude towards the processes, trends, obstacles and failures in the BA. In terms of national defence, this Parliament professes the bureaucratic principle “So much, so good.”

C. Not only are there very few military officers in the National Assembly compared to representatives of other professions, those officers who have entered the National Assembly representing the various parties tend to conceal each other and are probably ashamed of their military biography. They disguise themselves as civilians and are unwilling to accept the role of competent politicians and statesmen concerned about the fate of the Armed Forces.

D. As long as members of the National Assembly are directly dependent on the Prime Minister, as leader of the ruling party, it will be impossible to overcome the conflict between public interest and the personal benefit of members of the NA for inclusion in the lists of candidates in the next elections.

In advanced countries, national security committees combine powerful intellectual and political potential. They are a generator of ideas and forward-looking proposals, and are a strict and competent judge of military leaders. The US Congress, for example, controls how every dollar of the military budget is spent. They adopt and finance long-term programmes for the development of the five types of armed forces (Land Forces, Air Force, Navy, Marines and Space Forces). They set assignments and evaluate the scientific, technical, management, and other concepts aimed at improving the country’s defence capabilities. Experienced generals in command of the various types of armed forces admit in their memoirs that their most formidable tests were not on the battlefield, but in investigations by Senate committees or in congressional hearings.

For decades there have been insufficient influential politicians in the Bulgarian Parliament who could act as specialists in the military



field; no one with the will to confront any short-sighted party line, to defend the national interest, or support the urgent construction of modern, flexible, capable armed forces.

The legislators have abdicated from their obligation to exercise control and demand that the representatives of the executive comply with the laws and be accountable for their activities before the nation's elected representatives. Governments which have broken with the practice of submitting an annual report on the state of national defence to parliament have not been sanctioned by their employer – the National Assembly. Parliamentary scrutiny is currently a formal activity under the formula “Specific question – abstract answer”.

This is reason why small demonstration projects such as the Strategic Defence Review, Plan 2011 and yet another National Security Strategy, have passed through the legislative mill without leaving any benefit.

The Bulgarian Parliament still fully complies with Cyril Parkinson's finding that “No one can be sure of life, health and property while the legislative assembly is sitting.”

## **2. The Council of Ministers**

As a senior executive body, the Council of Ministers provides resources, adopts plans – programs and regulations for the implementation of the laws, makes proposals to the President regarding the appointment and promotion of senior officers, etc. In fact, the Council of Ministers gives the green light to the documents developed in the ministries, since the Prime Minister and the other ministers have neither the time nor the competence to understand the essence of the problems dealt with by the other departments.

Therefore, the style and results of the Council of Ministers' activities in the field of defence depend to an exceptional extent on the individual Prime Minister, on the strategic goals and priorities pursued by the ruling party. Over the past 30 years, none of the ruling parties have made a priority of creating a modern, flexible, efficient, and capable Armed Forces. The election rhetoric of all the political parties contains promises and incantations in the name of the independence and defence of the country. However, the implementation of these pathetic phrases is either forgotten days after the election victory, or postponed until the end of the governing term.

It was only in the last term, under pressure from both the Bulgarian military led by President Rumen Radev and NATO partners that the decision was taken to buy 8 new modern fighters for the needs of the Air Force. This was in principle a step in the right direction. However, the deal was marred by unexplained vagaries: there were serious doubts about dependencies in the decision-making process; about external pressure; and the fact that the planes bore a "golden" price. There should be no doubt that everything is crystal clear.

The main unresolved problem is **the defence budget**. The military budget for many years has been about 1.3–1.5 of GDP. Given the signed contractual obligations on the part of the Bulgarian state this percentage should not fall below 2%. Now, under pressure from the former US President, a number of European NATO member states, including Bulgaria, have been forced to adopt programmes to raise military spending to the level to be reached in 2024.

Such reduced funding has not only negatively affected the social status of the personnel but hampered the selection of candidates for professional soldiers. The unbalanced redundancies in the armed forces result have led to an unbalanced structure and loss of capabilities

that may need to be re-created. Which will cost far more. Most alarmingly, there is a lack of funds for training, combat preparedness and the text-book training of field, air and naval personnel.

In terms of capital expenditures for one serviceman, Bulgaria ranks last among NATO allies. **The cost per soldier is half that of the Romanian army, 4 times less than the Estonian army, 9 times less than the Danish army and 14 times less than the Dutch army.** We would not be as bold to suggest the Bulgarian soldier is 14 times more incapable than a Dutch one. We can only claim that the Bulgarian state government is performing its patriotic duty 14 times worse than the Dutch government.

In this way the constantly decreasing ranks of Bulgarian Army are not entirely fulfilling the most important constitutional task: to prepare for the armed defence of the Fatherland. The excuses of politicians, civilians and military chiefs are primitive and jaded: “lack of funds”. Over the last twenty years, the budget of the Ministry of Defence has spent a lot of money in the most inefficient way. For example, the central administration has absorbed 28–30% of the budget. This is twice as much as one entire wing of the armed forces – the Navy, which has a budget of 12–14%.

During the term in office of GERB, such inaction has become a millstone around the neck of the Armed Forces. For “economic reasons” the process of de-professionalization of a key part of the command staff of the Bulgarian Army has grown more profound and irreversible. An increasing number of officers entering the “G. S. Rakovski” Military Academy have not commanded units during large (brigade) exercises. They have not participated in general staff field training, with sudden relocation of concentration areas, nor have they been inspected in accordance with the complete military training control scheme of the Bulgarian Army. After graduating from the academy,

these same officers hold senior positions in the battalions and brigade units, without being able to plan and lead real combat activities in a real environment.

We have heard explanations that the Bulgarian people are in such a parlous state that it would be sacrilegious to steal a morsel from their mouths by buying expensive military equipment. No one wants to take from the miserable income of the poor and impoverished Bulgarian. Defence funds can and must be provided in a number of painless ways: through long-term loans, through leasing, offset and other financial mechanisms, through aid from allies which will not undermine the balance of the state budget in the coming years.

A serious problem with Boyko Borisov's government is that it does not know how to use its powers and in which direction to lead the state. **His type of government is instinctive and propagandist.**

The Council of Ministers and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs must be fully aware that some of the major countries on earth are significantly increasing their military budgets. They can envisage deterioration in international relations over the next five to ten years, and are preparing for possible future wars for resources and vital raw materials. We only have to recall the sharp diplomatic remarks exchanged by Norway, Canada, the United States and Russia over the ownership dispute to the mineral resources of the North Pole.

Bulgarian politics, diplomacy and military thought should have options in the event of negative trends in the European Union, in the event of a partial or complete disintegration of this architecture – so eulogised by the Bulgarians and built up with great hopes by the Europeans. What useful moves could Bulgaria make in the event of the most unpleasant option? Will we re-enact the Warsaw Pact drama, in which the Bulgarian communist state leadership did not believe until it was too late?

### **3. The Ministry of Defence and the Defence Staff (DS):**

In 2011, the idea of an integrated Ministry of Defence was finally achieved. This included the Defence Staff. After 20 years of parallel existence which on more than one occasion has erupted into hidden battles, the Ministry of Defence has finally spoken with one voice – the voice of political leadership and military expertise. We are yet to know what benefits or damages this loudly proclaimed integration will bring.

Between 2001 and 2009, three ministers from National Movement for Simeon II “headed” the Ministry of Defence with their characteristic incompetence, lack of vision and leadership qualities, ineptitude and corruption. Since 2009, all manner of representatives of GERB have headed the ministries, – not only politicians with questionable competence, but also military officers benefiting from such a powerful position. At the present time the minister is a coalition partner with the mentality of the Vojvode warlord of the Macedonian Chetnik. In a chronological examination of the stated priorities, the leadership of the Ministry of Defence for the past 12 years has clearly been unsuccessful in all of the areas which have been important for the defence of the country.

With robust military leadership, the failures by civilian defence chiefs could have been prevented or minimised. However, in our country there were two negative phenomena: weak political leadership and lack of military leaders.

#### **Some of the major problems today:**

a. The wretched state of the Air Force. Since the Treaty of Neuilly until today, the Bulgarian Air Force has never been in such a situa-

tion. What is even stranger is that for the last 14 years, three Air Force generals have headed the General Staff (HQ). Ministers Svinarov and Bliznakov repeatedly suspended and renewed the contract with the Russian company RSK-MIG for the repair of MiG-29 fighters, thus damaging the Bulgarian Air Force's capability. It has come to the point that there is no fighter on standby to protect Bulgarian airspace and patrol it in the framework of air policing.

Several years ago, Romania proposed that the two countries jointly purchase multi-purpose fighters for their armies. The Bulgarian Defence Ministry and the government were suspiciously silent for a long time. This was probably due to fears that they might lose the opportunity to negotiate their commissions. It is far more difficult to bribe two committees in two different countries or a joint commission of representatives of these countries.

In 2018, an investment project was finally announced to acquire a new type of fighter aircraft. This was approved by the National Assembly on 8 June 2018. An inquiry/request for submission of offers for delivery of 16 new or second-hand modernized fighters worth 1.8 billion BGN was sent to 7 countries. After a series of intrigues and the anticipated tender which was believed to favour the Swedish "Gripen" fighter, quite unexpectedly, without tender or competition, and without compliance with the PPA, the government purchased not 16, but of 8 F-16 block 70 fighters. This is a modification that has yet to see the light of day, and the cost per aircraft in a fairly economical version of its armaments has swollen to 1.2 billion dollars. However, that was not all, it also came to light that the amount had to be paid in full and in advance at the moment of signature of the contract and that the planes would be produced in 2023 and 2024. Ultimately, on 12 August 2016, Bulgaria paid the full amount of \$1.2 billion for the 8 planes in question.

The triumph of corruption and mercantile dependence of the Bulgarian ruling party!

b. The Bulgarian contingents in peacekeeping operations still do not have their own logistical resources or headquarters and are attached to independent formations from other countries (mostly Germany, the Netherlands and Italy). This approach affects the quality of the mission, undermines the self-confidence of the servicemen, prevents commanders and staff officers from accumulating and gaining experience from participating in such operations, and negatively affects the prestige of the Bulgarian state.

c. The political decision of 1 January 2008 to make the Bulgarian army an entirely **professional army** was taken in haste. It lacked organizational, resource or moral support. It would have been of greater benefit to make a smooth transition over two or three years. The parliament's decision forced the General Staff and unit commanders to make serious compromises in terms of the quality of the young male and female applicants, in order to comply with the order of 1 November 2007 that all military positions in the Bulgarian Army be occupied by professional soldiers.

There is a fundamental difference between a young person who has signed a contract to be a professional soldier and the real professional warrior. The social and psychological portrait of most professional soldiers shows that most often these are young people from poor families and small towns, with average intellectual and physical capabilities. It is extremely difficult for commanders to assemble combat units using this kind of human material.

Up to two hundred soldiers leave the army every year by not renewing or terminating their contracts. According to some generals, this percentage is insignificant and does not pose a threat to the integrity of the units. According to other specialists, the resigning officers

are among the elite of professional soldiers who are dissatisfied with salaries, the atmosphere and organization in the units, the qualities of the command staff, social security and the prospects offered by the military profession. Their behaviour is indicative of the superficial and hasty approach of parliament and the Ministry of Defence to the professionalization of the army.

**d. Lack of motivation among officers.** After three years of exerted effort, Ministers Simeon Dyankov and Anu Angelov finally did what their predecessors failed to do: they provoked a serious collapse in the motivation of a huge part of the officers, initiating a wave of reports on the resignation of young and middle generation officers. When Finance Minister, Simeon Djankov arrogantly compared mothers expecting an increase in their child allowance to professional servicemen, and Anu Angelov explained that the work of ballerinas is no lighter than the workload of the fighter pilot, there were no doubts about the choice of this government.

It became absolutely clear that for Boyko Borisov and his ministers, officers, sergeants and soldiers are an unnecessary burden on the state budget; something which should be disposed of as soon as possible and at a minimum price. The situation was no better with the next Defence Ministers Nikolay Nenchev and Krasimir Karakachanov. The public continues to harbour the belief that for GERB military servicemen are unnecessary mouths to feed, as well as a dangerous, hard-to-manipulate part of the population unwilling to serve the rulers in return for their official salary. Whoever follows the example of their ancestors always put the Fatherland above the state.



### 3. NECESSARY REFORMS

After the collapse of the GERB's personnel policy in the Bulgarian Army, **urgent measures are required to recruit officers, sergeants and soldiers.** As a first step towards the revitalisation of the Bulgarian Army the following actions can be taken:

1. Partial introduction of the Swiss model of defence. All men able to carry weapons between the ages of 20 and 30, shall be required on an annual basis for 4 years, and then twice every 3 years to take 10–15 day training and retraining courses. They will be assigned personal weapons, uniforms and means of protection against chemical and biological weapons. They must undergo psychological tests.

2. Centres for the recruitment of young volunteers shall be added to the existing military formations (units) for national service. The Bundeswehr's experience can be used for this purpose.

#### **Close Priorities:**

1. Given that Bulgaria is likely to be the EU's external border for many years to come, it is imperative that high-speed boats and helicopters be produced or purchased for the Border Police.

2. Operational interaction must be developed between the Navy, the Air Force and the Border Police. If necessary, Navy boats, helicopters or aircraft of the Air Force will support the actions of the Border Police against terrorism, smuggling, illegal fishing in Bulgarian territorial waters, illegal trafficking in human beings and cargo.

3. Establishment of a new type of rapid reaction force – the units of the special operations forces of the Navy, the Air Force and the Land Forces must be ready to be deployed in piracy zones, where they will carry out operations to neutralize pirates and rescue Bulgarian citizens.

4. Re-equipping of the army with the most modern military equipment – mainly artillery, tanks, armoured personnel carriers, MLRS and air defence – missile defence.

5. Introduction of new means for conducting military operations – drones, artificial intelligence, electronic warfare (REB).

#### **4. CHANGES IN LAWS AND REGULATIONS**

1. Law on Defence and the Armed Forces of the Republic of Bulgaria,

2. Statutes of the Bulgarian Army,

3. Doctrine of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Bulgaria,

4. Penal Code of the Republic of Bulgaria.

#### **5. EXPENDITURE FOR MILITARY REFORM**

We estimate additional expenditure for military reform outside the defence budgets, which amounts to 2% of GDP, to be as follows:

– **2 billion per term in office, equally distributed.**

A direct return of these costs should not be expected, but they provide minimal protection for our country from external harm.

### **5. FINANCE**

One of the most important things in the functioning of a country is public finances. Public finance covers both tax collection processes and its redistribution to cover certain social needs such as budget, gross domestic product, public debt, Central Bank, commercial banks, taxes.

## **GDP**

Bulgaria's GDP for 2019 was BGN 118.669 billion, or EUR 60.7 billion.

Our studies show that compared to 1989, when the changes began in Bulgaria, GDP at comparable prices rose from 1989 to 2019 by about 35<sup>1</sup>%, while the purchasing power of people is only about 72% of that in 1989, and in the case of pensioners not exceeding 67%. This shows only one thing: a policy of plundering and enriching carried out by a narrow social stratum at the expense of people, as well as a large outflow of capital.

The disproportions of inequalities and revenue in every society are mostly regulated through tax and budgetary systems.

## **BUDGET**

In order to be consistent with the expectations of taxpayers, a modern budgetary system must meet certain conditions:

1. capacity of the administration – not only in terms of the ability to do certain work, but also to achieve a result adequate to the resources invested;
2. adequacy of the changes in terms of economic conditions and attitudes. This is achieved through the continuous training of administrative staff. However good a system may be at its time, it is doomed to failure if it ceases to develop and improve;
3. effectiveness and efficiency as key indicators of the quality of public finances in collecting and spending public funds;
4. transparency in drawing up and accounting for public budg-

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<sup>1</sup> <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD?locations=BG>

ets by introducing uniform accounting and control rules. This also increases the credibility of the system;

5. compliance with European norms and regulations through the effective application of good practices and efforts, aimed at changing and adapting regulations which are not compliant with our economic realities;

6. maintaining the level of taxation and protecting this position with regard to European institutions as a fundamental benefit of our economy;

7. retention of the currency board (but compulsory development of alternative exit scenarios in the event of a collapse of Eurozone or in certain other economic scenarios; a referendum would be desirable for this purpose).

We insist on balanced budgets. At least in the first two years of our eventual term in office, we would want to undertake urgent investment and make significant changes in the structure of the economy.

These changes are based on our views on moderate statism in the economy, i.e. an increased (but not absolute!) presence of the state as owner in several strategic sectors: energy, military industry, telecommunications, banking and insurance, agriculture, railways.

We envisage the creation of state-owned companies to compete – while fulfilling the requirements of Bulgarian legislation – with the existing private companies:

1. Large commercial bank;
2. National Insurance Company;
3. Electricity distribution company, covering the entire territory of the country;
4. Telecommunication company with GSM operator;
5. Chain of supermarkets;
6. Chain of fuel stations;

7. Large state-run agricultural exchanges throughout the country will buy up agricultural produce at real prices to stimulate agricultural producers.

These large companies will operate in some of the most profitable, strategic sectors of the Bulgarian economy. In this way, we will ensure a reduction in the outflow of capital from the country, while providing additional and significant income for the budget. We will form a second budget based in practice on significant dividends from the state ownership of the above-mentioned sectors, which are presumed to be the most profitable.

## LOCAL BUDGETS

In order to implement public policy for the development of certain regions, the following measures can be identified:

1. granting greater autonomy in determining local budgets;
2. redistribution of funds from rich to poorer municipalities in order to unify social status;
3. opportunities for tax preferences at a regional level – municipalities, in order to determine local taxes and fees at a wider range than at present;
4. increasing the capacity of local administrations to collect taxes more effectively and manage local budgets;
5. removing national priority activities from the scope of activities funded by local budgets and reassigning them to be funded by the state budget (e.g. education and medical care since local budgets do not have sufficient capacity to conduct national policy). In their place, activities of local importance will be introduced (e.g. financing of local security authorities at the expense of security police);
6. adopting of local budgets in dialogue with the local population

and regional business; allocating part of the budget (e.g. for infrastructure) to finance activities approved by the local population and local business.

## **TAX SYSTEM**

For the tax system to function successfully, the following rules need to be complied with:

1. preserving the stability of the national tax system while maintaining low uniform tax rates and a broad tax base;

2. predictability of the tax system as a key factor for business development in the country and attracting external investors. This can be achieved by introducing a mandatory procedure for assessing the impact of changes in tax laws on business and economic processes. Representatives of professional, business and non-governmental organizations must be involved in the procedure together with the state administration.

3. applying the principle of the greater burden of indirect tax over income tax in the overall tax burden;

4. robustness of the tax system – preventing regular taxpayers from paying on behalf of irregular taxpayers (e.g. refusal to reimburse VAT credit to an irregular supplier; recognition of entitlement to VAT credit only upon effective payment).

5. use of the tax system as a mechanism for conducting state policy and imposing priorities that have been set. Tax preferences shall be used to cover part of the social security burden for a certain period of time, and simplified administrative procedures shall be applied to incentivise companies to create new jobs;

6. preventing capital outflow from the country without the requisite taxation; tightening the regime for transfers to offshore areas and eliminating opportunities for tax evasion;

7. revision of the transfer pricing regime for transactions between related companies – the current framework is quite restrictive and is not effective due to the complexity of procedures;

8. fair taxation: the recognition of interest expense on loans to individuals which will accompany interest tax on deposits; as well as recognition of all types of insurance expense for individuals.

Taxation in Bulgaria is among the lowest not only in Europe, but also in the world. However, this is only one of the possible ways to attract investments. Other equally important prerequisites are connected with quality of administrative services, the speed and quality of dispute resolution and corruption.

However, taxes and their collection are a key factor in combating the shadow economy and increasing money for social activities. The most important factor in this regard is the quality of the tax administration.

We do not intend to introduce radical problems into the tax system, but there are two things that we will certainly change:

1. We will increase **VAT by 5 points to 25%**, the increase will be **targeted at healthcare** and at the same time the health insurance contributions will be cancelled and the NSSI will be fundamentally reformed (see chapter “Health”, the part “Health reform”, 1.4).

2. We will increase **corporate tax** by 5 points to **15%**.

## TAX ADMINISTRATION

Certain improvements in the work of the tax administration would increase its efficiency and, overall, substantially reduce the administrative burden on taxpayers:

1. introduction of the principle of “tacit consent” in the tax administrative process;

2. imposition of the principle for analysis of risky activities in the tax control;

3. activities for preventive and not subsequent control in the prevention of tax fraud;

4. providing incentive to personnel based on the number of completed checks → more effective inspections → better evaluation → higher bonuses; introducing systems to train inefficient employees, in order to increase efficiency in tax control.

At the same time, our tax system still has problems detecting hidden and unpaid taxes. A suitable system of e-government, covering the needs of the tax administration, could periodically indicate all tax entities that have not paid their taxes and, more importantly, monitor in real time the incomes of all citizens over a certain age and compare them with the taxes paid. If there are people who have not paid taxes for years, this system would determine how they support themselves, and they would be punished severely if they are proven to have hidden all their income. This is exactly the kind of system we will implement as early as the second year of our first term.

## **THE TAX OFFICES AND THE TAXPAYER**

The taxpayer is the main factor in the state's existence. In the same way as the tax payer must be loyal in his duties and the law should provide for severe penalties for non-compliance, so should the tax services both in the municipalities and in the NRA be friendly and organized. However, this is not always the case. The vast majority of municipal tax administrations do not have internet sites where one can check one's obligations and see the history of tax payments, and then pay online conveniently.

NRA personnel should provide free consultations to people who



want to enter their extremely inconvenient system for submitting declarations and paying due amounts of tax.

In the first year of our first term in office, every taxpayer will be able to make inquiries in no more than one minute regarding the amounts due by him both in the municipalities and the NRA, and make their payments electronically. The submission of various types of declarations (especially by those who are self-insured) will also be simplified as much as possible and secured by the most modern software.

## **PUBLIC DEBT**

An ineluctable and very significant part of public finances is public debt formed by state borrowing and that of the municipalities. Bulgaria is one of the few countries in the EU with debt below 30% of GDP. However, this is no consolation in view of uncontrolled borrowing of debt in the last decade: from 13% at the end of 2009, when Boyko Borisov's government came to power, to 24.5% of GDP by October 2020.

Public borrowing growth can be seen as a positive factor, if the money goes to investments, but almost none of this increase has been used for this purpose.

## **THE CENTRAL BANK**

The Central Bank of Bulgaria (BNB) pursues a conservative policy. It is a pillar of the currency board and maintains the stability of our currency and finances. However, there is clearly more it can do to maintain effective control over banks, as can be judged by the recent case of the bankruptcy of KTB (Corporate Commercial Bank) whose liabilities at the end of 2014 amounted to BGN 6.5 billion. It became

evident that given a sufficient lack of honesty, both bankers and the controlling authority were capable of carrying out particularly large crimes with the potential to jeopardise the stability of the entire banking system.

At the same time, the BNB will be able to afford over a certain period of time (3 years in our first term) to increase the volume of cash and provide cheap money for investments. If this is done skilfully and money is not poured into the consumer goods market, this will not lead to an increase in inflation.

We must also provoke debates about a possible emission of a Bulgarian digital lev, the E-LEV.

## **BANKS**

Banks in Bulgaria are rapidly increasing their profits at the expense not of lending, which is their main function, but thanks to fees and commissions. It has come to the point that customers may even have to pay a fee to enter and exit branch premises. Such fees are already charged for depositing money, withdrawing, counting, checking, etc., etc.

The banks' policy is astonishing – they seem to have conspired to repel their small customers; those who contribute the most to their turnover. However, we should not be surprised at this seemingly damaging behaviour.

There is a current trend imposed by the super-sized transnational banking corporations that cash money is dying out, and everything is transacted by means of virtual money. This is done in order to impose full control over all cash flows around the world, on the one hand, and full control over people, on the other. This removes the last pillar of individual freedom: when there is no cash, you cannot be isolated or hidden from the authorities in any way.

This further justifies our determination to open a large state-owned commercial bank (as mentioned above, in the budget section). It will also aim, in addition to its core business, to undermine the tacit bank arrangements (which we would even call cartel arrangements), providing its customers with far better banking conditions and a minimum of fees and commissions. In this way, all other players in the banking market will be forced to adhere to more well-intentioned behaviour towards their customers.

## **CHANGES IN LAWS AND REGULATIONS**

1. Law on Value Added Tax,
2. Corporate Income Tax Act,
3. Personal Income Tax Act,
4. Law on the BNB.

## **6. EDUCATION, SCIENCE, CULTURE AND YOUTH WORK**

### **1. EDUCATION**

#### **1. CONDITION AND PROBLEMS**

##### **SECONDARY EDUCATION**

1. Teacher self-education instead of fundamental pedagogical training of teachers.

## 2. Regression in the level of Bulgarian education:

a. imitations of reforms such as: ever-changing state educational requirements; curricula that neither modernise nor improve the educational content studied in secondary school, but legitimise its structure and content worthy of the beginning of the 20th century;

b. mixing the objectives of education with social missions (for example, one of the missions of education requires all children going to school, and the reasons for leaving school are mainly ethnic and social, not educational);

c. a grotesque underestimation of the role of teaching, which has led to the simplification, feminisation and degradation of the teaching profession;

d. complete refusal of the state to regulate certain public relations such as the propaganda of violence, pornography, the vulgar relations that overwhelm us from television screens, from radio shows, from advertisements on the streets and more.

e. closure of schools in villages and small towns, accelerating their imminent death;

f. outdated teaching methodology;

g. vicious and unfair evaluation system;

h. educational content typical of the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century;

i. badly written textbooks abounding in pretentious scientific terminology inaccessible to students.

School teaches children a lot of unnecessary things that neither lead to the main goals discussed below, nor give specificity to knowledge. They simply fill children's minds with ballast of information that is unlikely to ever be needed. For example, in the civilized world natural sciences have long been taught in an integrated way, with far fewer hours, using base information aimed at developing a conceptual

approach, accompanied by wonderful visualisation and methodology which encourage the development of logical thinking and autonomy. However, in Bulgaria we teach brain-addling facts such as aldehydes and ketones, formic acids, formulas for movement, etc., which can easily be dropped. However, this will also lead to the removal of a guild of firmly entrenched teachers and their positions will be reduced. This will not happen without opposition.

The same applies to basic subjects such as native language, literature and mathematics. Language is taught poorly and children are illiterate. At the same time, within this subject area entire sections of linguistics, stylistics, language history, etc. are studied which are completely redundant. Not to mention literature, which for the most part is oriented towards classical Bulgarian literature from the 1920s and 1930s. Although such literature is of superior quality, it reflects a rural reality, vocabulary and human relations which are incomprehensible to children and cannot be of interest to them at that age.

When we talk about the important area of ACADEMIC CURRICULUM, we have to say that our education is generally over-concerned with learning foreign languages due to the fact that our language is extremely peripheral and a good knowledge of at least one language is imperative for communicating with other nations. A decent mastery of a language in school requires more than 1500 hours of study. Anyone can calculate what this means, knowing that the school hours in one school year (in all subjects) are about 1100–1200.

## HIGHER EDUCATION

The current problems in higher education can be grouped in the following several areas:

### *1. Inefficiency of higher education*

In general, higher education in Bulgaria is inefficient and expensive for the state. There are over 50 accredited universities in Bulgaria, both public and private. According to this indicator we hold a record in Europe in terms of number of universities compared to the population and number of students. Moreover, there is a serious discrepancy between the ratio of teachers and students. In Europe it is 1:15–20, in Bulgaria – 1:7–10. University lecturers have a low teaching workload (between 240 and 400 hours per year), and the time devoted to individual work with students outside regulated classes is extremely insufficient.

### *2. Low level of fundamental knowledge*

Over the last twenty years there has been a drastic decline in the level of fundamental knowledge among first year students in the basic secondary academic disciplines. This inevitably affects their subsequent studies at higher education institutions. This problem is particularly serious during the first two years of university education when most students drop out because they are unable to cope with the material. Poor preparation has an extremely negative impact on the quality of training, resulting in the poor level of education of graduating students.

### *3. Gap between market needs and suitability of diplomas*

The involvement of specialists in the development of curricula and programmes is often only “on paper”. There is an urgent need to modernise the curriculum and teaching methods. The educational process is characterized by the fact that it is centred not on the student, but the teacher. The majority of teaching is based on lecture hours, rote learning of facts, while students’ passivity prevails at the expense of

stimulating participation in the development of individual projects and tasks, teamwork, flexibility and ability to think independently.

#### *4. Negative impact of the demographic crisis*

The long-term impact of the demographic crisis on the overall economic development of Bulgaria as well as on education and the labour market is extremely negative. An increasing number of secondary school graduates choose to study abroad in foreign higher education institutions. Higher education graduates here, for their part, are increasingly going out looking for work outside Bulgaria. Bulgaria finds itself in the position of training people not for its own economy, but for foreign ones.

#### *5. Academic development*

Academic development (the acquisition of the degrees “Doctor” and “Doctor of Science” and the academic positions of “Assistant Professor”, “Associate Professor” and “Professor”) is now entirely in the hands of higher education, and the system begins to reproduce itself without objective external control, regarding the qualities and value of the scientific-teaching activity of the teachers.

#### *6. Research activity*

Higher education research is not at a sufficiently high level. This is a result of both insufficient state funding and a lack of real incentives, or the obligation for lecturers to do academic research.

#### *7. Depreciated material and technical facilities*

Current material and technical facilities do not meet the requirements to implement modern and innovative technological changes in training and research.

## 2. REFORM PROGRAMME

### 1. Preschool education

Provide all working parents with modern nurseries and kindergartens. Since Bulgaria already has a very good tradition in this area, we intend to further develop these traditions without introducing revolutionary transformations. The most important thing for children of this age is to have the conditions to play most of the day, spend valuable time together and to sleep in the afternoon.

Games remain the most important component for children as they grow up until at least 6 years of age. Kindergartens should provide different play opportunities for boys and girls. The need of different types of play for boys and girls is quite obvious: boys need a lot of movement and girls need more stationary games, mainly related to the imitation of motherhood. This does not mean that children of both sexes must necessarily play separately all the time; there should also be a number of common games. However, the Bulgarian tradition and our views categorically reject the notion of gender education of young children prevalent in a number of countries.

For the harmonious development of children, parents need to have received the appropriate training. Raising a family is not something that people can learn by themselves; it is a collection of specialized knowledge and human experience. Therefore, when we refer to secondary education below, we advocate the idea that in high school students should study the subject “parenting skills”. The state should print specialized brochures at its own expense with the most important advice and information on child development to be distributed to each mother.



We also support parents who wish to raise their children in a family environment before starting school. We think that family cooperatives are a good form of raising children during this period. The children of families who are friends can be cared for in one place by parents whom the others pay for the service. We are ready to support such forms by providing methodical assistance and advising on sanitation, nutrition and safety measures that must be respected. We believe that this activity should not be subject to permits and licensing regimes, taxation or other controls, but should depend entirely on the will of the parents.

## **2. Secondary education**

The educational process is based on the four pillars requiring the formation of four main groups of competences:

1. Learning for knowledge – i.e. acquiring social, cognitive and specialized concepts in all educational fields. Combining them serves as a basis for improving lifelong education.

2. Learning for action – i.e. this is related to the teaching of skills which will guarantee the universality of children's experience – the opportunity to implement their own strategies in a variety of situations in the absence of a strictly defined system.

3. Learning to live together with other people, to understand and respect their history, traditions and cultural values, to recognize their traits and their right to be different. This is about acceptance of difference and tolerance.

4. Learning to be ourselves – this includes self-knowledge, independence, critical thinking and creativity, so that everyone can make the best decisions in different situations and independently develop and expand the full wealth of their individuality.

### *The essence of reforms*

1. A clear formulation of the goal of education is what we seek to achieve at the outcome of the educational process. The main objectives of secondary education are:

a. to teach children the basic logical models of creation, society and man;

b. to teach children to speak and write well in their native language and at least one other foreign language;

c. to develop curiosity and intellectual boldness;

d. to assist the family in building such qualities as responsibility, autonomy, diligence, and systematisation;

e. to teach teamwork,

f. in short – to present children with the full range of knowledge and skills necessary to make (with the help of parents, teachers and friends, but above all the children themselves) the right choice in their future development.

This is why school education has to be all encompassing.

### *Academic curriculum*

There is an urgent need in our education system to begin a conversation about the clear definition of the academic curriculum in secondary education. A number of thinkers in recent decades have expressed the belief that the 21st century will be a century of humanitarian knowledge, since the problems of mankind are not related to production (it produces far more than it needs), but social and human relations, as well as in the development of personality. If this is true, it means that the sciences relating to man and society must occupy a completely different place in education, especially within the humanities. It is imperative that we discuss the introduction in the Bulgarian school education of a range subjects that will benefit everyone, regard-

less of the future profession of the individual school leavers. Such subjects will be:

- a. The basics of law
- b. The basics of economy
- c. parenting skills
- d. elementary medicine

In every democratic society, legal knowledge is crucial to the development and career achievements of every individual, to the protection of their rights and participation in civic life. Legal knowledge is not only part of the ability to resolve conflicts with the help of civil institutions, but also a worldview related to the ability to interact with the other (others) as well as to achieve the desired category of justice.

The same applies to the fundamentals of the economy. Every person, no matter what his or her professional and personal development, enters into economic relations. They are either employees or employers. They may participate in shared forms of ownership and participation in the operation of an enterprise, or may be sole traders benefiting from the fruits of their own labour, etc. However, no one is outside this relationship.

There is no doubt that the cardinal part of life is care for one's own body, knowing it well, its harmonious development, the correct modes of life and work, the taking of timely measures in any illness, maintaining the constant capacity to work and a level of fitness. Such an academic discipline would contribute to a healthy lifestyle, longevity, creation of healthy children, good professional and social development. It would certainly reduce such phenomena as drug addiction, obesity, improper early sexual relations, excessive dieting leading to bulimia or anorexia – all mass phenomena among teenagers around the world, including in our country.

Around 90% of these are young people who have children – either their own or adopted. There is a ubiquitous lack of knowledge of the care that needs to be taken and attitudes in relationships with little children who are constantly changing. This is frequently disastrous. The vast majority of psychological traumas, complexes, strange behaviour and anomalies which sometimes erupt into violence towards others or self-destructive behaviour, are due precisely to conflicts with parents. More precisely, they are due to the inability of parents to behave in a suitable way towards their children and, above all, to balance the relationship between control and freedom in the development of their child. At the same time, the world has accumulated colossal experience and knowledge about children and their stages of development, and many wonderful books have been written on these issues. It is clearly the duty of society as a whole to make great efforts in this area and to teach young generations the principles of relationships with children. This would lead to a significant humanisation of society and to far happier generations.

Of course, when referring to this, we are not suggesting that these subjects should be studied at a high level, which will replace university education. We are more concerned with teaching the fundamentals of these subjects, their philosophy, the basic conceptual apparatus, and discussion of typical cases. This may be the place to note that subjects such as “parenting skills” and “elementary medicine” are not typical of world-wide education, although elsewhere in the world children are provided with a good knowledge of sexual relations and prevention.

### *A system of knowledge verification and evaluation*

In the entire Bulgarian education system there is probably nothing more ambiguous, indeterminate and inclined towards corrupt practice. The idea of the teacher teaching the curriculum content and then

determining grades based on some supposedly accurate, but vague criteria, is bad by presumption. The most natural consequences of this are that the teacher determines grades based not only on the acquired knowledge and skills, but also taking into account behaviour and personal attitudes. Grading is also used as encouragement, for peace of mind, to avoid trouble and under the influence of a number of external factors, not to mention the natural subjectivity of each person. The crowning moment is the practice of children's school grades being used to determine their families' welfare benefits. This is a perversion of the idea of learning and the fundamental role of the school in the development of the individual. A system of anonymous examinations needs to be introduced, either at the end of the school terms or on an ongoing basis. They need to be assessed by external examiners on the basis of clear and precise criteria. A suitable system for checking and evaluating knowledge has a key impact on all subjects in the educational process.

An objective and external evaluation system should under no circumstances be limited to "matura" or school leaving examinations. It should start at the basic level of education and go through the entire upper level of secondary education. Of course, there will be enormous resistance for at least two reasons: firstly, this will reveal clearly the level of education in Bulgaria, and everyone fears such an effect: the government, teachers' guild, parents, pupils; and secondly, such a system requires a lot of money.

### *Teaching Methodology*

Teaching methodology in our country is an echo from the era of Jan Amos Comenius (mid-18th century) – the creator of the classroom system introduced everywhere in Europe and which became the foundation of modern education. Bulgarian teaching methodol-

ogy relies mainly on the word and narrative. It entirely relies on the abstract explanation of objects, phenomena, concepts, processes, patterns, including description of natural paintings, animals, plants, etc. Sometimes, and only too rarely, attempts are made by individual teachers to accompany verbal narrative with superficial visualisation. This method is applicable to times when technology was unable to provide visual representation of learning content. Its main disadvantage, i.e. its abstract nature, is exacerbated by the subjective level of the teacher, which can vary greatly. A good narrator enthral their audience. However, most teachers are bad narrators, since they have neither been trained in the relevant schools of rhetoric and logic, nor have they been trained how to narrate simply and understandably in accordance with children's perceptive abilities. Such training is key to teacher training. However, it does not exist in practice, and relies on the natural qualities of the individual teacher, and they are rarely very elevated.

However, the lack of modern teaching methods is a real omission. These methods should be developed along three main lines:

### *Visualisation of the academic curriculum*

This will be achieved by equipping the relevant science rooms and classrooms with computers and introducing visual systems (LCD panels, televisions, electronic boards, etc.). Naturally, to this end, the Ministry of Education and Science needs to develop teaching aids for all subjects and for all classes. In the modern age they seem to be referred to by the common term of multimedia products. Thus every concept, every process, every event, personality, phenomenon, etc. could be wonderfully visualised.

### *Interactive teaching of the academic curriculum*

The teacher should no longer be a narrator that the children have to listen to and understand, then write down what they can. They should be a mediator helping pupils analyze certain assumptions, grasp the relationships between them and then perform a synthesis between them, in order to create a concept, rule or regularity. In order to achieve this, the teacher first needs to undergo a completely new type of training, where their role is to ensure pupils interaction in the analysis of the academic material distributed. They need to guide the children's thought processes and help them where they encounter an obstacle or are unable to overcome it. The teacher's previous monologue is now a dialogue. Secondly, the appropriate tools are needed to provide the student with the necessary information that he/she must process (analyze, systematize, extract, arrange) in order to reach a certain level of knowledge at the end of the class. The role of students is to get under the skin (more precisely, into the mind) of the scientist who has made the relevant discovery, created a formula, or has launched the relevant hypothesis. Thus they are not only acquiring an analytical but also heuristic (creative) mind, and they are learning to think logically, to produce generalizations, to be observant, to appreciate even the small details. In fact, the academic lesson is a compressed 40-minute imitation of the evolution of discoveries in a given science.

### *Teamwork skills*

The introduction of such methodology also allows the active use of teamwork and teaching children to work together. They learn to be tolerant of each other, to assist each other, to distribute their work, to share the difficulties and joys in it. Teamwork is a key skill in the modern world, without which almost no sphere of life can be successful – be it in business, science, in sport or anywhere.

### *Teacher training*

How are things in the rest of the civilized world? There the teacher is an individual who learns almost as much as his students do. First, he undergoes fundamental training in the relevant faculty. After this for a period of at least two years they study the minutiae of methodology of at least two main subjects in which they will teach at school. These subjects may not in a variety of cultural and educational fields (e.g. natural sciences). In addition, the teacher studies the psychology of children of school age. They will be trained to resolve a variety of cases, deal with extreme situations, resolve conflicts, maintain attention, evaluate the psychological condition of children, and acquire a range of different communication techniques.

In developed countries, teachers periodically undergo retraining courses which are mandatory in the event of any even minor change in teaching methodology. Teachers in developed countries are familiar with all innovations and achievements in teaching methodology. The manner of presentation of educational content to children is so unified and carefully developed that the individual teacher in this case does not matter. Every graduate teacher knows exactly how to teach a particular didactic unit. Teachers creativity is primarily in the way they communicate, their presence, attractiveness of personality to children, fairness and dedication. Everything else is a matter of training. THE TEACHER IN THE CIVILIZED WORLD IS A WELL-TRAINED SPECIALIST.

Going back to Bulgaria, it has to be said that in our country all this has yet to be achieved. It is a matter of:

- a. the radical reform of state requirements for pedagogical competence related to equally radical reforms in universities;
- b. providing forms of continuous improvement and retraining



that are mandatory and financed by the State in all subjects for all teachers;

c. the introduction of at least two years compulsory service for the teacher before his/her appointment to a permanent contract.

### *Youth Sociology System*

The children in the classroom in front of the teacher today have little in common with those who sat in the classrooms ten years ago. They have other values; they emulate other heroes, other manners, a different language, and a different way of communicating. At the same time, teachers continue to treat students as they did during our grandmothers time. Naturally, they are not very successful in their relations with children and that their behaviour generates natural resistance. On the other hand, it is completely unnecessary and even harmful, for teacher to descend to the level of children and imitate their behaviour.

What is needed above all is knowledge – a systematic, constantly updated knowledge of the processes taking place among young people. This can be achieved through constant in-depth methodological sociological surveys of pupils of different ages. Teachers' behavioural patterns can then be built and teachers retrained to meet the requirements and specific traits of their classrooms. In other words, they will know how to treat children, how to make an impression, how to connect their value system to the value of what they are being taught.

### *Boarding Schools*

In education in general, there are three powerful factors: the state of society, the state of the education system and, in particular, the school and the state of the family. Good education is based on the formula: education = society x school x family. When one element is 0, the final result is zero.

It is perfectly natural to conclude that there is a severe crisis in education. We are living a sick society in which public morality, values, culture, behavioural norms, short-term and long-term goals are at freezing point. The family is no longer a substantial value and the school system has been shaken by meaningless “reforms”. It is natural that things seem to function relatively well only in the initial stage of the school where there are still healthy natural laws in place. Prior to puberty parents have not yet lost control of children, teachers have some kind of authority, even the state and society are concerned with the raising and education of the youngest. This case represents the quintessence of centuries of experience, not the fruit of unhinged fantasies, pedagogical innovations and decadent modernity.

In human history societies have always had problems with teenagers. Families and societies have always exercised full control over their children’s behaviour and development until they reached adulthood. The problems arose in the 20th century and began with the emancipation of the woman, and her leaving the family to start work. Then children were given far greater freedom, and control was sharply weakened. This happened first in the United States after the First World War, followed by Western Europe after the Second World War, and the totalitarian regimes in Eastern Europe maintained the same stance. After the outbreak of democracy in Bulgaria, everything collapsed completely. The modern fashion for adolescent rights, freedoms and responsibilities is combined with the information revolution and the complete rejection of the recent past, in which the older generations were condemned frequently undeservedly for the tainted life they led during the time of real socialism. Over the course of several months, the generation gap between parents and teenagers opened up to the size of a chasm.

That alone was enough to bring about a collapse in the education

system. In order to correct it, extreme measures are needed in the three crucial components: society, school, family. Since there is no promising trend in this regard, the collapse will inevitably continue.

Where can the healing begin?

*It can start at school.*

As stated above, the main problems in Bulgarian schools are in the senior grades. In order to avoid the malevolent impact of society and the inadequate, often irresponsible behaviour of parents, the state must establish all-day schools for adolescents in high school in them – boarding schools.

The best schools in the developed world are based on this form. During the most turbulent and crucial period for their future development, children are taken away from everything else, to be able to devote themselves entirely to their own improvement. They are taught at a very high level, do sports and engage in arts of their choice on a daily basis. They perform social activities to help the elderly, disadvantaged children or support the local community. The emphasis is always on self-discipline, self-organization, leading an active and diverse life, the acquisition of multiple skills and – very importantly – a large set of values.

Such objectives can only be achieved, if children are separated from the negative impact of the social and media environment. Even if the school system is doing its best, upon leaving and immersion in the unhealthy environment, this positive impact is reduced to zero.

In about ten years, this form of high school education could become available for about 10% of high school students. There are currently about 300,000 high school students in Bulgaria. One of those schools for 600 adolescent girls and boys with all its facilities (teaching facilities, dormitories, sports facilities, art rooms, canteens, etc.) would

cost about BGN 10 million. With an annual investment of BGN 50 million in similar schools, i.e. construction of 5 boarding schools, 3,000 students could be enrolled in them.

Obviously, this is an expensive investment, and the upkeep of such schools is also expensive, but the cost is totally worth it. It is the only way to build a new elite, a new high quality intelligentsia with a high level of morality, far from the vulgarity and primitivism that overwhelms everything in our country. This elite will gradually pull everything else up to a higher quality of professions, relationships, and knowledge.

The Direct Democracy Party will implement at all costs such a project for similar educational complexes, which will operate to the highest international standards. This is a key investment in the future of the nation.

Consideration should also be given to such important elements of the organisation of education as:

1. the role and functions of the inspectorates;
2. the management and financing of education;
3. the preparation and the continuing training of the directors;
4. system for constant study and application of the world experience;
5. international relations;
6. improvement of the school buildings and facilities;
7. the existence and observance of a moral code of the teacher.

### *Auxiliary Schools*

The level of maturity of a society is judged by the way it treats its weaker and defenceless members. Some of these are children with special educational needs. That is why we shall offer a **Profession and de-**

**cent work for every such student.** This should be the main objective and motto of schools that train students with intellectual disabilities for the labour market. The aim here is not to prepare for further training, as this is considered to be the final stage. Schools should therefore not only feel responsible for training, but also for the successful placement of pupils at work afterwards. Of course, they do not always succeed, but their efforts must be directed towards achieving this goal.

Intellectually challenged students are statistically about 2- 2.5% of all students. They have the right to training, social and professional realization. These young people need to be offered prospects so that they do not become a problem for themselves, for their relatives and for society as a whole.

In practical terms, the introduction of special vocational training for young people with varying degrees of intellectual disabilities implies not only restructuring of training and the creation of a new legislative base, but also the creation of multiple working relationships. This is a process that requires the efforts of many people, time, energy and resources. This is an interactive process in which doctors, teachers, educators, psychologists, job instructors, experts and social workers have to overcome many problems related to the individual characteristics, abilities and needs of students.

The provision of prospects for young people with special educational needs is undoubtedly a test for both students and their parents, as well as for the school and society as a whole. At the same time, these students should not be classified as a problem, since this would work against them. If we accept that practical training is too expensive and look at it from a financial point of view, then we have to ask ourselves what the costs would be if these young people were not offered such prospects (as is the case at the moment). In the future, this would entail costs for maintaining their social security, as well as the costs in-

volved in dealing with a large number of social problems arising from the inactivity of these young people. Finally, when we look at things from this perspective, the cost of practical training for pupils with intellectual disabilities is not an unreasonably large investment.

The education of children with intellectual disability is an important element of the general education policy. By providing equal educational opportunities for these children, they are also given the chance of prospects which in turn is a sign of an effective social and educational policy. Education plans must be in a process of continuous development. Children with special educational needs (particularly those with mental disabilities) also require higher skills and knowledge on the part of teachers. This in turn requires the continuous improvement of the qualifications of the teachers themselves.

### *Religious education*

Education in Bulgaria is secular. This could not be otherwise given that about 10% of the population professes a different religion. Many do not adhere to any faith, and do not want their children to fall under the influence of any clerics. Religions should therefore be studied as a part of the regular course of study in both academic and comparative terms. This should include the history of religions, basic principles and messages, religious symbols and their meaning, mythology, etc.

At the same time, however, it would be advisable to create Saturday or Sunday religious schools on a voluntary basis in school buildings. The state, in cooperation with the Bulgarian Orthodox Church should support the organization and financing of such extracurricular activities.

### 3. Higher education

The legislative framework in the field of higher education should provide active mechanisms to provide widely accessible and high-quality education. An education which focuses on real knowledge and skills, taking into account the dynamics of the labour market and technological developments, strong control mechanisms (internal and external) and the provision of a wide range of educational services beyond the traditional specialties of continuous training.

The role of Bulgarian higher education is to provide a basic and qualified human resource, with skills and abilities, and to be the safest guarantor of sustainable development of our country in the long term. It must become a national priority because it is the key to the development of the economy and of our society as a whole.

In order to solve the above problems, work needs to be undertaken in the following areas:

#### *Phase I (1st term in office)*

a. The authority of each of the universities will be analysed in detail and the criteria for attestation shall be prepared together with leading foreign institutions. (This approach should also be applied in the other spheres of public life. The aim is to create objective criteria and approaches that are not subject to conjuncture or corporate interference.) The higher education institutions that do not meet the required criteria should be closed.

b. The practice of the academic and teaching capacity in certain universities being reliant on retired teachers from other universities needs to desist.

c. The number of students, as well as their specialities, should be based on actual surveys and forecasts on the needs of the economy for

the forthcoming 10–20 years. Private institutions of higher education should also be subject to this type of regulation. The aim is to avoid “flooding” the labour market with certain types of specialists, which can lead to a situation in which business is not capable of absorbing them.

d. The funding of state universities should not be based on the number of students studying in them, but on their prestige and importance for the national business, science and the prosperity of the nation. The rating system of higher education institutions (according to objective criteria) should have a real impact on the subsidy allocated to each university.

e. Higher education institutions should introduce a preparatory semester (especially in the technical ones) in which the basic knowledge acquired at the secondary school is revised and consolidated for the needs of the relevant higher institution. This preparatory semester should be a temporary measure (for 10–12 years) until the positive results of changes in secondary education are felt.

f. The autonomy of higher education institutes should apply only in as far as teaching and scientific work is concerned. The administration of state-run HEIs, especially in terms of their financial subsidy should be a matter for the state.

g. The academic positions of professors – senior assistants, associate professors and professors – shall not be tenured for life, as is currently the case. Defining real criteria (similar to those of the leading foreign educational centres) for assessing the effectiveness of each of the teachers. The assessment shall pay significant attention to the “end – users” of their work – students and graduates.

h. A system of differentiated remuneration for teaching work, based on an integrated assessment of the actual work done shall be established. This shall include preparation for academic hours, cor-



rection and review of continuous course work, individual and group work with students, etc., and not only on the amount of lecture hours. The financial incentive shall be established to allow proven experts in different fields to conduct classes and lectures.

j. In order to attract the best quality and appropriate young graduates to the teaching, the base salary for new lecturers should be significantly increased.

k. Higher education institutions should be financially stimulated in their intentions to reform and modernize their curricula and provide training with modern facilities and resources. They shall need to focus on specialties with a strategic role in the development of the economy and society and to develop science. Cooperation between universities, research institutes and business need to be stimulated. Innovation in science and technology must quickly become a cornerstone of the educational process.

l. The architectural environment and surroundings in higher education institutions must be designed in such a way as to promote the aesthetic development of the future elite of the nation.

### *Phase II (II term in office)*

1. Reduction of state universities to 7 – 1 in the six regions and 1 in Sofia.

2. A drastic increase in the requirements for universities within the Law on Higher Education and the activities of the National Agency for Evaluation and Accreditation.

3. Each university shall offer all branches of knowledge, in order to correspond to its name and not just be a part of a given science (e.g. Mining and Geology University, or Agricultural University).

4. The construction of new university complexes with the necessary educational buildings, student campuses, sports facilities, park

environment, laboratories, scientific units, etc. In this way, students will study and live in a cultural environment, as in the best universities anywhere in the world. The first will be Sofia University, constructed on the southern slopes of the Balkan Mountains between Kremikovtsi and Lokorsko.

5. Reduction of the current approx. 230,000 state-funded students (a way to concealing youth unemployment) to no more than 100,000 – 120,000, who will be subject to far more stringent requirements.

## 2. SCIENCE

In the last 30 years, science in Bulgaria has suffered a real pogrom. This is absolutely unacceptable in the 21st century – the century of intellectual knowledge and the permanent scientific revolution.

In order to revive science, the following measures must be taken as a matter of urgency:

1. Development of a strategy for science by the Bulgarian Academy of Science (BAN) with the help of the most prestigious universities in Bulgaria.

2. Ensuring strong financial flows in three areas:

d. European Structural Funds;

e. State budget;

f. Large business stimulated by appropriate tax relief.

3. Defining key for the country scientific directions with priority over the others:

a. Agricultural technology, animal breeds, seeds, fruit trees, vegetables, vines and machinery.

b. Energy technologies such as biogas production, the use of hy-

drogen sulphide from the Black Sea, hydrogen technologies to ensure the full energy independence of the country.

c. Nanotechnology.

d. IT technology.

### 3. SPORT

Like any other sphere in a poorly governed state, sport in Bulgaria has reached the bottom when compared to a few decades ago, when it was under the protection of the state and served to bolster the nation's image.

For the past 30 years, state support for high-level sport has mainly been used as a means of siphoning-off money, corruption and mafia schemes. Bulgaria's sportsmen are the victims, placing their careers, hard work and health on the line to fill other people's pockets.

Because high-level sport demands big money, and in Bulgarian there is no one else who can provide it, we believe that until the existing corruption schemes are not completely cleared up, money for high-level sport should not be provided. There could perhaps be a few exceptions when there is a motivated and prepared athlete or group of athletes with real opportunities to win big competitions.

Therefore, during our first term in office, when we will be making huge investments in all sectors of activity, we intend to place the emphasis entirely on non-professional mass sport. We want to involve as much of the Bulgarian youth as possible, and to provide conditions for pleasant sport for people outside this age category.

The following needs to be done to develop mass sport:

a. Construction of easily accessible swimming pools, basketball courts, tennis courts, ice rinks – indoors or outdoors – in all districts of Sofia with a population of over 100,000. Such facilities should also

be built in the provinces. Their number in individual cities depends on the concentration of population;

b. School swimming pools should be repaired and normal operating conditions ensured;

c. Construction of cycle paths and specialized sports grounds in local parks. Only in this way will it be possible to ensure that physical exercise and sport become a widespread element in people's lives;

d. The mandatory introduction of serious tax relief for companies that support or finance sports clubs and federations or build cycle paths, sports grounds and other sports facilities;

During the second term in office of the Direct Democracy party, we will proceed to implement an ambitious programme, backed with financial resources, to raise the image of Bulgaria as a sporting country with excellence in professional sport.

## 4. CULTURE

As in all other spheres, culture has not been spared degradation, vulgarisation and corruption. What are the problems in the various sectors:

### THEATRE

#### *What are the problems of the theatre in Bulgaria today?*

After the democratic changes in 1989, the theatre is no longer fully subsidised by the state. There are also examples of successful private theatres. The main problem of today for theatres is to define the parameters of artistic and commercial performances. Many perfor-

mances in the 1990s attracted audiences with scandalous dialogues, costumes and stage design. Today, this is no longer of interest, but the question of what is artistic and what is commercial is still relevant. The theatre has to present something new while at the same time making the audience happy, but without resorting to a lack of taste. Another problem is the great power of theatre directors. Unfortunately, they are not sufficiently well-trained as managers and are unable to manage theatrical troupes or the means of performance production.

Another problem, though not as significant for the theatre processes, is the low level of education of the “second echelon”. The low salary of theatre craftsmen, stage workers, lighting operatives, carpenters, wardrobe managers etc., leads to a high turnover and hence the hiring of unqualified people.

### *How can these problems be solved?*

We should rely more on high-quality performances and not underestimate the audience. The creative process cannot be an end in itself. Or, as Stanislavski said, “Love art within yourself, not yourself in art.” We also want to encourage young people to return to Bulgaria, because in other places around the world they will have to make greater compromises, especially in the field of art.

### *What will we do in our two terms in office?*

Theatres in the major cities can be rebuilt by uniting the budgets of several cities and moving performances from city to city. In this way, there could be performances all over the country. The peregrination of a theatre from Pleven to Sofia, for example, may be reminiscent of the Bulgarian Revival, but there will only be a result if the performance is performed on a Pleven stage. Over the last 20 years, graduate students have not been allocated internships and this has prevented them from

debuting on a professional stage. Actors can therefore be provided with internships under professional conditions and employed as an actor trainee at low pay.

*What will this achieve?*

We will continue the path of decentralisation. We will support independent troupes with a more radical language.

We will allow competent directors to allocate delegated budgets themselves and determine staff numbers in theatres. Theatre financing cannot be the sole responsibility of the state. It should also be the responsibility of those who consume it, i.e. municipalities (districts).

## CINEMA

*What are the problems of cinema in Bulgaria today?*

Film creativity in our country has suffered aesthetic problems for more than a hundred years. Our cinema has never participated in world schools and currents. It has not developed its own cinema language and has left no trace in the world cultural process. A small exception was in the 1960s, when the so-called “poetic cinema” was formed in Bulgaria. One a vivid example was “On the Small Island” by director Rangel Valchanov, written by Valeri Petrov.

An economic problem for the cinema today is the lack of adequate distribution in Bulgaria. Over the last 20 years, over 600 cinemas have been closed and film screening has been concentrated in shopping malls. A vicious practice is that cinemas and distribution companies are owned by the same persons. This leads to a limitation of the showing of Bulgarian cinema films, since they are not profitable enough compared to mainstream films from the United States.

Another serious problem is the allocation of state subsidies through specially established commissions run by the National Film Centre. The members of the committees are elected by branch associations and the Union of Filmmakers, thus creating conditions for lobbying and corruption.

*How can these problems be solved?*

Regarding cinema screenplay writing, there has been some improvement with the introduction of a new specialty of “Dramaturgy” in film schools. An increasing number of screenplay writers need to be accepted, in order to create a bank of scripts for coming years. Young people need to be encouraged to return to Bulgaria after receiving education at prestigious universities abroad. Regarding the economic problem, the committees should support commercially oriented cinema at a ratio of around 75%, while only 25% should be for debuts and authors’ cinema. This way the distributors will have an interest in distributing Bulgarian films.

*What can we do in two terms in office?*

Certain movie theatres in the cities could be rebuilt and supported by the “Culture” departments in the larger municipalities. Documentary cinema has to completely move over to television, since it has zero distribution in cinemas.

*What will this achieve?*

By improving film screenplays and directing the committees towards mainstream production, we hope to bring viewers back to the salons. Currently, TV series are more popular than large-screen cinema. We should especially note that young writers work on TV series.

The annual payment of the entire subsidy as implementation of the Law on the Film Industry will enable many young people to make their first films and ensure the employment of a greater number of professionals in the cinema business. The opening of new cinemas in the country will help the distribution of Bulgarian cinema.

## LIBRARIES

In every developed society, libraries are the main centres which provide culture and information for every person. They are a hub of diverse cultural contacts and integrated regional information centres.

The problems with library services are grouped into two main groups – **legal** and **professional**.

**The first problem** related to basic and specialized library services, lies in the different interpretation of certain articles, specific provisions and norms of the Public Libraries Act (in force since 06.07.2009) by local authorities.

This is due to the lack of tools developed for its application – recommendations for the implementation of the Public Libraries Act and above all the lack of a standard for library information services.

**The second problem** with library services is the formal existence of a National Council on Library Affairs, the information about which, according to the Ministry of Culture website, is not entirely reliable.

**The third problem** in the first group is related to the municipalities. For the most part they have not implemented the texts of the Public Libraries Act. This concerns the establishment of municipal commissions for the development of library-information services for citizens.

There is no legal requirement in the Law on Local Administration



to define the provision of library and information services as a type of administrative service.

The purely **professional** problems that need to be resolved by the Methodological Department of the National Library “St. Cyril and Methodius“ and the Bulgarian Library and Information Association are:

- a. Outdated standards for bibliographic description;
- b. Obsolete and non-compliant statistics and logs for daily/monthly/annual reporting;
- c. The Library Manager’s Guide is voluntary rather than mandatory.

The problems with the National Library are traditional – a lack of funds. There is an astonishing lack of funds for postal costs for international book exchange. The lack of storage facilities is also a significant problem. It is criminal to store valuable 18th–15th century manuscripts in a former toilet.

From a positive point of view, we intend to carry out a complete overhaul of the National Library “Sts.Cyril and Methodius” during our first term in office. During our second term, we will take the necessary actions to design and build a second mirror building of the library on designated land behind the current building, taking into account the latest digital and visual technologies.

## **ART GALLERIES**

In Sofia we intend to establish a future state centre where all major state institutions will be located. This will gradually lead to the emptying of the current city center from administrative buildings. It will

then be turned into a pedestrian tourist and cultural zone. Thus a large part of the vacated buildings in the centre of Sofia will be turned over for use as a museum of Bulgarian fine arts to exhibit many of the available exhibits currently stored in terrible conditions and inaccessible to citizens and tourists.

## **COMMUNITY CENTRES – CHITALISHTE**

The history of the Chitalishte or community centre reflects the historical vagaries that marked the era of our National Revival. The idea for the establishment of the Chitalishte union was centred around the Bulgarian Chitalishte in Istanbul. The plan was discussed on April 5, 1870 and it was proposed that “each Chitalishte should hold a meeting on the above issue”. The Union of National Chitalishtes was established in 1911 after Liberation from the Ottoman Empire.

Chitalishte are essentially the cultural and information centres of the local community. Their role is determined by tradition. Community chitalishte have existed in the modern world for nearly 160 years. They also satisfy the needs of people for an educational and cultural product. From the opportunity to participate in amateur creativity, to becoming an artist. We should not forget that the name “chitalishte” comes from the verb to “read.”

As in any other sphere of public life in our country, in the years of transition from communism, the Chitalishte became a facade for enrichment, based not on creative activities but on a simple deception. Countless consultancy firms, which are by their very nature parasites, have very easily managed to find a way to siphon off European Union funds. This unfortunately benefits only the “consultants”, who under different identities are the main beneficiary at each stage of a specific project.

The oldest cultural association in Southeast Europe – the Union of National Chitalishtes in Bulgaria – has become the victims of such crime.

Chitalishte can again play a significant role in reviving the nation, as they played during the Renaissance era. Almost every Chitalishte can find a European partner, engage in meaningful new activities, cooperation and joint participation in projects.

It is with great sadness and nostalgia that we have observed the collapse of the Bulgarian village. On the other hand, there are more than 2600 rural community centres. Based on a sensible policy for their revival, the chitalishte can become the basis for reviving the villages.

Young people should be stimulated to take a renewed interest in the Chitalishte – in parallel with the sensible absorption of European funds. Young people should be asked what they expect from the Chitalishte; what do they want a Chitalishte to provide. If they are unable to answer, then Chitalishte activists should help them with information, and their own experience in working with young people. Recently there has been a return of young people to the Chitalishtes – so far mostly in dance collectives and schools. The magic of Bulgarian folklore is attracting more and more of them.

## **CRAFTS**

The Direct Democracy Party will devise a strategy to preserve traditional crafts and craftsmanship, rooted for centuries in our traditions. This will be achieved through craft courses and the creation of high quality souvenirs for the tourist sector.

## MAINTENANCE OF CHURCHES AND MONASTERIES

Until recently, issues of maintaining, conserving, restoring and renovating the old buildings of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church within the Republic of Bulgaria (churches, chapels, monasteries and cells) were managed by the former National Institute for Cultural Monuments (current NICM), established in the mid-1950s.

This was a period of intense preservation of cultural monuments and the Institute carried out considerable activity in searching for, archiving, research, documentation and registration of immovable cultural monuments within the entire territory of Bulgaria. It was particularly active and effective in the 1970s, when the state provided significant funds for the preservation and maintenance of immovable cultural monuments. Three branches were established throughout the country to identify and restore all monuments on their territory.

This activity ceased after 1990. The former directorates of “Research”, “Design”, “Monuments” (restoration) and “Implementation”, as well as their branches in the country were “denationalised”, i.e. were closed down. At the present time, the remainder of the National Institute for Cultural Monuments represented by the National Institute for Immovable Cultural Heritage (NIICH) of the Ministry of Culture mainly performs control and coordination functions. Activities connected immovable cultural monuments are transferred chaotically and uncontrollably into the domain of private construction companies without the necessary qualifications. Many gross violations have been committed with the de-registration of many buildings from the state register. Modern glass mastodons with bizarre and pointless roof shapes are rising uncontrollably in their places. There is no ecclesiastical or state agency whose function it is to approve the proposed projects on a competitive basis. This is not only the case in new con-

struction, but also for the renewal and restoration of the immovable cultural monuments.

These monuments include fortresses, defensive structures, old bridges, residential buildings of all ages, historic places, and buildings related to historical events and architectural and artistic monuments – buildings with artistic decoration and churches with frescoes, iconostasis with icons, woodcarvings, church furniture and settlements. Prior to 1990, the state financed all work connected with the preservation of cultural and historical heritage, including the restoration of immovable monuments of national importance – residential buildings, churches and monasteries. It had done so for many years. For more than 30 years now, the democratic state has paid no attention to cultural heritage, while boasting about it to the world. Private tourism has taken advantage of the historical heritage preserved and restored with state funds, while turning it to private use only. Since the private businesses still have to maintain the buildings to maintain its profits, this leads to unprofessional arbitrary “restoration” and modern reconstructions which destroy the authenticity of the sites.

Unfortunately, the results of maintaining the church and monastery complexes is more than deplorable. Most of the numerous village churches and those in smaller towns are not maintained at all due to lack of funds. They are cared for depending on the abilities and understandings of local priests, who end up damaging the authenticity of the buildings with uncontrolled repairs and renovation. They are not to blame for this state of affairs. They are priests, not builders; they are not restorers or bankers who can provide the finance themselves.

Therefore, the following actions need to be taken for the actual preservation, maintenance and restoration of the architectural and artistic monuments of culture by the Holy Synod:

1. This will be achieved by passing a special law, developed, discussed and adopted without delay, aimed at restoring all lands, forests, estates and other church and ecclesiastical properties that have not yet been restored to the Holy Synod by the state or municipalities.

2. Those articles of the Statutes of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, adopted at a recent session of the Church Council, prohibiting the sale and/or replacement of these church properties, except in exceptional cases and with the full supremacy of the Holy Synod shall be accepted. Moreover, their real value shall be calculated in the aims of preserving them, and to provide the funds necessary both for the maintenance of the Church and for the maintenance of the religious monuments of culture.

3. A plan must be designed for resolving issues connected with the conservation of cultural monuments owned by the Bulgarian Orthodox Church. Over the past 20 years, the former National Institute of Cultural Monuments (now NIICH), have identified about 1200 churches built from the 9th to the beginning of the 20th century. Around 100 of these churches are from the Middle Ages (9th–14th century) and the Late Middle Ages (from the 15th to the 18th century – the time of the Turkish rule over Bulgaria). The total number of churches from the two periods is about 100. Most of them are preserved in their entirety. Most churches, monuments of culture, are from the Renaissance period – from the end of the 18th to the beginning of the 20th century – about 1000 (according to data from the scientific archive of the old institute for monuments of culture). This vast amount of ancient and more modern churches needs constant maintenance. Built over a period of 1,200 years, today they all need maintenance, if we are to preserve them. Each of them has its own unique artistic decoration of murals, woodcarving and icons. No one nation has the power to allocate a huge amount of money to this

end. We need to plan the stages and resources for the long-term implementation of a programme for the conservation of this type of cultural heritage.

4. In order to achieve this goal, the state authorities and the Holy Synod need to unite efforts to resolve these problems, regardless of the situation that the Church was separated from the state as early as 1948. This is not a matter of state intervention, but coordinating efforts to resolve a shared problem.

5. The establishment of an effective, strict and punitive law on cultural monuments which will provide a final solution to this shared problem. Such a law exists with a series of supplements, but it also contains a number of weaknesses and disadvantages caused by stakeholders.

6. Establishment of a commission or artistic council as a body of the Holy Synod which will defend its interests in this area. This council should consist of specialist theologians, a church museum, as well as specialists in church architecture, art history, church painting, church inventory and woodcarving. The task of this artistic council will also be to supervise contemporary church construction awarded through competitions, as well as competitions for the painting of murals and icons and woodcarvings. To prevent the creation of works with poor artistic qualities by unskilled and inexperienced artists, the art council will issue permits to artists who have passed an exam and presented work that meets the requirements – subject, canonical iconography and composition, presence of artistic qualities.

7. An important condition for the beneficial cooperation between the Holy Synod and the state is the state to create a new specialized structure entirely responsible for the preservation of cultural monuments such as the National Institute for Cultural Monuments, which possesses the appropriate powers, qualified team and financial

resources. The Patriarch of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church in his capacity as chairman of the Holy Synod must hold the deciding opinion on the matter of the conservation of its property – i.e. ancient church which survived for 500 years under the dependence of the non-Christians; churches which preserved the national consciousness of the Bulgarians with the help of the Christian religion.

Our assistance to Bulgarian church communities located outside the Republic of Bulgaria can be grouped in two areas:

1. Finding the right mechanism for financing and supervising the construction and restoration works of the material funds of these communities.

2. Finding the right approach at government level with regard to the return of disputed lands (which once belonged to these communities) located outside the borders of Bulgaria. If this is impossible for legal or other reasons, then at least the historical boundaries of these church communities should be outlined, in order to provide a bridge between our country and the population with Bulgarian self-consciousness living in the respective country.

With regard to managing their property, the church communities should have at least 50% representation in the respective executive body.

3. Evaluation of the reforms in education, science, culture and work with the youth

During the first term of the Direct Democracy party in the field of education, we envisage the following expenditure **outside the traditional budgets**:

- BGN 200 million – for the construction of 20 new schools in restored villages;



- BGN 100 million – for re-equipping and adaptation of general education schools according to stages: separately for primary education, for junior high school and high school.

- BGN 40 million – for technical equipment with new communication resources: electronic boards, LCD-panels, audio systems, etc.

**Total in the area of education – BGN 340 million**

### **FOR SCIENCE:**

- BGN 50 million – for the provision of modern equipment in scientific institutes, centres and laboratories.

- BGN 100 million – for scientific developments on a project basis.

**Total for science – BGN 150 million**

### **FOR CULTURE:**

- BGN 50 million – for new theatre productions
- BGN 50 million – for film productions
- BGN 50 million – to support book publishing
- BGN 30 million – for orchestras and music
- BGN 30 million – for art galleries
- BGN 10 million – for libraries and chitalishte community centres

**Total for culture – BGN 220 million**

**For mass sport – BGN 100 million**

**Total expenditure in the field of education, science, culture and sport in the first term – BGN 810 million**

**Direct revenue from activities in this area is not expected.**

## **7. HEALTHCARE**

### **1. ACCENTS**

The accents in the field of health are the following:

1. Putting the patient, not profit, cash flows or commerce, at the centre of the health system.

2. Affordable healthcare for every Bulgarian citizen – regardless of which part of Bulgaria he or she lives in, ethnic group, or whether they have the money to pay or not. At the beginning of the 21st century, with modern technologies and labour productivity, every country which is not in the Third World must be organised in such a way as to provide **every citizen with full medical treatment at all times**. Because our citizens are human beings and because part of the humanistic ideals of our modern times.

3. More prevention! From primary treatment to primary prevention.

4. The principle of continuity must be observed. Beneficial heritage must be preserved and multiplied. It must be improved and perfected with our reforms and passed on to those coming after us.

## 2. CONDITION AND PROBLEMS

1. Bulgaria has allocated for healthcare in 2018. **8.1% of GDP**, with **4.5% of GDP** coming from the budget and health insurance<sup>2</sup>. Private expenditure – mainly direct payments from patients – increased from 39.1% in 2000 to about 46–47% of total spending in 2015 and represents the largest source of funding for health care in Bulgaria<sup>3</sup>.

2. While it has doubled since 2005, per capita healthcare expenditure of €1311 is the fourth lowest in the EU in 2017. This represents **8.1% of GDP**, which is below the EU average of 9.8%. Direct payments (DP) by consumers in 2017 were the highest in the EU (46.6% compared to 15.8% on average and are about **BGN 3,663 million** for 2017). This is mainly due to the additional fees for medicinal products, dental and outpatient care, for medical devices. The widespread practice of unofficial payments also increases household spending on healthcare.

3. All the primary and predominant parts of specialized medical care in Bulgaria are **privately** owned. The distribution of specialists throughout the territory of the country is characterized by large regional differences.

4. This fact leads **to deep inequalities** in access to medical services and to a number of social strata being almost completely deprived of them. The social health insurance system is compulsory, but in practice there are significant differences in terms of population coverage

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.minfin.bg/bg/1231>

<sup>3</sup> Here and in a number of the following findings we have made use of the conclusions and data from the report “Bulgaria. Analysis of the health system” by the team of authors, published by the Regional Office of the WHO for Europe// [www.researchgate.net/publication/334203713\\_Blgaria\\_Analiz\\_na\\_zdravnata\\_sistema\\_2018](http://www.researchgate.net/publication/334203713_Blgaria_Analiz_na_zdravnata_sistema_2018)

and what is offered in the package of health activities. **One in seven Bulgarians do not have health insurance.** ([https://ec.europa.eu/health/sites/health/files/state/docs/2019\\_chp\\_bulgaria\\_bulgarian.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/health/sites/health/files/state/docs/2019_chp_bulgaria_bulgarian.pdf)).

5. There are a very high percentage of poor families experiencing **difficulties in obtaining health services.** If for such families in the EU the costs of medicines, dental care and medical care are reimbursed 100%, in our country this figure is 52%, 60% and 62% respectively.

6. Since the “reforms „of the late 1990s, the focus in healthcare has not been on treatment, but **on managing cash flows.** The prevalence of commercial over humanitarian and medical principles has led to severe corruption from top to bottom, to the **dehumanization of the medical profession,** to the draining of a significant part of the funds that society devotes to health, to severe disproportions in the organization of health care.

7. **There has been a process of resizing of clinical assistance,** with hospitalizations in Bulgaria exceeding 20% of the EU standard. This fact suggests ineffective outpatient medical care and the lack of integration and coordination between different levels and units in the system.

8. At the same time there is a shortage of **hospitals for long-term treatment, for psychiatric care,** almost complete absence of **palliative care centres** and organization for **home care.**

9. **Dental care** is Dickensian. There are many modern clinics, but they are concentrated almost entirely in the big cities and only people with incomes above average benefit from such care. The NHIF budget covers a minimum amount of services, while most of the dental care is paid for by patients.

10. **The General Practitioner (GP)** has become a meaningless institution that practically does not provide treatment, but referrals

to specialists. The GP is a “gatekeeper,, of the system to the next levels, namely specialized outpatient and hospital care. The number of general practitioners in Bulgaria is constantly decreasing and access to primary care in rural and remote areas is limited.

11. **The planning, regulation of the health system and information management** is ineffective and hampered by the mixed public-private funding system and the mixed state-municipal system of public health organization. The lack of a clear distinction between the activities under different types of ownership only leads to a draining of resources, corruption and inefficiency of health services.

12. The **rate of infectious diseases** remains high compared to EU standards and vaccination rates for a number of diseases are lower than those recommended by the WHO.

### **3. A REFORM PROGRAMME WITHIN A SINGLE TERM (4 YEARS) AND MEDIUM-TERM PERIOD (10 YEARS)**

#### **1. Health reform**

##### *1.1. Universal accessibility to health care of the entire population without exception.*

The aim of the reform we are advocating is to change the current model of healthcare, according to which it is a commercial activity for the provision of health services. We want to resurrect, in modern conditions, the familiar classic model of humanitarian aid for the sick or traumatized. The task will be to alleviate suffering, heal and prolong patients lives. At the heart of this activity is the patient, not the cash flows. This is the foundation on which all elements of the reform are based.

### *1.2. Separation of state and private healthcare*

The proper functioning of medical establishments requires a clear distinction between public and private healthcare and the eradication of the current vicious practices. Within 2 terms in office, private non-hospital and hospital establishments will have to switch to entirely their own funding (from patient fees, donations, treatment of foreigners, etc.) without receiving any budget and state funds. By exception, private medical establishments may receive budgetary funding only in the following cases:

1. Participation in national scientific projects on a competitive basis.
2. Performance of specialized high-technological procedures, therapies and operations, which the public medical institutions on the territory of Bulgaria do not offer.

The doctors and medical staff of public medical institutions will not be allowed to practice in any form in private institutions.

### *1.3. Centralizing public health care in the hands of the state*

The current system of mixed state and municipal public health is cumbersome, difficult to manage, highly bureaucratic, with vague responsibility, and an appropriate environment for corruption. In practice, municipal health care now receives a large part of the funds for maintenance of its medical institutions from the NHIF and from budget transfers. Such a dual hierarchy does not allow for the harmonious and integrated organization of healthcare on a national scale. It makes it difficult to replace equipment, renovate facilities, or implement revolutionary medical practices. Therefore, we envisage the transfer of all non-hospital and hospital facilities, laboratories, specialized national hospitals, emergency medical centres, psychiatric hospitals, transfusion haematology and dialysis centres, polyclinics, etc. to a

centralized hierarchy, financing and state management.

Municipalities, as well as various organisations (such as the Church), will retain the right to set up and maintain their health care facilities under the unified methodological guidance of the Ministry of Health, but will not be entitled to a state subsidy for their funding unless they provide services that other health care facilities do not provide.

#### *1.4. Liquidation of the Health Insurance Fund and establishment of a special directorate in the Ministry of Finance dealing with the financing of health care.*

If we look at public health spending in 2017 and 2018, for which there is clear accountability, we will see the following picture:

In 2017, public funds spent in the field of health amounted to **BGN 4,355.3 million** and represent **4.4%** of GDP. Another **BGN 3,663 million** were spent in the form of private direct payments.

From public funds, the revenue from health insurance contributions received under the NHIF budget amounted to **BGN 2,404.2 million**.

The remaining **BGN 1,951.1 million** (up to the amount of BGN 4,355.3 million) consisted of transfers from the state budget covering the costs of:

- emergency medical centres,
- regional inspections,
- transfusion haematology centres,
- policy to implement national health programmes on strategic health priorities and socially significant diseases,
- provision of medicines, consumables and organic products from central procurement,
- diagnostic and consultative and medical activities in medical

institutions, in the system of Ministry of Health, MTITC (Ministry of Transport, Information Technology and Communications), Council of Ministers, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Interior and MYS (Ministry of Youth and Sports).

So, we have:

- **2 404** million payments under the National Health Insurance Fund,
- **1 951** million transfers from the budget,
- **3 663** million private direct payments.

We propose that the NHIF be liquidated, that the health contributions paid by employers, employed workers and self-insurance be cancelled, and that the funds required for health care be raised by increasing VAT by 5 percentage points (up to 25%), which by law can be used exclusively for health purposes.

These 5 additional percentage points of VAT (i.e. a one-quarter increase in VAT) are almost exactly equal to the revenues collected by the NHIF:

- In 2017, the amounts collected under VAT amounted to BGN 9.3 billion. A quarter of BGN 9.3 billion is BGN 2,324 million. Which is only **BGN 80 million less** than the amounts collected by the NHIF for 2017, – 2,404 million,

- In 2018, the amounts collected under VAT amounted to BGN 10.1 billion. A quarter of BGN 10.1 billion is BGN 2,525 million, which is **BGN 108 million less** than the amounts collected by the NHIF for 2018, – BGN 2,633 million.

However, it should be borne in mind that the NHIF spends annually about 70 million for administrative costs, so the revenue collected either way would be roughly the same.



An alternative to this model is the creation of a multitude of health funds with the idea of significant competition between them, but this is a detrimental and vicious model. This form has been perfected in the US. In 2017 it was found that 34% of all healthcare funds go to administrative costs (and especially to the functioning of the many health insurance companies). Given that for 2017, a colossal 17.9% of US GDP went to healthcare<sup>4</sup>, which in turn amounted to \$19.39 trillion, i.e. \$3.47 trillion, more than a trillion dollars were spent on administering healthcare. It is no coincidence that one of the most influential presidential candidates of the Democratic Party, Bernie Sanders, promotes the idea of **Medicare for All**, which he calculated should save about \$600 billion in administrative costs, while providing adequate medical services for all.

The model we propose in our view will significantly optimize healthcare costs in Bulgaria and will achieve a saving of no less than 20% when completely integrated. With these savings, we intend to extend the healthcare services for which citizens are now paying directly from their pockets (e.g. dental services). We aim to reduce direct personal healthcare costs from the current 46–47% to no more than 30% and, at the next stage, to 15–16%, which is the European standard for insured citizens.

Collecting health care funds by increasing VAT makes it impossible to avoid paying money for health care. It ensures social justice, because the rich through their large consumption pay significantly more. It drastically reduces bureaucracy and allows every Bulgarian citizen to receive the full package of medical services.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.statista.com/statistics/184968/us-health-expenditure-as-percent-of-gdp-since-1960/>

### ***1.5. Establishment of a health database and health card***

An extremely important part of the reform is the creation of an electronic individual card for every Bulgarian citizen and an electronic health database for all registered patients in Bulgaria. The health card will contain absolutely all sicknesses, treatment, tests carried out, prescribed medicines, check-ups, procedures, manipulations, operations and therapies, and for last 4 types of intervention (check-ups, procedures, manipulations, operations) a video recording is entered in the databases. In this way, every citizen receives a complete history of all illnesses and injuries suffered, treatment and health status, while keeping the written work of doctors and their assistants to a reasonable minimum.

Every citizen's health card shall be integrated into the electronic chip of the identity card, which is also a driver's license, social security document, electronic signature and identification certificate.

The electronic database records every medical intervention on every Bulgarian citizen, allows for the tracking of all their diseases, provides the health authorities with complete information at every specific moment about the morbidity picture both for the whole territory and for individual districts. It allows for the tracking of all epidemics in their earliest stages, shows which types of diseases are increasing and which are decreasing. It provides clear information about the health status of the population of all ages and allows the right measures to be taken to deal with negative trends. It suggests where there are problems with the functioning of hospitals or emergency services and provides a clear picture of the qualification and engagement of every doctor or medical person.

### ***1.6. Revival of polyclinics.***

We envisage reviving full polyclinic treatment and diagnosis by providing support for polyclinics with all necessary specialists. They

will be provided with the most modern equipment and apparatus needed. We will facilitate citizens access to specialists, without necessarily going through the GP, whose institution, as has been pointed out, has become a “gatekeeper“ and “distributor of referrals”, an unnecessary link and bottleneck in the entire system. We will also create conditions for full outpatient treatment for less serious cases.

### *1.7. Transforming the functions of general practitioners*

The role of the GP will be transformed with an emphasis on prevention and home visits. We intend to direct the activities of general practitioners towards prevention with mandatory complete examination of all registered citizens at least once a year. These examinations will be one of the most important duties of general practitioners. They will keep a record of examinations and make an annual report on the health of their contingent with estimates of needs and potential costs for the coming year.

The second main duty of general practitioners will be to visit the homes of the chronically ill, the disabled, the temporarily incapacitated and the contagious.

Village doctors will be a special case. They will be general practitioners with a wide profile of specialities. Village doctors will receive special status and 50% higher salary. They will be equipped with modern equipment and a wide range of life-saving and other medicines. They will be provided with a medical post, off-road car and family accommodation. Each village doctor will be responsible for a group of villages within a radius of 10–15 km.

## 2. Organization of medical care on a national scale

### *2.1. Construction of 8 super-hospitals providing all medical profiles*

There will be one super-hospital for each of the 6 economic districts of Bulgaria and 2 in Sofia city. They will be equipped with the most advanced medical equipment possible and will implement all revolutionary medical practices. The doctors working in them will have undergone internships in the most prestigious clinics in the world. In each of these hospitals, every Bulgarian citizen will be able to receive a full range of medical services of the same quality. Once every 5 years, all equipment will be replaced with new equipment and decommissioned equipment (as it will still be relatively new and at a high level) will be distributed among district hospitals. Each of these eight hospitals will have a medical helicopter.

### *2.2 Active Treatment Hospitals*

Part of the current district hospitals will support regional hospitals for active treatment with a personnel level depending on the needs of the region. They should not be more than 100 km apart in order to comply with the requirement of a maximum of 30 minutes for provision of qualified emergency assistance, and a maximum of one hour for a patient to be taken to hospital. As a result of such optimisation, certain hospitals will be closed while others will be built, to ensure interconnection in a harmonious chain. There will also be a reduction of at least 20% of the number of beds. This according to research, goes beyond European standards. Optimisation will go hand in hand with the introduction of a comprehensive system for disease prevention, so that there will be no shortage of beds in these medical facilities.

### ***2.3. Hospitals for specialized treatment***

In parallel with the multi-profile hospitals, we will maintain the necessary number of specialized medical institutions – oncology, psychiatric, communicable diseases and others, and we will maintain one central hospital in Sofia with branches in the 6 economic zones of Bulgaria and, if necessary, in other residential areas.

### ***2.4. Hospitals for long-term treatment***

One of the biggest disadvantages of current healthcare is that the entire attention of the system is focused on intensive care within a few days, but not on the final healing of patients. Therefore, hospitals for long-term treatment will be built in all centres of the 6 economic zones and also in other cities. If necessary, patients will undergo rehabilitation after active treatment until they are fully recovered or, if this is not possible, until maximum improvement, after which patients will receive either home medical care or continue their treatment in dispensaries. The current situation in which untreated patients in very serious condition are discharged from hospitals for active treatment because clinical pathways do not allow their stay in hospitals to continue will be terminated.

### ***2.5. Dispensaries and sanatoriums***

We plan to restore and improve the system of dispensaries throughout the country, which was liquidated after the 1989 changes because it originated from medical practices in the Soviet Union. Dispenserisation means a complex of therapeutic, diagnostic and prophylactic services available to chronically ill patients and includes regular examinations and tests, medical follow-up and ongoing and active treatment. It aims to provide integrated care for people with chronic diseases and prevention of subsequent complications.

## *2.6. Palliative care centres*

Palliative care is provided to terminal and incurable people with severe illnesses for which remaining life may be from a few weeks to several months and for which adequate care cannot be provided at home, and no active treatment can help them anymore. Palliative care is both medical, but above all psychological. Global practice shows that such centres employ many volunteers and charitable people willing to help prepare the sick for the transition from life to death.

In Bulgaria, there are almost no such establishments, except for some hospices, where all these activities are at a rather primitive level.

Our programme provides for the establishment of palliative care centres in each economic zone and, if necessary, in other larger cities.

## *2.7. Urgent and emergency assistance*

Emergency care should be offered by all intensive care hospitals in addition to the University Multiprofile Hospital for Active Treatment and the Pirogov Emergency Medical Centre as a leading unit in this field.

In addition to the hospitals, there should be teams based in high-risk places such as stations and airports, or in other places with very intense movement of many people suggesting activities with potentially high injuries. Looking ahead, hospitals for active treatment will be equipped with helipads.

## *2.8. Mobile medical centres*

Mobile medical centres will be set up to carry out preventive examinations, vaccinations, counselling and emergency assistance for at-risk populations, as well as for environments that for cultural or religious reasons are isolated. Early diagnosis is a preventive measure that

saves a large resource needed for treatments at a more advanced stage. One will be set up in each centre initially

### ***2.9. Medical helicopters***

A medical helicopter must be owned by each of the 8 super-hospitals in Bulgaria, as well as the Ministry of Emergency Situations, which should have at least 5 medical helicopters available for disasters, accidents, technological and transport accidents, etc.

## **3. Management**

Health care management is based on two-tiers. It involves the Ministry of Health (respectively the Ministry of Finance) and the directors of health institutions. All regional, urban and municipal structures in this area shall be liquidated.

### ***3.1. Ministry of Health (MoH)***

The Ministry of Health is the principal of all health facilities in the country. The MH makes suggestions to the Council of Ministers regarding where, when and in what health institutions to invest. It drafts all legislative and normative documents, exercises methodological assistance and control over all medical institutions. The MH prepares a draft budget for each subsequent year, appoints the directors of all health institutions, maintains a register of all medical personnel, maintains and improves the electronic health card and electronic health database. It maintains teams of specialist consultants in all fields of medicine, carries out centralized tenders for medicines, equipment and medical equipment, and updates the clinical pathways and their value every year.

The Ministry of Health works with a relatively small personnel.

It appoints ad hoc expert groups to develop strategies, deal with epidemics, overcome negative trends, update methodologies, and provide qualified personnel on a national basis.

### ***3.2. Ministry of Finance (MF)***

The Ministry of Finance provides the funds provided for in the health budget ratified by the National Assembly. The MF allocates the funds to health institutions in accordance with the plan set by the Ministry of Health in the budget. It then monitors their proper spending and controls the financial departments of all health institutions.

With the introduction of the Health Card and the Health Database, with nation-wide digitisation and e-government, the MF will be able to track in real time all healthcare expenditure, account for any anomalies and take prompt and effective measures to prevent any kind of corruption and irregular expenditure. Under such a scheme, we envisage a minimum of 20% savings compared to current levels and the reduction of theft from the health system, which is notoriously huge, to a sanitary minimum.

### ***3.3. Directors of health institutions***

The directors of health care institutions are appointed on a competitive basis by the Ministry of Health. They must have medical and economic education. The directors are responsible for the overall activity of the institution entrusted to them, with the interests of the patient first and then everything else.

## **4. Personnel**

The main personnel in healthcare institutions are: doctors (profiled and general practitioners), nurses, orderlies, laboratory technicians.



They can only be appointed with the appropriate qualifications, an important part of which is medical ethics. In a completely new study by Gallup International, nurses were named the profession with the highest integrity and ethics<sup>5</sup>. The same goes for doctors. As healthcare becomes a commercial activity, medical ethics seem to have taken second place which is unacceptable. Every medical practitioner should be aware that they are not working not with objects, but with sick people, and that their only task is to alleviate this suffering.

All medical personnel should be trained to a level of automatic response that their job is to follow the appropriate procedures and protocols described in the methodologies for the treatment of each disease. This is an integral part of medical professionalism which only in exceptional cases allows “creativity”. Medical science and its practice have reached such heights that supplementing them individual “creativity” usually leads only to misfortune. In this regard, Bulgarian medicine has to catch up with the advanced countries.

The remuneration of doctors and medical personnel will be formed using a point system. It will take into account the medical field, the complexity of the activity, the degree of risk, the degree of innovation of the technologies used, the qualification, the quality and quantity of work done, the geographical location. The salary of doctors cannot be below the national average salary, multiplied by two (i.e. to date – below 2500 BGN). That of nurses – below the national average salary multiplied by a factor of 1.5.

General practitioners will have guidelines for the activities they perform: routine examinations, annual physical examinations, specialized medical care referrals, which will be directly linked to the results

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<sup>5</sup> <https://news.gallup.com/poll/274673/nurses-continue-rate-highest-honesty-ethics.aspx>

of the activity. Their salary will be based on a point system for all these activities, not just the number of patients.

#### **4. CALENDAR OF ACTIONS AND LEGISLATIVE MEASURES**

During the first 4-year term, all legislative, administrative, financial and personnel changes will be made to implement the health reform. As regards the material and especially the construction of super-hospitals, hospitals for long-term treatment, sanatoriums, dispensaries and polyclinics, this process will continue within the framework of about 10 years

**In the first year of the first 4-year term, the following will be carried out:**

- Development of an electronic health card and electronic health database in a completed form,
- Adoption of the legislation and regulations for the liquidation of the NHIF and preparation for the assumption of its functions by the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Finance,
- Development of a plan for the territorial location, number and types of health facilities throughout the country,
- Restoration of state-run polyclinics and outpatient health facilities throughout the country,
- Transforming the activity of general practitioners,
- Adoption of a plan and schedule for termination of state funding to private health facilities within a 4-year period.

**In the second year of the first 4-year term, the following will be carried out:**

- Implementation of the new financial model and liquidation of the National Health Insurance Fund,
  - Reform of the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Finance in view of their new tasks and functions,
  - Implementation of universal comprehensive medical care for the entire population,
  - Transfer of all existing state hospitals for active treatment, sanatoriums, laboratories, research centres to centralized management and funding,
  - Liquidation of the National Health Insurance Fund and all regional and municipal healthcare structures,
  - Optimization of the bed capacity in hospitals for active treatment
  - Beginning of the systematic removal of state funding of private health care institutions (laboratories, primary and specialized care facilities, where there is state competition in the respective region),
  - Start of construction of 1 super hospital, 1 sanatorium, 1 hospital for long-term treatment, 1 dispensary, 2 centres for palliative care, 10 rural health centres,
  - Provision of 1 medical helicopter.

**In the third year of the first 4-year term,** the following will be carried out:

- Review of the reform and adoption of legislative and administrative adjustments, if necessary,
- Continuation of the systematic removal of state funding of private health care facilities,
- Start of construction of the next phase or 1 super hospital, 1 sanatorium, 1 hospital for long-term treatment, 1 dispensary, 2 centres for palliative care, 10 rural health centres,

- Provision of 2 medical helicopters.

In the fourth year of the first 4-year term, **the following will be carried out:**

- Complete separation of private from public health care, except for the cases under item 1.2, section “Reform Programme”,
- Commissioning of the first 1 super hospital, 1 sanatorium, 1 hospital for long-term treatment, 1 dispensary, 2 centres for palliative care, 10 rural health centres,
- Start of construction of the next phase or 1 super hospital, 1 sanatorium, 1 hospital for long-term treatment, 1 dispensary, 2 centres for palliative care, 10 rural health centres,
- Provision of 2 medical helicopters.

During the second 4-year term, **the following will be carried out:**

- Construction of 4 new super hospitals, 4 sanatoriums, 4 hospitals for long-term treatment, 4 dispensaries, 8 centres for palliative care, 40 rural health centres,
- Provision of 8 medical helicopters.
- Renovation of all equipment and apparatus of the first super-hospitals and provision of the old hospital equipment for active treatment throughout the country,
- Completion of the renovation and replenishment of the material facilities, in accordance with the objectives of the reform,
- Bringing private direct payments to no more than 25% of all healthcare costs.

## 5. LAWS TO BE AMENDED

1. Health Act;
2. Regulations for application of the Health Act;

3. Law on Medical Establishments;
4. Law on Medicinal Products in Human Medicine;
5. Law on Professional Organizations of Doctors and Dentists;
6. Law on Professional Organization of Nurses, Midwives and Associated Medical Professionals;
7. Health Insurance Act (repeal);
8. Social Security Code.

## **6. EVALUATION OF HEALTH CARE REFORMS**

Investments in the construction and reconstruction of hospitals, polyclinics, sanatoriums, dispensaries, palliative care centres, urgent and emergency care centres, mobile medical centres, rural health posts and medical helicopters:

1. Superhospitals (250 million each) – 1 billion for one term (4 hospitals)
2. DCC (Diagnostic Consultant Centre) (10 million each) – 200 million per term (20 DCC)
3. MHAT (modernization of 10 million) – 100 million per term (10 MHAT)
4. Specialized hospitals (30 million one) – 120 million per term (4 specialized)
5. Hospitals for long-term treatment (30 million each) – 210 million per term (7 hospitals for long-term treatment)
6. Dispensaries and sanatoriums (30 million each) – 210 million per term (7 dispensaries and sanatoriums)
7. Palliative care centres (10 million each) – 100 million per term (10 centres)
8. Urgent and Emergency Care Centres at MHAT (10 million one) – 100 million per term (10 centres)

9. Mobile medical centres (1 million one) – 20 million per term (20 centres)

10. Rural health canthers (0.5 million one) – 10 million per term (20 points)

11. Medical helicopters (10 million each) – 50 million per term (5 helicopters) + 50 million for helipads = 100 million.

**Total investments: BGN 2.170 billion per term**

### **Return on Investments (RoI)**

1. From reducing the number of beds – BGN 250 million per year = BGN 1 billion per term.

2. From increased efficiency – BGN 100 million per year = BGN 400 million per term.

3. From improving the health status of the population – BGN 100 million per year = BGN 400 million per term.

4. From services provided to foreigner citizens: BGN 50 million per year = BGN 200 million per term

**Total return: BGN 2 billion per term**

## **SOCIAL POLICY**

In the traditional perception of social policy, its main areas of application are: education, healthcare, maternity and childhood protection, social security (pensions, unemployment), personal social services.

We have detailed our intentions for education and healthcare, which is why these chapters on our platform are the biggest. We believe that in the context of economic acceleration due to the introduction of increasingly productive technologies, every country, if they are

not the most backward, has the obligation to pursue an active, multi-lateral and effective social policy.

At the same time, this policy must not replace the personal responsibility for one's own destiny, and must not allow the formation of parasitic strata, draining the resources of social policy, without giving any benefit for the money received.

## **1. ACCENTS**

1. Provision of normal conditions for life and development conditions for every Bulgarian citizen from birth to old age.

2. Creating conditions for the functioning of the family as a basic unit of society.

3. Targeting aid to those in real need. Cultivation of social responsibility and achievement of social justice.

4. Decisive improvement of the status of pensioners.

5. Development of a long-term strategy for combating unemployment with the entry into the Post-Industrial Society.

## **2. CONDITION AND PROBLEMS**

1. Child benefits are given only to parents with an income below BGN 510 per person, with a wretched BGN 40 for one child, BGN 90 for two children and BGN 135 for three children. In 2019, 370,000 families received assistance, and the number of families with school age children according to the latest NSI data from 2011 (then was the last census) was 1,309,229. Which means that only a quarter of families receive child benefits.

2. Since the 1990s, there has been a chronic shortage of places in kindergartens, especially in the 4 largest municipalities in the country.

There it varies between 7 and 23% of children. In addition to the largest towns and villages, a problem with the number of places in kindergartens (if any) has also been observed in villages where there are fewer and fewer children. They are often so poor that they cannot support kindergartens with small groups of children, nor can they organize a good transport system to a central day-care centre. Although this is a problem for the municipalities, the state cannot ignore it. When they clearly cannot cope, the state must help overcome it.

3. The poverty line for 2021 is BGN 369. Given that the concept of “poverty line” implies more income than the concept of “subsistence minimum”, it is not clear what methodology was used to obtain this number. However, for any unbiased person it is very clear that this amount of money is insufficient to live on, let alone survive. According to Eurostat data in Bulgaria in 2019 over 1.3 million Bulgarians or 18.6% of the population had incomes below the poverty line.

4. The minimum pension for 2021 was BGN 300, and the poverty line – BGN 369. Therefore, many old age pensioners live around and below the survival limit.

5. Unemployment in Bulgaria reached 7% last year, which is not much in a pandemic, but due to the many government subsidies allocated for the pandemic, there is high level of hidden unemployment, which will come to light soon after the restrictions fall.

6. Maternal and perinatal death in our country is still about 3 times higher than the EU average.

### **3. REFORM PROGRAM**

1. Special attention to motherhood and child care:

a) The cash benefit for pregnancy and childbirth, which is now paid for a period of up to 410 days, of which 45 days are be-



fore birth, shall be extended to 540 days, of which 90 before birth;

b) In order to combat high maternal and infant mortality, maternity homes will be set up in perinatal centres. In addition to the maternity home, there will be consultative wards, laboratories, neonatal wards with appropriate equipment and teams;

c) Intensified construction of crèches and kindergartens in cities where there is a shortage, and support for the school bus system for villages without their own schools.

2. Assistance for people, who have lost their jobs, had an accident or have suffered a natural disaster:

a) Compensation for 2 months to the amount of 80% of labour income, on which the unemployed person has been insured during the last 6 months, for the unemployed. After this period the unemployed will carry out community service until they find a job in their profession;

b) special attention to youth unemployment and pursuing a proactive policy: programs for subsidizing start-ups, continuing education, subsidies for starting a small business, etc.

c) support for the injured and disabled by providing state-of-the-art means of returning people to active life and increasing their abilities: exoskeletons, artificial humanoid limbs that are almost indistinguishable from natural ones and are controlled by the brain, artificial organs cultured by stem cells, etc. for this purpose, the production of such aids and substitutes will be organized in Bulgaria (see section VIII. Billion programmes).

3. Conditions for normal and active life of pensioners:

a) increase of all pensions by 60% in our first term and by another 60% in the second;

b) the lowest old-age pensions for a length of service of less than 20 years must cover the subsistence minimum. Those for a length of

service of more than 20 years but less than the full pension requirements must be at least 30% higher than the subsistence minimum;

c) If possible distribution of additional bonuses from the budget.

4. Shelters for all de-socialized people (vagrants, homeless, beggars), providing adequate food, clothing, sleep and residence. The beggars must disappear from our streets.

5. Centres for treatment of addicts of psychotropic substances – alcoholics, drug addicts, etc. Permanent anti-drug campaign in schools and the media.

6. Legislative and administrative measures against the misuse of funds for social needs: fictitious patients, false pensioners, mothers with multiple children, who have turned motherhood into a business, parasitic strata, who have not started and do not intend to work.

7. Striving to achieve the highest possible level of social justice. Social justice consists in the proper distribution of wealth, equal opportunities and social privileges. The emphasis is on removing barriers to social mobility, creating social assistance programs and economic justice, i.e. the correspondence between the quality and quantity of labour and its remuneration.

8. Improving the tax administration aimed at a significant (at least 25%) increase in social security revenues (bringing the grey economy into the light).

#### **4. LAWS SUBJECT TO ADOPTION OR AMENDMENT**

1. Social Security Code.
2. Child Protection Act,
3. Law on Start-ups (new),
4. Law on Transhumanism (new).

## 5. EXPENDITURES FOR SOCIAL REFORMS

The costs of social reforms outside the standard budgets, which cover the increase in pensions during the first term of office, are:

1. Perinatal centres – BGN 50 million
  2. Nurseries and kindergartens – BGN 100 million
  3. Subsidizing start-ups and programs for start-ups – BGN 100 million
  4. Construction of shelters – BGN 50 million
  5. Centres for psychotropic addictions – 50 million.
- Total expenditure on social reforms – BGN 350 million**

## 8. AGRICULTURE AND FORESTS

### 1. ACCENTS

The accents in the field of agriculture and forestry are as follows:

1. Sharp increase in the percentage of agriculture in the GDP of Bulgaria.
2. Maximum and manifold reduction of imports and increase of exports.
3. A sharp increase in labour-intensive industries such as fruit, vegetable and viticulture in the field of agriculture, with a reduction in grain and oil crop production which provide extremely low-yield income<sup>6</sup> per unit area and exhaust the land.
3. Drastic increase in animal husbandry and production of meat, milk, leather, canned goods, etc.
4. Revival of the Bulgarian village and achievement a higher

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<sup>6</sup> They are not to be confused with profit margins!

standard of living, no worse than in the cities.

5. Significantly increasing the role of the state in the management of Bulgarian lands and forests; the production of high-quality and diverse production and achieving a high social status of people related to agriculture and forestry.

6. Building a powerful food processing sector related to agriculture and forestry.

7. Provision of modern infrastructure (roads, communications, water and sewage treatment plants) in the Bulgarian villages.

8. Providing all the social benefits inherent for the urban population: affordable healthcare, education, social services, special programme for increasing the birth rate.

## 2. CONDITION AND PROBLEMS

Agriculture as an economic sector suffered the greatest losses during the post-socialist period.

1. It was literally liquidated

2. Nationalised land was fragmented and then privatized into latifundia by unscrupulous and ignorant people.

3. Domestic herds which have been grown for decades were eradicated.

4. The extremely efficient branch network for artificial irrigation and amelioration ceased to exist. The metal pipes were stolen and the irrigation channels filled in.

5. The network of veterinarians and agronomists built up over decades was destroyed.

6. Something else that was disrupted was the revival of farming in the 1980s. This was based on a state policy of entering into large contracts for the production of agricultural produce.

7. Private production was also disrupted by private buyers in the criminal sector. Purchase prices did not even correspond to cost, while city markets were taken over by wholesalers, not private producers or farmers.

8. The fertile Bulgarian lands characterized by a huge variety of soils, climatic conditions, and moisture, etc., requires an extremely differentiated approach. However, it was united into large land masses treated in the same way, often resulting in great damage to its productivity.

9. Traditional and centuries-old markets have been lost.

10. Bulgaria is increasingly dependent on imports of meat, fruits, vegetables and other foods important for the nutrition of the population and which at one time were traditional Bulgarian export goods. Deputy agriculture ministers in two successive GERB governments said the same thing: that we are importing about 80% of our food. This is an unthinkable absurdity, especially given that according to claims by Bulgarian agrarian specialists, Bulgarian land can feed 50 million people.

11. The collapse of the agricultural economy has given rise to an unprecedented demographic collapse: of about 5000 Bulgarian villages, more than 600 have been completely eradicated, and within another 15 years the number of small villages is expected to fall below 3000.

12. Villages are suffering from irreversible processes of extreme ageing. They not only lack children, but also of people of active working age and fertility. This too is a sad perspective for their future existence.

13. With extreme ageing of the population, all economic activity has disappeared and the infrastructure – roads, water supply, retail trade, restaurants, etc is derelict.

14. There is growing evidence of depopulation and de-civilisation of entire areas.

15. The formally increase of the forestry area in Bulgaria (from 3 914 355 decares in 2000 to 4 243 835 decares in 2017), has also lead to a number of negative phenomena: massive illegal tree felling near some settlements, especially with the predominance of Gypsy population; illegal felling and poaching all over the country; sick and pest infected forests; an increase in indiscriminate wild forest growth in former arable areas and pastures due to lack of management; construction works in protected areas; frequent summer fires, sometimes covering large areas; increased saturation with sulphur and nitrogen dioxides, leading to acid rains and deterioration of soil quality; infiltration of motor cycle and quad bike riders in the forests, etc.

### **3. A REFORM PROGRAMME WITHIN A SINGLE TERM (4 YEARS) AND MEDIUM-TERM PERIOD (10 YEARS)**

Mankind's entry into the Post-Industrial Age, characterised by massive automation and robotisation, envisages the release of huge masses of people from the labour market and rising unemployment. There is a growing struggle to reallocate market niches worldwide. It is therefore the duty of each country to anticipate developments in the global economy and pursue a policy of maximising employment for its population and develop those sectors which, at all times, will enjoy high demand. Such industries are mostly food production, energy and medicines, which most directly related to human survival and reproduction.

In this sense, the strong development of agriculture is a factor which will ensure the adequate participation of Bulgaria in the international division of labour and its sustainable prosperity.

Due to the complex nature of the problems in agriculture, the Di-

rect Democracy Party believes that they should be resolved in an integrated way:

- first, the restoration of human communities,
- secondly, the introduction of modern technologies and the approximation of the culture of agricultural labour to that of industry,
- thirdly, ensuring sustainable reproduction and stable markets for the produce,
- fourthly, providing a social environment that does not differ in quality from the urban one;
- building infrastructure which provides connectivity (physical, virtual and information) with the rest of the country and with the world.

Our main plan is to harness all the power of the state to **end the process of rural decline and to start the process of their gradual recovery**. In parallel, we aim to increase the volumes of natural and processed agricultural produce several times.

To this end, in the first 4 years of our potential term in office, we intend to rebuild 70 derelict villages (starting with 10 in the first year and increasing their number by 5 each year), in order to attract an average of 500 people and build modern agricultural complexes in four main areas:

1. Vegetable production and fruit growing, including state-of-the-art greenhouse complexes.
2. Livestock and dairy production.
3. Canning and food industry.
4. Fisheries and aquaculture.

In order to claim that a village has been revived, we envisage the following activities:

1. Complete renovation of the housing stock by building new

family houses with yards. Houses will be provided to new families at low rent not exceeding 10% of one person's salary in the local enterprise, and ownership of the property shall be handed over after 20 years of work.

2. Construction of modern urban infrastructure: paved streets with pavements and lighting, sewerage, plumbing, electricity supply, treatment facilities.

3. Construction of modern agricultural enterprises: dairy farms, poultry farms, vegetable farms, food industry enterprises: canning factories, meat processing factories, dairies, etc.

4. Implementation of hydro-ameliorative measures to turn at least 20% of the land into irrigated areas.

5. Construction of agricultural yards with barns and workshops for storing and servicing agricultural equipment (tractors, combine harvesters, irrigation equipment, attached equipment, etc.).

6. Construction of social infrastructure: schools (initially local centres with school transport and subsequently in the individual villages) Each village will be provided free of charge with a fully equipped GP doctor's clinic and nurse, post office, town hall, chitalishte community centre, shops and restaurants, free internet connection.

7. Construction of quality intercity roads.

We estimate that the construction of one such village with production capacity and social facilities would cost between BGN 50 and 60 million. The ROI period would be between 8 and 10 years. We will start with the completely abandoned villages.

Initially, this model will entail 100% state ownership of everything built. Subsequently, if there is sufficient private initiative available to build a large agricultural enterprise, the state will undertake to make social and infrastructure investments.



In order for the model to be viable and for agricultural production to develop as a whole, a number of other measures are needed:

1. Management of agriculture

In agriculture, as in other sectors, e-government needs to be fully deployed, in order to ensure:

- Maximum simplification and acceleration of administrative procedures to achieve transparent, accessible and effective management of administrative processes and document turnover.

- Establishment of a single electronic register of agricultural land properties, agricultural areas under productions and agricultural operatives, as well as a platform for land management by the municipal and state land funds.

- Electronic identification of all animals and electronic veterinary controls.

2. Guaranteeing markets.

We believe that, with good management of the agricultural industry, the internal market will quickly become saturated and it will become necessary to access international markets for most of the produce. Therefore, large-scale and long-term contracts must be entered into at the inter-state level for the export of Bulgarian produce to large consumer countries: Russia, the EU and especially Northern Europe, China, some Arab countries such as Saudi Arabia, the Far East countries.

3. Purchase of all agricultural and animal produce.

Agriculture must become an industry where bankruptcies never happen. They must have the confidence that the state is behind them in all circumstances. This principle will be set out in laws and regulations. Agricultural and livestock produce will be sold on domestic and

external markets, unsold produce will be stored (if possible) and, if necessary, distributed to those in need inside or outside the country.

4. Construction of modern state exchanges and markets in every district town.

This measure is necessary to stop the uncontrolled plundering of farmers by the chain of resellers who buy produce for nothing and resell it on several levels. The state stock exchanges will buy the entire produce of registered producers – cooperatives, farmers, individual producers at robust prices which take into account the current circumstances (poor or strong harvests, natural disasters, animal epidemics, etc.), thus ensuring reproduction and based on the quality of the produce offered.

5. Development of a long-term plan for the mass implementation of melioration and irrigation.

All water sources suitable for irrigation, their seasonal flow and financially viable use will be identified and explored. Melioration is an essential condition for the implementation of the priority policy for vegetable production and fruit growing. Where possible, to this we must add modern drip irrigation technologies.

All reservoir and water facilities will be returned to state ownership and only those suitable for fisheries and aquaculture can be granted on concession (short-term). A centralised structure will be set up at the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry to manage these resources. It will maintain the reservoirs in good condition and monitor the way they are maintained and used.

6. Training and use of highly qualified specialists.

Modern agriculture is impossible without highly qualified special-

ists (agronomists, veterinarians, technologists, technicians, ameliorators, etc.). To this end, the curricula and programmes of agricultural and forestry universities, vocational schools of agriculture and forestry should be reviewed and updated. The prestige of agricultural specialist shall be enhanced through appropriate pay, advertising and high public status. In regions where village revival and agricultural production are to be initiated, the state must first set up specialised centres for scientific support for agricultural activities and employ the necessary specialists there. With the expansion of production, all production units will decide independently what specialists they need and, where possible, the state will transfer this responsibility to them.

#### 7. Fisheries and aquaculture.

The increasing global consumption of fish and fishery products makes fishing, fish farming and fish processing one of the most promising areas in the food industry.

The main priorities in the fisheries sector are the following:

1. Restoration of the Bulgarian trawler fleet for fishing in the world's oceans.

2. Cleansing of the coastal waters of the Black Sea and carrying out controlled fishing, in order to protect natural resources from over-exploitation. Development of an initiative to enter into inter-state agreements with the Black Sea basin countries aimed at conserving the fish wealth in the Black Sea basin.

3. Incentives to build aquaculture farms in reservoirs and rivers to significantly increase freshwater fish species.

4. Establishment of large enterprises for the processing of ocean fish catches and measures to support private initiative in the construction of small and medium-sized enterprises for the processing of domestic fish stocks.

5. Establishing a single standard chain of fishmonger shops throughout the country and leasing them out to families and individuals.

8. Intensive construction of modern enterprises in the food industry: canneries, dairies, confectioneries, production of semi-finished products, wine cellars, factories for juices and frozen foods, workshops for sausages and meat products. The strategic goal is for as much of the agricultural production as possible to undergo deep processing so that its exports can bring maximum income.

9. Beekeeping.

The state will support the development of beekeeping to the highest extent by granting subsidies and buying up the entire production of honey producers. The produce can be used both in the confectionery industry and for export, as there is a high worldwide demand for this product as well as for other beekeeping products: beeswax, propolis, beeswax tinctures, etc.

10. Hail control.

Every year, hail causes enormous damage to farmers. To combat this natural disaster, we will build a state-of-the-art unit covering the whole country. In the future, anti-hail technologies must be controlled by local producers with the financial and logistical support of the state.

11. Insurance of land, products, animals and people.

Agriculture is exposed to many risk factors, such as the vagaries of weather, climate change, technogenic influences and the human factor. Due to poverty, ignorance and a lack of tradition, insurance in this economic sector is more incidental than routine. In order to provide

incentive for developing insurance habits among farmers, we want to establish a state agrarian insurance institute. It will offer the most favourable insurance to people, animals, produce, machinery, production buildings and facilities, and possible damage resulting from activities, etc. Some types of insurance should be made mandatory by law.

## 12. Forests.

Forests in Bulgaria cover about 38% of the country's territory. According to the state authorities responsible for the sector, the area is increasing: from 3 914 355 decares in 2000, to 4 243 835 decares in 2017.

In view of 2.1 of the chapter "Agriculture and forestry" the main objective of management in this area is the protection and increase of the country's forest resources, which will be achieved through:

1. Implementation of electronic and remote surveillance methods from space, using drones and stationary cameras to prevent illegal logging, poaching, infiltration of forests by powerful motor bikes and off-road quad bikes.

2. Improving fire safety in forests by building a unified fire surveillance system over and inside forest areas and the purchase of 2 fire fighting planes and 5 fire helicopters.

3. The restoration of sick and damaged forest areas through modern phytosanitary control and pest control by spraying with relevant reagents and substances from helicopters.

4. Increased forestation of state-owned and municipal forests, including through voluntary school and student brigades.

5. Restricting or even banning the export of unprocessed wood and imposing national quotas on wood processing factories.

6. Introduction of special measures for the protection of old forests as well as those with valuable and rare tree species.

7. Increasing protected areas and reserves.

8. Restoration of forestation beneficial to agriculture, in order to avoid wind erosion and protect crops in areas with intermittent stormy winds.

9. Diversification of revenue from the forest system based on the production of organic products, the development of mountain sports and various types of tourism.

10. Increasing the economic impact of forests through the development of a national green economy and a modern forest industry.

11. Increased control over forest use by involving the general public as guarantor against encroachments into the forests.

12. Developing a medium-term programme for buying and nationalisation of small and inefficient private forest plots.

13. Supporting the national forest felling and processing industry, furniture production and local companies by continuing measures for preferential provision of timber raw material to Bulgarian and local processors, as well as long-term agreements for the trade in raw materials with third countries

14. Increased control over hunting reserves and creating new ones to boost hunting tourism in Bulgaria with continuous and qualified monitoring of the animal population in Bulgarian forests.

#### **4. CHANGES IN LAWS AND REGULATIONS**

##### **The Law on Food**

1. Increased requirements and extremely strict controls on the presence of GMOs, nitrates, chemicals and other harmful substances in marketed agricultural produce.

2. The name “Bulgarian” can only be placed on products pro-

duced in the country and with raw materials of Bulgarian origin.

3. Minimum thresholds for products produced in Bulgaria must be introduced in retail chains:

- 70% fruit and vegetables in the season of their production and 50% – outside it,

- 70% milk and dairy products,

- 50% meat and meat products (excluding chicken), 70% chicken meat,

- 75% wine and spirits;

4. To restore and improve Bulgarian state standards for the production of all dairy, meat and canned products. Anything outside of them should be labelled as food injurious to health.

### **The Law on Wine**

All so-called “third and fourth cuvee” products which are in practical terms a chemical product with traces of grape fermentation products should be prohibited.

The name “rakiya” shall be banned for products made not from grape or fruit marc, but from alcohol and flavouring essences whatever the proportion.

### **Law on Agricultural Insurance**

A specific law on agricultural insurance shall be drafted (see above 3.11) under the heading “Agriculture and forestry”, or a new section added to the Insurance Code covering all cases of possible agricultural insurance events.

## **5. FINANCIAL PARAMETERS OF THE REFORMS**

Under the current programme during the first 4-year period we envisage investing about BGN 8 billion, relying on a return of investment of about BGN 6 billion with a subsequent cumulative effect.

The synergistic effect on other industries (transport, rural tourism, packaging production, leather, footwear, furniture, etc.) during the same period is estimated at about BGN 3 billion.

Thus, the economic impact of the programme, even during the first term, amounts to about BGN 1 billion.

The social, environmental and moral effects are difficult to measure in money.

## **9. TRANSPORT, ROADS, COMMUNICATIONS**

### **1. ACCENTS**

1. Improve road and communication infrastructure to a level above the EU average.

2. Harmonious development of all types of transport.

3. Construction of transport system which will allow citizens to travel by public transport from any point in the country to any other point in no more than 6 hours.

4. All highways and first-class roads in Bulgaria to be in impeccable condition and with constant maintenance.



## 2. CONDITION AND PROBLEMS

**1. Lack of high-quality long-term strategies for the development** of transport and communications both in integrated terms and in specific areas.

In order to improve transport and communications in Bulgaria, we will undertake a comprehensive analysis of the existing transport systems, demographic, social and economic situation and potential for sustainable development of the regions, future demand for transport services and establish an exhaustive list of weaknesses that need to be addressed.

The main weaknesses are observed in the following directions:

**1. Management and administration** – structures with prerogatives in the field of organization, regulation and control are not always in evidence;

**2. Corridor strategies** – there is a lack of vision for improving and restoring the existing infrastructure along the main corridors, not to mention maintaining and improving the third and fourth class road network and industrial railway connections, which are often the key factor for the development of the regions;

**3. Network strategies** – there are a number of weaknesses in the development, operation and maintenance of communication services at national and regional level;

**4. Strategy for ecology and competitiveness** - to promote the development of intermodality, containerization, increased goods transport by water and railway, for integrated, competitive and open electronic and communication services, access to tourist, historical, church and cultural sites, efficiency of the public and private sector.

**5. Public openness of conditions** – the public and private transport and communication services offered do not always meet the

highest criteria for openness of the carrier (provider) and clarity of the conditions offered by it.

**6. Focusing on highways in particular** and neglecting second- and third-class road networks and other modes of transport – rail, water, air.

7. Unfinished work on the toll system, **low collection level of road tax, vignette and toll fees**, which leads to underfinancing of road construction and road maintenance.

**8. Large-scale corruption** – road construction was known to fill the party coffers during the last few governments.

**9. Complete withdrawal of the state from the construction and operation of communication systems.**

### **3. REFORM PROGRAMME<sup>7</sup>**

Long-term government planning policy, combined with strict regulatory control of competitiveness, environmental, security and safety measures, is the most important priority for the development of transport and communications.

#### **Institutional measures**

1. Analysis of all available strategies, studies and plans by an integrated administration team. Delivering a basic transport and communications development plan, continuing the positive experience and policies;

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<sup>7</sup> With regard to the state of transport in Bulgaria and the necessary reforms, we have consulted AECOM's report to the Ministry of Transport, Information Technology and Communications from 2010, preceding the elaboration of the General Transport Master Plan. [http://www.optransport.bg/upload/docs/BGTMP\\_Final\\_Report\\_30\\_11\\_10\\_BG\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.optransport.bg/upload/docs/BGTMP_Final_Report_30_11_10_BG_FINAL.pdf)

2. The future development of all modes of transport in all parts of Bulgaria will be based on the General Transport Plan for all modes of transport (road, rail, sea and air) for the period 2008–2030 of the Ministry of Transport with additions where necessary.

3. Full overview of all privatization deals in recent years due to numerous corruption alerts;

4. All future tenders and competitions will be conducted entirely electronically in order to eliminate subjective human interference and they will be based on clear and precise criteria;

5. Analysis of the administrative structure and capacity, compliance with the main functions of good planning and control for the development of transport and communication services. Removal from the administration of those non-essential activities related to technical preparation, legal services, technical control, and tendering procedures. Analysis and development of positive experiences, as well as major issues in project management, planning and financing;

6. Integration of activities in the administration to avoid duplication and clear accountability at all levels. Creating conditions for sharing the experience and knowledge of the administrative staff;

7. Analysis of funding plans, project priorities and their compliance with the main guidelines for sustainable transport development and communications;

8. A strict mechanism for control and implementation of commitments under concession contracts and prevention of monopolies in awarding services and public infrastructure;

9. Active control and managerial strengthening of state-owned enterprises in the field of transport and communications, in order to make them competitive, effective and able to perform their social functions successfully, without being a burden on the budget and subject to unfair competition.

## **List of projects broken down by mode of transport and services:**

### ***Road infrastructure***

1. Planning high-quality infrastructure for all regions and categories of roads within economically acceptable timeframes;
2. An integrated approach – including all modes of transport, taking into account their relative advantages;
3. Optimal use of the existing infrastructure capacity;
4. Effective financing and cost-appropriate fees;
5. Improving road safety and environmental solutions when designing new and rehabilitating existing road infrastructure.
6. Effective organization for maintenance of category II and III roads, consisting of allocating small sections (20–30 km) for snow cleaning, trimming of verges at the side of the road, cleaning of curbs and drainage facilities, renewal of markings, etc. to small local companies without the possibility of connected persons managing two or three lots.

### ***Motor vehicle transport***

1. Control administration of the road infrastructure for the whole road network;
2. Effective financing and cost-appropriate fees;
3. Maintenance plan for the road network and an effective system for monitoring its condition;
4. Establishment of a state-owned chain of service stations to enter into strong competition with existing private players in this sector;
5. Development of road safety information campaign and conducting training campaign.
6. Strict control over the ecological condition of road transport. Decommissioning of vehicles polluting air above acceptable limits.

7. Highway control by police officers to undergo evolution. Police cars shall be equipped with front and rear surveillance cameras. They are constantly patrolling highways and roads and inspire respect among offending drivers. AI devices monitor in real time whether passing cars have a valid vignette, civil insurance, paid road tax, and technical inspection.

### *Railway transport*

1. Railway control administration;
2. Effective financing and fees;
3. Rationalization of the network, stations and freight facilities;
4. Improving information for rail passengers and an integrated electronic ticketing system;
5. Renewal and improvement of the railway line Vidin – Sofia;
6. Renewal and improvement of the railway line Sofia – Plovdiv – Burgas / Varna;
7. Renewal and improvement of the railway line Sofia – Kulata;
8. Renewal and improvement of the railway line Sofia-Kalotina – the main rail corridor connecting Asia with Europe, especially after the commissioning of the railway tunnel under the Bosphorus;
9. Renewal and improvement of the railway line Ruse – Varna.
10. Efficient, fast and socially acceptable passenger transport, guaranteeing the development of regions;
11. High-quality improvement of railway personnel and competitive maintenance units.

### *Water transport*

1. Effective control and strict implementation of concession procedures for all ports;
2. Information system for ship traffic management;

3. Information system for the Danube River;
4. Implementation of the project for year-round navigation on the Danube River;
5. Ports of Varna and Burgas – development of master plans and focus on development of container transport;
6. Ports of Lom and Ruse – development of master plans and strategy for development with emphasis on passenger and tourist shipping;
7. Control of antimonopoly measures in concession ports.

### *Air Transport*

1. Efficient, competitive and cost-oriented airport charges;
2. Increased and effective control of measures and their implementation for civil aviation safety and security;
3. Research and competitive development of the air market;
4. Strategy for regional and international development of the airports in Bulgaria;
5. Relocation of Sofia Airport outside the city zone;
6. Development of the airport at “Gorna Oryahovitsa”, located in close proximity to major cultural, historical and archaeological centres, and in a region of intensive agriculture.

### *Intermodal transport*

1. Intermodal terminal in Sofia – the largest consumer of containers;
2. Intermodal terminal Plovdiv;
3. Intermodal terminal Ruse;
4. Measures to promote container transport by water and rail, reducing the maximum heavy traffic on the roads, thus reducing the cost of road maintenance.

### *Communications*

1. Establishment of a major state-owned telecommunications operator with GSM capabilities to compete with existing players in this sector.
2. Complex integration of electronic and communication technologies and services, with competitive participation of all operators and service providers;
3. Real “e-government” and integrated and publicly available electronic services for citizens and businesses – with full computerization of the administration, there will be no fees for certificates;
4. Electronic signature together with personal identification and health card and the possibility of electronic voting, for all citizens.

The above-mentioned projects shall facilitate the development of a comprehensive strategy for the development of transport and communications on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria.

The value of the benefits accrued from a preliminary cost-benefit analysis may be underestimated because they do not include the full range of potential benefits that would result from improving the quality of transport and communications infrastructure.

It is important that the implementation of all projects and plans be seen in an integrated way, in the context of overall sustainable development, and not as purely transport and communications projects.

The implementation of the above projects depends on many different factors, both under and outside the control of the government, ministries and directorates throughout the country. In order to ensure the most efficient and effective implementation of these projects within the overall plan, careful and thorough planning and identification of the best approaches for the different types of projects must be carried out.

In order to support this and create a framework for financing and implementing the projects, a **strategy** has been developed to guide those who will take responsibility for the implementation of the plan.

*Strategy for financing and implementation of projects:*

1. Review of the current situation for the financing and implementation of projects identified through the Operational Programme on Transport and optimization of projects in the next programming period;
2. Review of the various funding options available to finance other schemes and the implications they may have on the implementation of projects;
3. Recommendations on how each project in the above list can be funded;
4. Public programme showing the design, development, construction/ implementation and start of operation phases for each project.

Implementation of this transport development plan will have an impact on employment and human resources in Bulgaria due to the scale and scope of the respective projects. Attention should be paid to the country's ability to provide people with appropriate knowledge and skills. This will have a direct impact on the timing of the projects and the possibility for Bulgaria to derive maximum economic benefit.

To this end, a **strategy for the development of human resources in the field of transport and communications** has been prepared. It will assist in the provision of appropriate skills. The strategy is based on an overview of the current situation in the sector and the strengths and weaknesses identified. The review includes consultations with a wide range of interested institutions, consumer representatives and academics.



*Strategy for human resources development in the field of transport and communications:*

1. Ensuring effective management of the most important asset of the sector – the people who work in it;
2. Identification of skills gaps needed to develop and implement individual schemes in the framework of development plans;
3. Identification of training and qualification courses needed to fill specific skills gaps;
4. Stimulating the development of key areas of human resources management.

The main requirements for monitoring and evaluating development plans will be:

1. Identifying underperforming projects and enabling corrective action to be taken;
2. Improving the specification and implementation of future projects;
3. Transparency when applying for EU funding.

#### **4. CHANGES IN LAWS AND REGULATIONS**

1. Railway Transport Act,
2. Road Transport Act,
3. Law on Roads,
4. Water Act.

#### **5. TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATION COSTS**

In our estimation, the costs of new roads and repairs of old ones, railway infrastructure and rolling stock, port repairs and new-line

ships during the first term of our government beyond the specified budget costs and European programmes are as follows:

1. For roads – BGN 1 billion,
2. For railway infrastructure – BGN 0.5 billion,
3. For railway rolling stock – BGN 100 million,
4. For repair of ports – BGN 50 million,
5. For new ships – BGN 32 million.

**Total transport: BGN 1.682 billion**

**For communications (telecommunication operator with GSM) – BGN 1.5 billion.**

**Total costs for roads and communications – BGN 3.182 billion.**

ROI or the first term in office:

- Transport in total – BGN 0.365 billion
- Communications – BGN 0.9 billion

**ROI for the period of the first term in office: BGN 1.265 billion.**

## **10. ECONOMY, ENERGY, TOURISM AND TRADE ECONOMY**

### **1. ACCENTS**

1. Accelerated development of the Bulgarian economy with priority given to industry, energy, tourism and agriculture.
2. Making Bulgaria attractive for investors with good legislation

and regulations, a well-trained workforce, excellent fiscal conditions, effectively functioning judiciary, well-built infrastructure and transport opportunities.

3. Turning Bulgaria into a country where émigrés from all continents will wish to return, because it will enable them to pursue their personal development and a future for themselves and their children and grandchildren.

4. Special preparation for future global financial and economic systemic crises related to the development of capitalism and stimulated by the health crisis related to COVID-19. Efforts to construct a state capable of lasting for a certain period of time and self-sufficient.

5. Special attention will be paid to medium-sized processing plants (canning factories, milk processing plants, meat processing plants, leather goods factories, wood processing plants, etc.) located locally and helping to revive the Bulgarian village.

## **2. CONDITION AND PROBLEMS**

### **1. Historical and economic information.**

The largest number of enterprises in Bulgaria are micro-enterprises – 325,000.

There are almost 25,000 small businesses and 4700 medium-sized ones.

There are only 760 large firms – two percent of the total.

Demographically, most functional business is concentrated in southern Bulgaria, dominated by companies from the processing industry. In Northern Bulgaria there are a small number of working enterprises.

Three-quarters of the workforce in Bulgaria is engaged in small and medium-sized companies.

## **2. Lack of state forecasting and strategy for business development, business environment, legislation and regulatory framework.**

No business has ever developed without literate planning – with short- and medium-term plans. Each company sets certain goals, appropriate funds, calculates the necessary investments, determines the sources for them, researches market opportunities, seeks partners, and explores the business environment.

The same applies to the state, even more so. For many years, there has been a refusal to plan and develop strategies. This has probably been as a reaction to the over-planning typical of countries with developed socialism a little over 30 years ago. This is not a very sensible reaction.

## **3. High administrative burden on business,**

In order to allow business to start up, the state requires a whole pile of documents that it issues itself. After decades of “building e-government”, after spending hundreds of millions of levs, businessmen are still forced to line up at the counters with piles of paperwork (lack of obligation to the NRA/NSSI, financial statements, current status, status of the enterprise, etc.). Even though any civil servant could do this with one click of the mouse. Every encounter with the state administration is not only an excruciating experience but a “Catch-22” situation.

## **4. Lack of high-quality and educated labour at all levels.**

We have witnessed a number of cases wherein leading companies attracted by good tax conditions decide to invest in our country. However, they eventually give up because, when they examine the labour market, they realise they will be unable to recruit the necessary num-

ber of skilled and disciplined workers. One of the latest examples was Volkswagen's billion-dollar investment saga.

### **5. Funding problems.**

The problem for any start-up business in our country is that the mass of the Bulgarian people are extremely poor. Bulgarians do not have inherited property which they can sell or mortgage to raise the start-up funds needed. They do not have wealthy relatives and friends to lend to them. Banks do not lend money to projects under a business plan that lacks solid material cover. The state does not have funds to support start-ups. The result is the extremely small number of start-ups with fast growth and brilliant prospects. In the developed countries there are tens, if not hundreds, of thousands.

The lack of financial resources affects some companies to such an extent that they can no longer pay their employees and consultants. The consequence is that they are unable to meet the requirements for participation in public procurement competitions by the state and municipalities. It is namely in these operational programmes involving European money that there is still some real paid work. In the absence of any other market, this dooms them to bankruptcy.

### **6. The hopeless struggle of small and medium-sized enterprises against the big “sharks“ and the government.**

In the context of the existing lack of orders, they usually won either by large companies with international participation or by companies close to the government. Favoured companies use unscrupulous economic coercion against small and medium-sized enterprises by subcontracting them under conditions unacceptable in a normal situation. This speculation is implicitly admired by the government, which gladly explains how they have successfully negotiated low pric-

es for the implementation of the state investment program. This whole process is at the expense of small and medium-sized enterprises. They are unable to defend their interests against the arbitrariness of bureaucrats and monopolists due to the lack of an effective sectoral union, functioning administrative or non-governmental organisation. This is also due to the absolute unilateralism, disinterest and inaction of the Commission for Protection of Competition.

### **7. Interference by para-governmental individuals and organizations to undermine promising businesses.**

The former practice of racketeering and protectionism, or the usurping of profitable small and medium-sized businesses by “well-dressed businessmen“, was revived during the government of Boyko Borisov in the form of “offers impossible to refuse” made to well-structured and professionally managed companies. There are hundreds, if not thousands, of cases of businesses seized in this way by people closely connected with the government. In 99% of cases, the victims do not complain to the police and the prosecutor’s office because they are convinced that they are part of governmental power. The most common consequence of such practice is that disadvantaged businessmen and businesswomen move abroad, where they can start again from scratch undisturbed and expand their business.

## **3. REFORM PROGRAM WITHIN ONE TERM**

1. Preparation of short- and medium-term forecasts for the development of the economy, on the basis of which plans can be drawn up for the individual years and term (four-year) plans.

2. Reforms in education with a view to training and educating a qualified workforce.

a. introduction of the subject “economy“ (see section on edu-

cation) in all secondary schools with a curriculum designed to build practical qualities: negotiation, public speaking, successful sales, business correspondence, business plans, team management how to work under pressure and overcome crises;

b. modernisation of physics, chemistry and mathematics education – it is now the century of quantum physics, and school education is at the level of the 1950s. This deprives pupils of the opportunity to appreciate the new technical revolution;

c. internship programmes for small and medium-sized enterprises: a long-term contract with a small enterprise and with good grades, pupils will receive subsidised maintenance. Preferences are given to employers who provide internships and actual traineeships;

d. internship programs in high-tech enterprises in Bulgaria, Europe and the USA. Selection of students for a higher state school of management of manufacturing enterprises;

e. subsidised training of children from minority groups with lower grades, in craftsmanship

3. Purging the judiciary of corruption, legislative reforms to achieve speed and fairness in economic disputes brought to court.

4. Negotiations with major international companies for investment in Bulgaria with the necessary guarantees for excellent conditions for the development of their business in Bulgaria.

5. Restructuring of the State Agency for Promotion of Small and Medium Enterprises. It shall be transformed into a working institution with sufficient financial resources and capacity to evaluate projects, allocate the necessary funds, control project implementation, report and monitor the ROI of each project.

6. Increase in the financial capacity of the State Export Insurance Agency, since a large part of the produce of the large and medium businesses is destined for export.

7. Expanding the powers of the Bulgarian Development Bank with a view to granting low-interest loans for small and medium-sized businesses.

8. Expansion of old economic zones and construction of new

9. Establishment of several state funds for small and medium-sized enterprises:

a) *Guarantee fund*

A guarantee fund for small and medium-sized enterprises will be established. The Fund issues guarantees to small and medium-sized enterprises for working capital and investment loans, as well as for participation in competitions and tenders.

The Fund also issues guarantees for the participation of enterprises in international tenders and competitions, as well as for the participation of companies as subcontractors in medium and large foreign and transnational sites.

It can issue bonds.

b) *Innovation Fund. Technology Transfer Bank*

The Fund finances the registration of patents and useful models. It offers purchasing and sales of intellectual property. It creates a technology transfer bank.

c) *Fund for Young Entrepreneurs*

The fund provides scholarships for bachelor's degree and full start-up funding for micro-enterprises for grantees with participation of up to 25%. It works in conjunction with active start-ups and provides professional advisory support.

d) *Production Recovery Fund*

The Fund finances the resumption of suspended promising pro-



duction capacities in small and medium-sized enterprises in return for equity participation. It buys technology and trades in share participation. It also sells entire enterprises or individual technologies.

e) *Export Incentive Fund. Export-Import Bank*

The export of products, technologies and intellectual property, benefits from preferential conditions – interest-free lending, subsidized guarantees and insurance. The Fund can issue bonds, and manages, together with the Development Bank, a purpose-built Exim bank aimed at optimizing the foreign trade balance.

f) *Small and Medium Enterprises Employment Incentive Fund*

Examples of world practice where targeted subsidies increase opportunities and turnover:

Work from home – via videoconferencing and high-speed internet. It will be supported by the fund by subsidizing social security contributions of up to 50%.

10. Amendments to the Public Procurement Act allowing the Council of Ministers to enter into large contracts in exceptional cases in order to speed up the investment process without tender and outside the rules of the PPA based on collegial decision and with the approval of the National Assembly.

#### **4. CHANGES IN LAWS AND REGULATIONS**

The intensive development of the economy requires urgent changes in the following laws and normative documents:

1. Law on Small and Medium Enterprises.
2. Public Procurement Act.
3. Export Insurance Act.

4. Tax Code.
5. Labour Code.
6. Social Security Code.
7. Legislative initiatives:
  - creation of reasonable preferences for small and medium-sized enterprises with regard to tax regulations and guarantees for credit and public procurement;
  - creation of incentives for large firms to subcontract to small and medium-sized enterprises;
  - a regulation on hourly pay and a high hourly rate; this will require systemic amendments to the Labour and Social Security Codes.

## **5. FINANCIAL PARAMETERS OF THE ECONOMIC REFORM**

Expenditure in the first term of office of the Direct Democracy government:

1. Investment support funds – BGN 300 million
2. Capitalization of the Bulgarian Development Bank – BGN 300 million
3. Capitalization of the State Agency for Export Insurance (former Bulgarian Export Insurance Agency) – BGN 200 million
4. Capitalization of the State Agency for Promotion of Small and Medium Enterprises (former Executive Agency for Export Insurance) – BGN 200 million.

# ENERGY

## 1. ACCENTS

1. Meaningful transition to the energy of the 21st century.
2. Ensuring the energy stability and independence of Bulgaria.
3. Application of state-of-the-art energy technologies.
4. New clear rules in energy pricing.
5. Profits from energy – mainly into state treasury.

## 2. CONDITION AND PROBLEMS

### 1. The new global policy in the field of energy production and Bulgaria.

Energy consists of 4 main components:

- production of electricity from various sources,
- processing of petroleum as fuels and lubricants for transport (road, rail, water, air) and to a small extent for the production of electricity,
- consumption of natural gas for electricity, heating and synthetic material production,
- consumption of coal for electricity generation, heating and the chemical industry.

In fact, all energy sources are used for the production of electricity, the importance of which, in view of the trends in the development of the world economy, will only increase.

Thus, in 2020, the ratio of the main energy sources for electricity generation was as follows:

- coal – 40%
- petroleum and petroleum products – 10.6%

- natural gas – 21.8%
- renewable sources – 6.7%
- hydroelectric power plants – 16.4%
- nuclear power plants – 4.2%
- others – 0.3%

In Bulgaria, the main sources of electricity generation in 2020 were the following:

- NPP – 16 555 000 MWh
- TPP – 16,200,000 MWh
- HPP – 3 MWh
- Photovoltaic power plants – 1.6 MWh
- Wind generators – 1.5 MWh
- Biopower plants – 1.5 MWh

In view of global warming and the greenhouse effect mainly from the use of hydrocarbons, a huge campaign has been launched to reduce the carbon footprint, i.e. efforts are being made to decisively reduce the current main sources of energy.

Alternatively, two main strands are proposed: energy saving and renewable sources. The clamour surrounding energy savings seems to have subsided. Much effort was made to reduce electricity consumption at the expense of thermal insulation of buildings and the implementation of various appliances with low electricity consumption. However, as could have been expected, energy savings reduced consumption, but did not cancel it, and electricity has to be produced from somewhere.

The paradigm shift in electricity generation remains: hydrocarbons must be replaced by alternative sources. At the present time, such alternative sources are renewables using wind power and solar energy. Despite the enormous efforts made in recent decades in this area, the

share of RES in global electricity production is only 6.7% and is unlikely to increase much more. In Western Europe there are countries with a large share of RES in their electricity generation, for example Germany. However, this model could not be used everywhere, and there are times, as happened this year in mid-February, when due to the heavy snow fall the photovoltaic panels stopped working. For several days Germany experienced great difficulties and had to import significant amounts of electricity from outside.

The EU's post-2050 strategy for carbon-free energy raises a number of questions for Bulgarian energy. Having put off the decision for a long time and avoiding responding to question of when it would close the Thermal Power Stations, the Bulgarian government stated at the end of 2019 that it would not support coal mining after 2025 (it had previously talked about 2030). Very recently it announced that by 2025 it would announce a strategy to build a natural gas-fired TPP to replace coal. However, let us not forget that although more environmentally friendly, gas TPPs also use hydrocarbons, they leave a significant carbon footprint.

The Bulgarian government, while embroiled in all this European nonsense and completely lacking in any clarity whatsoever about how the main energy capacities will be replaced within 3 decades with increasing electricity consumption due to electric cars, continues to behave like a typical mercenary, seeking to please its external overseers instead of addressing an extremely important problem.

It is quite obvious that if coal (and subsequently natural gas) ceases to be a factor in energy, then there is only one alternative – a combination of NPPs, RES and HPPs. In this situation, everyone will be looking towards fast neutron reactors, fuelled not with Uranium-235, which is a relatively rare element, but Uranium-238 and Thorium; both chemical

elements which are relatively common in the Earth's crust and which can provide global energy for at least 1500 years to come. A number of countries have embarked heavily on the development of such reactors, and by 2030 the first of these will most likely come on line. However, it will be at least another 20–30 years before the technology is developed and mass production of such reactors begins.

So now the construction of a second nuclear power plant in Bulgaria is vital for the country.

How is the Bulgarian government behaving in this situation? It froze the Belene NPP project as soon as it arrived in 2009 although it was ready to implement. This was to please the US government which was opposed to it. This project was highly profitable because the price of the two reactors at the time was 3.997 billion Euros in total. Bulgaria had a strategic investor in the face of the renowned German company RWE, which was to take on 45% of the investments.

A string of foolish actions ensued, the consequence of which was RWE's withdrawal from the project. The court cases initiated by GERB in European courts ended to our detriment, and now with the constant increase in the price of project, we now intend to build a nuclear power plant whose ownership is ambiguous. The price is in excess of \$10 billion (which is, by the way, the normal price for such a plant) and the already spend BGN 3 billion on various projects around the future plant.

The entire saga surrounding the Belene nuclear power plant is a string of crimes. They will no doubt receive the assessment they deserve, and the perpetrators will be brought to trial as soon as the “Direct Democracy” party comes to power.

## **2. Regulation of the energy market.**

There can be no more unregulated market than that of the energy

market. This is not our invention, it is a European invention. This type of regulation, which has nothing to do with the market, is carried out by officials in a state commission. The electricity producers are organised according to the average cost of their production and those who produce expensive energy receive subsidies. This leads to both a regulated and unregulated market. The regulated market is for the general public, where prices are set on an ultimate basis for long periods (e.g. one year). The rest of production goes to the so-called free market, where prices are spot and can vary dozens, even hundreds of times (in a period of energy crisis).

It should be noted that in Bulgaria absolutely all producers of electricity, with the exception of Kozloduy NPP, receive subsidies from a special fund called “Electricity System Security” and which is made of deductions from sales prices. This fund distributes **about BGN 2 billion per year**. The lion’s share is given to RES owners, i.e. party favourites from the Triple Coalition and GERB (the first wreaked havoc at the end of Sergey Stanishev’s term in office, the others at the beginning of Boyko Borisov’s first term).

This can all be judged on the basis of the curious documents issued annually by EWRC. Albeit public, they are not discussed by Bulgarian journalists and specialists and remain unknown to the general public.

Here is one such fundamental document – a decision of the EWRC determining the current prices.

<http://www.dker.bg/uploads/reshenia/2018/res-c9-2018.pdf>

There is no need to read all 50 pages, but only after page 38. There are amazing things there, such as the fact that some prices are advertised at about BNG 70–80/MwH, i.e. about 7–8 stotinki/ Kwh for renewable energy sources, but entail certain premiums which must

lead to the aforementioned prices in order to be competitive on the market.

**Here is an example from the document** (p. 38) in point:

1. Premiums in relation to certain and/or updated prices under Decision No. TS-010 of 30.03.2011 of the EWRC:

***1.1. Premium in the amount of BGN 144.11/MWh at preferential price – BGN 213.09/MWh, excluding VAT, for low-pressure hydro power plants, derivation hydro power plants, sub-reservoir hydro power plants and derivation hydro power plants with an annual equalizer and net drop of up to 30 metres and installed capacity from 200 kW to 10,000;***

**What does that mean?** It means that from the actual production price of BGN 213.09/MWh, BGN 144.11 is subtracted for the same megawatt hour (paid by NEK – the National Electricity Company) to achieve the market price of BGN 68.98/MWh at which energy is sold on the market.

There are cases where the premium reaches BGN 620.13./MWh

Again: all generators with the exception of Kozloduy NPP receive subsidies. A truly market economy!

### **3. The fate of gas pipelines through Bulgaria**

Another crime committed by GERB was the suspension of the South Stream project, which was to transit through the territory of Bulgaria about 64 billion cubic meters of natural gas from Russia to Central Europe. After a number of incidents, a pipe passed through our territory with a capacity of about 16 billion cubic metres. This was part of the former South Stream pipeline, renamed “Turkish Stream” and “Balkan Stream”, referring to that part of it which passes through Bulgaria. This was reported as a phenomenal success. Instead of more than \$400 million in revenue from South Stream, we will now have to



settle for a little over \$100 million a year. But we will have fulfilled our democratic duty.

In the emerging energy deficit, our government's behaviour towards Belene and South Stream was absurd.

#### **4. District heating in big cities.**

Centralised heating systems in big cities are a hangover from socialist thinking about the collective lifestyle and the market for something that does not exist. They are designed and constructed in such a way that the residents in the apartment blocks supply cannot be disconnected under any circumstances. This is because the pipes of their main installation pass through the walls of each apartment and cannot be cut off or moved without this affecting everyone. Therefore, the residents of apartment blocks built during the socialism era remain captives of the district heating system. That is unless they decide to basically reconstruct the entire system and make it horizontal with heat meters in each apartment. However, this would cost between BGN 2 and BGN 3 thousand per apartment and people do not have that money. Thus, if, for example, a person is absent for a long time, he still remains obliged to pay for the heat emitted through the installation. Even though he has not benefited from it.

### **3. REFORM PROGRAMME**

#### **1. Construction of a nuclear power plant**

In our first term, we will complete the construction of the Belene nuclear power plant. However, we will not stop there. We will take steps to build another nuclear power plant, possibly a fast neutron plant, because these types of plants leave hardly any nuclear waste. In addition to providing Bulgaria with energy security, these nuclear

power plants will also be used to supply heat to a large array of greenhouses to be built near the plant. The country will thus receive a large amount of cheap vegetables and fruits in the winter and will have something to set aside for export.

***2. Use of hydrogen sulphide from the Black Sea to produce hydrogen or electricity using new revolutionary technologies.***

90% of the Black Sea waters contain hydrogen sulphide which could be used to generate cheap electricity. Bulgarian extraction technology exists, but the plan is gathering dust on some shelf and none of our managers remembers that there is such an energy option. The Direct Democracy Party, as soon as it comes to power, will unfreeze this project and do everything possible for it to see the light of day.

***3. Production and satisfying the internal market with photovoltaic elements.***

Bulgaria is a country with a large number of sunny days and favourable conditions for obtaining solar energy. This electricity can be obtained not only from large producers with large photovoltaic parks, but from every family, regardless of where they live. If they live in a house, the panels can be arranged on the roof and walls, providing much of the energy needed by the family. If they live in an apartment block, they can use photovoltaic windows or elements on the walls of the apartment.

Bulgaria has the potential to meet the needs of such production for all the Balkans.

***4. New energy regulation.***

The Direct Democracy Party will strictly adhere to the market principle: the goods are sold in a competitive environment at their

cost. Therefore, we will announce uniform electricity prices that will fluctuate around the cost of the current TPPs. In this way, TPPs will have to possess the most modern technologies, NPPs will make huge profits, and RES owners will have to learn to earn moderately.

**5. Establishment of a state electricity distribution company for the whole country.**

We believe that the State should intervene in the electricity distribution market and create competition for the current private companies. We are convinced that people will want to be clients of such a company, and the state will benefit greatly from such activity.

**6. Transformation of “Maritsa-East – 2” into a gas thermal power plant.**

Until clarification of the new energy strategies and models, it is imperative that the state-owned Maritsa-2 replace its obsolete and worn-out equipment and change the source of energy from lignite to gas. It will also offer a buffer for the peaks and valleys in electricity consumption in Bulgaria, while removing a number of environmental problems in the region.

**7. Land reclamation of the Maritza East mines.**

The territory of the “Maritsa East” mines near Radnevo is a lunar landscape. The state must devote significant funds to reclaim the land, plant a forest in its place and provide people there with normal environmental standards.

**8. “Lukoil” has to pay taxes.**

A few years ago, it became headline news that Lukoil had not paid corporate taxes in a long time. Despite many demonstrative attempts,

the state has never been able to force Lukoil to pursue a transparent revenue policy and pay taxes appropriate to its profits.

When Direct Democracy comes to power, this practice will be stopped, and Lukoil, who also runs a monopoly in oil processing in our country, will have to adhere to good fiscal practices.

### **9. Conditions for use of electric cars.**

Having an electric car now in Bulgaria is a real torment. Owners cannot take long journeys, nor can they fast-charge their cars, because the grid is not adapted to do so. Therefore, we will immediately undertake mass installation of chargers on the streets of major cities, build charging stations on the roads and stimulate the purchase of electric cars.

## **4. CHANGES IN LAWS AND REGULATIONS**

1. Energy Law.
2. Energy Efficiency Act.
3. Renewable Energy Act.
4. Law on Electric Cars (new).
5. Regulations for district heating.

## **5. ENERGY EXPENDITURE**

During the first term in office of the Direct Democracy party, we will undertake the following costs in the field of energy:

1. Use of hydrogen sulphide from the Black Sea for energy and hydrogen production – BGN 0.5 billion
2. State Electricity Distribution Company – BGN 1 billion
3. Production of photovoltaic elements – BGN 100 million

4. Gas plant in Maritza-2 – BGN 0.5 billion
5. Reclamation of “Mini-Maritsa” – BGN 200 million
6. Construction of charging stations and devices:
  - 10,000 individual devices on the streets – BGN 100 million
  - 50 large multi-location charging stations for fast charging – BGN 800 million

**Total energy expenditure in the first term outside the standard budget expenditure – BGN 3.2 billion**

**Total revenues: BGN 0.8 billion**

## **TOURISM**

### **1. ACCENTS**

2. Increasing the efficiency of tourism by diversifying the product offered.

3. Drastic increase in business culture in this area and attracting wealthy tourists by offering services in the high price classes.

4. Remedying a number of extremes from the phase of “wild capitalism” by removing some hotels in the over-populated resort complexes and landscaping their territory.

5. Development of a number of parallel tourist activities: wine-making, production of souvenirs and guidebooks, specialized editions for historical and pilgrimage tourism, museum work, national cuisine, etc.

6. Turning Bulgaria into a 4-season elite tourist destination.

## **2. CONDITION AND PROBLEMS**

The Direct Democracy Party views tourism as a key sector in the Bulgarian economy.

In recent decades, tourism has enjoyed a turbulent, albeit controversial development. The main problems can be described as:

1. Ownership of the facilities by oligarchic and mafia structures;
2. Reconstruction of the most important sea and mountain resorts;
3. Poor infrastructure (“Sunny Beach”, for example, has no sewerage system and with a little rain the entire resort is flooded);
4. The prevalence of insignificant forms of sea and ski tourism, which do not add high value;
5. Poor service and low prices, making Bulgaria a cheap destination for alcohol and sex tourism;
6. Strong seasonal dependence;
7. Complete absence of urban planning in the uncontrolled construction of sea and mountain resorts, leading to architectural chaos, kitsch and a poor environment;
8. The desperate state of archaeological sites systematically looted by treasure hunters and the mafia, no landscaping, infrastructure, no hotels nearby or high quality literature;
9. Unused opportunities for sanatorium and balneo-tourism which abound in Bulgaria.

## **3. REFORM PROGRAM**

### **A. Major sea and mountain resorts**

1. Nationalisation of the land and infrastructure of the major sea and mountain resorts, in order to control their development and

achieve a more harmonious surrounding area and high-quality infrastructure. For this purpose, private hotels will set aside a percentage of their revenue.

2. A review will be carried out of the privatization deals in these resorts and where violations are found – the property will be returned to the patrimony of the state. The same applies to newly built hotels.

3. Development of urban plans for the major sea and mountain resorts, and demolition of some of the hotels to achieve a more harmonious environment.

4. Construction of additional sports and other facilities, eco trails, parks, etc. to attract year-round tourists outside the summer season for the sea resorts, and winter ski season for the mountains.

5. Development of suitable and efficient transport to the resorts (roads, railways).

6. Effective international advertising of Bulgaria as a tourist destination.

7. Effective security to prevent criminal contingents from entering the resorts.

8. Strict control by HEI (Hygiene and Epidemiological Inspectorate) and DVSK (State Veterinary and Sanitary Control) over the hygiene and quality of food in the resorts.

## **B. Cultural Tourism**

The cultural heritage of the New Stone Age to the present day is one of the greatest treasures of our country. It can form the basis of a huge tourism industry to compete with that in Greece and Italy.

Our territory is home to unique monuments from **the Prehistoric Age**:

1. The village burial mound in Karanovo, Stara Zagora; the burial mound near Golyamo Delchevo, Varna, Neolithic settlement near

the village of Gradeshnitsa, Vrachansko, Neolithic settlement and necropolis near Durankulak;

2. Caves in which Paleolithic human presence was recorded (“Kozarnika“ in the region of Belogradchik, “Temnata Dupka“ near the village of Karlukovo, Vrachansko; Devetashka cave, northwest of the village of Devetaki, Lovesko; “Magurata” cave).

The most spectacular are probably monuments from **the Thracian era**

1. Cities such as: Seutopolis (at the bottom of “Koprinka” reservoir with the concept of underwater exhibits and visit), Perperikon, Kabile;

2. Megalithic monuments in the Rhodopes and Sakar;

3. Burial tombs (Kazanlak, Golyama Kosmatka, Sveshtari, Zhaba Mound near Strelcha, Plovdiv, other tombs in the so-called Valley of the Tsars).

Of equal interest are the monuments from the **Greco-Roman classic period**, represented mainly in the following cities:

1. Mesambria (Nessebar),

2. Serdika (Sofia),

3. Philippopolis (Plovdiv),

4. Marcianopolis (Devnya),

5. Nikopolis ad Istrum near Nikyup, Veliko Tarnovo region,

6. Ulpia Eskus near Gigen, Pleven region,

7. Novae near Svishtov,

8. Deultum near Debelt, Burgas region.

Other remarkable sites are **the mediaeval cities** of I and II Bulgarian kingdom:

1. Pliska



2. Preslav
3. Veliko Tarnovo
4. Cherven
5. Melnik

Of great interest are **the fortresses**:

1. Tsepina near Dorkovo, Pazardzhik region,
2. Liutitsa near Rogozovo, Ivaylovgrad region,
3. Shumen fortress.

For these and many other cultural treasures inherited from the millennia to be well exhibited and to become places of mass cultural tourism, such as the sites of Olympia, Delphi and Epidaurus in Greece, Pompeii, Cerveteri and Syracuse in Italy, the state needs to take a number of measures:

1. Urgent legislative and police measures to deal with treasure hunters and the mafia.
2. Mass excavations in a number of these sites, especially those of Graeco-Roman antiquity.
3. Mass conservation and restoration work (academically justified and in agreement with archaeologists), as well as site security.
4. Applications to European programs for landscaping and exhibition of the sites, the construction of convenient pathways which do not damage the ancient remains, but make the sites accessible to visitors, the installation of appropriate inscriptions, boards and other information materials.
5. Construction of museums near the most remarkable sites.
6. Writing and publishing of high-quality, luxury, richly illustrated guides to the sites, written by the best specialists and edited in an accessible language. They will be translated into the major European

languages, with the publication of maps and reconstructions of the sites or parts of them or the artefacts found in them.

7. Construction of suitable luxury, modern hotels and restaurants near the main sites.

8. Construction of convenient roads to them.

Special attention should be paid to Sofia. Major refurbishment in the centre (from Hristo Botev Str. to Rakovski Str. and from Positano to Iskar will form a historic complex similar to the Forum, Palatina, Coliseum and Capitol in Rome.

The state can also encourage tour operators to make thematic excursions to visit Bulgarian antiquities, based on either historic age or by region. Why not start a state-owned tour operator to compete with the private tour companies? It would be mainly concerned with cultural and historical tourism, and also raise pilgrimage tourism and balneo-tourism to a new level.

### **C. Pilgrimage tourism**

There are more than 500 recorded monasteries in Bulgaria, most of them in ruins. With active state investment and cooperation with the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, at least 250 monasteries can be revived.

Almost all are located in extremely picturesque areas throughout the country, and they themselves are of great interest in architectural and religious terms. Some have unique features (rock churches, perched on rocks, in inaccessible areas). If they are fitted with no-frills bedrooms with the amenities needed by modern man, these monasteries can become a significant additional base for intensive year-round tourism. There is an exceptional interest in pilgrimage tourism from

Orthodox countries such as Russia, Greece, Serbia, and the Ukraine.

The restoration of dozens, even hundreds of monasteries, in addition to bringing profits to the country, will contribute to the revival of the Bulgarian Church, and will be a base for school trips for Bulgarian children.

When taking over the reins of government, the Direct Democracy Party will provide the funds necessary for the overhaul and restoration of the murals and icons in the most famous site for pilgrimage tourism – Alexander Nevski Cathedral in Sofia, the capital, which is in a deplorable state.

#### **D. Balneo and spa tourism**

Bulgaria is extremely rich in mineral springs and deposits of healing mud. All of Bulgaria's mountains are wonderful places for recreation, treatment and restoration.

In the early years of the post-communist transition, a number of the most attractive places and most mineral springs were leased to all manner of companies and individuals for a long period and in most cases have not been well used or cared for.

Therefore:

1. A comprehensive and in-depth review of concession contracts needs to be carried out. Where violations are found (and there are plenty of them), the concession agreements need to be cancelled and natural resources will be managed by the state after some investments have been made.

2. We believe that it will be particularly appropriate to build at least 20 sanitary complexes for a capacity of 300 to 500 people in suitable places in the Balkan Mountains in Veliko Tarnovo and Gabrovo near the dozens of completely abandoned villages and hamlets without a single inhabitant. Our aim will be to restore life to these

regions which have been inhabited for millennia, but completely depopulated in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. This would also encourage the state to maintain the key transport hub at unique Gorno Oryahovo airport in the centre of northern Bulgaria, in close proximity to Veliko Tarnovo.

3. The state should build and manage facilities in important ancient spa centres, such as Augusta (Hisar), Serdika (Sofia), Desudava (Sandanski), Pautalia (Kyustendil), Tanzos (Sliven Mineral Baths), Aquae Calidae (Burgas Mineral Baths), Germania (Sapareva Banya), as well as Devin, Velingrad, Dobrinishte, Pomorie, Varshets, Bankya, Pavel Banya, etc. The same rule applies here, as in the case of cultural and historical tourism, for roads, infrastructure, guidebooks, additional entertainment.

### **E. Hunting tourism**

Bulgaria is abundant with all kinds of game. This is due both to the wild game reserves built during socialism and the large protected territories. Another factor is its extremely varied relief.

Unfortunately, these game reserves are partially derelict after falling into the hands of greedy people who do not care enough to preserve and multiply the wealth of game.

We need to stress that hunting tourism attracts some of the richest tourists in the world and raises the reputation of both the country and domestic tourism.

The following measures need to be taken in this area:

1. Complete and detailed legal and normative regulation.
2. A comprehensive and in-depth review of the lease concession and privatisation contracts and where violations are found (and in sufficient quantity), concessions and privatisations agreements should be cancelled, even if the state has to make certain payments.

3. Investments in the game wealth and the material base for this activity.

4. The establishment of new game reserves in the immediate vicinity of major sea and mountain resorts, which would contribute to their year-round intensive use.

5. Writing and publishing catalogues and guides for the habitats and animal species that occur there.

6. Training of all types of service personnel.

7. Procurement of appropriate equipment for the activity.

8. Organizing accompanying excursions to cultural and historical sites.

9. Construction of small airports close to important centres of activity. Establishment of a state-owned airline with a fleet of small aircraft and helicopters.

## **F. Underwater tourism**

The Black Sea offers exceptional opportunities for underwater tourism, providing skilled divers with access to rich underwater flora and fauna, beautiful locations, as well as a many underwater archaeological sites around the main ancient urban centres along the Bulgarian Black Sea coast: Ahtopol, Sozopol, Pomorie, Nessebar, Kavarna, Balchik, Durankulak, etc.

This type of tourism also attracts wealthy, civilised people and is extremely lucrative.

To this end, we will need:

1. Legal and regulatory regulations.

2. Establishment of the appropriate facilities (boats, diving suits, aqualungs, etc.).

3. Trained and experienced guides and instructors to prevent accidents or damage to the sites.

## **G. Rural tourism**

Rural tourism in particular will be fast tracked during the second term in office of the Direct Democracy party. Economic and social measures will contribute to the revival and partial restoration of the Bulgarian village.

Private initiative is a suitable investor in this type of tourism. The role of the state is to ensure:

1. Cheap (interest-free) loans,
2. Training for people wishing to engage in this activity. They often do not know what sort of training they require or what are the main activities of this type of tourism,
3. Appropriate intensive advertising on an international scale,
4. Good infrastructure and roads.

## **4. CHANGES IN LAWS AND REGULATIONS**

The intensive development of tourism requires urgent changes in the following laws and normative documents:

1. Regional Development Act
2. Cultural Heritage Act
3. Property Law
4. Law for confiscation of illegally acquired property
5. Tax legislation
6. By-laws

## TRADE

Trade is the preserve of private business par excellence

The Direct Democracy Party does not intend to intervene in this area, except in 2 areas:

1. Legislation and regulations to be developed in dialogue with the Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce.
2. Investments in 2 national chains:
  - State petrol stations and charging stations for electric cars,
  - State supermarkets.

Expenditure for the electric vehicle charging stations chain – BGN 800 million.

Expenditure for the petrol station chain – BGN 300 million.

Expenditure for supermarkets – 30 hypermarkets with 2 warehouses – 800 million BGN.

**Total investments in trade for the first term in office – BGN 1.9 billion.**

**Return on investments in the first term – BGN 1.3 billion.**

## 11. REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

### 1. ACCENTS

2, Harmonising relations between state and local authorities by improving legislation, tax laws and redistributing finance.

3. Effective support from the central government to regions where

many problems have accumulated. This will particularly focused on areas of advanced depopulation through the Bulgarian village revival programme (see chapter “Agriculture and forests”) and the Billion Programmes (see section “Billions Programmes”).

4. Raising the standard of living in small villages to that of large cities.

5. Total transformation of certain regions in view of the upcoming revolutionary changes in energy.

## 2. CONDITION AND PROBLEMS

1. Poor infrastructure, especially in small towns and villages. There are thousands of villages with pot-holed streets, without sewerage systems, intermittent electricity supply and frequent power cuts, with polluted water.

2. Local administrative and territorial planning does not respond to the realities of increased migration.

3. Regional development or regional regress? The practice of semi-criminal organisations with links to the government usurping promising business has inflicted irreparable economic damage on a number of villages and small settlements, depriving them of structurally defining businesses.

4. The catastrophic environmental situation, especially in Sofia, the capital city, in winter and in cities with specific industries such as Burgas. The peripheral and ethnic minority districts continue to use solid fuel for heating. They even burn old clothes and car tires, polluting the air in Sofia. The frequent release of toxic gas in Burgas by Lukoil’s Neftochim refinery.

5. Chaotic urban and architectural appearance of our cities.

6. Continuing violations in the reconstruction of the Black Sea



coast (see “land slide prevention facility with hotel rooms at Alepu beach”).

### 3. REFORM PROGRAM

1. **Revival** during the first term of office **70 completely depopulated villages** and turning them into attractive places to live with excellent infrastructure, new houses, schools, local roads – cf. Chapter “Agriculture and Forests”.

2. Comprehensive repair of **the street network** in small settlements. State support for people who do not have sufficient financial resources. Establishment of a register of deprived settlements and the amount of assistance needed. Development of rules and regulations for maintaining an aesthetic environment, including forcing owners to give their properties an aesthetically pleasing appearance. In the case of default, this activity shall be carried out by the municipality at the expense of the owner.

#### 3. **Water sector:**

a. Restoration all **reservoirs** to the patrimony of the state or municipalities. Discontinuation of concessions. In the case of business opportunities (e.g. fisheries and aquaculture, water tourism, etc.), joint ventures should be set up, in which the owner of the reservoir receives at least 50% of the company shares.

b. Special care for **rivers**. Development of a programme to stop all illegal construction close to river beds. Offenders will be investigated and evidence sent to the prosecutor’s office. Establishment of a seasonal schedule for the cleaning and maintenance of riverbeds, examination of the functions and prerogatives of the control bodies in relation to this activity.

c. Review of all **concessions of mineral springs** in Bulgaria and in the case of violations – termination of contracts.

d. Repair and restoration of river **ports** along the Danube and sea ports along the Black Sea coast. Restoration of the high-speed hydrofoils on the Danube River and our Black Sea coast during the entire tourist season.

e. Overview of all concessions for **water and sewerage services** and in case of breaches – cancellation of contracts. Review of all drinking water tariffs by region and, in the case of unjustified prices, these cases will be referred to the court. Adoption of a programme to use untreated water to wash streets and to water parks and gardens in larger towns and villages.

f. Continuation of the programme for **sewerage and construction of treatment plants** with a focus on villages – 50 villages over 500 people each year.

#### 4. Programme for organizing **garbage collection in the villages**

Design and construction of recycling centres, plants for the preliminary treatment of municipal waste, anaerobic and/or composting installations for biodegradable and/or green waste, municipal waste recycling plants, provision of the necessary equipment, facilities and equipment for separate collection.

### 5. **Problem regions**

A targeted investment programme in support of regions that are not yet completely depopulated: North-western Bulgaria, Rhodope Mountains, Strandzha-Sakar, border, mountain and semi-mountainous regions.

#### 6. Programme for **the development of mass, cultural, rural and**

**medical tourism** by region (see chapter Economics, Energy, Tourism and Trade).

7. Regional planning – accelerated and transparent investment process.

The main problems faced by investors are the unsatisfactory level of administrative services and transparency, as well as the many administrative procedures when starting a business. Our efforts will be directed towards making changes to the Regional Planning Act and the regulatory framework in order to dramatically facilitate the investment process for the public and businesses.

### **8. Sofia City<sup>8</sup>**

We believe that Sofia should have a “city” area, but in no case should it be in the historic centre of Sofia, as has been frequently suggested. Many international teams have carried out studies in this area, and found that the most appropriate solution for a new administrative, business and financial center is north of the Central Station. It will mark the beginning of the economic development of Northern Sofia. It will enable the construction of a belt of business buildings, and behind it – a belt of residential and commercial buildings, which will bring this part of the capital to life. The state administration zone will merge well with the business buildings zone. This will then flow into a residential belt and finally – beyond the northern arc of the Ring Road – to a belt of villa zones at the foot of the Balkan Mountains.

The old centre will be transformed into a cultural, tourist and commercial pedestrian zone. This will restore to some extent the original

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<sup>8</sup> Cf *Platform for the development of Sofia* of the Direct Democracy Party, 2019.

design of Old Sofia and combine it with the archaeological remains of Ancient Sofia.

9. Increasing the scope of the Natura 2000 program.

10. Development of a comprehensive programme for the overall **transformation of the region around the Maritsa East Mines** and the thermal power plants in the Maritsa coal basin. This will come into force after 2030. Due to the imminent closure of the coal-fired power plants, one of the three current TPPs (Maritsa-2) is being converted into a steam gas plant. A long-term comprehensive programme for investment in alternative industries in the region is being adopted, in order to provide employment to all workers who are faced with redundancy without any interruption to their working life. Soil reclamation measures will be adopted throughout the region. Funds will be allocated for landscaping and infrastructure development of all towns and villages in the region.

#### **4. CHANGES IN LAWS AND REGULATIONS**

1. Law on Local Self-Government and Local Administration.
2. Water Act.
3. Waste Management Act.
4. General development plan for Sofia Municipality.
5. Natura-2000 program.

#### **5. EXPENDITURE FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND ECOLOGY**

We estimate that the costs of the main activities in this sector during a single term in office are as follows:

1. Street network – **BGN 50 million.**
2. Cleaning and repair to riverbeds – **BGN 30 million.**
3. Repair and restoration of river and sea ports – **BGN 50 million.**
4. Sewerage system and construction of treatment plants in villages with more than 500 people – a total of 200 villages at 2.5 million each (2 for sewerage network and 0.5 for a treatment plant): a total of **BGN 500 million.**
5. Waste collection in the villages: containers for separate collection, lorries, waste treatment installations – for 200 villages a total of **BGN 25 million.**
6. For Sofia City, the costs will be clarified when the project has been drafted and evaluated.

**Total expenditure** for Regional Development and Ecology within one mandate – **BGN 655 million**

## VIII. Billion programmes<sup>9</sup>

### SOCIAL

During the first term of our administration, we intend to ensure that all pensioners receive one **Einkorn loaf<sup>10</sup>(200 g), a pot of yogurt and a litre of mineral water free of charge every day** – all products characteristic of our land. Bulgaria is abundant in them and they have been feeding our people for millennia.

These products provide all the necessary substances for good nutrition and guarantee the lives of those who consume them. We will do this because we consider old age pensions to be insultingly small and often place them on the edge of life and death due to malnutrition. Of course, we will try to raise pensions considerably, but we do not know exactly what economic picture we will be faced with. That is why, at first, we will adopt this particular measure.

We are convinced that humanity should have a real place within politics and not be expressed in idle talk. Another aspect of our thinking is our determination to reform health in such a way that all citizens have full access to all health services.

Einkorn is a cereal with exceptional qualities in concentrated form: full of nutrients, vitamins, minerals and basic organic compounds that other cereals and forms of wheat do not contain. Since the cultivation

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<sup>9</sup> “Billion Programmes” – the name we have given to our plans to implement certain manufacturing industries that are either high-tech or extremely important to our society or to certain strata of it. They may not be of the scale of 1 billion, they may well exceed this volume, but we believe they are key to the development of our country.

<sup>10</sup> In fact, Einkorn loaves will be distributed after the first term (see the characteristics of Einkorn below). Prior to that rye loaves will be distributed.

of this crop is quite neglected and the stock of its grain is minimal, during the first 4 years of our project all crop yields will be used for new sowing. Over this period sufficient quantities will be accumulated for its mass use instead of wheat.

This programme could then be extended to include people with disabilities and increased social needs, and possibly the unemployed. This will be an alternative to the growing idea of an Unconditional Base Income, which we consider harmful. We do not accept the idea of getting something for nothing. That is why the unemployed while they are waiting for a job to be created, will have to perform some useful function for society.

Annual costs for the Einkorn – Milk – Water (EMW) programme, are about BGN 1.1 billion.

## STRATEGIC

A strategic multi-billion programme – this is what we call the two programmes related to agriculture in Bulgaria:

1. For the revival of the Bulgarian village through the construction of farms, greenhouses, factories and workshops for processing agricultural production in a completely renovated modern and aesthetic environment – new houses with yards, schools, roads, infrastructure, medical and police stations.

See more detail about this programme in the section Agriculture and forestry”.

2. Construction of large greenhouse complexes using the heat emitted by Kozloduy and Belene NPP. These complexes will be able to fully meet the needs of vegetable growth in Bulgaria in any climate event – global warming or mini-ice period due to reduced solar activi-

ty, the likelihood of which has also been discussed in scientific circles.

Annual expenditures under the first program are between BGN 0.8 – 1 billion. From the fourth year onwards, we envisage the programme to pay itself and subsequently earn robust profits.

The annual expenditure under the second programme is within BGN 0.5 billion in the 4 years of our first term. With BGN 2 billion investment, we can build about 7000 decares of ultra-modern, year-round working greenhouses, using lighting during dark days, especially in winter, allowing annual yields to reach 180–200 tonnes/acre per year.

## INDUSTRIAL

These programmes envisage the revival of Bulgarian industry, albeit not as we knew it during socialism, generally primitive and unsuitable for a competitive economy, but in an ultra-modern version, taking into account modern trends and trying to guess those of the future.

We believe that the development of high-tech industry has an extremely beneficial impact on society. It produces goods and provides disciplines to those involved in manufacturing at all levels. It requires high quality education and stimulates both applied and fundamental science.

We consider that the development of a class of engineers, designers, technologists, material scientists, and managers, etc. has its place under the sun along with the burgeoning generation of brokers, agents, pockets, merchandisers, publicists, social anthropologists and political scientists. Without denying the emerging public need for the latter, we prefer to live in a society with a greater abundance of the homo faber breed (human producer, creator of his environment).



We will be targeting the following industries which have been selected either because we had some traditions in them (food for astronauts, tyres, electric vehicles), or because of the large and long-term prospects (robotics, drones, 3D printing of houses, transparent photovoltaic glasses), or because of the huge expected economic and financial effect (hydrogen sulphide production), or because of the huge scientific challenge (production of stem cell organs).

Here is the list of manufacturing areas:

1. Robotics
2. Commercial/military/agricultural/ meteorological data acquisition drones.
3. Production of human organs from stem cells.
4. Space industry – food, space waste.
5. Production of transparent photovoltaic glasses.
6. 3D printing of houses and farm buildings.
7. Production of Bulgarian branded electric cars.
8. Production of car tyres.
9. Production of electricity and hydrogen from hydrogen sulphide dissolved in the waters of the Black Sea.
10. Initiating and participating in the Shanghai-Frankfurt (Paris-Beijing) Arrow Train Project, which will develop one of the Silk Road routes (China, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Iran, Turkey, Europe). Subsequently the wheeled train may very well be replaced by a maglev train.

Our response to the many possible opponents who say: “We can’t make ends meet, and we’re talking of building maglev trains!” we would say that we are not in the beginning of the 20th century, but in the 21<sup>st</sup>. People have learned how to organize advanced and complex industries even in many backward countries, and we are not one of

them. The success of such programmes requires political will, organizational knowledge, specialised education, specific vocational training, motivation, good pay and a prepared market. We are convinced that we can.

Naturally, all these industries will be in close cooperation with leading technology companies in the world, some of them will be joint ventures, but with predominant shares of the Bulgarian state. The companies will be equipped with the best currently available equipment and technology, and Bulgarian engineers, scientists and technologists will receive the necessary training in specializations, courses and internships.

Should companies have no interest in joint ventures, the technologies will be purchased and individual managers and specialists in the respective industries will be invited.

The costs of the above programme during a single term are estimated grosso modo as follows:

1. For points 1–8 – approx. BGN 2.4 billion.
2. For point 9 – BGN 0.5 billion.
3. For point 10 – approx. BGN 1.4 billion.

**Total expenditure** per social programme (no return) during one full term: **BGN 5.4 billion** (BGN 1 billion for preparation of the necessary quantities of Einkorn seeds, food kit worth 2 BGN multiplied by 365 days, 4 years and 1.5 million pensioners = 4.4 billion)

Total expenditure for the remaining billion programmes (with ROI) during one full term: **BGN 9.5 billion.**

Total revenue **from the billion programmes by the end of the first term: BGN 5.8 billion with ROI in the second term.**

# IX. NATIONAL PROBLEMS WITH SPECIAL STATUS

## 1. DEMOGRAPHY

### BIRTH RATE – MORTALITY

In almost all years of transition, there has been a steady trend towards greater mortality than birth. Combined with intensive emigration, this phenomenon is detrimental to the development of the nation.

In terms of mortality for 2017, the latest CIA ranking of countries around the world, Bulgaria shares 3rd place with Latvia – 14.5 per 10,000 people.

In 2018, according to World Bank data, we rank 168th out of 200 countries with a fertility index (number of children per woman in fertility) 1.6, and in 2020 according to the CIA ranking, we rank 208th out of 231 countries with a fertility index of 1.47.

This data can only be interpreted as catastrophic. A government that has ruled for more than 10 years and has only exacerbated the already dire situation must not only immediately leave power, but must be brought to justice in its entirety and charged with genocide against its own people. Those who are guilty of this catastrophe are not only those who caused it, but also those who remained silent and did nothing to overcome it.

All the data points to a slow death of the nation.

Could this process be stopped and possibly reversed? Yes, it could, but only if the populists from the family of former thug Boyko Borisov with his entourage and other villains who want a piece of the power,

do not find support in the popular vote. Everyone who votes for these people have to take some of the blame for the genocide of their own people.

### **A NUMBER OF MEASURES ARE NEEDED TO OVERCOME THIS EXISTENTIAL PROBLEM:**

1. Significant increase in maternity payments FOR A SECOND CHILD;
  2. Significant increase in paid maternity leave FOR A SECOND CHILD;
  3. Development of a programme along the model of Russian “Maternal Capital” capital in which the mother or single adoptive father is given the equivalent of \$6,300 and for a second child – \$8,300, which can be spent on specific things:
    - improving living conditions;
    - receiving education;
    - purchase of goods and services intended for social adaptation and integration into society of children with disabilities;
  4. Increased construction of crèches and kindergartens for working mothers;
  5. Children’s food and basic necessities (clothes, shoes, nappies, mats, etc.) should have a zero VAT rate;
  6. All medicines for children under 16 – free.
  7. Creating conditions for families to raise more than 2 children.
- We believe that these conditions will be created with our programme for the revival of the Bulgarian village. Under this programme, people working in modern agricultural enterprises will have modern working conditions, and houses large enough to raise not only one or two children, like in the cramped and small urban apartments.

8. Creating conditions and extremely active policy for émigrés (post 2000) to return to Bulgaria. Our Billion programmes will, in our view, also contribute to this (see section “VIII. Billion programmes” that will create modern and highly intellectual jobs).

9. Creating conditions for a large part of the old émigrés to return (Bessarabian Bulgarians, Bulgarians from Moldova, etc.).

## **NEGATIVE IMPACT OF THE DEMOGRAPHIC CRISIS**

The long-term impact of the demographic crisis on the overall economic development of Bulgaria as well as on education and the labour market is extremely negative. An increasing number of secondary school graduates choose to study abroad in foreign higher education institutions. Higher education graduates here, for their part, are increasingly going out looking for work outside Bulgaria. Bulgaria finds itself in the position of training people not for its own economy, but for foreign ones.

The other extremely severe consequence is the emergence of demographic deserts in a number of areas of the country. These are mentioned in other parts of this platform.

Here is some data:

Villages – total 4 998:

- without a permanent resident – 171
- with a single-digit number of inhabitants – 446
- between 101 and 200 people inclusive – 722
- between 201 and 300 people – 506
- between 301 and 400 people – 396.

With regard to this issue, no political power in Bulgaria has pro-

posed or offered any working or effective solution. The Direct Democracy Party, however, suggests one: see the chapter “Agriculture and forestry” and section “VIII. Billion programmes”.

## 2. THE MEDIA AND US

**Democracy is the kingdom of the word.** It is a form of government based on continuous elections. Every election is connected with constructing personal and collective opinions, likes and dislikes, the preference for certain personalities, ideas, parties and promises. Every preference and liking in today’s world is entirely dependent on interaction with the media environment. The slightest distortion of media images in one direction or another leads to serious consequences in people’s hearts and minds.

Subjective, biased and purposefully deceitful media is a real scourge of democracy. It is another form of election falsification. Figuratively speaking, media activity seems to undermine the results of the ballot boxes. It’s as if the media are directing the hand of the voter to reach for a particular party bulletin. The ruling cliques are so keen to dominate the media from behind the scenes. They try to guide public opinion in a direction which is beneficial to them. As a long-term goal – they are trying to vulgarise the tastes of the younger generations, propagating wickedness, vulgarity, immorality and perversion. A mass population at the lowest level of cultural development, with an elementary and unsustainable value system, is a substratum which can be very easily manipulated. The “strong of the day” have had undisputed success in this area. It is significant that Reporters Without Borders, the international rankings on media

freedom and objectivity, this year ranked Bulgaria 111th out of 180 ranked countries.

The pathetically stupid mantra – that journalism should always be against the government – also needs to be stressed. This is definitely not the case! Journalism should be about telling the truth. When the rulers commit shameless acts, they need to be exposed and nailed to the pillar of shame. When they do good things (because all governments do good things), this also needs to be taken into account and encouraged.

Everything else is manipulation and distortion of information. Or, if you believe the recent words of Mika Brzezinski a prominent political broadcaster on MSNBC TV and daughter of the eminent political scientist and politician Zbigniew Brzezinski: “The job of the media is to fully control what people think.”<sup>11</sup> Are we not among the leaders in this regard?

### **Measures required to achieve order and rules in the media**

Firstly, the media must be declared a fourth estate, equivalent in strength and influence to the legislative, executive and judiciary. No more, no less. Not just figuratively, but in the constitution and legislation. Because the media is such a power.

In practice, this means several things:

1. Ensuring through legislation media pluralism and full transparency of private media ownership, in order to make it extremely clear to the public who and what goals they pursue through them. The

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<sup>11</sup> MSNBC host says it's the media's job to 'control exactly what people think,' not Trump's. The Blaze, 22 February 2017.

<http://www.theblaze.com/news/2017/02/22/msnbc-host-says-its-the-medias-job-to-control-exactly-what-people-think-not-trumps/>

legal ownership of the media should be fully proven. It should only be open to ownership by legal entities registered in Bulgaria, and extreme transparency of natural persons who own them. Furthermore, the media market needs to be closely monitored. When the share of a media outlet exceeds 10%, it should be subject to restrictions, including the sale of its shares on the stock exchange. A ban should be introduced on media groups: every legal and natural person should own no more than one media in any form.

2. A new role for the state (public) media which must be guarantors of the objectivity and veracity of the information. People need to be reassured that there is a media that speaks only the truth. A media that works to the highest journalistic standards, checks its sources repeatedly and in its commentary broadcasts consistently observes the principles of pluralism and impartiality. The state (public) media must be guaranteed against attack by the executive power. This can be achieved by electing media leaders with sufficient powers to create their own teams. These elections shall run in parallel with certain types of elections (parliamentary, local, European). In addition, the general public must also elect supervisory boards comprising well-known and proven personalities to monitor and control the work of the media managers. In the event of problems, they will have a duty to inform the public.

If we want the information fog which surrounds us to be lifted and to minimize the manipulation of the general public, then clearing the media mine field is an absolute priority task.

Some people cite corrupt politicians as the main reason for the deplorable situation in our country. Other point to the justice system, but after an unbiased and thorough analysis it should be said that the



main reason for the wretched state of the nation's spirit lies with journalism. Spirit, mindset, state of thought defines both the value system, and behaviour, sense of responsibility, and integrity, and so much Professionalism, self-improvement, dedication, the desire to achieve more, perfectionism depend to a great extent on them. The totality of individual perfectionisms shapes era and predetermines the progress or decline of a country.

## **THERE IS A NEED TO REGULATE NGOS AND BLOGGERS**

As we enter the post-truth era, another major problem that has been ruthlessly disclosed in the circulation of information and its deliberate distortion is the role of NGO activists and bloggers. The time has come to clarify the involvement of these organisations in our lives, and sooner or later this will happen. The same problem exists as with the media: these so-called bloggers have real power without anyone authorizing them. Some use their texts to exert powerful influence on large masses of people, without bearing any responsibility for this or the credibility of their works. If they are not defined as a power, they cannot be controlled. However, they are all intent on pursuing policies – something they are forbidden to do by the constitution. Moreover, they are acting in the absence of any control or any responsibility. On top of everything, their activities are accompanied by powerful media attacks on the role of parties in modern societies to the extent that the word “party” has acquired negative connotations.

What can be done to eradicate harmful and anti-democratic practices in cloak and dagger political activity and the information black-outs?

1. The establishment of NGOs needs to be based on a permit re-

gime, rather than mere registration. The aims and objectives, statutes and scope of future organisations need to be carefully considered;

2. Foreign NGOs should not be able to register branches here, but subsidiaries subject to Bulgarian legislation (as with banks, for example);

3. NGOs must be prohibited from conducting political activities in any form;

4. NGO directors cannot participate in politics (the same applies to the military and police);

5. The Penal Code should be supplemented by a text stating that failure to comply with the provision on political activity will result in imprisonment for up to 2 years or up to 1000 hours of community service, as well as a serious fine;

6. The activities of human rights organisations should be very precisely defined so as to be limited to the field of human rights only, without entering politics;

7. The media should be re-registered so as to achieve full transparency of their real owners. A public register of all their revenue should also be established by law;

8. Bloggers writing on political topics should be required by law to declare the sources of revenue for their activities, if any, as well as their sources of information in the manner generally accepted by the media. If bloggers intend to act as media, they have to obey all the rules and norms that apply to the media.

In short, society needs to know who, how and why is publishing it in the information field. In today's world, real wars (or at least – the real influence of interested circles in Bulgaria and abroad) take place in the field of information. When all information structures are carrying out their activities in a cloak and dagger way, and for ambiguous purposes, when distorted, false or knowingly manipulated information is

continuously presented to society, society is incapable of knowing the truth about its own situation and about the trends in world development. A society blind to the truth is by definition weak, defenceless and susceptible to all kinds of influences. It becomes a demoralised society.

Today, the information fog which envelopes us, is causing enormous damage in every respect, sometimes even greater than the damage inflicted in war. The degradation (physical and spiritual), decline, powerlessness, humiliation experienced by our people in recent years are mostly due to the influence of the media and NGOs, which in a number of cases also perform the functions of media.

However, as is true for every single thing in this world, those things can be fixed too. Vision, public consent, competence and a lot of hard work are needed in order for our people to emerge from the pessimism that has taken hold (Bulgaria is 96th out of 153 countries in the 2020 happiness index).

**WE, THE PEOPLE OF  
“DIRECT DEMOCRACY”,  
WE BELIEVE IN THIS.**