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BULGARIAN PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AND ITS FOUR PRIORITIES

FUTURE OF EUROPE AND YOUNG PEOPLE

With decisions and concrete EU policies, we create the future today:

- The debate for new Multiannual Financial Framework has already started. We are discussing the topic at different formats. In March and June, MFF is core theme on the agenda of two conferences at high level in Sofia.
- In order to safeguard the continuity, we work in close cooperation with representatives of the next Presidencies - Austria and Romania.
- Cohesion Policy plays very important role within EU budget after 2020. Consensus between East and West, North and South is very necessary.
- Better integration of economic and monetary union, reach progress in banking union is needed.
- Bulgarian Presidency focus its efforts on green economy in order to improve life standards.
- We have made it clear that we support the debate for the future of Europe.

EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE AND CONNECTIVITY OF WESTERN BALKANS

Our aim is to outline European perspective for the countries from Western Balkans by encouraging citizens and governments to work on implementation of necessary conditions in the pre-accession process. We are well aware that Europe is built on values of solidarity and democracy. But it should be reiterated that they have their fundamental importance only when they are shared. Not only within EU, but also within the future Member States.



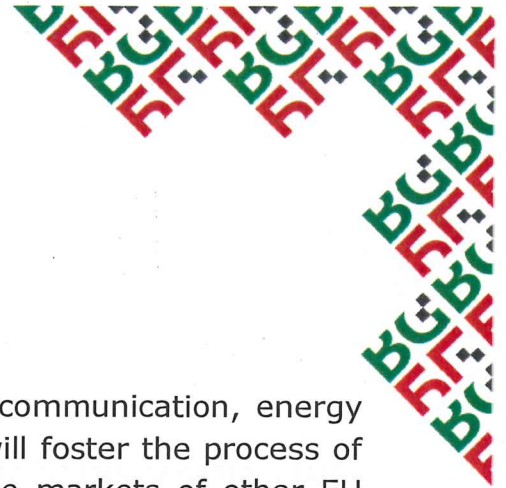
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We plan to support the process of building transport, communication, energy and educational connectivity of Western Balkans. This will foster the process of their economic development, it will involve them in the markets of other EU countries and will encourage communication between citizens.

We are fully conscious of the fact that, in our willingness to be useful, we shouldn't create unrealistic expectations.

SAFE AND STABLE EUROPE

Decisions related to security are the most important and the most difficult also. They should be based on the principle, which get us together – solidarity.

- Dublin Regulation is a big challenge. The Asylum System reform is key task for us. It should respond to realities and create fair mechanism, based on solidarity in order to manage and control the treat from external migration pressure. It should be done avoiding critical situations on borders – external and internal.
- When we speak for internal security, we should not forget strengthening external borders control and border security. Bulgarian Presidency works actively towards normal functioning of Schengen area.
- An important issue is the cooperation and exchange of information between law enforcement authorities and security authorities. We encourage the work in this area and achieving new stage of cooperation and integration of information systems in order to make EU stronger facing the current treats.
- Defence Union and develop of European Defence Fund. We actively work towards practical implementation of PESCO.
- We rely on constructive approach of European Parliament for successful conclusion of negotiations within legal framework. Our goal is to build integrated concept of European agencies to prevent and combat crime.
- We actively work on new Strategy and Action Plan in the field of electronic justice.



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- Today, more than ever, security of every single Member State and of EU as a whole is also a question of energy security. Overall, to create a stable Energy Union and to increase the regional cooperation is from key importance. We put Balkan Gas Hub on the table, because we are convinced that it would also be helpful for the Common European Energy Policy.

DIGITAL ECONOMY AND FUTURE SKILLS

This priority has direct and important meaning for whole internal market. The main focus is on digitalization – its implementation gives the best prospects for advancement both in economic and public sphere. Digitalization is strategic opportunity towards structural changes in economies of Member States, creation of new jobs and to enhance investments. Moreover it is necessary to guarantee security and safety for digital business and protection of personal data.

- In the field of digitalization and cybersecurity the Bulgarian Presidency works on 15 legislative initiatives.
- We work on the completion of Digital Single Market within 2018.
- The future development of the Single Digital Market and competitiveness is the base of adoption of comprehensive Industrial Strategy for European Economy. It aims to improve innovations, access of small and medium enterprises to the funding scheme and to the markets of third countries. We have the chance to restore manufacturing enterprises in Europe, to create another type of jobs with new skills of workers.
- Across all these themes, it is of utmost importance to develop the social dimension. That way, we would ensure free movement of work force and the rights of the European citizens.



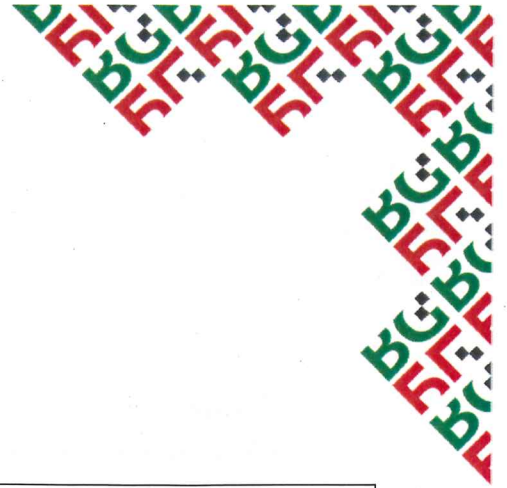
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As of 6 March 2018, 71 events from 322 in the calendar of Bulgarian Presidency were held. 22 dialogues within COREPER 1 and 13 dialogues within COREPER 2 are also held.

More than 6 500 delegates visited Sofia for the first two months of our Presidency. They took part in different conferences and meetings. More than 1 500 journalists cover the events from the calendar.

Donald Tusk, Jean-Claude Juncker and Antonio Tajani already presented their positive assessments of the Bulgarian Presidency.



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