



**BRITISH  
BULGARIAN**  
CHAMBER OF  
COMMERCE

## **Business in Bulgaria – Reliable and Sustainable**

with Guest of Honour and Principal Speaker

### **President of the Republic of Bulgaria Mr Rosen Plevneliev**

*12<sup>th</sup> November 2013*

*Sofia Hotel Balkan*

The ***British Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce*** participated as co-organiser in the **Business Breakfast** with lead-organiser - the ***Bulgarian-Nordic Chamber of Commerce***

The Ambassadors of Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Norway and Great Britain to Bulgaria were guests of honour at the Business Breakfast

#### **The Main Topics for Discussion were:**

How can the reliability and sustainability of Bulgaria as a business venue be improved?

How can the Presidency boost these extremely important improvements?

How can we all collaborate to speed up this process of improvement?

#### **Highlights form the President Plevneliev speech**

In his speech before the assembled distinguished audience, President Plevneliev outlined the following priorities which need to be realised in order for Bulgaria to improve its reliability and sustainability as a business venue:

- E-Government

The introduction of E-Government will require an administrative reform and will make the public institutions more transparent and predictable

- Energy efficiency

Energy efficiency can be achieved through diversification of the sources for energy supply

- Business Clusters

Bulgaria is forming business clusters with the neighbouring countries such as Romania, Greece and Croatia. This is a 'win-win' type of situation. An excellent example is the cluster in the automotive industry developed alongside the Bulgarian-Romanian border with Ford and Renault factories on the Romanian side and more than 15 factories, sub-suppliers of automobile components, built on the Bulgarian side of the border.

- Public Administration Reform

- There is corruption in Public Procurement in Bulgaria. This happens because creativity is allowed. It should be the opposite: standard rules and procedures should be universally applied. The public administration must be held responsible for what they do.

- Bulgaria is the only state in the EU in which the Ministries do not have professional administration and it changes with each new government coming in power.

- We must link E-Government with making Public Administration responsible.

- EU countries are example of open government policies. Bulgaria is a member of the 'Open Government' initiative but what have we done?

- It's not about strategies! It's about implementation and get things done. We should stop talking about strategies and plans, we must act!

On the Bulgarian economy, President Plevneliev stressed that the driver for the economic growth at present in Bulgaria is the export, not consumption and investment. EU funds are adding 1-to-1.5% growth.

To boost the economic growth, Bulgaria needs to increase its competitiveness, improve the infrastructure and invest in education.

The Ambassadors of Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Norway and Great Britain to Bulgaria were also quite frank in pointing out the main problems which the foreign business faces in Bulgaria. Among others, these include:

- corruption

- red tape

- ineffective judicial system, eg very slow enforcement of the rule of law – there must be a 'fast-track' court procedure for business cases

- lack of level-playing field, especially in Public Procurement

- endangered media freedom

- lack of transparency and predictability in the business environment

- not enough English language education in the Bulgarian schools

- the image of Bulgaria

The Business Breakfast concluded with a Q&A session in which the members of both chambers had an opportunity to ask their question and receive answers from the Bulgarian President, Mr Rosen Plevneliev.

--- *British Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce* ---

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