



# Ministry of Tourism of the Republic of Bulgaria

## News Bulletin

1<sup>st</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> March

### **Cultural and Historical Tourism is the Best Promotion for Bulgaria**

1<sup>st</sup> March

Tourists from Germany, Romania, Russia, Ukraine, Poland and Sweden are most attracted by Bulgaria's cultural and historical sites indicate results from the Ministry of Tourism's project for targeted promotion of Bulgaria.

The Ministry's project "Integrated Communication Campaigns for Bulgaria in Target Markets" is EU funded and is part of the Operational Programme "Regional Development". It was launched in 2013 and will end at the beginning of April of this year. The campaign is targeted at six markets, Germany, Romania, Russia, Ukraine, Poland and Sweden and has cost a total amount of 5.4 million leva.

According to official data, the media coverage – press publications, TV broadcasts and the like – have reached a greater audience than expected. The promotional publications and the TV reports in the six countries have reached 59 million viewers and readers, instead of the planned 40 million. There has been substantial increase in the number of unique visits (measured by single clicks) to the online publications about Bulgaria in the electronic sites – 2.7 million instead of the planned 195 000, while publications spurred by promotional activities are 483 instead of the predicted 225.

A positive attitude to the campaign's media promotion of Bulgaria's tourist product has been registered in those countries that are historically close to Bulgaria, such as Romania, Russia, Ukraine and Poland, while response in Germany and Sweden has been moreover neutral. The evaluation of the campaign's effectiveness is to be finalized in 2015-2016.

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## **Mark Girardelli: I carry Bulgaria in my heart wherever I go**

2<sup>nd</sup> March

Hours before the opening of the Alpine Ski World Cup in Bansko (27<sup>th</sup> February – 1<sup>st</sup> March), the advisor on winter tourism of Bulgaria's Minister of Tourism and five-time World Cup overall champion, Marc Girardelli landed in Sofia. He gave an interview for the Bulgarian National Television right before heading to the ski pistes of Bansko.

"I became a free-will ambassador of Bulgaria as early as 2005 when I attended the opening of the ski season. I promote the country and the people wherever I go because I really feel quite comfortable here. I even bring my family often. So I carry Bulgaria in my heart wherever I go", said Girardelli. The world ski champion added that Bulgaria has changed a great deal since his first visit to the country in 1979 for the European Ski Cup in Borovets. "Back then I thought the country and the people were quite poor, I even left my equipment to my Bulgarian friends. And they have kept it as a keep-sake present thirty years later".

Bulgaria can be hub for tourism with its sea and ski resorts, noted the world ski champion. "The Bulgarian resorts have still not reached the level of their counterparts in Austria, Germany or Switzerland but change comes gradually. Besides Bansko and Borovest and the golf courses in Varna are quite popular already. Yesterday some friends of mine even suggested that I organize a golf weekend for them in Varna which is a great idea. So we should concentrate on that – on bringing more foreigners to the country to see your resorts which. I'm sure, will continue to develop." The advisor on winter tourism to the Minister also explained that the Ski World Cup Championships that Bansko has hosted in recent years have made the resort quite popular abroad and that the place is quite appropriate for ski competitions as the runs are rather competitive.

Note: The complete interview can be viewed in Bulgarian on:

<http://bnt.bg/part-of-show/svetovna-ski-legenda-razkazva-za-sebe-si>

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## **Minister Angelkova attended one of the world's biggest tourism fairs ITB Berlin**

5<sup>th</sup> March

Bulgaria is a well-known destination for German tourists, the majority of which associate the country with summer and the sunny seaside, said Bulgaria's Minister of Tourism Nikolina Angelkova during ITB Berlin 2015. She also noted that according

to official statistics about 1 million Germans have visited Bulgaria in the past year and 700 000 of them have done so for tourism purposes.

The Ministry of Tourism is currently looking for possibilities to promote other forms of tourism, including cultural, eco, SPA and turn Bulgaria into a preferred year-round destination. A massive advertising campaign under Operational Programme "Regional Development" 2007-2013 was also realized on the German market. It included 39 tourist websites, 9 TV channels with 406 broadcasts (including RTL 2, SKY, TELE 5, Sport 1 and others), 36 promotional materials in the Berlin metro and 11 print editions (including Reise & Preise; Freizeit Spass and others.) "In January 2015 we've registered a growth of about 45% of German citizens in our country compared to the same period from the previous year which indicates that Germans are becoming more familiar with the possibilities for tourism in Bulgaria outside the summer season", said Nikolina Angelkova during the Ministry's official press conference at ITB Berlin.

Later that day Bulgaria's Minister met with the Secretary General of the German Federal Enterprise for International Cooperation (GIZ) Hans-Joachim Fuchtel and the mayors of the federal state of Baden-Württemberg to discuss possibilities for extending cooperation and for exchanging experience in marketing that could be applied in the setting up of the regional centers in each tourist region of Bulgaria. The idea for the regional division of the country into 9 regions is to be approved by the Council of Ministers and the creation of organizations for their management will be launched.

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### **Bulgaria's Tourism Minister Meets with Thomas Cook's Managements**

5<sup>th</sup> March

Minster Angelkova initiated a meeting with the management team of Thomas Cook during ITB Berlin 2015. She met with Karl Schattmaier, executive manager, Andre Müllmann, commercial director and Alex Werde, official authorized agent for Bulgaria to discuss possibilities for extending the cooperation between Bulgaria and one of the world's biggest tour operators which covers most of Bulgaria's target markets.

The representatives of Thomas Cook stressed that the high quality of the tourist product is a major precondition for improving the tourist flow. Angelkova responded by saying that the Ministry is currently involved in the creation of a fund or some other financial mechanism through which it could invest part of the revenues from tourism into improving the infrastructure and the tourist attractions.

She explained that different options will be probed, university courses and other additional trainings, for increasing the qualification of those involved in the tourism sector. Minister Angelkova invited the representatives of Thomas Cook to take part in the b2b forum which the Ministry of Tourism will organize this spring.

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