

## News Bulletin

### Bulgarian was one of eight country-panelists at the UNWTO Ministerial Meeting during ITB Berlin 2016

Minister Angelkova was a panelist at the UNWTO Ministerial Meeting during the world’s biggest international travel exhibit for both professionals and the general public (8-12 March). The topic of the discussion was “New Business Models in the Digital World” and was moderated by the UNWTO secretary general Taleb Rifai.

“Tourism is a major economic sector in Bulgaria and it is pivotal that we meet the challenges of today including the demands of digitalization”, stressed Minister Angelkova during the panel discussion. She explained that Bulgaria has already taken well-targeted measures in that respect including the launch of an Online Register of Tourist Attractions, a Regulation on the launch and function of an Integrated Tourist Information System as well as an upgrade of the criteria for high category hotels.



The Minister added that **Minister Angelkova and the UNWTO Secretary General Taleb Rifai**



Minister Angelkova with the CEO of DerTuristik Ralf Malzahn



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The Minister also took part in the 6th UN-WTO International Meeting on Silk Road Tourism where the sustainable development of tourism through public-private partnerships was a main focus. “Public-private partnerships are often associated with big infrastructure projects, yet practice shows that the PPP



Minister Angelkova with the Minister of Tourism and External Communications Charles Gaëtan Xavier-Luc (to her right) of the Republic of Mauritius and the ambassador plenipotentiary and extraordinary of Bulgaria to the Federal Republic of Germany Radi Naydenov

model can be successfully implemented in tourism as well”, said Minister Angelkova. She also outlined some of Bulgaria’s promising investment projects as well as measures for enhancing investment in the tourist sector. The meeting was attended by representatives of over 35 countries and

*“Public-private partnerships are often associated with big infrastructure projects, yet practice shows that the PPP model can be successfully implemented in tourism as well”, said Minister Angelkova.*

Bulgaria is featured at ITB Berlin with a stand of over 550 sq.m., where alongside the Ministry of Tourism, 44 tourist organizations and Bulgarian municipalities promote possibilities for year-round tourism in the country.

ITB Berlin is the biggest b2b tourist forum in the world open to the general public as well. The exhibit attracts over 170 000 visitors including more than 140 000 professionals.



Minister Angelkova and Günther Horzetzky State Secretary of the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Energy, Industry



Minister Angelkova and Deputy Minister Manolev greeted all participants at the Bulgarian stand of ITB Berlin 2016



*Minister Angelkova presided the meeting with the National Tourism Council*

### **Amendments to Law on Tourism introduced by Minister Nikolina Angelkova**

Bulgaria's Minister of Tourism outlined the amendments to the Law on Tourism during the annual sitting of the National Tourism Council on **26<sup>th</sup> February**. Alterations include the establishment of a tourist inspectorate, guaranteeing the rights of consumers in organised trips with a tour operator. The Law also provisions a new chapter which determines the rules and regulations for granting a national-resort status to a given settlement. The latter amendment also provides for the issuing of an Ordinance on the management and the organization of the tourist activity within the territory of the national resorts; representatives and owners of the tourist sites will also be included in the management board.

Hoteliers will be obliged to keep track of tourist registrations in electronic format. The business will be obliged to provide automated data exchange between the information system of the register that they will keep and the Integrated Tourist Information System (ITIS) which provides data about the number of tourists accommodated as well as the dates of registration and departure. This is an important step towards curbing the grey economy and increasing the state revenue from tourism.

The amendments to the Law on Tourism envisage an increase in revenue sources for the municipalities. Funds will be targeted at municipal programmes for tourism development. During the sitting Minister Angelkova was quick to note that a strengthened partnership between the Ministry and local authorities is seminal for the growth of tourism. Hence, the amendments will specify the obligations of regional governors and the functions of municipal councils, mayors and municipal advisory councils on tourism aimed at developing the sector.

One other important alteration to the Law is an increase in the control functions of the Ministry of Tourism and the creation of a Tourist Inspectorate. The latter will be responsible for conveying checks and imposing sanctions or coercive administrative measures if violations have been established.

A new chapter in the Law will regulate the publicly available National Register of Tourist Attractions, maintained by the Ministry of Tourism. The law will also include new rules for ski schools and ski instructors and all licensed ski schools throughout will be entered in the National Tourism Register.

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## Minister Angelkova the First Bulgarian Minister to Speak in the Russian State Duma in 27 Years

*For the upcoming season, an increased number of charter flights from Moscow, St. Petersburg, Kazan, Nizhny Novgorod, Rostov-on-Don, Perm, Chelyabinsk, Volgograd, Samara, and Ufa have been planned. The expectations of the business are that all this will lead to an increase in Russian tourists of about 20 to 30 percent during the upcoming summer season.*

Bulgaria ranks first among destinations suitable to accept the Russian tourist flow in 2016, said Oleg Safonov, Head of the Federal Tourism Agency of Russia when presenting our country in the hearings in the State Duma Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation in the presence of its First Deputy Chairman Ivan Melnikov.

The Bulgarian Minister of Tourism Nikolina Angelkova was the only representative within the region who had the opportunity to present the tourist potential of her country on **February 25<sup>th</sup>**. She was accompanied by the Chairman of the Committee on Economic Policy and Tourism in the National Assembly Petar Kanev and the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Bulgaria in Moscow Boyko Kotsev.

Safonov and Melnikov emphasised that the measures taken by the Bulgarian Government to promote the tourist flow from Russia were visible and gave increasingly better results. They also stressed Bulgaria's advantage as a safe and secure destination. "The Russians are among the most numerous for-

foreign tourists in the Bulgarian summer resorts and for us as an administration it is very important to create the best conditions and to stimulate more of their trips to our country", said Minister Angelkova. She stressed that the Ministry of Tourism had consistently worked to promote the tourist flow between the two countries for more than a year. In this period, a number of travel incentives for the Russian tourists were introduced.

This year an increased interest in Bulgaria has been observed and currently ten new companies have applied for accreditation in Bulgaria's consular offices. For the upcoming season, an increased number of charter flights from Moscow, St. Petersburg, Kazan, Nizhny Novgorod, Rostov-on-Don, Perm, Chelyabinsk, Volgograd, Samara, and Ufa have been planned. The expectations of the business are that all this will lead to an increase in Russian tourists of about 20 to 30 percent during the upcoming summer season.

## Bulgaria and Cyprus signed a protocol on cooperation in the field of tourism

Minister of Tourism of the Republic of Bulgaria Nikolina Angelkova and Minister of Energy, Commerce, Industry and Tourism of the Republic of Cyprus Giorgos Lakkotrypis signed a Protocol on cooperation in the field of tourism on **February 22<sup>nd</sup>**. This happened in the presence of the Presidents of the two countries, Rosen Plevneliev and Nicos Anastasiades.

The Protocol provides that Bulgaria and Cyprus will implement measures on a reciprocal basis to promote the tourist flow between the two countries and cooperation in different types of tourism – cultural, pilgrim, yacht, cruise, sports, etc. Other areas of joint activities that are written down in the

document are participations in international exhibitions, fairs, conferences and seminars, exchange of experience and information, including in the field of promotion of tourism, planning and marketing of tourism activities. The Contracting Parties will prepare combined tourism packages for customers from distant locations.

Bulgaria and Cyprus will exchange information on national legislation relating to incentives for foreign capital investment and joint ventures in tourism, as well as guarantees for protection of foreign capital imported as investment.



Minister Angelkova and the Minister of Energy, Commerce, Industry and Tourism of Greece Yiorgos Lakkotrypis signed a protocol of cooperation in the presence of the Presidents of the two countries

## Minister Angelkova takes part in the awarding ceremony of the European Ski Cup first runs in Borovets and Pamporovo

Minister of Tourism Nikolina Angelkova took part in the award ceremony in the giant slalom held on the first day of the European Alpine Skiing Cup for women in Borovets (**February 12<sup>th</sup>**).

During the award ceremony Minister Angelkova stressed that today's event is a proof that the oldest winter resort in Bulgaria offers excellent conditions for high level ski racing and has the capacity for attracting more tourists. She presented the award to Simone Wild of Switzerland who occupied the honorary second place. Stephanie Brunner of Austria won the first place in the giant slalom and her compatriot Ricarda Haazer finished third.

The ceremony was attended by Krasen Kralev, Minister of Youth and Sports, Rositsa Ivanova, Regional Governor of Sofia Region, Vladimir Georgiev, Mayor of Samokov, Marc Girardelli, five-time world champion in alpine skiing, Tseko Minev, President of the Bulgarian Ski Federation and others.

During the week Bulgaria is hosting four starts for the prestigious trophy, something happening for the first time. This is the 12th European Cup in Borovets, however the first one for women.

Four days earlier, **February 8<sup>th</sup>**, the Minister of Tourism Nikolina Angelkova took part in the official opening of the race for the European Alpine Ski Cup for women in Pamporovo. Minister Angelkova greeted the participants and guests of the event and stressed that this is an extremely important event for promoting Bulgaria not only as sports but also as tourist destination. The ceremony was attended by the Minister of Youth and Sports Krasen Kralev, the Governor of Smolyan Region

Nedyalko Slavov and his two deputies Todor Bozukov and Andriyan Petrov, the Mayor of Chepelare Slavka Chakarova and the Deputy Mayor of Smolyan Marin Zahariev.



Minister Angelkova took part in the giant slalom award ceremony of the European Alpine Skiing Cup for Women in Borovets



Winners of the giant slalom competition in Borovets

## Deputy Minister Irena Georgieva launched the “Bulgaria welcomes the tastes of the world” initiative

Deputy Minister of Tourism, Irena Georgieva, together with representatives of nearly 20 foreign diplomatic missions in this country, launched the International Culinary Festival “Bulgaria welcomes the tastes of the world” on the **1st March**. The initiative, which is held in partnership with the Ministry of Tourism, is a continuation of last year’s online campaign “You think you know Bulgaria?”, behind which the embassies of

Israel, Poland and Croatia stood.

“The willingness of foreign diplomats in this country to support the campaign is evidential of the beneficial relationships that we have established

*“The willingness of foreign diplomats in this country to support the campaign is evidential of the beneficial relationships that we have established with the diplomatic missions”, said Deputy Minister Georgieva.*



Deputy Minister Irena Georgieva gave the go-ahead on the International Culinary Festival

with the diplomatic missions”, said Deputy Minister Georgieva. She emphasised that the representatives of the foreign diplomatic corps in Bulgaria were ambassadors not only of their own countries but also of Bulgaria across the world. From her words it became clear that this initiative was yet another step in the efforts of the Ministry to promote domestic tourism and the Ministry’s desire to draw the attention to the country’s traditions and cultural heritage.

The Deputy Minister also noted that the good results of the measures taken to foster domestic tourism were confirmed by statistics. “According to Eurostat data, last year the number of overnight stays of Bulgarian citizens in accommodation establishments with more than 10 beds in the country increased by 6% compared to 2014, which exceeds significantly the average growth of only 3 % in the European Union, she pointed out. Irena Georgieva also quoted NSI data, according to which overnights of Bulgarians within the country were over 3.4 million and revenues totalled more than 179 million euro, an increase of 6.6%.

The first phase of the Bulgaria welcomes the tastes of the world campaign starts today, 1 March 2016, and will run on the website of the project [www.iknowbulgaria.bg](http://www.iknowbulgaria.bg). All participants will be able to share recipes of the traditional Bulgarian cuisine and photos of dishes prepared by them in 4 categories. Special jury of chefs and experts from the HRC Culinary Academy will evaluate and select the 100 best dishes by the end of April. The winners will represent Bulgaria and Bulgarian traditional cuisine at the International Culinary Festival. It will be held in May (12-28), and plans to cover several major Bulgarian cities – Stara Zagora, Plovdiv, Burgas, Varna, Ruse, Blagoevgrad, Veliko Tarnovo and Sofia. At specific locations in each of the said cities Bulgarian food will meet with traditional dishes and drinks from over 20 other countries.

The event dedicated to launching the campaign was attended by the ambassadors of Israel, Egypt, Poland, Croatia, Azerbaijan, The Czech Republic, Morocco, Ireland and India, and representatives of the embassies of Mexico, Venezuela, Italy, USA, UK, as well as municipalities, etc.

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