

News Bulletin

Minister Angelkova: For the first quarter we have a 13% rise in overnights in the country

For the first quarter of the year about 2.5 million overnights are reported, which is a 13% rise on the same period of last year. 1.4 million of the overnights are realized by Bulgarians, which indicates that the upward trend in the development of our tourism persists, the minister of tourism Nikolina Angelkova said at the official launch of the campaign “We Love Bulgaria” in support of the 100 tourist sites on May 16th. Present at the event were

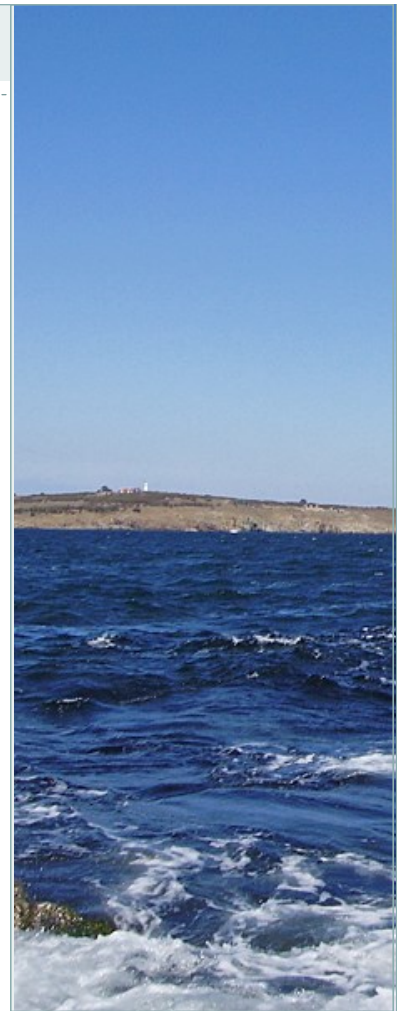
also the minister of agriculture and food Desislava Taneva and the deputy minister of culture Ass. Prof. Boni Petrunova.



Minister Angelkova, the manager of Billa Bulgaria, the Minister of Agriculture and Food Desislava Taneva and the Deputy Minister of Culture Boni Petrunova (from left to right)

Minister

Angelkova pointed out that public-private partnership is one of the proven and good forms of cooperation. She stated that the ministry had already implemented several similar successful projects. One of them is the commercial clip with the participation of seven Hollywood stars, the present International Culinary Festival “Bulgaria Welcomes the Tastes of the World”, as well as the campaign “You Think You Know Bulgaria” which was supported by many famous public figures. “What is valuable in the campaign we launch today is that it will invest in some of our most significant cultural and historical sites and will recall our countrymen how important they are for the national consciousness”, minister Angelkova underlined.



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She explained that in support of the 100 national sites included in the Online Register of Tourist Attractions created by the Ministry of Tourism there are links to TripAdvisor, Google Maps and Wikipedia. This will enable the persons wishing to visit them to receive fast and detailed information.

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The campaign is held at the initiative of Billa company and aims to raise funds for the restoration of the Shipka monument through the sale of T-shirts with images of the 100 national sites and a gala-concert “Stars Sing for Bulgaria” in Armmeets Hall on 31 May. From 2 to 29 June 1% of the dairy products certified under BDS and sold in the retail chain will also be donated for the campaign.



The national museum park Shipka will be the first site to be renovated with the funds gathered in the newly launched campaign

Minister Angelkova opened the first meeting of the Interinstitutional Council for the Personnel in Tourism

“Personnel are the face of Bulgarian tourism as they form the main part of its product and the improvement of their preparation and qualifications depends on our joint efforts. The quality of tourist services and the sector’s competitiveness respectively can increase only through well-trained personnel,” said Minister Nikolina Angelkova, speaking at the opening of the first meeting of the Interinstitutional Council for Personnel in Tourism on [May 16th](#).

Deputy Minister of Tourism Irena Georgieva chairs the council and took part in the working meeting. The council is comprised of 43 representatives of four ministries, institutions of education, employment and human resources development, controlling authorities, higher schools, colleges and occupational high schools from Sofia and the country, employers’ and industry organizations, trade union organizations, non-government associations, national resorts, etc.



According to World Travel and Tourism Council data, in 2015 the total number of jobs directly and indirectly related to tourism is 338 thousand, down by 6.5% on 2014. The total share of employees in tourism and tourism related industries is 11% of all jobs in Bulgaria. The number of directly employed persons in tourism exceeds 92 thousand, down by 10% on 2014.

Bulgarian education experts announce that university graduates in tourism have hit the lowest level of employment in the last five years. “We initiated the establishment of the council namely due to this so that we could begin to seek a solution to one of the biggest problems in the sector“, minister Angelkova said.

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“For a year and a half we have held many meetings with the tourism industry and the main problem raised at each of them was the lack of sufficient trained personnel in the sector. The data indicates there is no stability in the hiring of teams and the turnover of staff is constantly increasing because of the seasonal nature of the sector“, Nikolina Angelkova emphasized. She added the establishment of the council as a consultative body comprised of representatives of all institutions and organisations, which was to become a common platform for long-term solutions, had been initiated namely because of this.

In the words of the minister, the state can form policies and exert control on regulations but cannot do the business’ work. “We are, however, ready to cooperate in any useful way. All of us should together seek a balance as regards personnel on the basis of objective analyses,” she pointed out. The council will outline operational measures, discuss problems, gather and analyse information about the free movement of workers and employees, the employment rate, and income levels.

The establishment of the council aims to ensure the required coordination for the successful implementation of programmes and policies to encourage the employment, training, qualification, and requalification of people employed in the sector of tourism.

The Ministry of Tourism has studied the good practices in countries like Spain, France, Italy, and Portugal, but prior to applying their experience in professional training in tourism, the needs at a national level should be clear, it transpired at the event. Therefore, a more active partnership with business and employers’ organisations is also needed. The minister proposed the council holds a sitting once. Its members will present their views on the draft regulations on its functioning by June 10. They will also make proposals for the formation of thematic groups that will work on the most pressing problems.

Bulgaria was invited as observer at the meeting of the ministers of tourism in G20 format

Over the past ten years Bulgaria has marked about 40% growth in foreign tourists and our main priority is to ensure the sustainability of these results, said minister Nikolina Angelkova at the meeting of the



ministers of tourism in G20 format, which was held in Beijing. She was invited to make a statement during the official opening of the discussion and to take part in a capacity of observer country on 20th May. The forum was opened by the vice prime minister of the People's Republic of China Wan Yang.

“Political will is key to ensuring sustainable development in the sector at national and international levels. Tourism has demonstrated that it is one of the most resilient economic sectors, even in crisis conditions, and due attention should be paid to it“, minister Angelkova pointed out. In her words, with the establishment of a separate Ministry of Tourism in Bulgaria the government underscored the importance and commitment to its problems and priorities. According to data of the World Travel and Tourism Council, the total input of tourism and related economic activities to global GDP in 2015 is over 7 trillion USD or 9.8% of GDP. For Europe, this indicator is over 1.7 trillion EUR or 9.6% of GDP. In terms of Bulgaria, tourism is one of the leading structurally relevant sectors in the economy. Again based on WTTC data, the total input of tourism and related industries to the country's GDP in 2015 is over 10.5 billion BGN or about 13% of GDP.

In addition, minister Angelkova took part as a lecturer in the First World Conference on Tourism for Development, which was held in the Chinese capital. The event was opened by the prime minister of the People's Republic of China Li Keqiang and the UN World Tourism Organisation Secretary General Taleb Rifai. In her address minister Angelkova highlighted the importance of local administrations and regional marketing for the sustainable development of tourist destinations. “We have designated nine marketing regions in the territory of Bulgaria in order to present better the uniqueness of each region and the specialized forms of tourism it can offer”, Nikolina Angelkova said. She noted that in practice the country can offer everything to tourists and it is essential to put the focus on competitive segments in order to foster demand and make it more visible on international tourism market. The forum was moderated by CNN International anchor Richard Quest, who

is a long-standing partner of the World Tourism Organisation. Among the invited panelists were HRH Prince Salman bin Abdulaziz, chairperson of the Tourism Committee and the National Board of Saudi Arabia, the minister of tourism and antiquities of Jordan Nayef Al-Fayez, the minister of tourism of Kenya Najib Balala, the minister of tourism of South Africa Derek Andre Hanekom, etc.

During her visit to China minister Angelkova and the minister of tourism of the Republic of Argentina Jose Gustavo Santos signed a Memorandum of Understanding in the field of tourism. She also had meetings with the chairman of the China National Tourism Administration (CNTA) Jindzao Li, with the Secretary of State of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport of Great Britain John Whittingdale, with the minister of tourism and antiquities of Jordan Nayef Al-Fayez, HRH Prince Salman bin Abdulaziz, chairperson of the Tourism Committee and the National Board of Saudi Arabia, with the president of the Secretariat of Tourism of Mexico Enrique de la Madrid Cordero, with the minister of tourism of Indonesia Arief Yahya, with the minister of tourism of Venezuela Marleny Contreras and with the minister of tourism of South Africa Derek Andre Hanekom.

Minister Angelkova: We are introducing a voluntary label for quality in tourism

We are developing a system of criteria to promote the provision of more services at the hotels and restaurants and we intend to introduce a voluntary label of quality. An element of awarding it will be the offering of traditional Bulgarian products produced in accordance with the Bulgarian National Standard (BDS) and with the industry quality standards, minister of tourism Nikolina Angelkova said at the signing of the Memorandum of Cooperation between the Bulgarian Hotel and Restaurant Association (BHRA) and two industry organizations of Bulgarian producers of food and beverages on the 26th May. Present at the ceremony was also the minister of agriculture and food Desislava Taneva.

“Observing the Memorandum will be one of the requirements for awarding the label for quality in tourism“, minister Angelkova explained. In her words, the purpose is by the end of the year to develop and present all the details for its award and implementation, which should be embedded in the amendments to the Tourism Act. She underlined that the aim is to encourage those members of the sector which offer greater number and more diverse services apart from those set out in the act and in the regulations. “Quality in tourism means not only good facilities but also the services offered on the spot. Through the voluntary label of quality members of the sector which offer more services to their guests will become more visible and this will pro-

mote competitiveness in the sector”, the minister of tourism added. She underlined that in the preparation of the quality label good practices of leading tourism countries and the Code of Quality and Ethics of the World Tourism Organisation have been taken into account.

The changes will not incur further burdens on the



The chairperson of BHRA Blagoy Ragin, Minister Angelkova and the Minister of agriculture and food Desislava Taneva

business but will relieve its work.

Minister Angelkova recalled that in terms of high-quality services in the sector very good results were achieved in 2015. In the four- and five-star places of accommodation over 11 million overnights were realized, or 4% growth versus 2014, i.e. more than half of all overnights in the country. Over 3 million persons stayed here, i.e. 7% more than in 2014, and proceeds from overnight marked some 10% rise.

The Culinary Festival "Bulgaria welcomes the tastes of the world" was visited by over 100 thousand persons

The Culinary Festival "Bulgaria welcomes the tastes of the world" was visited by over 100 thousand persons, Bulgarians and foreigners, the minister of tourism Nikolina Angelkova announced during the opening of its latest edition in Sofia on the 28th May.

Present at the event were also diplomats from Hungary, India, Azerbaijan, Romania, Denmark, Poland, Great Britain, Israel and the USA.



"I would like to thank the Sofia Municipality for the support. This is yet another step in making Sofia an even more desired tourist destination", Nikolina Angelkova said. In her words the capital offers excellent opportunities for both city tours and cultural-historical, festival, eco, sport, gourmet and wine tourism. "The total number of realized overnights for the whole 2015 is over 1.6 million, a rise by 5.3% compared with the previous year", she added. It became clear from the words of the minister that the revenues for this period are over 115 mil-

lion BGN, marking a positive difference of 5.5% in comparison with the previous 2014.

"Bulgaria welcomes the tastes of the world" began on 12 May 2016 in Stara Zagora and passed through the cities of Burgas, Plovdiv, Veliko Tarnovo, Ruse and Varna. The festival is organized by the company GTC with the support of the Ministry of Tourism and 17 embassies in our country. For the period of the campaign its website reached to over 2.6 million persons and its fans in Facebook are nearly 40 thousand persons. Every city in which the event was held had a charity cause for which funds were raised. In Sofia the raised donations will be spent for treatment of children with cancer diseases. The final stage of the event today is divided in two parts and everybody can taste the culinary dishes in Sofia Mall at Al. Stamboliiski blvd. and Bulgaria Mall at Bulgaria blvd.

The Ministry of Tourism launched a contest for child painting “My EDEN destination in Bulgaria”

On the occasion of the Day of the Child, 1 June, the Ministry of Tourism announces a contest for child painting entitled “My EDEN destination in Bulgaria”. The event is organised within the project “Communication Campaign to Promote Bulgarian EDEN Destinations – Second Edition”, financed under the EU COSME 2014 – 2020 Programme.

The paintings should feature the child view of the landmarks and attractions located in the territory of the EDEN destination presented – natural, cultural, historical sites, customs, events, festivals, etc.



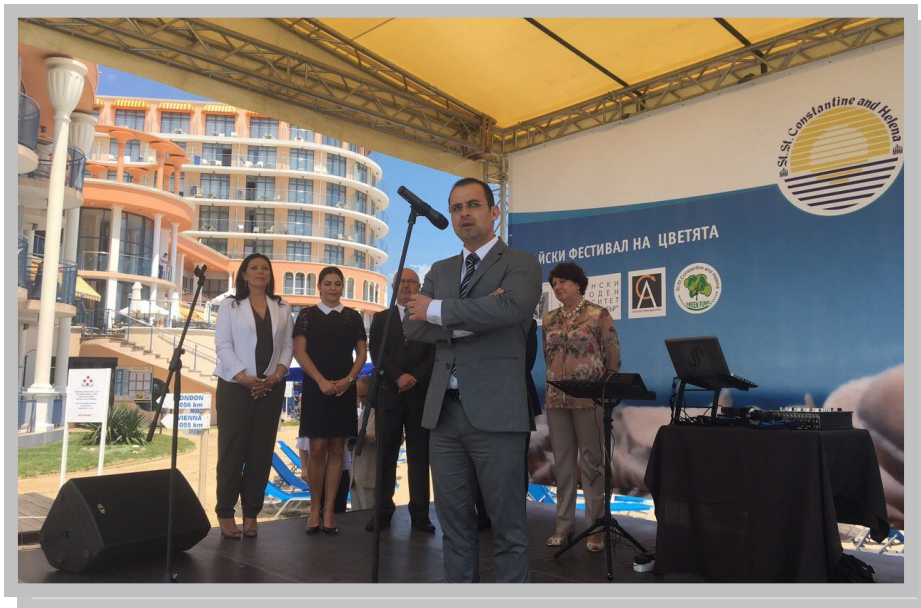
The contest for child painting entitled “My EDEN destination in Bulgaria” begins on 2 June 2016 and will continue till 22 July 2016 inclusive. Children aged 7 to 14 years may take part in it. The paintings received will be examined by a jury and the best paintings may be placed on the advertising souvenirs to be created under the project (postcards and magnets), which will be distributed across the country and abroad. Everyone who wants to participate in the contest may send his/her painting by mail or courier at address: Sofia, 1 Saborna street, for the Ministry of Tourism.

The personal viewpoint of the small participants in the contest should reveal places we do not notice in our everyday life and which can be recreated through the prism of the child perception. This will also help promote further less known tourist destinations and untraditional forms of tourism that could impress visitors.

There are twelve EDEN destinations in Bulgaria (Silistra, Lukovit, Sandanski, Kyustendil, Belogradchik, Belitsa, Sapareva Bania, Kavarna, Vratsa, Strandzha, Kazanlak, and Kardjali) which promote alternative and ecological forms of tourism. They are related to the subjects of water tourism, protected territories and cultural heritage.

The summer season 2016 was opened in St. St. Konstantin and Elena resort complex

The advisor of the minister of tourism Zhivko Tabakov together with the regional governor of Varna Stoyan Pavsev and the deputy mayor of Varna municipality Kosta Bazitov gave an official start of the season in St. St. Konstantin and Elena resort complex. Among the official guests were also Blagoy Ragin, chairperson of the Bulgarian Hotel and Restaurant Association, and Prof., PhD., D. Sc. Anna Nedyalkova, president of Varna Free University "Chernorizets Hrabar". The event was part of the celebrations on the occasion of the holiday of the oldest Black Sea resort, which will run for three consecutive days.



The advisor to the Minister on summer tourism Zhivko Tabakov gives the go-ahead of the summer season in St. St. Konstantin and Elena sea resort

In the period June-September 2015, according to NSI data, about 73 thousand tourists stayed in the complex, and the growth in overnights of Bulgarians is 8%. The total figure of realized overnights exceeds 471 thousand and revenues from them exceed 22.6 million BGN, Zhivko Tabakov said during the ceremony. He added that he hoped the results from the operation of the complex to be even higher in the new season and in order for this to happen everybody should use their best efforts. "This is the only way to guarantee the quality of the tourist product and meet the expectations of the thousands of tourists who will visit Bul-

garia in the next months", Zhivko Tabakov pointed out.

On her part the executive director of St. St. Konstantin and Elena resort complex Elena Koseva thanked all partners participating in the creation of the quality tourist product and expressed her best wishes for a successful season.

In the framework of the opening an exhibition of sketches of a workshop "St. St. Konstantin and Elena – history, development, architecture" was held. A special programme will mark 21 May – the day of the Equals to the Apostles Konstantin and Elena and the holiday of the resort complex named after them. The celebrations will start with a liturgy in the St. St. Konstantin and Elena monastery, a procession with the miracle icon of the Equals to the Apostles and a qurban dedication. The programme will continue with a concert of the brass orchestra of the Bulgarian Navy with conductor captain III rank Miroslav Todorov, of Academic Dance Theatre at Varna Free University "Chernorizets Hrabar" and with Bulgarian folk dances and many other children and adolescent musical and dance groups.

Part of the celebration programme on 21 May is the workshop of students in fashion at VFU with the subject "My small colour dress", held in the framework of the May Festival of Flowers. The students will provoke both themselves and the visitors of the resort and together with them will design a classical small colour dress using fabrics in the summer colours. On 22 May a children's holiday will be held with a music and artistic programme and the traditional contest for painting on the asphalt. The subject is in line with the overall campaign of events in May: "Getting in touch with nature and arts".

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