

**Joint Political Declaration for a
Strategic Partnership
between the Republic of Bulgaria and Romania**

Acknowledging the solid historical ties, the good neighborly relations and long-lasting people-to-people contacts that unite Bulgaria and Romania,

Recalling the importance of the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Good Neighbourliness between the Republic of Bulgaria and Romania, signed in 1992, that we celebrated last year at its 30th anniversary,

Reaffirming the unwavering support for the principles of the UN Charter, the Helsinki Final Act and the Paris Charter, which underpin the rules-based international order,

Taking into account the two countries' membership in the European Union and NATO, their commitment to the fundamental values and the common interests that the Republic of Bulgaria and Romania share at European, regional and international level,

Building upon the solid cooperation developed in the fields of common interest and taking into account the existing potential to further increase and expand it in a mutually beneficial way,

Considering that Russia's brutal war of aggression against Ukraine has resulted into a deteriorated security context, including in our region, while reaffirming the goals for peace, prosperity and security of their peoples,

Emphasizing the importance of active regional cooperation, as the basis for lasting stability and security in South-East Europe,

Reiterating their resolve to support stability and security in the Black Sea region,

Bulgaria and Romania have decided to establish a new consolidated framework to their bilateral relation at the level of Strategic Partnership, in order to further foster their cooperation bilaterally and within the European Union, NATO and other regional and international fora, which are reflected by the following lines of approach and action:

Part I - BILATERAL COOPERATION

Based on the already active and regular **political dialogue**, including through the five meetings of the High - Level Cooperation Council between the Bulgarian and the Romanian Governments, both countries express the common will to further consolidate their cooperation. To this end, they will consult regularly on issues of mutual interest and will aim to organize periodic meetings of the High-Level Cooperation Council.

While the **economic ties** are strong, Bulgaria and Romania commit to work closer to further harness the potential of their bilateral exchanges and identify together new opportunities for trade and investment promotion, economic cooperation, including market access to third countries with common products, and tourism. The development of partnerships between economic zones, logistics and SME's business networks, technological and industrial parks, business incubators, as well as joint projects in the field of science, innovation and research, with a particular focus on digitalization will be pursued with a view to ensuring the competitive edge and sustainability for our economies, both in the region and EU-wide. Bulgaria and Romania will work to further strengthen bilateral cooperation in the field of tourism and promote participation in joint projects and initiatives.

The Strategic Partnership requires considerable improvement of connectivity across the common border in the fields of transport, infrastructure, energy, telecommunications etc. In this context, the construction of the new cross-border bridge over the Danube River near Ruse – Giurgiu, as well as the implementation of the FAST DANUBE Project will bring significant benefits for both countries, the region and the EU as a whole. Therefore, Bulgaria and Romania will further enhance their efforts to expedite the realization of both these already envisaged projects, and will continue to cooperate closely with a view to implementing other concrete projects in the field of connectivity.

Both countries will join forces to enhance the **cooperation in the field of energy**, while exploring ways to improve energy inter-connectivity within the region, especially, considering the new regional outlook of energy supply and distribution following the full-scale military aggression of Russia against Ukraine. Opportunities for cross-border cooperation in view of maximizing the two countries' shared potential regarding renewable energy will be duly considered.

Both countries are committed to enhance the bilateral political-military dialogue at all levels and strengthen bilateral defence cooperation at practical level, with focus on domains such as military training and education, technical-military, cyber defence and the protection of commemorative monuments.

Bulgaria and Romania will pursue their cooperation in the field of internal affairs focusing on preventing and countering cross-border crimes through intensified dialogue and common operational activities at the level of the relevant structures from both countries, as well as on joint efforts to facilitate the cross-border traffic. Both countries will continue to cooperate in order to improve their capacities to react in emergency situations, taking into account the current regional security environment and the challenges connected to climate change.

The two countries will take further steps to foster cultural cooperation and exchanges and to encourage a stronger cooperation between educational institutions (universities, colleges, schools etc.).

While acknowledging the longstanding bonds between the peoples of Bulgaria and Romania, both countries will encourage and promote active contacts and relevant initiatives between their citizens, as well as their media institutions, including public media, in order to further increase the level of mutual knowledge and understanding.

PART II – EUROPEAN AFFAIRS

Convinced that unity and solidarity remain the milestones of the European project, Bulgaria and Romania will continue to work together for a strong and resilient European Union, based on respect for fundamental values and principles, able to respond to the expectation of its citizens.

Both countries continue to join efforts in order to further contribute and support a more cohesive European Union, by strengthening the Single Market and by ensuring the Union's social, environmental and economic development, to the benefit of their citizens.

Both EU countries will undertake to promote measures that encourage growth-enhancing investments, within the framework of the EU green and digital objectives. They stress the need for a fair and balanced EU economic governance, incorporating the basic principles of national ownership, flexibility and country differentiation.

The two countries will continue to cooperate at EU level on energy security related issues, with a view to increasing the resilience of the European energy market and reaching the objectives of the green transition towards climate-neutral economy.

Bulgaria and Romania reaffirm their determination to continue consolidating the internal security of the European Union. In this regard, Bulgaria and Romania will continue to coordinate in order to reach their common priority objectives related to the full Schengen membership, based on the acknowledged constant contributions of both countries to ensuring the security of the EU external borders.

Bulgaria and Romania commit to strengthen their cooperation and to further contribute to the European security and defence at political-military and operational level, as well as with regard to EU initiatives, in complementarity with NATO, avoiding duplications and with the aim of maintaining interoperability.

They commit to work on improving their cyber security using the existing instruments at EU level, including the capacity of EU cyber security center based in Bucharest.

Bulgaria and Romania will consult each other and seek to consolidate common positions in relation to institutional developments of the EU and CFSP issues.

The two countries commit themselves to actively support the EU enlargement policy and will stay strongly engaged in consolidating its dynamics.

Both countries support the European membership perspective of the Western Balkans, based on the fulfilment of the agreed EU accession criteria and candidates "own merits" in achieving the necessary reforms.

Bulgaria and Romania welcome the European perspective for Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, as well as the status of candidate country granted to Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova.

The two countries stand ready to provide all relevant support to the three Eastern neighbours, in order to advance their European integration path in accordance with the merit-based approach.

Bulgaria and Romania consider that the EU should consolidate its role and project its values in the Eastern Neighborhood, including through the Eastern Partnership, a particularly relevant objective given the current geopolitical developments. They reaffirm the sovereign right of each Eastern Partner to freely decide on the scope, goals and level of ambition of their respective relationship with the EU.

Both countries shall cooperate in joining EU efforts to promote further development in third countries, with special focus on EU neighboring areas, while participating to the EU Team Europe approach and implementation of NDICI – GE Regulation.

PART III – REGIONAL COOPERATION

Bulgaria and Romania commit to strengthen their cooperation within regional initiatives in the Black Sea and in the South-East Europe, with the aim to contribute to regional, European and Euro-Atlantic security and stability.

Bulgaria and Romania will work together to update the activities of the relevant regional formats and initiatives in order to turn them into effective tools aimed at supporting and promoting the European process of the candidate countries.

Both countries will endeavor to strengthen their cooperation related to the Black Sea region, including with a view to increase situational awareness at the international, NATO and EU level. They will continue to consolidate the framework of cooperation in order to effectively respond to the respective challenges.

The two countries will continue to work with all their partners, at local, national, regional and European level, from both public and private sectors, in order to see concrete blue economy projects developed within the framework of the Common Maritime Agenda (CMA) and the Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda for the Black Sea (SRIA).

Acknowledging the growing importance of North-South connectivity, where the Three Seas Initiative plays an important role, the two countries will continue to advance their cooperation in the framework provided by the Initiative and develop the projects initiated under its auspices.

Both countries commit to further increase their efforts to implement concrete social and economic development projects within the framework of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region.

PART IV – SECURITY COOPERATION

Bulgaria and Romania will further develop bilateral dialogue and cooperation in support of regional and Euro-Atlantic security, in accordance with their interests and responsibilities as NATO and EU Member States. They will further intensify the cooperation and coordination within the EU and NATO through regular consultations on issues of common interest.

Both countries will develop cooperation, bilaterally and with other partners which share similar values and objectives, in order to foster peace, security and stability in the strategically important Black Sea region as well as in the Euro-Atlantic area as a whole. To this end, Bulgaria and Romania will further deepen their coordination and cooperation to ensure the long term adaptation of NATO's deterrence and defence posture as well as strengthening the Allied forward defence posture on the Eastern Flank, particularly at the Black Sea.

Bulgaria and Romania will work together to achieve full operational capability of the Allied operational projects and structures deployed on their territories in line with NATO policy and decisions. They will cooperate to ensure the effectiveness of the cross-border Allied air-policing missions over the Black Sea. They will promote a strategic and structured NATO approach in supporting security at the Black Sea. At the same time, they will work together for identifying a viable solution for ensuring sustainable fuel supply chain on the Eastern Flank, including on its South-Eastern part.

Bulgaria and Romania will cooperate in a spirit of solidarity and by concerted action to effectively address the new security risks, including extremism and violent extremism and radicalization, terrorism, hybrid threats, illicit trafficking and cybercrime.

Bulgaria and Romania will work together to support vulnerable partners in Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans, to strengthen their resilience, including their capacity to tackle disinformation, foster democratic defence systems and develop their cooperation with NATO and the EU, in accordance with their interests and objectives. The two countries will work together to support the Euro-Atlantic aspirations of NATO aspirants and EU candidate countries.

Both countries reiterate their resolute condemnation of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, which constitutes one of the most serious violation of the UN Charter, of the principles of international law and of the rules-based international order. Bulgaria and Romania reaffirm their strong and full support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders, including territorial waters, as well as for its inherent right to self-defence against aggression.

Bulgaria and Romania reconfirm their commitment to support Ukraine and its people in order to defend their territorial integrity and build their way towards peace. Both

countries stand ready to further expand their multidimensional assistance, including for building Ukraine's resilience and long-term reconstruction.

At the same time, considering the challenges that the Republic of Moldova is also facing as an effect of the Russian aggression, Bulgaria and Romania will cooperate to ensure appropriate multidimensional support for the Republic of Moldova, including through the Republic of Moldova Support Platform, in order to help this country respond to the consequences of the security, economic, energy and social crisis in the region.

PART V - INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Bulgaria and Romania are committed to cooperate in multilateral fora to uphold and defend the shared values of freedom and democracy, market economy, human rights and rule of law.

In the complex security context generated by the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, the two countries will strengthen their cooperation, as NATO Allies and EU partners, as well as participating States in the OSCE, in order to mitigate the impact of the war, and to consolidate the security in Europe, so that such aggressions become impossible in the future.

Bulgaria and Romania will work together as advocates for strong climate and environmental action, by championing funding for countering climate change, promoting marine conservation and protection, while also continuing their commitment towards achieving a climate-neutral EU. Both countries agree to have regular discussions on delivering on their COP commitments and on how to utilize their position as Black Sea riparian states to catalyse their shared journey towards climate-neutrality.

Given their common goal to become full members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Bulgaria and Romania are committed to support each other and harness the opportunities offered by the accession process to OECD, by engaging in consultations, sharing of best practices and contacts between experts. Both countries will cooperate in order to step up efforts to maintain and strengthen the rules-based international economic order, while preserving the economic security and countering economic coercion, including in the context of the war in Ukraine. The OECD membership will be mutually beneficial and will offer both countries the opportunity to further develop their bilateral relations, shape their best governance practices, in the context of open, competitive, sustainable and transparent market economies, promoting inclusive economic growth.

Bulgaria and Romania will seek to exchange their support on reciprocal basis for candidatures in the European and international organizations.

Bulgaria and Romania shall seek to exchange good practices in the field of development cooperation and humanitarian aid, and will collaborate in fulfilling their respective engagements towards achieving the UN 2030 Agenda Sustainable Development Goals,

the European Consensus for Development, as well as in enhancing the compliance with the criteria and principles set by the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD regarding the Official Development Assistance.

Signed in duplicate, in English, in Sofia, on 15 March 2023.

Rumen Radev

Klaus Iohannis

President of the Republic of Bulgaria

President of Romania