



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

**BULGARIA**

# COUNTRY PROFILE

DECEMBER 2007



*The USAID program in Bulgaria has focused on helping the country achieve a more prosperous, stable, and democratic future. The new generation of Bulgarians will grow up as European Union citizens.*

## BULGARIA SNAPSHOT

Date of independence:  
September 22, 1908  
Capital: Sofia  
Population: 7.4 million  
GDP per person: \$9,600

For more information,  
see [www.usaid.gov](http://www.usaid.gov)  
Keyword: Bulgaria

## OVERVIEW

Since 1990, the American people, through USAID, have contributed more than \$600 million in economic and technical assistance to support Bulgaria's transition to a market-based democracy. The USAID program in



**Sofia**

Bulgaria has evolved from its early, dual focus on humanitarian aid and political party strengthening to a broader development approach designed to help the country overcome the challenges of its transition to democratic governance and a market economy. Together with its partners, USAID has assisted with developing private businesses, improving local democratic governance, supporting rule of law reforms, building new systems and institutions, enhancing human capacity to manage these changes, and addressing the needs of vulnerable populations.

Bulgaria's membership in the European Union, effective January 2007, will end economic assistance provided by USAID under the Support to Eastern European Democracy (SEED) Act in September 2008.

## PROGRAMS

### STRENGTHENING THE RULE OF LAW

Rule of law programming is the centerpiece of USAID assistance in Bulgaria. Efforts target three distinct areas: justice sector reform, anti-corruption, and reducing trafficking in persons. The many judicial reform issues in Bulgaria require USAID to work at both the national and local levels with regional, district and appellate courts, lawyers, non-governmental organizations and professional organizations. USAID's anti-corruption activities strengthen the Government of Bulgaria's institutional capacity to prevent corruption and enhance transparency and accountability, particularly in government auditing, internal controls, and public procurement. A civil society component promotes anti-corruption public awareness, monitors public administration functioning, and investigates corruption allegations. Anti-trafficking efforts focus on building capacity of Bulgarian institutions to combat this problem and support a shelter for child victims.



## COUNTRY PROFILE CONTINUED

### USAID ASSISTANCE TO BULGARIA

Early Transition Years (1990-1996):  
\$206 million

Years of Political Stability and Rapid Reform (1997-2001):  
\$192 million

Years of Consolidation, Stability and EU Accession (2002-2007):  
\$166 million

Humanitarian Assistance (1991-2006):  
\$65.5 million

### CULTIVATING A ROBUST ECONOMY

With Bulgaria's graduation from economic assistance looming, USAID is focused on enhancing the business environment, contributing to job creation, and improving access to financial resources. USAID assists the Bulgarian government to plan and implement forward-looking economic reforms in the areas of small and medium enterprise growth, competitiveness, and foreign direct investment. USAID strives to promote growth and job creation in a sustainable manner by strengthening the private sector. For instance, a project aimed at improving efficiency of the labor market in Bulgaria seeks to reduce the mismatch of skills between supply and demand for human resources. USAID-supported reforms in business registration and enforcement of judgments help to better protect economic rights and promote an improved business environment. The Bulgarian–American Enterprise Fund, active since 1991, continues to support the growth of private enterprises.

### PROMOTING INCLUSIVE, RESPONSIVE LOCAL GOVERNANCE

USAID projects build on its unique investment in the local government sector while broadening involvement to include community building issues. To provide local governments with enhanced autonomy and availability of resources, USAID has assisted with the development of decentralization legislation and a mechanism for dialogue between central and local government on ongoing reforms. These efforts are complemented by the establishment of innovative public-private partnerships for the provision of social services, and programs to promote social and political inclusion of vulnerable groups. Conflict prevention and ethnic integration issues are addressed primarily at the community level, targeting youth, ethnic minorities, and vulnerable groups and communities.

### BUILDING AN INFRASTRUCTURE FOR CONTINUED PROGRESS

National and regional stability are dependent upon Bulgaria's ability to sustain economic, democratic, and rule of law reforms. To this end, USAID delivers specialized assistance to develop and reinforce the infrastructure required to support these reforms and Bulgaria's future progress. Specifically, USAID trains Bulgarian professionals, creates advocacy and public awareness media campaigns, enhances avian influenza preparedness, and provides flood relief assistance. USAID also supports the American University in Bulgaria, the only American-style liberal arts education institution in southeastern Europe.

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Michael Fritz  
Mission Director, USAID/Bulgaria  
U.S. Embassy Sofia  
16 Koziak Street  
1407 Sofia  
Bulgaria  
Tel: +359-2-937-5101

Andrew Rajec  
Bulgaria Desk Officer  
Tel: 202-712-1904  
Email: arajec@usaid.gov