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Bulgaria No Longer in the FATF's "Gray List":

An Important Step for the Country, but Not the End of Reforms

Transparency International Bulgaria and the Business Integrity Club welcome Bulgaria's removal from the Financial Action Task Force's List of Countries Under Enhanced Monitoring after nearly three years of consistent advocacy efforts and institutional dialogue

On October 30, 2026, the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) officially removed Bulgaria from the list of jurisdictions under enhanced monitoring, known as the "gray list." The decision was made at the FATF plenary meeting in Paris following a positive assessment of the implementation of the national action plan and an on-site review to confirm the progress made.

Transparency International Bulgaria and the Business Integrity Club welcome the decision as an important step toward strengthening international confidence in Bulgaria and improving the investment and business environment. At the same time, they emphasize that being removed from the list does not mean that all systemic weaknesses in the fight against money laundering, corruption, and organized crime have been overcome.

The significance for Bulgarian businesses

Bulgaria's inclusion on the "gray list" had consequences not only for the country's international reputation but also for its economic activity. It led to an increased risk assessment by international financial institutions, additional checks, administrative burdens, and difficulties with certain cross-border financial transactions.

Removal from the list creates the conditions for reducing these difficulties, facilitating international financial relations, and improving the investment climate. The actual benefits, however, will depend on the sustained implementation of reforms and the assessments of international financial institutions and investors.

The next challenge: Sustainability of reforms and effective implementation

Bulgaria's removal from the "gray list" is recognition of the progress made, but it does not eliminate the need for consistent action to strengthen the rule of law, mitigate corruption risks, and improve the effectiveness of institutions.

The Business Integrity Club's priorities for the next phase should include advocating for:

- effective and consistent implementation of measures against money laundering and financing of terrorism;

- consistent results in the investigation and prosecution of financial crimes and corruption;
- reliable information on beneficial ownership and effective, risk-based supervision;
- strengthening institutional capacity, coordination, and accountability;
- legal certainty, a predictable regulatory environment, and proportionate requirements for businesses acting in good faith.

Genuine success will be measured not only by removal from the list of jurisdictions under enhanced monitoring, but also by the sustained reduction of financial misconduct, the effectiveness of institutions, and the restoration of trust among citizens, businesses, and international partners.

Three years of heightened supervision

Bulgaria was placed on the FATF's "gray list" in October 2023 due to identified strategic deficiencies in its national system for combating money laundering and financing of terrorism.

Being place on this list resulted in the country being put under heightened international scrutiny and required the implementation of a specific action plan aimed at improving institutional oversight, financial intelligence, transparency regarding beneficial ownership, and the effectiveness of financial crime investigations.

In June 2026, the FATF reported significant progress in the implementation of the action plan and approved an on-site review to assess the sustainability of the measures taken. On October 30, 2026, the organization confirmed that Bulgaria had fulfilled the necessary commitments and was no longer subject to enhanced monitoring.

Among the improvements reported are the implementation of risk-based supervision, the enhancement of the reliability of information on beneficial owners, the strengthening of financial intelligence, and progress in the investigation and prosecution of money laundering, including in connection with high-level corruption and organized crime.

The FATF emphasizes the need for Bulgaria to continue its cooperation with MONEYVAL of the Council of Europe to ensure the sustainability of the results achieved.

Three years of consistent efforts of Transparency International Bulgaria and the Business Integrity Club

Since the beginning of 2024, Transparency International Bulgaria, including in its capacity as the secretariat of the Business Integrity Club, has consistently placed Bulgaria's removal from the FATF's "gray list" among the priority issues in the dialogue between the business community and public institutions.

During this period, the Business Integrity Club kept this issue on the agenda in its communications with six consecutive governments, three regular and three caretaker governments, led by Nikolai

Denkov, Dimitar Glavchev (two caretaker cabinets), Rosen Zhelyazkov, Andrey Gyurov, and Rumen Radev.

Regardless of changes in political leadership in the country, we insisted on the consistent fulfillment of Bulgaria's international commitments, effective inter-institutional coordination, and the acceleration of necessary reforms. These priorities have been advocated through official correspondence, public appeals, meetings with representatives of the executive branch, and discussions with business organizations.

The issue of Bulgaria being placed under enhanced monitoring was first discussed at a meeting of the Business Integrity Club in March 2024. Progress on the implementation of the national action plan was subsequently monitored and discussed at all meetings in 2025 and 2026. Thus, the issue remained a permanent item on the business community's agenda.

An important milestone in advocacy efforts was the initiative launched by the Business Integrity Club in partnership with the American Chamber of Commerce in Bulgaria and the Bulgarian-Swiss Chamber of Commerce in the period of May-June 2024. Following an official letter dated May 29, on June 11, 2024, representatives of the three organizations held a meeting with Acting Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Lyudmila Petkova and representatives of the State Agency for National Security.

During the meeting, participants discussed the implementation of Bulgaria's commitments to the FATF and MONEYVAL, the legislative and institutional measures taken, and opportunities for closer cooperation between the government, the business community, and civil society.

In a follow-up letter dated June 19, 2024, addressed to Acting Prime Minister Dimitar Glavchev and Minister of Finance Lyudmila Petkova, the organizations expressed their support for the reforms and their willingness to participate in the development and implementation of these reforms. Particular emphasis was placed on providing timely information to stakeholders, applying a risk-based approach, and avoiding a disproportionate administrative burden on businesses acting in good faith.

Continuation of the institutional dialogue in 2026

In 2026, during the final phase of the action plan's implementation, the Business Integrity Club's secretariat continued its active dialogue with the institutions.

The topics of Bulgaria's progress and the conclusion of the enhanced surveillance procedure has been raised in official correspondence addressed to the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance. Between June and September 2026, the issue was raised at meetings between representatives of Transparency International Bulgaria, the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Emphasis was placed on the fulfillment of international commitments, inter-institutional coordination, and the significance of the decision for the country's international reputation and investment climate.

At the Business Integrity Club meeting on November 4, 2026, the organizations discussed the news that Bulgaria had been removed from the FATF's "gray list." Thus, the issue, which was first raised in March 2024, has progressed through consistent monitoring of progress, institutional dialogue, and advocacy initiatives, culminating in the announcement of this positive outcome.

The Business Integrity Club will continue to promote institutional dialogue and policies that combine effective measures to combat financial crime with transparency, legal certainty, and a competitive business environment.