

# **BULGARIA**

**STATEMENT OF MR. ASSEN VASSILEV**  
MINISTER OF FINANCE OF REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA  
EBRD GOVERNOR FOR REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA  
ON THE OCCASION OF THE 30<sup>TH</sup> EBRD ANNUAL MEETING

This year's meeting marks the thirtieth anniversary from the establishment of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development as one of the first manifestations of the common will to bring prosperity and unity to Europe and beyond through democracy and market-based economy. At the same time, the anniversary provides an opportunity to review the new challenges and to set concrete objectives towards preserving the transition gains and supporting economies in which the Bank operates towards achieving sustainable post-pandemic recovery.

During the period under review, all EBRD regions of operations faced extreme economic and social turbulences. EBRD has reacted swiftly and in a well-targeted manner to the unprecedented social and financial challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic through its Solidarity Package. We welcome the investment amount of up to €21 billion which is anticipated to be channelled to countries of operations by the end of 2021 and the record €11 billion invested in 2020. The combination of more effective implementation of existing initiatives and creation of new targeted crisis response facilities, like the Resilience Framework and the Vital Infrastructure Support Programme, have contributed to the amelioration of the economies in the region.

Despite the unprecedented global environment, EBRD remained strong, sustainably managed and dedicated to the expectations of its shareholders and clients. In 2020 EBRD maintained good operational and financial results, as reflected in its Annual reports, with record investment levels, healthy profitability and strong transition impact in the countries of operations. We welcome the sustainable financial position of EBRD, which will allow the Bank to support annual investment flows of up to €13 billion in support of building stronger economies of the countries of operations. Against the background of extraordinary economic and financial challenges, these results attest to the high professional standards of the management and staff. In this regard, I would like to extend our gratitude to President Renaud-Basso for providing strong leadership in these uncertain times.

As the world is slowly recovering from the crisis, it is of utmost importance that we ensure that this recovery is based on a smart and sustainable transition. The Covid pandemic emphasized the importance of investing in innovative technologies and the undoubted value of a rapid digital transformation in the public and the private sector. We are confident that the digital transformation has a considerable potential for increasing competitiveness, effectivity and job creation and we fully support the Bank in pursuing digital ambition and fostering technological innovation for the sake of delivery of higher quality impact.

The greatest challenge of the post-crisis recovery, however, remains the achievement of climate and environmental sustainability. Accelerating decarbonisation is a pressing challenge but also an opportunity for the EBRD's countries of operations. We appreciate that with the Strategic and Capital Framework 2021-2025 the Bank embarked on a greater ambition to transform the recovery into a more competitive, resilient, inclusive and green transition and we commend the Bank for its efforts to use this moment as an opportunity to tilt investments and economic activities on to a durably sustainable trajectory. Not only mass investment in green and innovative technologies will be needed, but also restructuring of the current economic systems in order to avoid exacerbating existing inequalities between regions in order to pave the way for a just transition. In view of this, we encourage the Bank to work towards mobilization of financial resources for achieving sustainable transformation while at the same time addressing the regional vulnerabilities and sectoral development in its countries of operation.

We value the support brought by the Bank to Bulgaria in 2020, through loans, technical assistance and expertise in the preparation and execution of projects or as part of standalone initiatives. Going forward,

as the Bulgarian economy recovers and resumes more robust growth, EBRD's financial resources and expertise could become a catalyst for attracting more investments. We believe that EBRD will continue to be a trusted partner in the path towards sustainable and innovative development, as well as experienced advisor on regulatory reforms that go hand in hand with such investments.

We look forward to continuing our fruitful cooperation in the years ahead.

Thank you.