



Press Release

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**STATE VISIT TO MALTA BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA
ROSEN ASENOV PLEVNELIEV**

Speech by President of the Republic of Bulgaria Rosen Plevneliev at the State Dinner at The Palace, Valletta

Dear Madam President,
Your Excellences,
Ladies and gentlemen,

First of all I would like to thank you for the kind invitation to visit your beautiful country and for the warm hospitality and excellent organization. It truly is a great pleasure to visit the “City of Palaces” – Valletta. This is an expression not only of the warm and friendly relations between Bulgaria and Malta, but also of the shared desire to deepen cooperation between us.

For most people, Malta is a country with rich history and some of the most ancient monuments on the planet. But for us, Bulgarians, it is much more. When the Ottomans attacked the island in 1565 there were many Bulgarians, forced into joining their army as cooks, baggage carriers, etc. When they saw the large Ottoman army defeated by a much smaller force, they brought that tale back to Bulgarian lands. They spread the story of how the Ottoman Empire which had conquered so many Christian lands, was finally defeated in Malta. They brought back hope that one day Bulgaria would be freed from Ottoman rule. To this day, many parts of Bulgaria have old folklore songs that sing of the defeat of the Ottomans at Malta.

Apart from our historic ties, current relations between our two countries are classified by dialog and friendship. We share similarly important geopolitical positions. We have common dreams and aspirations to build a strong, prosperous and united Europe. Together, we “smaller countries” can have a strong voice, especially when we work together.

Both Malta and Bulgaria have great experience in the interaction between different religions and cultures which we can use to tackle some of the pressing problems facing Europe and the world. Within the EU, especially during the forthcoming Maltese presidency of the EU Council and the Bulgarian presidency in the first half of 2018, we can combine our efforts in order to provide a unified and decisive response to the real problems of migration and radicalization. And build a stronger, more united and competitive EU.

Malta, with its constructive role in the Union for the Mediterranean, is already a leading voice for promoting peace, security and prosperity both regionally and globally.

Attachments: none

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Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to express my satisfaction with today's fruitful talks. We share a common will and desire to give our bilateral relations a new impulse for their future development. However, there is still a great deal of untapped potential for cooperation in many areas and we should make joint efforts to develop our ties further. Our special interest is in expanding trade, increasing investments and deepening our cultural, scientific and educational exchanges. I believe Bulgaria and Malta are ready to move to a higher level of bilateral political dialogue.

Madam President,

I would like to assure you that, in Bulgaria, you have a reliable friend and ally on whose support and understanding you can count on in the future.

With best wishes for good health and further success to you and all those present here, I would like to raise a toast to the prosperity of our friendly peoples and for a better future for Europe and the world!

Наздраве!