



REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA  
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

DIPLOMATIC INSTITUTE



DOCENDO DISCIMUS  
Bulgarian Diplomatic Institute



LEVAN MIKELADZE  
DIPLOMATIC TRAINING AND RESEARCH INSTITUTE  
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF GEORGIA



# Specialized seminars on Energy and climate diplomacy, energy efficiency and energy management

**Tbilisi and Batumi  
Republic of Georgia  
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Website: <https://bdi.bg/>

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## I. Introduction

The Bulgarian Diplomatic Institute, in partnership with the UN and Cooperation for Development Directorate at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Bulgaria, as well as the Levan Mikeladze Diplomatic Training and Research Institute to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Georgia, has the pleasure to conduct four specialized seminars on **Energy and climate diplomacy, energy efficiency and energy management**, for representatives from the Georgian diplomatic service, state administration, academia, as well as business and NGO sector.

The objective of this undertaking is to increase the expert capacity of the target audience in the field of energy and sustainable development and to expand and deepen the regional cooperation within formats such as the Eastern Partnership, the Energy Community and the Paris Agreement. At the same time, it is designed to get the audience acquainted with latest initiatives of the European Union, regarding energy and climate, such as the European Green Deal. Another important focus of the seminars is the energy security dimension in the Caspian and the Black sea regions and the establishment of the necessary synergies between them, including opportunities for investment in green energy. In this regard, the factors which could lead to disruptions in energy and climate security would also be assessed, for example sharp increase on the demand/supply side, natural disasters, geopolitical competition, the issue with energy poverty, the attainment of the sustainable development goals, without compromising affordability and security of energy, etc. To add further to the topic, the energy transition and the related social, financial, economic and geopolitical transformations it bears would also be a subject for broad discussion and analysis. Whether less carbon-intensive fossil fuels such as natural gas ought to be regarded as transitional energy source and important part of the global energy mix and what role does gas play in the region of Southeast Europe and how it relates to Georgia, is another important topic for debate.

Energy and climate diplomacy is one of the main research activities of the Bulgarian Diplomatic Institute (BDI). Over the last decade, the institute has gained considerable experience in conducting various kinds of training, research and public events activities on the topic. It has put unwavering efforts in making the energy topic and its interaction with foreign policy a priority issue in its research agenda. Starting in 2010, the BDI began its journey in the field of energy by conducting the first energy diplomacy seminar geared towards Bulgarian civil servants. Throughout the years, this forum has gained an international dimension, attracting participants – both civil and diplomatic servants – from the Western Balkans, the Eastern Partnership countries, EU Member States and other corners of the world. This year marks the 10th anniversary since the first International Energy Diplomacy Seminar, and the BDI continues to provide this platform for exchange of ideas, viewpoints and finding the right solutions. Besides the annual seminar on energy and climate diplomacy, the BDI also includes the topic in its external trainings abroad – both in Western Balkan countries and the members of the Eastern Partnership. It also publishes an annual journal on Energy and Climate diplomacy, attracting researchers on the topic from different sectors of the economy – academia, public sector, business community, NGOs. It is quite clear that energy and climate cut across both bilateral and multilateral relations and that international cooperation is a key element in accomplishing a just energy transition. As radical reforms and transformations mostly affect the poorest, carbon neutrality cannot be achieved by ignoring this dynamic, so this series of seminars attempt to address this concern. The rapidly changing global energy and climate landscape represents a challenge for every stakeholder - international organizations, national governments and institutions, business communities, civil

society, etc. Anthropogenic climate change is among the most pressing issues of our time and it is intrinsically connected to the way "the blood system" of our economy - our energy system, functions. Providing sustainable, affordable and secure energy is undoubtedly a global issue with national, regional and local dimensions. Within the current decade, the energy transition enters a new accelerated phase, propelled by the COVID-19 pandemic and the stated intent by most industrialized countries to follow sustainable post-COVID recovery and achieve net-zero economies by mid-century. These ambitious goals would be pursued on the background of geopolitical disruptions, widening social inequalities, global security challenges, as well as lurking "black swan" events, able to further complicate the system of international relations. However, this should not be an excuse to seek the accomplishment of a sustainable, comprehensive and socially acceptable energy and climate future.

## II. The Bulgarian Official Development Aid

Development cooperation is an integral part of the foreign policy of the Republic of Bulgaria and contributes to the achievement of its goals. It is chiefly implemented by the UN and Cooperation for Development Directorate at the Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and is defined and pursued in accordance with the common EU Development and Humanitarian Aid Policy. Its main principles include:

- supporting sustainable development in the economic and social spheres, including environmental protection and sustainable management of natural resources in the partner countries, in consonance with the UN Sustainable Development Goals for 2030.
- promoting the basic human rights and international law principles, maintaining peacekeeping and strengthening of international security, good governance and democracy; encouraging gender equality; upholding the rule of law, solidarity and justice.
- encouraging good global governance and integration of all countries into the global economy.

The mid-term programme for Development Assistance and Humanitarian Aid of the Republic of Bulgaria for the period 2020 -2024 builds upon, enriches the geographical and sectoral priorities of Bulgaria's official development assistance formulated in the previous strategic documents on the subject, and broadens the range of participants. **It proves the country's steady shift from being mainly a development aid recipient to becoming a donor country that is actively preparing to achieve one of its crucial foreign policy goals: membership in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.**

The Western Balkans and the Eastern Partnership countries are the main beneficiaries of the Bulgarian Official Development Assistance (ODA). In providing development assistance to the Western Balkan countries, Bulgaria is guided by the strategic goal of their successful integration into the EU in the medium and long term. In the period 2016-2019, projects totalling BGN 7.9 million (EUR 4, 03) were financed bilaterally with Bulgarian ODA in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Republic of North Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro. In 2020, Bulgaria provided BGN 2.7 million (EUR 1,4) for the Western Balkan countries.

In 2020, three regional projects for building administrative capacity were financed. In 2021 Bulgaria will continue to support the realization of regional projects, one of them being the specialized seminars on Energy and climate diplomacy, energy efficiency and energy management, implemented by the Diplomatic Institute.

Bulgaria supports the deepening of relations with the European Union of Armenia, Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. During the period 2016-2019, development projects worth a total of BGN 5.2 million (EUR 2,7) were financed bilaterally with Bulgarian ODA.

The projects executed in 2020 were aimed at expert and technical capacity and building socially significant infrastructure; the protection of human rights; improving the quality of education; sustainable management in agriculture and food; support for better healthcare; protection of cultural diversity; building capacity to support security and development.

Bulgaria provided humanitarian aid to support the countries in the region:

- In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and a request to our country for humanitarian assistance, Bulgaria provided protective medical supplies (protective clothing, helmets and goggles) to partners from the Western Balkans, the Eastern Partnership and Iraq. In addition, food packages were distributed to the neediest in Albania, the Republic of North Macedonia and Serbia.
- Financial resources in the amount of 195 583 BGN (EUR 0,5) have been provided for Albania to overcome the consequences of the earthquakes that hit the country in 2019.
- For Ukraine, Bulgaria provided 195 583 BGN (EUR 0,5) to the Ukraine Humanitarian Fund and to the International Committee of the Red Cross for the implementation of the international movement's appeal.
- Funds in the amount of 195 583 BGN (EUR 0,5) were provided to the World Health Organization under the Coronavirus Global Response for the development and distribution of a vaccine against COVID-19.
- In the end of 2020, humanitarian aid was provided in response to the humanitarian crisis due to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. It amounted to 195 583 BGN (EUR 0,5) and was directed for implementation of the emergency appeal of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

In 2020, a total of BGN 5.99 million (EUR 3,06) was spent from the approved BGN 6 million (EUR 3.06) for Official Development Aid from the MFA's budget.

The work carried out in the field of development and cooperation policy in 2020 asserted the role of Bulgaria as a stable partner and allowed our embassies working on the field to engage actively with the local national and municipal authorities in the partnering countries.

The project for the implementation of specialized seminars on energy issues in Georgia corresponds to the geographical (Black Sea region), sectoral (Environmental protection; improving the quality of education; expanding mutual trade and investment) and thematic (Capacity building in support of security and development) goals and priorities of the Bulgarian official development assistance. It is also in line with the goals for sustainable development of the UN Sustainable Development Program until 2030, related to quality education, providing accessible and environmentally friendly energy sources, taking action to combat climate change and more. The DI project will contribute to strengthening security and stability in the energy sector, supporting the sustainable economic development of a country neighboring Bulgaria, as well as to fulfilling the country's commitments arising from its participation in international organizations and initiatives by increasing the professional expertise of a specific target group of public administration, private sector and academia in the field of energy.

### **III. The Bulgarian Diplomatic Institute**

The Bulgarian Diplomatic Institute (BDI) was created on 23 September, 2003, pursuant to a Decree of the Council of Ministers. Its status and functions were regulated by the Diplomatic Service Act adopted by the National Assembly on 13 September, 2007. Its work meets the high demands and professional expectations pursuant to Bulgaria's membership in EU and NATO, and displays continuity that allows the Bulgarian diplomatic profession to have the place it deserves in the large Euro-Atlantic community.

Our mission is to:

- Guarantee the high-level expertise and skills of the diplomatic staff and the public administration by applying up-to-date professional standards of training;
- Enhance continuity in the Bulgarian Foreign Service by promoting exchange of experience and good practices among generations of diplomats;
- Promote the diplomatic profession and Bulgaria's foreign policy by reaching out to the general public;
- Provoke exchange of expertise on foreign policy issues by providing a platform for debate among government and non-government actors;
- Support the diplomatic profession and the foreign policy debate by research and publications;
- Develop national and international cooperation by implementing joint projects.

#### **TRAINING PROGRAMMES**

We provide trainings for both Bulgarian and foreign diplomats and government officials, as well as experts from the NGO and private sector. They meet all demands of modern diplomacy and use the good practices of our counterparts from all over the world. To respond to the need of high-quality training, we focus on interactive and practical sessions and have as trainers Bulgarian and foreign diplomats, university professors and other highly qualified experts, providing the benefit of a broad range of opinions and approaches.

Among our major training programmes are the courses for the MFA trainee attaches and consular staff, foreign language training, courses for diplomats, representatives of the public administration and of the NGO and private sector in the field of regional issues and security, energy diplomacy, economic diplomacy, environment, public diplomacy, diplomatic protocol, as well as tailor-made trainings for foreign diplomats and our traditional Winter School of Diplomacy.

#### **PUBLIC POLICY AND COOPERATION**

To provoke public interest and debate on current foreign policy issues, we hold public lectures by prominent public figures, leading politicians and diplomats. We also organize conferences and round-table discussions with Bulgarian and foreign experts, to contribute to the exchange of expertise and to the foreign policy theory and practice. We interact actively with the young public by organizing essay competitions on foreign policy topics, visits of school and university students within our "Open Doors" programme, and by implementing a coherent internship programme. To enhance our public outreach, we aim at strong media and digital presence, and maintain our own radio broadcast, a webpage in Bulgarian, English and French, Facebook and Twitter account. The Institute's national and international partnerships with government, research, NGO and academic institutions is visible in the implementation of joint projects and exchange in the field of training, research and public activities and EU policies.

#### **RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS**

A strategic task of the DI is to provide comprehensive analyses by internal and outside experts on international topics to meet the needs of the MFA and to enhance the expertise in foreign policy theory and practice. As of 2013 the Institute also holds national contests for applied research

projects.

Among our publications, in Bulgarian and/or English, are the Foreign Policy Research Papers series, the Energy Diplomacy collection, books and textbooks on EU matters, security and environment issues, diplomatic skills and practice, as well as the long-established Diplomacy Journal which has already grown into an online platform for foreign policy analysis and research. To assist its activities and programmes, the DI manages a library of over 65 000 titles in over 20 languages, in the field of international relations, European Studies, security, international organizations, diplomacy, law, history, sociology, political sciences, economy, etc.

## IV. Speakers



**Dr. Valentin Katrandzhiev** has been working at the Bulgarian Diplomatic Institute (BDI) in areas of strategic research and diplomatic training since 2008. He holds MA in International Relations from Kyiv National University “Taras Shevchenko” (1989) and a PhD from Peoples’ Friendship University of Russia (2000). During 2001-2002 he has been a researcher with the Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies (MEDAC) in Malta in the field of crisis diplomacy. Between 2002-2007 he has been working for the DiploFoundation (a leading diplomatic e-training provider) as a knowledge management coordinator. During this period, he has done extensive research in the field of public diplomacy,

diplomacy of nonstate actors, EU diplomacy. Apart from his current work with the Diplomatic Institute, Dr. Katrandzhiev has been serving as a visiting professor at several Bulgarian Universities. Within the format of the International Energy Seminar (organised annually since 2010 by the Diplomatic Institute) he has contributed as a lecturer and analyst on the topic of energy diplomacy. Dr. Katrandzhiev is member of the Editorial Board of Bulgarian specialized journal “Geopolitics and Geostrategy”. He also represents the BDI in the Executive Academic Board of the European Security and Defence College and in the 17+1 China-CEEC Think Tank Network.



**Dr. Plamen Dimitrov** is a political analyst and historian. He has PhD from Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” with dissertation “Caspian Perspectives of European Energy Security”. His scientific publications are in the field of history and contemporary politics of Russia and post-Soviet space, geopolitics, geopolitical aspects of energy security. Plamen Dimitrov is a member of the Board of Bulgarian Geopolitical Society and member of the Editorial Board of “Geopolitics” Magazine. He is part-time lecturer at Sofia University and has been visiting lecturer in IR at L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University, Astana, Kazakhstan (2012-2014 and 2018) and visiting researcher

at the Center for Strategic Studies under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan (2016).



**Mr. Nikolay Mihaylov** specializes in the field of circular economy. In total, he has over 7 years of experience helping develop local government legislation, coordinating EPR (Extended Producer Responsibility) schemes, and conducting comprehensive advisory services for a number of public (e.g. European Commission, Sofia Municipality) and private (e.g. Coca-Cola, BILLA, Phillip Morris International) clients. As a consultant at denkstatt, Nikolay is working across a broad range of circular economy topics, including packaging, textile and municipal waste, as well as EPR design and compliance. In sum, Nikolay's formal training in environmental policy

assessment combined with his experience as a local government official, an expert in an EPR organization and a sustainability advisor have helped him establish a solid grasp of EU resource management theory and practice. Nikolay holds a Bachelor of Economic and Social Studies degree in European Politics, a Master of Arts degree in Regional and Environmental Policy from Aberystwyth University, Wales, as well as a Master of Science degree in Environmental Management from Aalborg Universitet, Denmark. He has also been awarded a postgraduate degree in Regulatory Impact Assessment by Sofia University, Bulgaria.





**Mr. Slavtcho Neykov** has more than 29 years of uninterrupted experience in the energy sector, including as Secretary General of the Bulgarian Ministry of Energy, Member of the State Energy Regulatory Commission, expert at the Energy Charter Secretariat in Brussels and the first Director of the Energy Community Secretariat in Vienna (2006-2012), He led the Bulgarian negotiation team working on the energy chapter during the country's EU accession process. Throughout the years, his area of activities has been linked to international and EU energy law, energy diplomacy and energy policy matters at national, regional, EU and global level. Since the end of 2014, Mr. Neykov has been serving as Chairman of the Board of Managers of the Energy Management Institute, an NGO uniting the biggest foreign investors in the energy sector in

Bulgaria. He is also a member of the Board of Directors of the Union of the Electricity Industry – EURELECTRIC. His higher education in Bulgaria includes a law degree and two years of postgraduate studies in international economic relations and foreign economic activities. He also holds MA degree in European Integration from the University of Limerick in Ireland.