

Trilateral Meeting of the Prime Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria, the Hellenic Republic and Romania

Joint Declaration

We, the Prime Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria, the Hellenic Republic and Romania, having met in Euxinograd on 9 October 2023, for a meeting of this trilateral format,

- *Underlining the excellent relations among our countries at all levels as well as within the Trilateral cooperation,*
- *Reiterating that being Members States of the EU and NATO Allies we have a special role with regard to security, EU integration, energy security, connectivity and economic development of South Eastern Europe.*
- *Considering that Russia's brutal war of aggression against Ukraine has resulted into a deteriorated security environment in Europe and in particular in the strategically important Black Sea region with increased risks for our citizens, economy and environment,*
- *Emphasizing the importance of the military mobility in strengthening the dual-use transport infrastructure across the trans-European transport network,*
- *Stressing the need to enhance NATO's Eastern Flank fuel supply capability by connecting Greece, Bulgaria and Romania,*
- *Acknowledging the key importance of good-neighbourly relations in the region of Southeastern Europe,*
- *Underlining the importance of a consistent EU enlargement policy, based on the fulfillment of the agreed EU accession criteria and candidates' own merits in achieving the necessary reforms,*
- *Reiterating commitments for the timely implementation of joint transport infrastructure projects already considered priority projects for the development of the trans-European transport network, Core and Comprehensive.*
- *Recognizing the urgent need to further increase and expand the cooperation for developing connectivity, strategic infrastructure interconnections of transport, energy and digital networks along the North-South axis and achieve greater cohesion and economic growth of the region and of Europe as a whole,*
- *Concerned by the withdrawal in July 2023 of the Russian Federation from the Black Sea Grain Initiative and the disruptions this has caused to the global food chain and the supply of Ukrainian grain worldwide,*
- *Exploring possibilities to promote alternative routes, while also acknowledging the key role of the EU-Ukraine Solidarity Lanes and reiterating the support for their consolidation in coordination with the European Commission.*

Have agreed the following:

- We will further strengthen and intensify our coordination and cooperation in all relevant formats with the aim of supporting regional and Euro-Atlantic security.

- Faced with increasing levels of hybrid attacks and disinformation, spread by state and non-state actors in the region, we are committed to enhance our coordinated efforts in countering foreign malign influence and strengthening strategic communication, ensuring synergies and complementarity.
- We firmly condemn any form of violation of internationally recognized borders and sovereignty of any State. We reconfirm our resolute support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability within its internationally recognized borders, including territorial waters, and reconfirm our commitment to further expand our multidimensional support to Ukraine, including for building Ukraine's resilience and for its long-term recovery and reconstruction.
- Considering the security challenges that the Republic of Moldova is also facing as an effect of the Russian aggression against Ukraine, we will continue to cooperate in order to ensure appropriate multidimensional support for that country.
- We condemn the continuing Russian shelling against civilian targets and infrastructure in Ukraine, including the Ukrainian ports on Danube River. Bulgaria and Greece express strong concern over the recent drone debris found on the territory of Romania and reiterate their unwavering support to Romania as a NATO Ally and EU Member.
- We are gravely concerned by Russia's military build-up and aggressive posture in the Black Sea and call for an immediate end to unlawful restrictions to freedom of navigation, which further jeopardize global food security. In this context, we stress the need to further consolidate the use of EU-Ukraine Solidarity Lanes by pursuing possible increase in the capacity of the Constanța and Sulina Harbors, the potential of the transport on the Danube by ensuring the navigability all year long, as well as by exploring the involvement of the Bulgarian ports of Varna and Bourgas and the Greek ports of Thessaloniki and Alexandroupolis. We commit to constructing intermodal cross-border infrastructure across the Danube river, including new bridges at Giurgiu-Russe and other locations subject to timely additional considerations in line also with the existing European standards for military mobility and sustainability.
- We support a continuous NATO focus and strong NATO presence in the Black Sea, which we see as key for ensuring deterrence and prevention of conflicts in the Southeastern flank of the Alliance.
- We also stress that military drills at sea should take place in accordance with international law. In this context, we express full solidarity with Bulgaria in the face of the Russian warning area for military drills declared within large part of the Bulgaria's Exclusive Economic Zone.
- We agree to further cooperate in enhancing the Alliance's capacity to ensure adequate and sustainable fuel supply to NATO's Eastern Flank.
- We reaffirm our determination to support the European membership perspective of the Western Balkans, as well as that of Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, based on the fulfilment of the EU accession criteria and candidates' "own merits" in achieving the necessary reforms.
- Recognizing the important role of the Three Seas Initiative, Bulgaria and Romania once again welcome the joining of Greece as the 13th participating state to the 3SI and look forward to working together in the framework provided by the 3SI and on projects initiated under its auspices.

- The ever-growing importance of multidimensional connectivity between our three countries, the EU interregional connectivity as well as connectivity in the wider neighbourhood demand further advancement of projects of common interest in order to radically improve the cross-border infrastructure. Further, we have agreed to identify and develop new routes/corridors on the North-South axis connecting the three countries through new rail and motorway infrastructure.
- Underlining our joint commitment on connectivity, we agreed to establish a Trilateral Working Group led by relevant Ministers with the aim to prepare and sign on a timely manner a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on the financing, development, construction, and management of a multimodal transport corridor linking Bulgaria, Romania and Greece as well as consequently a comprehensive trilateral Joint Agreement based on the MoU.
- Taking into account the current challenges to energy security in the region and in order to further contribute to the diversification of energy supplies routes and resources, we agree to further advance in practical terms the Vertical Gas Corridor. This project, together with the Greece-Bulgaria Interconnector (IGB) and FSRU in Alexandroupolis, will contribute significantly to the diversification of supplies, the EU energy security and the energy independence of the wider region, including the Republic of Moldova and potentially Ukraine.
- Being directly affected by the devastating impact of the global climate changes, we agree to share information and integrate our weather forecast and early warning systems. A comprehensive response needs to be urgently developed in the framework of the European Union, along with climate adaptation efforts, and increase of Solidarity Fund.
- We underline the importance of the accession of Romania and Bulgaria to the OECD for the economic stability, boosting the investment climate and the standard of living in the region of South East Europe.
- We concluded this Trilateral meeting by renewing our strong call for a positive decision of the JHA Council on the accession of Bulgaria and Romania to Schengen in 2023. The full accession of Bulgaria and Romania to the Schengen area will undoubtedly contribute to EU safety. It will facilitate the free movement and ensure equal rights for all EU citizens, which is a fundamental principle of our Union. It will clearly benefit the business sector and commerce and reduce harmful traffic emissions. Moreover, it will limit the room for foreign malign influence feeding anti-European or anti-Western narratives in the region as a whole.
- Furthermore, we agree to strengthen our cooperation as regards combatting illegal migration, as well as breaking human smugglers' networks and disrupting their financing and supply chain, as part of the common effort at EU level towards managing illegal migration. In this context, we recall the importance of pursuing the implementation of the European Council conclusions of 9 February 2023, on all dimensions, and we condemn the attempts to instrumentalise migrants. when used as leverage or as part of hybrid destabilizing actions.

We agreed the next meeting of the Prime Ministers of Bulgaria, the Hellenic Republic and Romania (*Euxinograd-3*) to be held in 2024.