



## **REPORT ON CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE SUPREME BAR COUNCIL OF THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA**

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**In 2025, the Supreme Bar Council (SBC) of the Republic of Bulgaria continued its active and principled engagement in strengthening the independence of the legal profession, safeguarding the rule of law, and enhancing the institutional role of the Bulgarian Bar at both national and international levels.**

### **Protection of the Rule of Law and Institutional Stability**

Throughout 2025, the Supreme Bar Council remained consistently engaged in public and institutional debates concerning the functioning of the judiciary and the guarantees for its independence. The Bulgarian Bar reaffirmed its position as a key constitutional stakeholder, advocating for transparency, legality, and adherence to democratic standards in judicial governance.

The Council actively monitored legislative and institutional developments affecting the justice system and expressed its positions through official opinions, public statements, and expert participation in parliamentary and professional forums. These efforts were aimed at reinforcing public confidence in the legal system and ensuring that reforms affecting the judiciary and the legal profession comply with constitutional principles and European standards.

### **Legislative Initiatives and Modernization of the Legal Framework**

In 2025, the Supreme Bar Council continued its work on the development of a modern and comprehensive concept for a new Attorneys Act. Building on the groundwork laid in previous years, the Council focused on refining proposals addressing the independence of the



legal profession, professional self-governance, access to justice, and the protection of attorneys' rights.

Special attention was given to issues related to attorneys' remuneration, procedural guarantees, and the role of bar associations in safeguarding professional standards. The Supreme Bar Council actively participated in discussions with legislative and executive authorities regarding amendments to procedural laws, including the Civil Procedure Code, with the aim of establishing clear, fair, and predictable criteria for determining attorneys' fees, special representation, and objections to excessive costs.

The Ordinance on Remuneration for Attorneys' Work continued to serve as an important reference framework in cases where no contractual relationship exists between lawyer and client, while also providing guidance for fair and balanced professional practice.

### **Continuing Legal Education and Professional Development**

The commitment of the Supreme Bar Council to continuing legal education remained a central priority in 2025. Through the Attorneys' Training Center, the Bulgarian Bar organized a wide range of seminars, conferences, and specialized training programs, covering developments in national legislation, EU law, human rights protection, and emerging areas of legal practice.

The successful cooperation with international partners was further expanded. The Bulgarian Bar continued its close collaboration with the HELP Programme of the Council of Europe, the European Lawyers Foundation (ELF), and the "Friends of ERA" Association. During the reporting period, the Attorneys' Training Center further strengthened its participation in European projects, enhancing access to high-quality training and international expertise for Bulgarian lawyers.

### **International Cooperation and Representation**

In 2025, the Supreme Bar Council further consolidated the international standing of the Bulgarian Bar. Active participation in the work of leading international professional organizations – such as the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE), the International Bar Association (IBA), The European Bars Federation (FBE) and the Union



Internationale des Avocats (UIA) – continued to facilitate the exchange of best practices and the representation of Bulgarian attorneys in key European and global discussions.

During the reporting period, Bulgaria signed the Convention for the Protection of the Legal Profession, marking an important step toward strengthening guarantees for the independence, safety, and professional freedom of lawyers. The Supreme Bar Council actively supported this development, viewing the Convention as a key international instrument for safeguarding the role of lawyers in a democratic society and ensuring effective access to justice.

The Bulgarian Bar contributed substantively to debates on professional ethics, the digitalization of justice, access to legal aid, and the protection of lawyers' independence, reinforcing its reputation as a reliable and respected partner within the international legal community.

#### **Legal Aid and Access to Justice**

The Supreme Bar Council maintained its engagement on issues related to legal aid and access to justice, emphasizing the role of attorneys as essential guarantors of effective legal protection. The Bulgarian experience continued to be shared in regional and international professional forums, focusing on challenges related to funding, quality standards, and professional qualifications in the field of legal aid.

#### **Centennial of the Supreme Bar Council and the Independent Bulgarian Bar**

The year 2025 also marked a historic milestone for the Bulgarian legal profession – the 100th anniversary of the adoption of the Attorneys Act of 1925, which laid the foundations of the independent Bulgarian Bar and established the Supreme Bar Council as a self-governing professional body, separate from the judiciary.

This centennial anniversary symbolized a century of institutional continuity, professional independence, and commitment to the rule of law. The Supreme Bar Council commemorated the occasion by highlighting the historical role of the Bar as a guardian of citizens' rights and freedoms, as well as its enduring mission to uphold professional ethics, independence, and access to justice. The anniversary provided an opportunity not only for reflection on the achievements of the past century, but also for reaffirming the core values of the legal profession in the context of contemporary societal and legal challenges.



### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, 2025 marked a year of continuity, consolidation, and strategic development for the Supreme Bar Council and the Bulgarian Bar. The efforts undertaken during the current mandate contributed to strengthening the institutional authority, independence, and international visibility of the Bulgarian legal profession.

The protection of the professional rights and interests of Bulgarian lawyers remained a guiding principle in all activities of the Supreme Bar Council. These efforts will continue with the aim of establishing the Bulgarian Bar as a strong, independent, and authoritative institution—an active and respected participant in both national legal processes and the international legal community.

January 29, 2026

Sofia, Bulgaria