

# 2017 ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT OF THE "BINATIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE BULGARIA-ISRAEL"

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### 1. Overview

2017 was an intensive year for BCCBI with numerous activities and events. The Chamber and its President, Mr. Avinoam Katrieli continuously put efforts and time striving for better future for Bulgaria. In the meetings held with the Prime Minister Mr. Boiko Borisov, Minister of Economy Mr. Emil Karanikolov and many other Government officials were discussed possibilities to attract foreign investments in Bulgaria as well as many other issues.

Humanitarian activities of BCCBI are implemented by Foundation "I Love BG". Together they proudly announced about new ambulances, which donation will help to save human lives. Tradition in Foundation "I Love BG" is to support talented students of our country, for example one of them, this year was Evgeni Kayryakov.

Continuing the tradition started last year, the improvement of educational system was on focus again. BCCBI held an important seminar about "The Educational System In Bulgaria As A Preparatory Factor For The Labor Market" with Minister of Education and Science Mr. Karsimir Valchev, HE Ms Irit Lilian, other government officials and CEOs of many leading companies in Bulgaria. Mr. Avinoam Katrieli, President of BCCBI met the rector of Sofia University, Prof. Atanas Gerdjikov and also rector of UNWE Prof. D.Sc.(Econ.) Statty Stattev to discuss possibilities for mutual cooperation.

Mr. Avinoam Katrieli, President of BCCBI and President of Foundation "I Love BG" as well as the owner of project "Plana Heights" commented on all contributions and efforts invested in the Bulgarian society as absolutely necessary and expressed optimistic feelings about upcoming 2018. The ambitious project "Plana Heights" has attracted the attention of different media like "Vagabond" Magazine, BNT, BTV, etc. In November the project received the price for "MOST INNOVATIVE PROJECT in 2017" and was awarded in a special ceremony.

BCCBI and Foundation "I Love BG" cooperated with many other organizations and NGOs.

In the field of commercial development a lot of personal work was done. During the year the Chamber's team worked for the specific needs of many of the member companies. The following overview emphasizes on most of the events and official meetings without entering into details and without reporting on the private interests of the member companies.

The BCCBI Team wishes you a successful 2018!

Please dedicate a few minutes in going through the pictures and titles of the report!



### 2.New Members of BCCBI











### 3.Official events

1. GERB Leader Boyko Borisov Thanked The President Of BCCBI Mr. Avinoam Katrieli For The Best Estimate Of The Efforts That Were Made



GERB leader Boyko Borisov boasted with a new high honors mark achieved. He received high praise from Israel for trade relations between the two countries. "I thank the President of the Binational Bulgarian-Israeli Chamber of Commerce Avinoam Katrieli for the best estimate of the efforts that we made. We will continue to work for the development of our bilateral relations with Israel in a number of areas such as tourism, where we have great potential for cooperation, "wrote The Prime Minister . Link to Bulgaria Utre Link to Pik Link to BCCBI



2. A New Town Is Being Built 20km Away From Sofia (Commentary By The Bulgarian National Television)



A new town is being built 20 km from Sofia. It will be called "Plana Hights" and will be located in Plana Mountain, between Sofia and Samokov.

The idea of the town belongs to the Israeli businessman Avinoam Katrieli, who has been living in Bulgaria for 10 years. The last city built in Bulgaria was Dimitrovgrad.

The price of most houses in the city will approach that of three-room apartments in the districts of Sofia. Plots are also being offered. Construction is expected to begin in the Spring, and experts from the Ministry of Economy project that 100 new jobs will be opened. Link to BCCBI

3. Mr. Avinoam Katrieli, President Of Foundation "I Love BG" And President Of BCCBI Met Mr. Dimitar Berbatov And The Managing Director Of Foundation "Dimitar Berbatov" And Chairman Of The Board, Ms. Dimitrina Hodjeva



Mr. Katrieli met with Mr. Berbatov and Mrs. Hodjeva in the office of "Dimitar Berbatov" Foundation. Both sides expressed willingness for future cooperation for Bulgaria's development, support of talented children and in order to improve the atmosphere for social and humanitarian activism. Both sides expressed mutual respect and appreciation regarding humanitarian activities supported by foundations "I love BG" and "Dimitar Berbatov". The meeting was summarized by Mr. Katrieli with an invitation to join forces. Link to BCCBI



4. The President Of BCCBI Mr. Avinoam Katrieli Met The Director General For Bilateral Relations Of The Foreign Ministry Mr. Kostadin Kodzhabashev



The President of BCCBI Mr. Avinoam Katrieli Met the Director General for Bilateral Relations of the Foreign Ministry - Mr. Kostadin Kodzhabashev in his office. Mr. Katrieli discussed different projects and possibilities for cooperation. Mr. Kodzhabashev expressed appreciation and support for the presented initiatives and shared Mr. Katrieli's positive attitude for the development of Bulgaria in different fields. Link to BCCBI

# 5. The President Of BCCBI Mr. Avinoam Katrieli Met The Head Of Cabinet Of Ministry Interior Maj. Gen. Nikolay Krushkov



The President of BCCBI Mr. Avinoam Katrieli met the Head of Cabinet of Ministry Interior from the caretaking government Maj. Gen. (retired) Nikolay Krushkov. Mr. Krushkov expressed appreciation for the work done so far and highlighted the successful educational project done in schools with the cooperation of the Traffic Police and Sofia Municipality. Mr. Krushkov also commented with gratitude for the "Vests Initiative". Mr. Katrieli was honored by the warm words and welcomed future ideas for cooperation.

Link to BCCBI



# 6. Prof. D.Sc.(Econ.) Statty Stattev Rector Of UNWE Met Mr. Avinoam Katrieli President Of BCCBI



Prof. D.Sc.(Econ.) Statty Stattev, Rector of the University of National and World Economy (UNWE) Met Mr. Avinoam Katrieli President of the Binational Chamber of Commerce Bulgaria-Israel (BCCBI). Mr. Katrieli has already held a lecture in the university but this was the first official meeting between Prof. Stattev and him. The President of BCCBI and the Rector of UNWE shared views on the economy of Bulgaria and the potentials that the country has to develop. Mr. Katrieli was eager to discuss the role of the students in the universities outside the educational institutions - for the future of Bulgaria and along the meeting a few possibilities for future cooperation were outlined. Prof. Stattev expressed his surprise and gratitude for the possibility to cooperate with BCCBI for projects that he did not expect would be of the interest of BCCBI and was glad of the profound and realistic understanding of the country that Mr. Katrieli had revealed. Link to BCCBI

## 7. The President Of BCCBI Mr. Avinoam Katrieli Met The Rector Of Sofia Uiversity Prof. Anastas Gerdjikov



The President of BCCBI Mr. Avinoam Katrieli Met the Rector of Sofia Uiversity Prof. Anastas Gerdjikov to discuss possibilities for mutual cooperation. The universities are the beating heart and soul of any country active citizens and movements are usually the young students, said Mr. Katrieli who also presented th ativities of BCCBI as well as foundation I Love BG. Prof. Gerdjikov expressed will for future cooperation and both sides brainstormed a few suggestions and decided to organize meeting with the student's managing body in order to develop the relations. Link to BCCBI



# 8. Mr. Avinoam Katrieli, President Of BCCBI, Met Mr. Petar Belchev, Head Of Sofia Regional Prosecution Service



Mr. Katrieli, President of BCCBI, had a meeting with Mr. Petar Belchev, Head of Sofia Regional Prosecution Service to discuss possibilities for cooperation. Both discussed similarities and differences between the systems in Bulgaria and Israel. The President of BCCBI presented projects and activities of the Chamber as well as challenges that foreign and domestic investors are meeting while doing business in Bulgaria. Mr. Belchev expressed his appreciation for the activities of BCCBI and was very impressed especially by some of the presented projects. Link to BCCBI

#### 9. Mr Emil Karanikolov The Minister Of Economy Met Mr Avinoam Katrieli President Of BCCBI



Mr Emil Karanikolov the Minister of Economy Met Mr Avinoam Katrieli President of BCCBI. During the meeting Minister Karanikolov presented the priorities of the Ministry and Mr Katrieli presented the activities of the Binational Chamber of Commerce Bulgaria - Israel. Both discussed the possibilities to attract foreign investments in Bulgaria and what are the challenges concerning the administration. Mr. Karanikolov was deeply impressed with project Plana Heights and said that he will be most delighted to see it fulfilled. Link to BCCBI



10. Mayor Of Samokov Municipality Mr. Vladimir Georgiev Welcomed Mr.

Avinoam Katrieli, The President Of The Binational Chamber Of Commerce Bulgaria –

Israel In The Museum Sarafskata House



Mr. Vladimir Georgiev, Mayor of Samokov Municipality welcomed Mr. Avinoam Katrieli, the President of the Binational Chamber of Commerce Bulgaria – Israel (BCCBI) in the Museum Sarafskata House. This interesting House is located in town of Samokov and presents one of the several homes (called palaces) of one of the most popular Jewish families in Bulgaria – Arie family. Mr. Katrieli was glad to discuss with the Mayor during the visit possibilities for future cooperation in regards to cultural and historical heritage. Link to BCCBI

#### 11. The Sofia Airport CEO, Mr Rapondjiev, Met The President Of BCCBI, Mr Avinoam Katrieli



The Sofia Airport CEO, Mr Rapondjiev, Met the President of BCCBI, Mr Avinoam Katrieli on working meeting. Mr Katrieli congratulated Mr Rapondjiev on the new position and wished success to the new CEO of Sofia Airport. Both discussed the importance of Sofia Airport as main gate to Bulgaria. The discussion concerned means of attracting new investors and tourists to Bulgaria, upgrading the image of Bulgaria and Mr Rapondjiev expressed his gratitude and will for cooperation with BCCBI. Link to BCCBI



12. Mr. Avinoam Katrieli, The President Of The BCCBI, Visited The Event Of Bulgarian Jewish Community In Which Were Conferred Awards On Former President Plevneliev And Late Metropolitan Neofit



Mr. Avinoam Katrieli, the President of the BCCBI, visited a moving ceremony at the Sofia Central Synagogue, in which the Shalom Organization of the Jews in Bulgaria and the Central Israelite Spiritual Council conferred formal honors on former president Rossen Plevneliev and posthumously on Vidin Metropolitan Neofit for his role in the Bulgarian Orthodox Church's resistance to the deportation of Bulgarian Jews to the Holocaust. The award to late Metropolitan of Vidin Neofit was accepted on behalf of that diocese by its vicar, Bishop Polycarp. The event marked the start of a campaign by Shalom and the Central Israelite Spiritual Council entitled "The Unforgotten – 75 Faces of Salvation". Mr. Katrieli thanked with kind gratitude to the Bulgarian clergymen and to the dignified people of Bulgaria for the prevention of the deportation of the Bulgarian Jews in 1943. Link to BCCBI

## 13. Mr. Avinoam Katrieli, The President Of The Binational Chamber Of Commerce, Had A Meeting With Mr. Rumen Porozhanov, Minister Of Agriculture And Food



Mr. Avinoam Katrieli, President of BCCBI, met Mr. Rumen Porozhanov, Minister of Agriculture and Food. Mr. Katrieli presented to Minister Porozhanov some of the activities of BCCBI and Fondation "I Love BG", as well as, the vision of the Project for New City "Plana Heights" in Bulgaria. Minister Porozhanov confirmed that the Bulgarian government as a whole and he as Minister of Agriculture and Food, fully support serious investors with experience and private investments that drive the Bulgarian economy and Bulgarian people towards more success. Mr. Katrieli and Minister Porojanov discussed the possibilities for organic farming, as well as the perspectives for such type of agriculture. The meeting was summarized with expressed readiness from both sides for further cooperative activities. Link to BCCBI



14. Mr. Krasen Kralev, Minister Of Youth And Sports, Met Mr. Avinoam Katrieli, President Of The Binational Chamber Of Commerce Bulgaria – Israel



Mr. Krasen Kralev, Minister of Youth and Sports, met Mr. Avinoam Katrieli, President of the Binational Chamber of Commerce Bulgaria – Israel. Mr. Katrieli mentioned about previous mutual initiatives with the Ministry of Youth and Sports and proposed some new opportunities for further cooperation and joint initiatives. Mr. Kralev, on his part, expressed his gratitude and support, as well as, a commitment to offer ideas for cooperation in the near future. Link to Ministry of Youth and Sports Link to BCCBI

### 15. The President Of BCCBI Took Part In Press Conference Of Yasmin Levy's Upcoming Concert In Sofia



Mr. Avinoam Katrieli – President of the Binational Chamber of Commerce Bulgaria – Israel took part in the official press conference of Yasmin Levy's upcoming concert. Other guests were Her Excellency Irit Lilian – Ambassador of Israel in Bulgaria, Mr. Havier Valdivielso - Director of "Servantes" Institute and media representatives. Yasmine Levy joined in direct online connection and shared many personal details about her creative work and life. Yasmin Levy and her band are performing a concert on 21 October, in Sofia Live Club where passionate magical realism will be played from the depths of the Spanish culture. Link to BCCBI



16. Mr. Svetoslav Nakov, Adviser To The Minister Of Regional Development And Public Works And Former Executive Director Of The "Agency For Geodesy, Cartography And Cadastre", Visited The Office Of The Binational Chamber Of Commerce Bulgaria – Israel



Mr. Svetoslav Nakov, Adviser to the Minister of Regional Development and Public Works and former Executive Director of the "Agency for Geodesy, Cartography and Cadastre" (AGCC), visited the office of the Binational Chamber of Commerce Bulgaria - Israel and met Mr. Avinoam Katrieli, President of the Chamber. Mr. Katrieli was impressed by the advanced level of services, provided by AGCC, and by their electronics and expeditiousness (for example, the provision of electronic administrative services as an electronic archive of the Geocartfund and so on). The applied modernization in the structure of the Executive Agency encompasses the process from the very creation and maintenance of the geodetic, cartographic and cadastral fund to the actual implementation of administrative and technical services for the users. Link to BCCBI

17. Mr. Nikolay Nankov, Minister Of Regional Development And Public Works, Met Mr. Avinoam Katrieli, President Of The Binational Chamber Of Commerce Bulgaria – Israel



Mr. Nikolay Nankov, Minister of Regional Development and Public Works, met Mr. Avinoam Katrieli, President of the Binational Chamber of Commerce Bulgaria – Israel (BCCBI). Mr. Katrieli presented to Minister Nankov the activities of the two non-governmental organizations, which he represents, BCCBI and Fondation "I Love Bulgaria". Mr. Tsvetlin Yovchev, Honorary Presidential Member of BCCBI, and Mr. Valentin Yovev, Deputy Minister at the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works, were also present and took part in the conversation. The meeting was summarized with discussion on the opportunities for improving the business climate in the country and desire for future cooperation was expressed. Link to BCCBI



# 18. The Minister Of Economy Mr Emil Karanikolov Met The President Of BCCBI Mr Avinoam Katrieli



The Minister of Economy, Mr Emil Karanikolov, and the Executive Director of Bulgaria Invest Agency, Mr Stamen Yanev, Met the President of BCCBI, Mr Avinoam Katrieli on a work meeting. Mr Katrieli presented some of the challenges that foreign and domestic investors are facing while making business in Bulgaria. The meeting finished with presentation of more options for cooperation and invitation for participation in event, organized by BCCBI which the Minister gladly accepted:

On 08.11.2017. From 18:30 in Sofia, a seminar organized by BCCBI, on "The education system in Bulgaria as a preparatory factor for the labor market", will be held at the Best Western Premier Sofia Airport Hotel. All members and friends of BCCBI are welcome to attend. Link to BCCBI

## 19. Meeting Between The Minister Of Environment And Water Dr Neno Dimov And The President Of BCCBI Mr Avinoam Katrieli



The Minister of Environment and Water, Dr. Neno Dimov, met the President of BCCBI, Mr. Avinoam Katrieli on a work meeting. There was a discussion on the future cooperation between BCCBI and the Ministry. Mr. Katrieli presented some of the challenges that foreign and domestic investors are facing while making business in Bulgaria. The conversation continued on methods for improving administrative services and therefore the general business climate in Bulgaria. The meeting finished with an invitation for participation in event organized by BCCBI in Sofia. Link to BCCBI



#### 20. "Plana Heights" Project Won The "Most Innovative Project" For 2017



On 01.11.2017, at Best Western Premier Sofia Airport Hotel took place the seventh edition of the LUXURY PROPERTY AWARDS 2017 - an annual awards ceremony for luxurious construction, architecture and design. "PLANA HIGHTS" project was bestowed with the award "MOST INNOVATIVE PROJECT 2017". A.Z.K. PROPERTIES LTD was represented on the ceremony by its owner Mr. Avinoam Katrieli and Liubomir Stanislavov - chief of the architectural team. Mr. Avinoam Katrieli received the prize from Mr. Stamen Yanev - the CEO of Invest Bulgaria Agency. Link to BCCBI

# 21. "Binational Chamber Of Commerce Bulgaria-Israel" Held A Seminar On "The Educational System In Bulgaria As A Preparatory Factor For The Labor Market"







The event was opened with a cocktail, followed by an official opening by: Mr. Avinoam Katrieli, President of the "Binational Chamber of Commerce Bulgaria-Israel". He talked about the opportunity for Bulgaria to build on its capabilities, using the potential it holds – the young people. In the following Discussion Panel "The Educational System in Bulgaria as a Preparatory Factor for the Labor Market", the panelists included: Mr. Krassimir Valchev, Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Bulgaria; Mr. Stamen Yanev, Executive Director of the Bulgarian Investment Agency; Mrs. Vanya Kastreva, Head of the Sofia Inspectorate of Education; Mr. Nikolay Hadjidonchev, CEO

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of TEVA-Actavis Bulgaria; Mr. Radoslav Nikolov, Executive Director of SAP Labs Bulgaria; Dr. Diana Stoyanova, Scientific Secretary of the Institute of Information and Security, UNIBIT.

The Panel was moderated by Mr. Robert Djerassi, Adviser at the Commission for Protection against Discrimination, who presented a brief overview of the labor market situation in Bulgaria, including the declining unemployment and the most demanding professions. The discussion involved a large number of guests who expressed their impressions from a professional point of view, gave their opinions, recommendations, and asked their questions to which the panelists were responsible. Link to BCCBI





22. The President Of BCCBI, Mr. Avinoam Katrieli Met Prof. Dr. Kamen Plochev, Director Of The National Health Insurance Fund



The President of BCCBI, Mr. Avinoam Katrieli met Prof. Dr. Kamen Plochev, Director of the National Health Insurance Fund on a work meeting. Possible collaborations and exchange of good practices from Israel were discussed as well as humanitarian activities between both sides. Prof. Dr. Kamen Plochev spoke from his professional experience in the healthcare system. Mr Avinoam Katrieli also shared a lot in regards to the history of improvements in the Israeli healthcare system. Potential humanitarian medical aid in certain cases was also discussed. The meeting finished with a wishes of successful partnerships in the near and further future. Link to BCCBI

BCCBI also acomplished humanitarian activities by Foundation I Love BG.

This year I Love BG Foundation provided help where is needed.



# 3. Social and Humanitarian Activity

1. Mr Avinoam Katrieli President Of BCCBI And Foundation I Love BG Met The Young Talent Evgeni Kayryakov And His Parents



Founation "I love BG" was created with the patronage and support of BCCBI with the vision to unite the Bulgarian nation"I love BG" together with the Binational Chamber of Commerce Bulgaria-Israel supports Bulgarian talents who are able to make us proud! One of those talents is Evgeni Kayryakov. His numerous achievements so far are impressive for his young age. Link to I Love BG /in Bulgarian/ Link

2. St. Marina Hospital in Varna received an ambulance by the President of BCCBI, Mr. Avinoam Katrieli through Magen David Adom of Israel and the Bulgarian Red Cross



"St. Marina" Hospital in Varna received ambulance provided by Israel's Magen David Adom with the support of BCCBI through the Bulgarian Red Cross. From today, "St. Marina" Varna has another ambulance after Mr. Hristo Grigorov, Chairman of the Bulgarian Red Cross officially handed the keys to the Executive Director of the hospital - Prof. Dr. Valentin Ignatov. The vehicle is provided free of charge by the organization Red Shield of David of Israel through the Binational Chamber of Commerce Bulgaria - Israel. Link to I Love BG



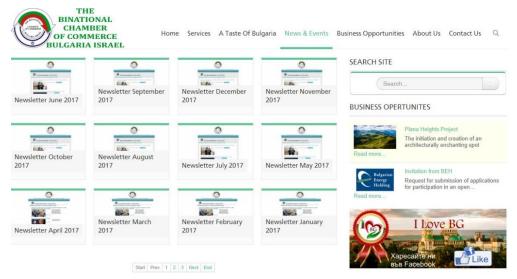
3. Mr. Avinoam Katrieli the President of "I Love BG" Foundation visited Radio FM+ to talk about the creation of the Foundation



Mr. Avinoam Katrieli, President of "I Love BG" Foundation and Mr. Emil Magrisso, Secretary General, visited "Iva from Morning to Noon" broadcasted on the Radio FM Plus program about the foundation and objectives of the Foundation. "My reason to start the Foundation is that I feel like a Bulgarian and I feel proud to be part of a nation with great theaters and a beautiful and intelligent society. Look around yourself. Look around the people surrounding you, who are trying to be good every morning. See the Bulgarian who gives way to the woman with the child - whether in the queue in the mall, whether in the transport. Take a look at the little things that happen around you all the time and consider them natural. They do not happen anywhere else in the world. Well, I've been to many places around the world. "Link to I Love BG Radio FM+

### Newsletters

BCCBI team has been continuously updating all of its members of all economy related news concerning Bulgaria through newsletters issued once a month.



Each newsletter consisted of 40 to 50 news updates in English gathered and filtered from different media channels in Bulgaria. Annually more than 500 news updates are sent to all members of BCCBI.



# BCCBI in the Media

1. Mr. Avinoam Katrieli, The President Of BCCBI, On The Cover Of Vagabond Magazine



Mr Katrieli, President of BCCBI and owner of Plana Heights Project gave exclusive interview for Vagabond Magazine with Dimana Trankova. In the interview Mr. Katrieli spoke about Bulgaria, Bulgarian people and Plana Heights Project. He also explained what is the focus of BCCBI and foundation I Love BG and how he decided to move to Bulgaria. Mr. Katrieli shares in the interview some of his goals and visions such as working for a better future, his deep love for Bulgaria and others. Link to Vagabond Magazine Link to BCCBI

2. The Project "Plana Heights" should become a flagship for investment courage in an uncertain business environment and should encourage bold investments



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Mr. Avinoam Katrieli, the President of BCCBI, was a guest of Mr. Velko Kamenov on the TV show "In Development" on Bloomberg Bulgaria. They discussed the volume of Israeli investments in Bulgaria and Mr. Katrieli gave examples of successful sectors of mutual interest: building and management of large shopping centers, development of modern outsourcing activities (including in the sphere of medical services), investments in the high-paying IT sector. The whole interview with Mr. Avinoam Katrieli can be found at the link: HERE Link to I Love BG

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

# 3. Better Collaboration Between The Administration And The Business Should Be Encouraged Mr. Katrieli in interview for Economic.bg from 17.11.2017



Avinoam Katrieli, President of Binational Chamber of Commerce Bulgaria-Israel and investor of 'Plana Heights' project.

The difficulties facing the big investors in Bulgaria are connected mostly with the administrative system. The administrative system is not motivated to solve problems and overcome challenges. Many of the clerks are trying to do the minimum possible or even nothing at all of what is needed. And that is the true "Achilles Heel" (weakness point) for doing business in Bulgaria..

The second problematic part of making business in Bulgaria I can define with subtitle "criminal". I will give you an example - certain people allow themselves to put investors under pressure and even to blackmail them. Often they are dressed in suits of positive ideas or hiding behind green organizations agenda for nature protection, but actually these people are making purposefully problems to the business. I address all of my colleagues, investors and businessmen in Bulgaria not to succumb to and not to forgive those circles of people in our society. Such deeds and practices as well as the complaints sent from the business should be made known to all as official information. Let's treat the administration more strictly in such matters and without fear and definitely without allowing to give illegal bonuses. I appeal to the Bulgarian Government to prepare punitive measures to address such illegal activities. Media link /in bulgarian/ www.economic.bg Link to BCCBI:



Mr. Avinoam Katrieli, President Of BCCBI And "I Love BG" Was Guest In Slavi's Show - On bTV



As President of the Binational Chamber of Commerce Bulgaria-Israel Avinoam Katrieli has undertaken the task to attract investors in Bulgaria and to improve the opportunities for Bulgarian businessmen to do business in Israel. He said that on the one hand the conditions of doing business in Bulgaria are wonderful because of low taxes and loyal Bulgarian workers, but on the other hand - investors do not come because "the stigma of Bulgarians is that the country is good for casinos and for alcohol tourism "and that" Bulgarians are the most depressed people in the EU." Avinoam Katrieli assured that through various projects he will seek to change this image of Bulgaria. Link to VIDEO Link to BCCBI

Photo from bTV media, www.slavishow.com