

AUSSEN WIRTSCHAFT FORUM

JOINING THE CORE: BULGARIA'S MOVE INTO THE EURO AREA

4th FIW Round Table: Focus Central, Eastern and South Eastern Europe

Thursday, 29 January 2026

PROGRAMME

Venue: Austrian Federal Economic Chamber | Hall 2 | Wiedner Hauptstraße 63 | 1040 Vienna

Event language: English

As of: 19.01.2026 | Subject to changes

Master of Ceremony: **Dražen MALOČA** | Regional Director Southeast Europe, Eastern Europe/Central Asia | AUSSENWIRTSCHAFT AUSTRIA

Description

On 1 January 2026, Bulgaria takes an important step in its European journey by adopting the euro and joining the euro area. This move marks a deepening of the country's economic integration with the European Union and reflects years of convergence and preparation. Beyond the technical change of currency, the introduction of the euro represents a commitment to greater stability, shared responsibility, and closer cooperation within Europe. For Bulgaria, and for the EU as a whole, it is a milestone that underscores the continued relevance and appeal of the European project.

THURSDAY, 29.1.2026

13.30 - 14.00 REGISTRATION AND WELCOME COFFEE

14.00 - 14.15 WELCOME ADDRESSES

- **Gudrun HAGER** | Chief Operating Officer, AUSSENWIRTSCHAFT AUSTRIA, Austrian Federal Economic Chamber
- **Cynthia ZIMMERMANN** | Director General, Austrian Federal Ministry of Economy, Energy and Tourism
- **Mario HOLZNER** | Director, The Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies (wiiw)

14.15 – 14.30 **INTRODUCTORY PRESENTATION: CROSSING THE THRESHOLD: BULGARIA'S PATH TO THE EURO**

- **Atanas PEKANOV** | Economist, Austrian Institute of Economic Research; Former Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Bulgaria
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14.30 – 14.45 **INTRODUCTORY PRESENTATION: BEYOND CURRENCY: BULGARIA'S EURO ACCESSION AS A STRATEGIC CHOICE**

- **Tanya MIHAYLOVA** | Director, Bulgarian Diplomatic Institute at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria
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14.45 – 16.00 **PANEL DISCUSSION
FUTURE GAINS: UNLOCKING BULGARIA'S EUROZONE POTENTIAL**

- **Thomas HANEDER** | Managing Partner, TPA Group Holding GmbH
- **Mariya MAERKOVA** | Economist, IFC - World Bank Group
- **Tanya MIHAYLOVA** | Director, Bulgarian Diplomatic Institute at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria
- **Atanas PEKANOV** | Economist, Austrian Institute of Economic Research; Former Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Bulgaria

CHAIR: Philippe KUPFER | The Austrian Trade Commissioner for Bulgaria

16.00 – 17.00 **NETWORKING**

The FIW - Research Centre International Economics (<https://www.fiw.ac.at/>) is a cooperation between the Vienna University of Economics and Business (WU), the University Vienna, the Johannes Kepler University Linz and the University of Innsbruck, WIFO, IHS and wiiw. FIW is supported by the Federal Ministry of Women, Science and Research (BMFWF) and the Federal Ministry of Economy, Energy and Tourism (BMWET).