



РЕПУБЛИКА БЪЛГАРИЯ
Министерство на земеделието и храните

Your Excellency Ambassador **Дай Цинли**,

Dear Professor Ivanov, Director of the Institute of Agrarian Economy,

Dear Professor Dimitrov, Rector of the University of National and World Economy,

Dear Professor Bozhanova, President of the Agricultural Academy,

Dear Associate Professor Ivanova, Rector of the Plovdiv Agrarian University,

Dear Professor **ЧЪ ШЪНЦЮЕН**,

Colleagues, Guests and Partners from the People's Republic of China,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Minister of Agriculture and Food, Dr. Georgi Tahov, I have the honor to welcome and congratulate you on the occasion of the Sino-Bulgarian Scientific Forum on Climate Change and Rural Revitalization 2025.

Over the past year, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food has taken a number of actions, both to outline the challenges facing the sector and the development of rural areas, and to strengthen interaction between China and Bulgaria.

We face a number of tangible factors that require decisive action - climate change is increasing and significantly affects natural resources, agriculture, water, energy and, most notably, the lives of people in rural areas.

This year, our team has taken a number of ambitious steps to help address these challenges. We have managed to program and launch a new measure for agricultural risk management. Additionally, we have developed a plan for the development of irrigation throughout the country.

In order to support the possibility to even better delineate future policies, and at the same time, to carry out a qualitative assessment of the effectiveness of the already implemented rural development policy, at the beginning of the new programming period, the University of National and World Economy prepared a ‘Socio-economic Analysis of Rural Development’. This report analyzes the effect of funding on employment, GDP and the territorial distribution of investments. The data demonstrates that the funding of rural development policies has led to the creation of new jobs and the stimulation of economic activity, especially in agriculture and the processing industry. Based on this report, we programmed a number of interventions within the framework of the Strategic Plan for the Development of Agriculture and Rural Areas 2023-2027. Some of them are aimed at non-agricultural activities in rural areas, training, innovation and cooperation, others - at supporting local communities with development strategies, environmental investments in agriculture and processing, and many others.

At the same time, the discussed report of the Joint Sino-Bulgarian Laboratory on Climate Change Adaptive Governance concluded and emphasized that in the period 2025–2100, an increase in average temperature and a decrease in precipitation

are expected, which will lead to more frequent droughts, forest fires and losses in agriculture.

These forecasts require adaptive actions – investments in sustainable agricultural practices, improved irrigation infrastructure, precision farming and innovations in the livestock and plant protection sectors. The initiatives, in turn, require good cooperation, exchange of experience, focused on practice, real problem solving and science.

I would like to emphasize that in recent years, the traditionally good cooperation between Bulgaria and China in the field of agriculture and food has been actively developing and continues to expand, based on the principles of equal partnership and mutual benefit. Also, trade in agricultural and food goods between Bulgaria and China shows a tendency to increase in volume and assortment. The good interaction between the Bulgarian Food Safety Agency and the General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China significantly contributed to this success. In 2023, trade in agricultural and food product between our two countries reached a record value of 640.6 million USD, which is 37.4% above the level of 2022. At the same time, the value of Bulgarian agricultural exports to the Chinese market doubled on an annual basis and reached 517.6 million USD. In 2023, 47% of Bulgaria's total exports to China were formed by agricultural and food goods. Bilateral cooperation in the field of agricultural science and technology is also developing successfully, with the Bulgarian Agricultural Academy developing active scientific and technical activities, jointly with similar organizations from the People's Republic of China.

Bulgaria has successfully partnered with China within the framework of the multilateral 14+1 format, including in the field of agriculture and food. Since its official launch on June 26, 2015 in Sofia, the Center for Promoting Cooperation in

Agriculture between China and CEE Countries has proven to be an important tool for promoting cooperation in agriculture and food and for promoting trade in agricultural and food products in this format. Since its inception, the Center has supported and facilitated the participation of many companies from the agricultural and food sectors in numerous exhibitions and fairs in China. A recent example of this is its participation with a booth in the 4th China-CEE Expo and International Consumer Goods Expo, which took place from May 22-25, 2025, in Ningbo, Zhejiang Province, where samples of goods from companies from CEE countries were exhibited. The Center also opened the new location of the Liaison Office and the Pavilion of the Center for Promoting Agricultural Cooperation between China and CEE Countries in Ningbo in May this year.

This year, we celebrate 10 years since the establishment of the Center, and on June 26 in Sofia, it will host the International Conference "10 Years of the CEEC: A Bridge for Cooperation between China and the CEECs". The conference is an excellent opportunity to share our plans for further cooperation in the field of agriculture within the framework of the multilateral 14+1 format.

Ladies and gentlemen, I believe that today's forum is another step towards deepening the strategic partnership between the two countries and is our joint response to the challenges of our time. It is my hope that this meeting, and the reports that are to be discussed, will become an occasion for even greater engagement on the part of the agricultural community and new joint initiatives. I am confident that only by sharing knowledge, technologies and good practices can we achieve our common goal - sustainable, vibrant and competitive rural areas.

Thank you for your attention!