

**MANIFESTO**  
**of**  
**the MOVEMENT FOR RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS**

**LET US ALL TOGETHER RENEW BULGARIA AND EUROPE**

The Movement for Rights and Freedoms – a responsible party in Bulgaria and a recognized Bulgarian party in Europe – is addressing the Bulgarian citizens, who are the only drivers of the development of the Bulgarian state and the only meaningful subjects thereof, with an appeal to support the policies set out in this Manifesto at the upcoming elections for members of the European Parliament and of the National Assembly of the Republic of Bulgaria on 9 June 2024.

The implementation of these policies will contribute to security, prosperity and prospects for the development of each citizen as a Bulgarian national and a personality.

The Movement for Rights and Freedoms is actively involved in developing the EU policies as an element of the national policies, and has set common priorities for its work to the benefit of the Bulgarian citizens both within the European Parliament and the National Assembly.

The implementation of these policies is possible only under conditions of national unification, a national vision for development and the united efforts of the Bulgarian citizens.

The guiding principle for the Movement for Rights and Freedoms is:

**TOGETHER WITH THE PEOPLE!**

**1. THE FUTURE OF BULGARIA ARE THE BULGARIAN CITIZENS. DEMOGRAPHIC POLICY**

MRF declares that the only way for Bulgaria to overcome the demographic catastrophe is a coordinated approach to the efficient management of the demographic processes involving all management levels and all stakeholders within the economy and the society in a democratic and inclusive manner.

Economic development, social safeguards, personal and social security, access to healthcare, high-quality education and systems for upskilling and upgrading, good infrastructure, transport connectivity, environmental efficiency and prevention of and adaptation to climate change, culture and cultural institutions are elements of an efficient demographic policy.

**1.1. Healthcare**

Healthcare is a fundamental element of the demographic policy and national security. The health of Bulgarian citizens and the normal functioning of the public health system require political will and specific consistent actions. MRF has set itself as a priority conducting a comprehensive reform of the healthcare sector.

Specific actions need to be taken for:

- developing a national health map and restructuring the municipal health facilities in coordination with the local authorities;
- ensuring access to high-quality medical services for all citizens, wherever they live – in cities or in small and remote settlements;
- maternal and child healthcare by means of specific programs
- increasing the funds in NHIF annual budgets for outpatient healthcare, prophylaxis and prevention with the aim to ensure the detection of socially significant diseases at the earliest possible stage;
- decisions to overcome workforce deficits in the healthcare system.

Good modern healthcare is an investment in the future of Bulgaria, an indisputable national responsibility and priority for the Bulgarian citizens.

In the European Parliament, MRF will participate effectively and with national responsibility in the debates and the decisions on deepening cooperation within the EU and designing the common tools to support healthcare.

## **1.2. Social policy**

Social policy is a key instrument in overcoming the demographic crisis.

Bulgaria needs a new vision for its social policy based on the Social Pillar in the common European policy which:

- is coordinated with all policies – healthcare, education, regional policy, local self-governance, culture, transport, environment;
- has a long-term horizon;
- plans and achieves higher levels of social protection for all Bulgarian citizens, irrespective of their age, gender, ethnic and religious background, with a special focus on vulnerable groups and young people;
- makes the best use of all the instruments of European solidarity, while also envisaging national programs.

It is of utmost importance for this policy to target young people, young families, and the working age population in Bulgaria.

MRF will continue its policy of providing support to retired and elderly people with a specific focus on decent old age and active social life for the elderly.

## **1.3. Targeted investments at the local level**

The demographic crisis in Bulgaria requires targeted investments in rural municipalities. It is in particular the rural areas in Bulgaria that are affected by the demographic decline and the ageing population.

The people living in rural areas, in particular the young, are entitled to an equal access to services and life quality as those living in urban areas, as well as to opportunities for professional and personal fulfilment.

Investments in road, water infrastructure, waste management, access to internet and communication networks, and transport services ensure the basic quality of life and are one of the efficient tools to improve the living environment and meet the needs of Bulgarian citizens.

Attracting investments which create jobs in a contemporary globalized Europe can and should be the responsibility not only of the government and private entrepreneurs but also of the local authorities.

#### **1.4. Education**

Education is an important component of a successful demographic policy – pre-school, school, university, and life-long.

The training of teachers and specialists for the secondary and high education and their fulfilment in Bulgaria is directly dependent on the needs of the labour market and the industrial and technological development.

What is needed are:

- modernization and digitalization of the educational process and the educational facilities;
- close cooperation with businesses and the industry with a view to upgrading the curricula and the programs;
- equal access to high-quality education;
- program-based financing of school education;
- contemporary training, qualifications, and continuous upskilling for teachers;
- opportunities for learning the mother tongue;
- learning at least one additional official EU language at the secondary education level, and two – at universities;
- sustainable legal framework;
- development of the academic staff.

Solving all these issues within the broad framework of the demographic policy can contribute to changing the trends.

MRF believes that high-quality education opens the doors to the EU labour market which the Bulgarian labour market is part of.

Contemporary life-long learning and upskilling programs coordinated with the industry can update the profile of the workforce, and have to be part of the programs for the transition for industries and for regions in green transition.

The participation of Bulgarian pupils and students in the horizontal exchange programs, such as Erasmus or DiscoverEU European Youth Card broadens the horizon of Bulgarian education. Central and local policies for scholarships and support are also needed.

The development of school and academic sports is a prerequisite for healthy generations, and a matter of national policy.

#### **1.5. Culture, cultural heritage, and cultural memory**

Culture, cultural heritage, and cultural memory are a basis for national pride, self-consciousness, but also for European-ness.

MRF regards culture: heritage, memory, live art, and cultural institutions – theatres, museums, libraries, archives – as an enormous and still unused resource for developing the regions and improving the living environment.

Cultural literacy is part of the literacy of a modern person.

MRF will work to ensure that every young Bulgarian has the opportunity to get acquainted with Bulgaria's rich cultural and historic heritage via national or municipal programs.

MRF will work to ensure that every European citizen feels the urge to get acquainted with the Bulgarian culture, cultural heritage, and the traditions of all ethnic and religious groups within the Bulgarian society.

## **2. ENSURE SECURITY AND PROTECTION FOR THE BULGARIAN CITIZENS**

### **2.1. Defence and security**

The Bulgarian citizens expect the political factors to commit to clear positions, political measures and concrete actions which will guarantee their security in all its aspects; they expect a response to their concerns, and safeguards for their rights and freedoms.

Bulgaria is a member of the EU and NATO, and the Bulgarian political system is responsible for facilitating and fostering Bulgaria's participation in ensuring the collective security.

The modernization of Bulgaria's armed forces is crucial for the security and defence of our country and for the common European security.

MRF will also work towards building the EU defence doctrine, the European defence forces and Bulgaria's full participation therein.

The modernization and development of the Bulgarian law enforcement services which are actively involved in counter-terrorism on the territory of both Bulgaria and Europe is of paramount importance in terms of ensuring security for the Bulgarian citizens.

The building of systems and the modernization of the existing systems for regulating and combating disinformation and hybrid attacks against national security.

### **2.2. Bulgaria's defence industry**

Bulgaria can and should make the most of all the programs for the modernization, support and balanced development of the Bulgarian industry as part of the EU defence industry.

The Bulgarian companies in the defence industry should be provided with national support, which is important for the implementation of the national policy and for transforming the defence industry into a systemically relevant sector in the upcoming years.

The training of young people in the modern technologies applied in this industry is a major priority for both the educational and the defence systems.

### **2.3. Energy**

MRF regards energy as a key element of national security. Bulgaria needs a new Energy Strategy with a view to ensuring the security and the living standard of the Bulgarian citizens, and the competitiveness of the Bulgarian industry.

This new strategy should reflect the policies for achieving models, other than the well-known current ones, in terms of:

- the use of energy resources;
- energy production, transmission and distribution;
- energy consumption;
- energy efficiency.

The Energy Strategy will envisage the introduction of innovations and low-carbon technologies in the energy sector by 2050 in the context of the common EU strategies:

- smart power grids;
- smart systems for power consumption management;
- creating facilities for power storage;
- introducing electrical transport;
- boosting the use of renewable energy sources;
- carbon capture and storage;
- developing hydrogen technologies and ensuring conditions for investments in such technologies.

The partnership at the EU level and the support from the EU will be crucial for the delivery of the goals of Bulgaria's new Energy Strategy.

MRF deems the modernization of Bulgaria's energy sector and the reduction of the carbon footprint as necessary for improving the daily life of our citizens.

The prices of electricity and energy carriers should be affordable to the citizens and businesses.

The local and central authorities can and should be regarded as a partner by those working in the energy sector, and should offer them a clear perspective for personal fulfilment and safety.

#### **2.4. Food security**

A new beginning and a new vision are needed for the country's agricultural policies, with a focus on clean food, clean environment, clean energy – visionary priorities identified by MRF in 2013.

We will set the new beginning and will implement the new model jointly with the agricultural producers: the new approach requires that the policies should be developed together with the farmers, instead of being imposed on them.

MRF will initiate the drafting of a Strategy for the Rural Areas in the Republic of Bulgaria on the basis of the free expression of opinions and the expertise of agricultural producers, the academia, sectoral organizations, and consumers.

The development of Bulgaria's agriculture in the context of security requires:

- investments in modernizing agricultural farms;
- investments in processing enterprises;
- investments in irrigation;
- investments in research, innovations, technologies, education, training, skills.

The production of high-quality and healthy foods by means of organic farming will contribute to higher revenues for farmers, ending the depopulation of rural areas, and environmental protection.

Food security is a priority for the EU, and Bulgaria's efforts along this line will arouse support from the EU, will create jobs, and will strengthen agriculture as a sector of the Bulgarian economy.

National targeted support for small agricultural producers is needed, in particular in mountain areas. This requires immediate, well-targeted and consistent measures for adequate financing of small farms, and conditions for setting up associations/cooperatives of such farms with the aim to achieve high competitiveness and modern marketing.

Advertising the traditional Bulgarian products is a responsibility at the national level. MRF will work to ensure more and effective advertising campaigns and marketing of Bulgarian products.

## **2.5. Migration**

Migration, as a global challenge, has its specific dimensions in Bulgaria which bear direct relevance to national security.

The migration of Bulgarian nationals towards countries in Western Europe has a direct impact on the demographic crisis in the country; it negatively affects the opportunities for economic development, and undermines national security. The measures proposed by MRF for overcoming the demographic crisis will directly contribute to reducing the number of emigrating Bulgarian nationals.

MRF reiterates its political support for modernizing the common EU migration policy which rests on a balanced approach and equal treatment of Member States, and ensures that our state, having an external EU border, will pledge to participate in the processes across Europe in line with its capabilities.

Bulgaria should reconsider its place and role in the overall migration processes worldwide and towards Europe, and should develop a national concept for a responsible behaviour of the Bulgarian authorities which also safeguards national security.

## **2.6. Protection from natural disasters**

Climate change worldwide challenges and tests all systems for prevention against natural disasters in Europe.

Bulgaria has suffered generally rising temperatures, which has caused local floodings and forest fires affecting the citizens' life and assets and the economy.

What is needed is a complex approach and strict coordination among government institutions, local authorities, private entrepreneurs and investors with the aim to ensure a synchronized operational system for disaster forecast and prevention.

MRF proposes targeted national and EU funding for risk prevention projects.

## **3. INVESTMENTS AND ACCELERATED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

### **3.1. Forecasting and policy decisions for accelerated economic development**

MRF calls for the urgent development and adoption of a national vision for accelerating the economic development of Bulgaria on the basis of investments, innovations, digitalization, green transition, hydrogen and digital transformation.

According to MRF, the formula for a successful national investment program is program-based, transparent, aligned with the national priorities and the trends in the development of the European economy and the local specifics.

Constitutional changes are the first step in the judicial reform. The full participation in the Schengen area and the accession to the Eurozone have the potential to facilitate the accelerated development of the Bulgarian economy.

### **3.2. Investments and business environment**

The business environment needs to have new dimensions which are linked to innovations and hydrogen industry.

The moment is critical for the initiative of businesses and business organizations. They expect a clear, transparent and effective national policy.

The partnership government – businesses and local authorities – businesses is the formula for economic growth.

MRF calls for and will work towards:

- accelerated, innovative economic growth;
- sustainable, green-oriented development of key sectors with a potential for a catch-up economic growth – energy, agriculture, defence industry;
- developing the knowledge-based economy – digitalization, high hydrogen technologies, support for the IT sector, and economy of intangible assets;
- promoting strategic investments via active support from the state and its participation in all phases of the investment process with the aim to speed it up;
- public municipal investment program – program budgeting of all investment projects of the municipalities, and integrating them in the national capital budget program;
- enhancing the role of local authorities in respect of regional development, investments at the local level, the development of an environment for creating jobs, and measures for young people and young families;
- MRF will work towards an environment which stimulates growing investments in the Bulgarian economy.

**3.3. Effective investment in the EU solidarity facilities** is a necessary condition for the support for the Bulgarian economy, the local authorities, and, as a whole, for the balanced development which will address the gaps between urban and rural areas, and will ensure the participation of businesses and the academia in the EU horizontal programs and in the common innovative environment.

Bulgaria's economic prosperity is directly dependent on the EU's prosperity, technological development and economic growth. MRF will work to contribute to the upgrading, modernization and the efficient functioning of the EU.

The full-pledged EU membership of Bulgaria will be completed with the country's accession to the Schengen area and the Eurozone.

The investments in the economy are the alpha and omega of growth, prosperity and high incomes.

**3.4. Active participation in the process of preparing and adopting of the new EU models of targeted financial support for growth.**

In the European Parliament, MRF will work, via its MEPs, to contribute to:

- the European Sovereignty Fund;
- programs for supporting the defence industry;
- new versions of support from the EU for the Member States and SMEs via the loan formula of the Mechanism for Recovery and Growth New Generation EU.

**3.5. Green growth is an opportunity**

In the European Parliament, MRF will work for the completion of Europe's green and digital transformation, for promoting it as a growth mechanism for the European economy.

MRF will contribute to promoting and regulating the green solutions and technologies as an opportunity for the development of the Bulgarian economy and society.

#### **4. POLITICAL REALISM AND PRAGMATISM**

It is of major importance for MRF to defend its principles and values, to deliver its commitments to its voters, to work for the functioning of institutions without corruption, open to the citizens.

##### **4.1. MRF calls for a nationally responsible behaviour and for reconsidering the nature and the advantages of coalition governance as the fundamental instrument of the effective democracy in the EU**

Coalition governance:

- expands the horizon of governance programs;
- ensures mutual control of the participants in the coalition;
- represents a broad range of voters.

##### **4.2. By means of political realism and pragmatism, MRF opposes demagoguery and populism**

Opposes disinformation;

Commits to participate in the development of upcoming national positions on artificial intelligence by focusing on potential speculations with AI in political life;

Promotes proximity to people and their concerns as a political responsibility, and as a requirement for the future of any political project.

##### **4.3. Rights and freedoms of the Bulgarian citizens**

MRF will defend the rule of law – safeguarding the rights and freedoms of each Bulgarian citizen, the independence of powers, the freedom of information and the media;

MRF will defend the rights and freedoms of Bulgarian and EU citizens by respecting the principles of human rights and being aware of the challenges of the changing world.

MRF will oppose anybody who attempts to impose policies and a social environment of ethnic, racial and other types of hatred and discrimination, to any attempts to impose hate speech.

#### **5. BULGARIA – A FACTOR OF DEVELOPMENT AND A LEADER IN THE PROCESS OF INCLUDING THE DIMENSIONS OF SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE IN THE COMMON EUROPEAN POLICY**

For the Movement for Rights and Freedoms preserving the homogeneity of the EU by means of reforms is a foreign policy and a national priority.

We fully stand by the role and actions of the EU and the international community supporting Ukraine, as well as the effective and consistent Common Foreign and Security Policy of the EU.



MRF abides by the full respect for international law and the protection of human rights, environmental protection and energy independence, a reformed migration policy, and the promotion of multilateral interaction as the best way to address global challenges.

The attitude of MRF towards Turkey is the attitude towards a strategic partner of the EU. This is the context of the good neighbourly relations between the two countries which are united by common challenges and common goals related to the migration pressure, as well as to the development of economic relations, trade and tourism between the two countries.

Peace is a high-order value but also a responsibility which MRF assumed as from its establishment. MRF is committed to defending peace – a human benefit, right and responsibility.

MRF stands by the enlargement of the EU with the Western Balkans as an opportunity for the development of the EU and of the Republic of Bulgaria.