

Council of Ministers Administration – “Coordination and Modernisation of the Administration”:

In 2025, the implementation of key initiatives continued and new ones were initiated to improve regulatory policy in the field of reducing administrative burden, including in sensitive areas such as the environment, energy, construction, and others. First and foremost, in 2025 the implementation of the Plan for Reducing Administrative Burden, adopted by Council of Ministers Decision No. 233 of 2024, continued. The Plan includes a total of 235 measures envisaging amendments to 91 laws, grouped into the following main areas: elimination of required documents, ex officio collection of information, statutory regulation of procedures for the provision of services, reduction of deadlines, as well as improvement of registers and enhancement of their usability. These areas have a directly expressed preventive and anti-corruption orientation with regard to regimes (licensing, registration, permit and notification regimes) and other administrative proceedings, as they:

1. limit the possibilities for divergent practices and uneven application of requirements in the provision of administrative services by introducing clear statutory requirements, conditions, and grounds for refusal laid down in law;
2. reduce the need to submit documents and certifying information that are already contained in public registers or available within the administration, thereby minimising the applicant’s involvement in obtaining and certifying facts and limiting opportunities for abuse;
3. enhance the transparency and traceability of administrative proceedings through publicity, integration, and operational usability of registers, as well as through the expansion of ex officio data exchange;
4. limit opportunities for unlawful influence on the duration of procedures by introducing clear deadlines and a predictable procedure for remedying irregularities, which reduces the risk of “delaying” or “accelerating” cases due to undefined or unclear timeframes.

The implementation of the measures in the Plan is reported periodically, ensuring ongoing monitoring, control, and traceability of progress on the commitments undertaken, including with regard to their effect on administrative burden and on integrity conditions in permitting procedures. It is envisaged that separate registers maintained by different administrative structures will be consolidated into a single unified register, that its functioning will be regulated by law, and that it will be connected to an environment for inter-register data exchange. This leads simultaneously to a reduction in administrative burden and to limiting the corruption risk associated with the “verification” and “certification” of facts that can already be established ex officio.

The Plan also contains horizontal measures to increase the usability of existing registers and their effective application, which have a wide-ranging effect on multiple administrative proceedings. For applicants for services, it is planned that the requirement to submit the following documents will be abolished: copies of sketches and other cadastral data; a document certifying completed education; a document proving the existence of an employment relationship; a document proving legal capacity to practise law; information on the existence or absence of criminal proceedings / brought charges / defendant status. The indicated information is to be established ex officio.

In this context, it should be noted that with the promulgated amendments to the Cadastre and Property Register Act (State Gazette, issue No. 91 of 2025), a rule was introduced for the

ex officio provision of sketches and other cadastral data, while parallel amendments were made to other special laws in order to abolish the requirement for applicants to submit various cadastral data. The measure has a clear anti-corruption effect, as it reduces personal contact, eliminates prerequisites for intermediation and acceleration in exchange for unregulated remuneration, and improves the traceability of administrative actions.

In the field of construction, the Plan includes 12 measures aimed at reducing administrative burden and improving administrative procedures, some of which are of substantial importance for limiting corruption risks in the investment process. By way of example, the measure for the establishment of a Unified Information System for Spatial Planning, Investment Design, and Construction Permitting should be highlighted. Through this system, it is envisaged that: the applicant submits a single request for the administration of the relevant regime; the affected administrations provide coordinating opinions as an internal administrative service; and the competent authority issues and serves the final act electronically. The measure covers regimes administered by mayors of municipalities, regional governors, and the Minister of Regional Development and Public Works, related to the investment process, thereby limiting the fragmentation of procedures, reducing the number of contacts, and enhancing the transparency and traceability of the process.

By Council of Ministers Decision No. 176 of 21 March 2025, a Plan of Action for the implementation of administrative services based on the “life event” principle was adopted, including measures to improve 11 life events. The Plan introduces a model whereby citizens and businesses do not initiate multiple separate administrative proceedings; instead, expanded ex officio data exchange, ex officio notification, and the transformation of services into internal administrative services are applied. This model has a direct anti-corruption effect, as it reduces the number of procedures and contacts that traditionally generate corruption risk.

Among the life events included in the Plan that carry an increased risk of improper practices are “Purchase and sale of a motor vehicle” and “Purchase and sale of immovable property”. Within the life event “Purchase and sale of a motor vehicle”, measures are envisaged such as: the issuance of methodological guidelines by the Notary Chamber to overcome differences in notarial practice when verifying the payment of annual motor vehicle tax; the establishment of a working group to eliminate the requirement to submit a certificate of the insurance value of the motor vehicle; and the removal of the requirement for the existence of compulsory motor third-party liability insurance at the time of notarisation of the transaction when the motor vehicle has been suspended from traffic. Within the life event “Purchase and sale of immovable property”, measures are envisaged such as: requesting and obtaining by the notary, as an internal administrative service, a certificate for the existence / absence of an act of state or municipal ownership; expansion of access to the information system under Article 28b of the Notaries and Notarial Activity Act; electronic registration of the transaction deed in the Property Register; and the abolition of the submission of paper-based documents by the notary. The overall effect of these measures is the reduction of administrative steps, standardisation of practices, and limitation of the prerequisites for improper influence and intermediation.

The framework for the above initiatives is provided by the Concept for the Development of the Regulatory Policy of the Republic of Bulgaria for the period 2025–2027, adopted by Council of Ministers Decision No. 175 of 2025, which defines objectives directly relevant to the prevention of corruption risks in permitting regimes, in particular: Objective 2 “Reduction

of administrative burden and improvement of administrative services” and Objective 4 “Improvement of law enforcement and administrative control”. The Concept places emphasis on transforming administrative procedures into services based on the “life event” principle, with a single application and digitalisation, envisaging an increasingly broad transformation of services into “internal” ones and their removal from the catalogue of services for applicants.

Last but not least, the expected anti-corruption effect of the measures under Objective 4 of the Concept should also be noted, aimed at strengthening inspection and control activities, including: identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the inspection and enforcement system and identifying areas for improvement at national level (through analysis and assessment based on defined criteria and the formulation of recommendations), as well as developing standards for conducting joint inspections by several institutions with control and inspection functions, including proposals for legislative amendments and the designation of a pilot area for implementation. These measures have a direct anti-corruption effect, as they limit opportunities for unregulated arrangements between the inspecting authority and the inspected entity, enhance traceability and control over the process through advance planning, clear allocation of roles, documentation of actions and exchange of information, and create conditions for harmonisation of practices and limitation of contradictory or uncoordinated control actions.

In summary, the initiatives undertaken and ongoing in 2025 to reduce administrative burden and improve regulation have a cumulative preventive anti-corruption effect in permitting and similar administrative procedures, as they limit the scope for arbitrary discretion, reduce administrative contact and the requirement to submit documents, increase transparency and traceability through registers and electronic processes, and strengthen control mechanisms and law enforcement.