

Treasury Sanctions Influential Bulgarian Individuals and Their Expansive Networks for Engaging in Corruption

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WASHINGTON — Today, the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) sanctioned three Bulgarian individuals for their extensive roles in corruption in Bulgaria, as well as their networks encompassing 64 entities. The Administration believes corruption degrades the rule of law, weakens economies and economic growth, undermines democratic institutions, perpetuates conflict, and deprives innocent civilians of fundamental human rights, and today's action — the single largest action targeting corruption to date — demonstrates the Department of the Treasury's ongoing effort to hold accountable those involved in corruption. The U.S. government will continue to impose tangible and significant consequences on those who engage in corruption and work to protect the global financial system from abuse.

“The United States stands with all Bulgarians who strive to root out corruption by promoting accountability for corrupt officials who undermine the economic functions and democratic institutions of Bulgaria,” said Office of Foreign Assets Control Director Andrea M. Gacki. “Not only does corruption deprive citizens of resources, it can erode the institutions intended to protect them. This designation under the Global Magnitsky sanctions program shows that we are committed to combatting corruption wherever it may be.”

This action targets **Vassil Kroumov Bojkov**, a prominent Bulgarian businessman and oligarch; **Delyan Slavchev Peevski**, a former Member of Parliament; **Ilko Dimitrov Zhelyazkov**, the former Deputy Chief of the Bulgarian State Agency for Technical Operations who was appointed to the National Bureau for Control on Special Intelligence-Gathering Devices; and the companies owned or controlled by the respective individuals. These individuals and entities are designated pursuant to Executive Order (E.O.) 13818, which builds upon and implements the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act and targets perpetrators of serious human rights abuse and corruption around the world. These sanctions coincide with complementary actions taken by the U.S. Department of State to publicly designate **Peevski** and **Zhelyazkov**, among others, under Section 7031(c) of the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act due to their involvement in significant corruption.

U.S. COMMITMENT TO TARGETING CORRUPTION

Today's designations constitute the largest Global Magnitsky action taken on a single day in the history of the program, targeting over 65 individuals and entities for their significant acts of corruption in Bulgaria.

The corrupt activities undertaken by the individuals designated today demonstrate how pervasive corruption goes hand-in-hand with other illicit activity. The breadth of today's action shows that the United States will support the rule of law and impose costs on public officials and those connected to them who use government institutions for personal profit. Today's designation exposes **Bojkov**, **Peevski**, and **Zhelyazkov** for abusing public institutions for profit and cuts off these individuals' and their companies' access to the U.S. financial system. To further protect the international financial system from abuse by corrupt actors, Treasury encourages all governments to implement appropriate and effective anti-money laundering measures to address corruption vulnerabilities.

These actions send a strong signal that the United States stands with all Bulgarians who strive to root out corruption. We are committed to helping our partners realize their full economic and democratic potential by tackling systemic corruption and holding corrupt officials accountable. Treasury remains committed to working with Bulgaria to address money laundering reforms that lead to financial transparency and accountability. We call upon regulators to communicate the risks of doing business with these corrupt officials and their companies.

VASSIL KROUMOV BOJKOV AND HIS NETWORK

Vassil Kroumov Bojkov (Bojkov), a Bulgarian businessman and oligarch, has bribed government officials on several occasions. These officials include a current political leader and the former Chairman of the now-abolished State Commission on Gambling (SCG). **Bojkov** also planned to provide a sum of money to a former Bulgarian official and a Bulgarian politician earlier this year to help **Bojkov** create a channel for Russian political leaders to influence Bulgarian government officials.

Bojkov is currently in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, where he successfully evaded Bulgarian extradition on a number of charges levied in 2020, including leading an organized crime group, coercion, attempted bribery of an official, and tax evasion. In its investigation, the Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Bulgaria found that in February 2018, **Bojkov** paid the then-Chair of the SCG 10,000 Bulgarian Lev (approximately \$6,220) on a daily basis to revoke **Bojkov's** competitors' gambling licenses. Following this massive bribery scheme, the Chair of the SCG resigned, was arrested, and the SCG was abolished. There remains an international warrant for **Bojkov's** arrest as his influence continues in Bulgaria. In advance of the July 2021 Bulgarian parliamentary elections, **Bojkov** registered a political party that will run candidates in the aforementioned elections to target Bulgarian politicians and officials.

Bojkov is designated pursuant to E.O. 13818 for being a person who has materially assisted, sponsored, or provided financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services to or in support of corruption, including the misappropriation of state assets, the expropriation of private assets for personal gain, corruption related to government contracts or the extraction of natural resources, or bribery.

OFAC is also designating 58 entities, including **Bulgarian Summer**, registered in Bulgaria that are owned or controlled by **Bojkov** or one of his companies:

- **Vabo-2005 EOOD, Digital Services EAD, Ede 2 EOOD, Nove Internal EOOD, Moststroy Iztok AD, Galenit Invest AD, Vabo 2008 EOOD, Vertex Properties EOOD, VB Management EOOD, Va Bo Company EOOD, Vabo Management EOOD, Vabo 2012 EOOD, Prim BG EAD, Eurogroup Engineering EAD, Kristiano GR 53 JSC AD, Nove-AD-Holding AD, Bul Partners Travel OOD, Bullet Trade OOD, Caritex Lucky AD, Sizif V OOD, Thrace Foundation, Vabo Internal AD, and Bulgarian Summer** are owned or controlled by **Bojkov**.
- **Rex Loto AD** is owned or controlled by **Vabo-2005 EOOD**.
- **Eurobet Partners OOD** is owned or controlled by **Digital Services EAD**.
- **Eurobet OOD** is owned or controlled by **Eurobet Partners OOD**.
- **Eurobet Trading EOOD** is owned or controlled by **Eurobet OOD**.
- **Vabo Systems EOOD, Vato 2002 EOOD, Nove Development EOOD, Property-VB OOD, Trans Nove OOD, Nove Partners OOD, Adler BG AD, Efbet Partners OOD, and Internews 98 OOD** are owned or controlled by **Nove Internal EOOD**.
- **Eurosadrushie OOD and Decart OOD** are owned or controlled by **Vabo Systems EOOD**.
- **Numerical Games OOD, Lottery Distributions OOD, National Lottery OOD, and Eurofootball OOD** are owned or controlled by **Eurosadrushie OOD**.
- **National Lottery AD** is owned or controlled by **Nove Development EOOD**.
- **Meliora Academica EOOD, Domino Games OOD, and ML Build EAD** are owned or controlled by **Decart OOD**.
- **Games Unlimited OOD** is owned or controlled by **VB Management EOOD**.
- **Evrobet - Rumania EOOD and Old Games EOOD** are owned or controlled by **Games Unlimited OOD**.
- **Vihrogonika AD** is owned or controlled by **Vabo Management EOOD**.
- **Vabo 2017 OOD and Lottery BG OOD** are owned or controlled by **Vabo 2012 EOOD**.
- **Siguro EOOD** is owned or controlled by **Eurogroup Engineering EAD**.
- **Trakia-Papir 96 OOD, Parkstroy-Sofia OOD, Publishing House Sport LTD, and CSKA Basketball Club** are owned or controlled by **Nove-AD-Holding AD**.
- **Ancient Heritage AD** is owned or controlled by **Thrace Foundation**.

DELYAN SLAVCHEV PEEVSKI AND HIS NETWORK

Delyan Slavchev Peevski (Peevski) is an oligarch who previously served as a Bulgarian MP and media mogul and has regularly engaged in corruption, using influence peddling and bribes to protect himself from public scrutiny and exert control over key institutions and sectors in Bulgarian society. In September 2019, **Peevski** actively worked to negatively influence the Bulgarian political process in the October 27, 2019 municipal elections. **Peevski** negotiated with politicians to provide them with political support and positive media coverage in return for receiving protection from criminal investigations.

Peevski also engaged in corruption through his front man **Ilko Dimitrov Zhelyazkov (Zhelyazkov)**, the former Deputy Chief of the Bulgarian State Agency for Technical Operations and former Bulgarian State Agency for National Security (DANS) officer who was appointed to the National Bureau for Control on Special Intelligence-Gathering Devices. **Peevski** used **Zhelyazkov** to conduct a bribery scheme involving Bulgarian residency documents for foreign persons, as well as to bribe government officials through various means in exchange for their information and loyalty. For example, as of 2019, **Zhelyazkov** was known for offering bribes to senior Bulgarian government officials who were expected to provide information to **Zhelyazkov** for onward passage to **Peevski**. In return, **Zhelyazkov** would see that individuals who accepted his offer were placed in positions of authority and also provided a monthly bribe. **Peevski** and **Zhelyazkov** also had an official placed in a leadership position to embezzle funds to them in 2019. In another example, as of early 2018, these two government officials ran a scheme to sell Bulgarian residency documents where company representatives purportedly paid bribes to Bulgarian officials to ensure their clients received citizenship documents immediately rather than making the \$500,000 deposit or waiting the five years for a legitimate request to be processed. Lastly, **Zhelyazkov** also blackmailed a potential Bulgarian government minister with criminal charges from Bulgaria's Prosecutor General's office if the minister did not provide him further assistance upon appointment.

Peevski and **Zhelyazkov** are designated pursuant to E.O. 13818 for being foreign persons who are current or former government officials, or persons acting for or on behalf of such an official, who are responsible for or complicit in, or who have directly or indirectly engaged in, corruption, including the misappropriation of state assets, the expropriation of private assets for personal gain, corruption related to government contracts or the extraction of natural resources, or bribery.

OFAC is also designating six entities registered in Bulgaria that are owned or controlled by **Peevski** or one of his companies:

- **Int Ltd EOOD** and **Intrust PLC EAD** are owned or controlled by **Peevski**.
- **BM Systems EAD**, **Int Invest EOOD**, **Inttrafik EOOD**, and **Real Estates Int Ltd EOOD** are owned or controlled by **Intrust PLC EAD**.

SANCTIONS IMPLICATIONS

As a result of today's action, all property and interests in property of the persons above that are in the United States or in the possession or control of U.S. persons are blocked and must be reported to OFAC. In addition, any entities that are owned, directly or indirectly, 50 percent or more by one or more blocked persons are also blocked. Unless authorized by a general or specific license issued by OFAC, or otherwise exempt, OFAC's regulations generally prohibit all transactions by U.S. persons or within (or transiting) the United States that involve any property or interests in property of designated or otherwise blocked persons. The prohibitions include the making of any contribution or provision of funds, goods, or services by, to, or for the benefit of any blocked person or the receipt of any contribution or provision of funds, goods, or services from any such person.

GLOBAL MAGNITSKY

Building upon the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act, E.O. 13818 was issued on December 20, 2017, in recognition that the prevalence of human rights abuse and corruption that have their source, in whole or in substantial part, outside the United States, had reached such scope and gravity as to threaten the stability of international political and economic systems. Human rights abuse and corruption undermine the values that form an essential foundation of stable, secure, and functioning societies; have devastating impacts on individuals; weaken democratic institutions; degrade the rule of law; perpetuate violent conflicts; facilitate the activities of dangerous persons; and undermine economic markets. The United States seeks to impose tangible and significant consequences on those who commit serious human rights abuse or engage in corruption, as well as to protect the financial system of the United States from abuse by these same persons.

Click [here](#) to view more information on today's designation.

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