



Y Viva Bulgaria and Green House Gases

by Joanne Green

There is much media speculation of Bulgaria and Romania acquiring entry in to the UK on 1st January 2014. This article attempts to explain how this partnership with the UK can be beneficial to the UK population and in meeting UK Green House Gas emission targets. Evidence includes how the UK embraced its construction and other skills and the culture of other countries during the past 150 years resulting in a cosmopolitan diversity of food, music, fashion, social media and architecture in addition to Green House Gas emission predictions.

To begin, there is 235 miles of Black Sea coastline in Bulgaria with one third being accompanied by a sandy beach. To the north there is a further 153 miles of Black Sea coastline in Romania. Average summer temperatures for both countries is 28°C. By comparison the coastline in Blackpool is 35 times smaller at 11 miles long and the average summer temperature is 16°C. However Blackpool is a very special place to the UK's population and their adoration is apparent and long-lasting. Firstly there is Blackpool Tower built in 1891 which took 3 years to construct. It stands tall at 158m and is open 7 days a week during peak season. The Tower contains attractions such as the Eye, a Dungeon, a circus, a playground and of course the very famous ballroom which attracts TV media each year including that of Strictly Come Dancing. Secondly people are attracted to Blackpool for a multitude of reasons including and not limited to, political conferences, hen and stag parties, for its gay scene, lights and theatre shows and as a holiday destination. To accommodate these activities Blackpool has its own airport, 350 hotels, campsites, a zoo and Victorian piers. By welcoming Bulgarians into the UK, by default Bulgaria will be welcoming Brits into Bulgaria - just as Spain and other European countries have and who the UK has longstanding and wonderful relationships with.

In 2011 there were 201,535,000 air and 28,825,000 maritime passengers to the UK and 165,153,000 air and 21,215,000 maritime passengers to Spain in contrast to 6, 652,000 air and 1,000 maritime passengers to Bulgaria and 9,687,000 air and 0 maritime passengers to Romania (Eurostat, 2013). The zero figures could illustrate there is no maritime travel along the Black Sea between Turkey, Russia, Ukraine and Greece or that figures are omitted. The UK has a proven history of port building so perhaps there are construction and trade opportunities along these coastlines for British Nationals? There has been mixed results for the construction industry: UK ↑2.2%, Spain ↓2.9%, Bulgaria ↑0.4% and Romania ↑4.0% (Eurostat, 2013).

A significant difference between the UK and Bulgaria is that in Bulgaria to receive healthcare one must have healthcare insurance. In the UK medical treatment is free. In Bulgaria in 2011 the cost of healthcare insurance to each person was 1% of the minimum salary in the country and for hospital stays 2% of the persons' monthly wage (2 Euros) (Bulgaria Travel, 2013). However these facilities may or may not be available to UK tourists and employees in Bulgaria as these people can only receive medical care from medical facilities which have a contract with National Health Insurance Fund or facilities on the Healthcare Establishments Register - which can be more expensive (Bulgaria Travel, 2013). In contrast Bulgarian tourists and employees can receive free NHS medical care in the UK. A question here is, on 1st January 2014 will

healthcare become free for British Nationals in Bulgaria? Or should the UK provide a fair system and request healthcare insurance from Bulgarians who access NHS medical care in the UK so that the NHS can pay for British National tourists and employees whilst in Bulgaria to incentivise UK people to visit and work in Bulgaria?

The great relationship with Spain is inferred in a speech by Simon Manley (Government, 2013) in which he speaks of British Nationals residing in a number of locations around Spain. Simon informs that though there are some issues, such as property, there is also a framework and support network in place for British Nationals living in Spain. Note that building and planning regulation in Spain is different to the UK in that builds need to accommodate the Spanish Building Act 1999 rather than the National Planning Policy Framework which is a consideration to UK construction. Also construction in Spain has 17 regulators (Europa, 2011) unlike in the UK. By contrast Bulgaria has private and government regulators of which the regulations aim to meet EU Directives (Europa, 2010) and these are created by the Ministry of Regional Development (MoRD) who issues funds for public works (MoRD, 2013). Other issues include for example when UK residents live in Spain they need to have already paid contributions to receive unemployment benefit (Seda, 2013). This is normal practice in other European countries too such as in France where unemployment benefit is only available to people who must be registered for 122 days prior to being allowed any benefit in addition to other criterion such as having lost their jobs (Cleiss, 2013). These examples help to indicate that placing benefit restrictions upon anyone visiting the UK to seek work is not racist and it also shows there is no requirement for specific timescale for benefits to be set.

In a different podcast one is able to understand how the UK construction and other industry could emerge in Romania and also in Bulgaria just as it continues to do in Spain (Government, 2013). For example, The British Council could assist Bulgarians and Romanians to learn the English language just as they have been helping people in Spain for the past 70 years including 40,000 visiting students per year (British Council, 2013). With today's technology could these students be able to enrol in online courses so as to help meet European Green House Gas targets? The EU Environment Agency reports Bulgaria an EU27 country as a non emission trading sector could be beneficial in helping the UK to reach its Green House Gas emission targets for energy and climate mitigation. Bulgaria is meeting its targets and has some spare international credits which it intends to use / sell to other countries as carbon sinks (EEA, 2013). With GHG emissions being transient it is imperative the UK meets its targets of 80% in 2050 to

1990 levels to mitigate and adapt against climate change and extreme weather. Though UK GHG emissions are reducing reductions such as these are well known for reducing during economic downturns. The UK economy is improving steadily therefore the UK must address GHGs too - so perhaps the issues of Bulgaria and GHGs can be combined and also in line with Conservative Party policy of Climate Change and Energy.

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