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## **Bulgaria**

### **Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards - Narrative**

### **FAIRS Country Report**

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**Report Highlights:**

Bulgaria, a member of the European Union (EU) since 2007, follows all EU directives and regulations. This report outlines the applicable legislation regarding the export of U.S. food products to Bulgaria, particularly those rules that differ from EU legislation. This report should be read in conjunction with the [EU-27 Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards Report](#).

**DISCLAIMER:** This report was prepared by the Office of Agricultural Affairs of the USDA/Foreign

Agricultural Service in Sofia, Bulgaria for U.S. exporters of domestic food and agricultural products. While every possible care was taken in the preparation of this report, information provided may not be completely accurate either because policies have changed since its preparation, or because clear and consistent information regarding these policies was not available. It is highly recommended that U.S. exporters verify the full set of import requirements with their foreign customers, who are normally best equipped to research such matters with local authorities, before any goods are shipped.

**FINAL CUSTOMS CLEARANCE APPROVAL OF ANY PRODUCT IS SUBJECT TO THE IMPORTING COUNTRY’S RULES AND REGULATIONS AS INTERPRETED BY BORDER OFFICIALS AT THE TIME OF PRODUCT ENTRY.**

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**SECTION I. Food Laws:**

Bulgaria is a member of the EU since 2007. As a member of the European Union (EU), Bulgaria follows all EU directives, regulations, and obligations where available. While EU Regulations are binding and directly applicable to the Member States, EU Directives have to be transposed into National law. EU Decisions are binding and directly applicable to whom they are addressed.

This report outlines the applicable legislation regarding the exports of U.S. food products to Bulgaria, particularly those rules that differ from EU legislation or regulation. Exporters should be aware that when EU-wide legislation is incomplete, absent or there is room for interpretation, Bulgarian laws apply and imported product must meet existing Bulgarian requirements.

For detailed information on EU Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards ([FAIRS](#)), see reports produced by the U.S. Mission to the EU in Brussels, Belgium which can be accessed from their website: <http://www.usda-eu.org/>.

Food and beverage products originating in the United States do not require any special Bulgarian permits and are not subject to special rules or regulations regarding retail sale in Bulgaria. However, all products must comply with the generally applied rules and regulations required for any food and beverage product sold within the EU market. Bulgaria's food regulations apply to both domestically produced and imported food products.

### **Bulgarian Food Law**

At the EU level, Regulation (EC) 178/2002 sets out general principles and objectives in food law. In Bulgaria, the Food Law (Bulgarian only, English version available upon request) [http://bah.government.bg/uploads/File/Dokumenti\\_zakoni/ZAKON\\_za\\_hranite.pdf](http://bah.government.bg/uploads/File/Dokumenti_zakoni/ZAKON_za_hranite.pdf)) published in January 2011, outlines the basic Bulgarian food and feed regulations. This law is based in EU Regulations and Directives and includes the traditional food safety aspects of detection and removal of physical, chemical, and biological hazards as well as other less conventional issues such as obesity prevention and food advertising rules. It applies to domestically produced and imported products.

The Bulgarian Food Law establishes basic definitions, goals, and principles for food safety. It also defines procedural rules, coordination mechanisms between the different public administrations with responsibilities in official food control. It sets out general food safety and health protection rules, regulates inspection, detention, and seizure rules of suspect food, and classifies breaches. The Food Law was initially passed in October 1999 and has undergone numerous changes and amendment as a result of EU accession in 2007 and following harmonization with the EU legislation. The last changes were adopted in January 2011. The Food Law implementing regulations can be found at: <http://www.bah.government.bg/bg/legislation-bg-regulations.html>

Other major legislation which applies to food imports can be found in the Veterinary Medical Act (Bulgarian only, English version available upon request) [http://bah.government.bg/uploads/File/Dokumenti\\_zakoni/ZAKON\\_za\\_veterinarnomedicinskata\\_dejno\\_st.pdf](http://bah.government.bg/uploads/File/Dokumenti_zakoni/ZAKON_za_veterinarnomedicinskata_dejno_st.pdf). Imports of raw materials and foods of animal origin are regulated by this legislation (Art.24b Food Law).

Legislation which may have direct or indirect effect on food imports is the Plant Protection Law (last revision April 2011)

[http://babh.government.bg/uploads/File/Dokumenti\\_zakoni/orz\\_ZZR.pdf](http://babh.government.bg/uploads/File/Dokumenti_zakoni/orz_ZZR.pdf)

and the Feed Law (last revision January 2013)

[http://babh.government.bg/uploads/File/Dokumenti\\_zakoni/Zakon%20za%20furajite\\_Obn.,%20DV,%20br.%2055\\_2006,%20dop.,%20br.pdf](http://babh.government.bg/uploads/File/Dokumenti_zakoni/Zakon%20za%20furajite_Obn.,%20DV,%20br.%2055_2006,%20dop.,%20br.pdf)

The following sources have a complete list of applicable EU and national legislation (Bulgarian only, English version available upon request):

EU and National Legislation, Documents, and Tariffs:

<http://www.babh.government.bg/bg/documents.html>

National Legislation:

<http://www.babh.government.bg/bg/legislation-bg.html>

### **Relevant Competent Authorities**

Bulgaria has a centralized system for testing and controlling the feed and food chain. The central government has total oversight over the control carried out in customs, and on monitoring and sampling plans throughout the food and feed chain. Sampling plans are based on risk assessment and sampling is primarily done at production, wholesale and the processing level.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Foods controls agricultural product imports intended for human consumption, through Bulgarian Food Safety Agency (BFSA). It also controls imports of animal feed/ingredients and live animals not intended for direct human consumption.

The BFSA is relatively young institution. It was established in early 2011 through a major reform by uniting 3 executive agencies – Plant Protection and Phyto-Sanitary Agency and Veterinary Medical Service, both under the control of the Ministry of Agriculture, and Food Hygiene Agency, part of the Ministry of Health.

Food Safety is the responsibility of the BFSA which coordinates the food and feed chain control. BFSA has a Risk Assessment Center which is responsible for risk assessment and management and work directly with European Food Safety Agency.

The BFSA is the competent authority on official control on all food imports, exports and manufacturing with the exception of bottled water (mineral, spring, and table water) (Art.28/ Food Law) Law on the establishment of Bulgarian Food Safety Agency – published in Official Gazette #8/January 25, 2011.

[http://babh.government.bg/uploads/File/Dokumenti\\_zakoni/ZAKON\\_za\\_Bylgarskata\\_agenciq\\_po\\_bezop\\_arnost\\_na\\_hranite.pdf](http://babh.government.bg/uploads/File/Dokumenti_zakoni/ZAKON_za_Bylgarskata_agenciq_po_bezop_arnost_na_hranite.pdf)

Contact data for BFSA can be found in **Appendix I**.

The BFSA has well developed website which makes an effort to list all regulations, documents, certificates, tariffs, registers, and any other relevant information, including links to the EU regulations.

Most information is available in Bulgarian while the references to the EU regulations are in English.

**Please note:** The following products sourced in the United States and imported into the EU must originate from an [EU-approved U.S. establishment](#) - red meat, meat products, farmed and wild game meat, ratites, milk and milk products, seafood, bovine embryos and semen, porcine and equine semen, gelatin and animal casings.

## **SECTION II. Labeling Requirements:**

At the EU level, general rules on the labeling, presentation and advertising of foodstuffs are laid down by [Regulation \(EC\) 1169/2011](#). This regulation consolidates general labeling requirements in a single text.

Bulgaria applies EU-harmonized legislation to:

- General Labeling Requirements
- Nutritional Labeling
- Product-Specific Labeling
- GE products labeling (Regulation (EC) 1829/2003).

The U.S. standard label does not comply with EU labeling requirements.

### **General Labeling Requirements**

In Bulgaria, Chapter 3 of the Food Law presents requirements about labeling of food products by transposing EU Directives 79/112/CEE and 2000/13/CE. There is also Regulation of Food Labeling and Food Presentation (last revision May 2008)

[http://babh.government.bg/uploads/File/Dokumenti\\_naredbi/Naredba\\_etiketirane\\_na\\_hrani.pdf](http://babh.government.bg/uploads/File/Dokumenti_naredbi/Naredba_etiketirane_na_hrani.pdf)

Information required includes:

- Product name
- List of ingredients and quantity of certain ingredients or category of ingredients
- Alcoholic content when it is over 1.2% in volume
- Net weight in packaged products
- Expiration date
- Storage and use conditions
- Use instructions when essential to make a proper use the product
- Company identification: name and address of the manufacturer or packer or seller established within the European Union
- Batch information
- Country of Origin

Misleading labeling attributing properties that the foodstuff does not have is not accepted.

The Government of Bulgaria permits multi-language labeling and stickers; however, one of the languages must be Bulgarian (Art.9/1 Food Law). U.S. food manufacturers or exporters are encouraged to contact their potential importer to learn the labeling requirements applicable.

For detailed information on the EU-harmonized labeling legislation, please consult the [EU-27 FAIRS Report](#) well as the [USEU website section on labeling](#). Detailed information on labeling can be found in the [USEU report on New EU food labeling rules](#) that will apply from December 13, 2014.

### Nutritional Labeling

Food products carrying health claims must comply with the provisions of nutritional labeling directive 90/496/EC. Regulation 432/2012, which establishes a list of permitted health claims made on foods, other than those referring to the reduction of disease risk and to children's development and health became applicable on December 14, 2012

### Product-Specific Labeling

For a number of products, specific labeling requirements have been established in addition to the general requirements described above. See Section VII for more details on above products.

## **SECTION III. Packaging and Container Regulations:**

Bulgaria applies EU-harmonized legislation to packaging.

There are two EU Directives related to the making-up by weight or by volume of certain prepackaged products ([Council Directive 76/211/EEC](#)) and laying down rules on nominal quantities for pre-packed products ([Directive 2007/45/EC](#)) that were transposed into Bulgarian's National Law Chapter 3 of the Food Law.

For more detailed information on the EU's harmonized legislation on packaging and container regulations, please consult the [EU-27 FAIRS Report](#) as well as the [USEU website section on packaging](#).

## **SECTION IV. Food Additives Regulations:**

Bulgaria applies EU-harmonized legislation regarding food additives. For detailed information on the EU-harmonized legislation on food additive regulations, please consult the [EU-27 FAIRS Report](#) as well as the [USEU website section on additives](#).

## **SECTION V. Pesticides and Other Contaminants:**

Tolerance for pesticide residues were harmonized in the EU in 2008. Bulgaria strictly adheres to EU-harmonized legislation on pesticides and contaminants.

The complete list of MRLs, and commodity combinations allowed in the EU can be obtained from the [Commission's webpage](#).

Bulgarian Food Law (art.5) calls for the Minister of Agriculture and the Minister of Health to set up the maximum pesticide residue and contaminant contents in foods through Ministerial orders (regulations).

When a pesticide is not listed under the EU harmonized MRL list, an authorization request can be submitted to the Bulgarian administration. (Ministry of Agriculture and Foods/BFSA).

Bulgarian National Pesticides Plan can be found here:

[http://babh.government.bg/plan\\_pesticidi.html](http://babh.government.bg/plan_pesticidi.html)

[http://babh.government.bg/uploads/File/Plan%20za%20pesticidi/Nacionalen\\_Plan\\_za\\_Deistvie\\_za\\_Ustoi\\_chiva\\_Upotreba\\_na\\_Pesticidi.pdf](http://babh.government.bg/uploads/File/Plan%20za%20pesticidi/Nacionalen_Plan_za_Deistvie_za_Ustoi_chiva_Upotreba_na_Pesticidi.pdf)

For detailed information on EU-harmonized legislation on pesticide and contaminant regulations, please consult the [EU-27 FAIRS Report](#) as well as the [USEU website section on pesticides](#).

### Private Industry Standards

While the official standards are set by the public administration, the large majority of food retailers require certification of good agricultural practices. The private certification schemes include not only stricter limits for MRL but also with other additional requirement. The most widely used schemes in Bulgaria include Globalgap, BRC, and IFS.

### Voluntary Aflatoxin Sampling Plan for Almonds

Bulgaria is a good market for tree nuts and the United States is the primary supplier to Bulgaria. As of September 1, 2007, the EU implemented Special Import Conditions (European Commission [Decision 2007/563/EC](#)), which called for mandatory testing of California almonds imported to EU member countries. The California almond industry and the USDA developed a Voluntary Aflatoxin Sampling Plan (VASP) comparable to the EU sampling procedures so that almonds can be uniformly tested before they are shipped to the EU.

In March 2012, the European Commission implemented the [Regulation 274/2012](#), amending Commission [Regulation 1152/2009](#), imposing special conditions governing the import of certain foodstuffs from certain third countries due to contamination risk by aflatoxin.

Regulation 274/2012 states that it is appropriate to repeal the transitional provision for foodstuffs imported from the United States of America, which are not covered by the Voluntary Aflatoxin Sampling Plan (VASP), as sufficient time has been provided to operators in the United States of America to implement the Voluntary Aflatoxin Sampling Plan. Almonds with a VASP certificate are subject to random testing while almonds without this certificate are subject to being rejected.

Regulation 1152/2009 introduced the use of a Common Entry Document (CED), similar to the Common Veterinary Entry Document (CVED) used for veterinary products. Starting January 1, 2010, the importer has to provide prior notification to the competent authorities at the designated port of entry for the goods covered by the regulation at least one working day prior to the arrival of the goods, using the CED. The CED was published in [Annex II of the Regulation 669/2009](#).

Provisions for methods of sampling and analysis for the official control of mycotoxins including aflatoxins are laid down in [Commission Regulation 401/2006](#) as amended by [Commission Regulation 178/2010](#). As of March 13, 2010, sampling under the VASP is performed on the basis of a 2x10 kg

sample, in accordance with the new EU sampling legislation. For additional information see Annex VII B of the EU [guidance document](#).

For additional information on the VASP program check the [Almond Board of California](#) website.

Commission Regulation (EU) No 165/2010 increased the maximum aflatoxin levels for almonds and pistachios, as well as apricot kernels, hazelnuts and Brazil nuts, bringing them in line with the Codex Alimentarius levels for tree nuts adopted in July 2008. As a result of both new EU regulations, EU aflatoxin levels are in line with existing Codex maximum aflatoxin levels and sampling plans. However, EU legislation has more extensive product coverage and also includes separate maximum limits for aflatoxin B1.

The new levels, effective on March 9, 2010, changes to maximum tolerance for aflatoxin to the following:

**Ready-to-Eat (RTE)  
For Further Processing (FFP)**

Almonds

10 ppb total /8 ppb B1

15 ppb total/12 ppb B1

Hazelnuts, Brazil Nuts

10 ppb total/5 ppb B1

15 ppb total/8 ppb B1

Pistachios

10 ppb total/8 ppb B1

15 ppb total/12 ppb B1

For more information, see the [E50018](#) GAIN report.

**SECTION VI. Other Regulations and Requirements:**

The Bulgarian Government applies EU-harmonized legislation for other related regulations and requirements including product inspection, registration, and certification.

For detailed information on certification, please see the [USEU certification site](#).

**Please note:** [Council Directive 2000/29/EC](#), harmonizes the importation requirements of plants and plant products into the EU. Phyto-sanitary certificates, issued by an APHIS inspector, are required to accompany all plant and plant products entering the EU. Your nearest APHIS Export Certification Specialist can be found in this [link](#).

**SECTION VII. Other Specific Standards:**

For detailed information on the EU-harmonized legislation on other specific standards, please consult the [EU-27 FAIRS Report](#) or the [USEU import rules](#) website.

### Genetically Modified Foods and Feeds

Regulation about GMOs and their release in environment and on the market (last revision October 2005) can be found here:

[http://babh.government.bg/uploads/File/Dokumenti\\_naredbi/Naredba\\_za\\_osvobodjavane\\_na\\_GMO.pdf](http://babh.government.bg/uploads/File/Dokumenti_naredbi/Naredba_za_osvobodjavane_na_GMO.pdf)

Bulgaria has a centralized system for testing and controlling unauthorized presence of GMO in the feed and food chain. The central government- Ministry of Agriculture and Foods/BFSA- has a total control over the controls carried out in customs as well as own monitoring and sampling plans throughout the food and feed chain. Sampling plans are based on risk assessment. Sampling is done at the production and the processing level.

A food containing GMO ingredient can be released on the market only after EU approval is granted based on Regulation 1829/2003 (Art.23/e Food Law).

The Food Law has been changed in 2010 to ban use of GE ingredients and GE products in manufacturing of baby foods regardless of their safety evaluation (Art. 4a/4 for the Food Law).

Labeling: The exact amount of the GM content, and the GM event unique code (Art 10/1 Food Law). According to art.4/6 of Regulation 1830/2003 of the EU Parliament and Council of September 22, 2003 and Directive 2001/18, the font used should be twice bigger and in color and font different than that of the other components of the label. If the product consists of or contains GMO above the threshold set up in Directive 1830/2003, the GMO type, quantity and the unique code and the words “Contains GMO” should be written on the label in size not less than 25 percent of the package in capital letters and in contrasting color to the rest of the package

Advertising of GE food or foods containing GE ingredients or products is not allowed when children are used for the presentation of the product or when children consumer such products (Art.9a/Food Law).

If an applicant would like to request an approval for a new food containing GMO ingredients, this request should be accompanied by a risk assessment study with the effects on human health and the environment (Art.23/b Food Law).

### Novel Foods

The Novel Food [Regulation \(EC\) 258/1997](#) lays down detailed rules for the authorization of novel foods and novel food ingredients, including foods derived from, containing, or consisting of GMOs. It defines novel foods as foods and food ingredients that were not used to a significant degree in the EU before May 15, 1997. The Regulation was adopted in the local legislation (Art.23 Food Law)

The EU catalogue on Novel Foods can be consulted in the [EU Commission's website](#). This catalogue provides information on whether or not a product would require authorization under the Novel Food Regulation. The list of novel food applications, authorizations, rejections, and withdrawals can be also found in the [Commission's website](#).

Experts belonging to Bulgarian Food Safety Agency participate in the EU decision making process by attending the discussions in the Novel Food Working Group. New authorizations can be submitted to Member State's competent authorities.

Article 23a of the Food Law introduces the procedure for approval and release on the market of new ingredients and substances as novel foods. A special Commission on Novel and GM Foods to the Minister of Health accepts requests for approval for such foods on the market. The Commission has an advisory role and consists of 15 scientists appointed for 4 years.

### Fortified Foods

[European Parliament and Council Regulation 1925/2006](#) amended by [Regulation \(EC\) 1170/2009](#) establishes an EU-wide regulatory framework for the addition of vitamins and mineral and of certain other substances such as herbal extracts to foods. It lists the vitamins and minerals that may be added to foods and sets criteria for setting maximum and minimum levels.

The use of vitamins and minerals not included in the annexes to Regulation 1925/2006 is not allowed. However, Member States may provide for a temporary derogation (until January 19, 2014) for vitamins and minerals not included in the annexes. Such derogations should be obtained from the [competent authorities in the individual Member States](#). In Bulgaria, BFSA is the competent authority to grant this temporary derogation.

### Foodstuffs for Particular Nutritional Uses

Specific directives on foods and beverages for athletes or on foods intended for diabetics are still subject to Member State legislation. The introduction of foodstuffs intended for particular nutritional uses for which no specific rules are set must be notified to the Member State where the food is sold. Bulgaria's competent authority is BFSA.

### Organic Foods

On February 15, 2012, the European Union and the United States announced that beginning June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012 their respective countries' certified organic products will be recognized. All products traded under the agreement must be accompanied by an organic export certificate. More information about this partnership can be found on the [USDA Organics Home Page for International Agreements](#). The Bulgarian Food Law contains special provisions regarding organic foods in Art. 6

### Vertical Legislation (Breakfast Directives)

[Directive 2001/112/EC](#) amended by [Directive 2012/12/EU](#) regulates to fruit juices and certain similar products intended for human consumption. Key amendments which affect to the fruit juice labeling rules

include orange juice, nutrition claims, mixed juices and sugars and sweeteners. More information about EU fruit juice labeling requirements can be found in the GAIN Report [E70022](#).

### Frozen Foods

Council Directive [89/108/EEC](#) sets rules for quick-frozen foodstuffs and for their packaging and labeling, and was transposed into national law through the Food Law. Quick-frozen foodstuffs sold to the final consumer should carry the following additional labeling indications: the product name with the indication “quick-frozen”; the date of minimum shelf life; the period during which the purchaser may store the product; the storage temperature and/or type of storage equipment required; batch identification a clear indication of the type “do not re-freeze after defrosting”.

### Food Irradiation

Harmonization of EU rules on food irradiation has been slow and only a few products have so far received EU- wide approval. [Framework Directive 1999/2/EC](#) outlines the marketing, labeling, import and control procedures and technical aspects of food irradiation. Irradiated foods must be labeled "irradiated" or "treated with ionizing radiation." [Implementing Directive 1999/3/EC](#) establishes a Community list of foods and food ingredients authorized for irradiation treatment.

The list contains only one food category: "dried aromatic herbs, spices, and vegetable seasonings." Until the EU positive list is expanded, national authorizations continue to apply. The list of Member States' authorizations of food and food ingredients which may be treated with ionizing radiation can be consulted in the [link](#). Art.22 of the Bulgarian Food Law regulates the use of irradiation in foods.

### Seafood

[Council Regulation 2406/96](#) lays down common marketing standards for certain fishery products.

NOAA (National Marine Fisheries Service) of the U.S. Department of Commerce is the unique competent authority for the certification of fishery and aquaculture products intended for the EU. More detailed information can be found in the Guide: “[How to export Seafood to the European Union](#).”

As of December 13, 2014, all seafood sold at RETAIL must have nutritional information on the package. [Regulation 1169/2011](#) describes the minimum information to mention of labels intended for retail or mass caterers. Exporters should pay specific attention to Article 9 and following articles as well as all annexes of the Regulation.

A new requirement regarding labeling of frozen food is in place since July 1, 2012. The intention of [Regulation 16/2012](#) is to ensure that the information on the date of production and freezing is provided to the food business operator to whom the food is supplied and not to the consumers.

Point 3 of Regulation (EU) no 16/2012 stipulates that the information must be available in an appropriate form which is up to the choice of the supplier. This does not imply that it has to be done through labeling or through the certificates. In practice, the information may be made available on the commercial document, catch certificate or in any other appropriate document that is sent to the next Food Business

Operator in the chain. According to the interpretation of the European Commission the document containing the requested information does not necessarily need to be presented at the BIPs. The control of the proper fulfillment of the rules will be carried out on a more general basis such as an audit by the Food and Veterinary Office.

Other sets of Regulations regarding ingredients, allergens, and guidelines for the implementation of labeling legislation can be downloaded from [DG SANCO's website](#).

### Pet Food

Information on requirements to export pet food to the EU can be found in the [FAS USEU website](#) as well as in the [GAIN Report Exporting Pet Food to the EU](#).

[European Parliament and Council Regulation 767/2009](#) sets out new rules for the labeling and marketing of feed and pet food. More information about EU pet food labeling requirements can be found in the [GAIN Report E50060](#).

### **SECTION VIII. Copyright and/or Trademark Laws:**

The regulations and standards covered under this section have been harmonized with the European Union requirements. However, the EU-harmonized trademark regulation did not replace the existing laws at the Member State level. Both systems coexist.

For detailed information on EU-harmonized legislation, please consult the EU-27 FAIRS Report. Also please refer to [Council Regulation 207/2009](#), which created a single, unitary trademark registration system for the entire European Community.

Applications for registering under the Community Trademark Register must be submitted to the Patent Office of Bulgaria.

PATENT OFFICE OF THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA

Sofia 1040, 52 b

Dr. G.M. Dimitrov Blvd., tel. (359-2) 9701 + extension number, fax: \*(359-2) 870 83 25

e-mail: [bpo@bpo.bg](mailto:bpo@bpo.bg); <http://www.bpo.bg/>

In Bulgaria the legal basis for trademarks is laid down by Law on Patent and Utility Model Registration (last amendment in 2007). The trademark protection is granted for 10 years after which it can be renewed. The full list of applied national legislation, please see [http://www1.bpo.bg/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=75&Itemid=122](http://www1.bpo.bg/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=75&Itemid=122)

For detailed information on the EU-harmonized legislation on copyright and/or trademark laws, please consult the [EU-27 FAIRS Report](#) as well as the [USEU website](#).

In December 2012, the EU Parliament approved the regulations that would establish the single patent for the EU. Companies or individuals who want to protect their innovations throughout the whole EU will have to request a patent in three places – in Munich, the headquarters of the European patent. More

information on the unitary patent can be found in the [link](#).

At the Member State level, the Patents Office of Bulgaria is the public body responsible for the registration and granting the different types of Industrial Property ranking from industrial property titles, including brands and commercial names (or distinctive signs), inventions, and industrial designs. The European legislation applied in Bulgaria can be found here:

[http://www1.bpo.bg/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=128&Itemid=174](http://www1.bpo.bg/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=128&Itemid=174)

Bulgaria applies international agreements in this area and the international legislation applied in Bulgaria can be found at: [http://www1.bpo.bg/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=80&Itemid=127](http://www1.bpo.bg/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=80&Itemid=127)

Bulgaria is a member of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and a signatory to the following agreements:

- Paris Convention for the Protection of Intellectual Property;
- Rome Convention for the Protection of Performers, Producers of Phonograms and Broadcast Organizations;
- Geneva Phonograms Convention;
- Madrid Agreement for the Repression of False or Deceptive Indications of Source of Goods;
- Madrid Agreement and Protocol on the Registration of Trademarks;
- Nice agreement on the International Trademark Classification
- Madrid Agreement on the International Classification and Registration of Trademarks;
- Patent Cooperation Treaty; Universal Copyright Convention;
- Bern Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works;
- Lisbon Agreement for the Protection of Appellations of Origin and their International Registration;
- Budapest Treaty on the International Recognition of the Deposit of Microorganisms for the Purpose of Patent Protection;
- Nairobi Treaty on the Protection of the Olympic Symbol;
- Vienna Agreement Establishing an International Classification of the Figurative Elements of Marks;
- Nice Agreement Concerning the International Classification of Goods and Services for the Purposes of the Registration of Marks;
- Strasbourg Agreement Concerning the International Patent Classification;
- Locarno Agreement Establishing an International Classification for Industrial Designs;
- WIPO Copyright Treaty; and
- WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty.

Bulgaria was added to the Special 301 Watch List of Countries that do not provide adequate protection of Intellectual Property Rights in 2013. While Bulgaria has legislation in place to protect IP enforcement is not very efficient and internet piracy in particular is widespread.

### **Designation of Origin and Geographical Indications**

In November 2012, [Regulation 1151/2012](#) on quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs repealing [Council Regulation 510/2006](#), was published, and came into force on January 3, 2013.

Regulation 1151/2012 sets out the mechanisms to protect PDOs and PGIs in third countries. In any case,

some regulations additional regulations need to be adopted for it to be fully functional.

Note: Wines and spirit drinks are covered by separate legislation.

Lists of protected names by country, product type, registered name, and name applied for are available through the Commission's online "[DOOR](#)" (Database of Origin and Registration) database.

More details about copyright, trademarks law, designation of origin and geographic indications, can be found in the Country Commercial Guide of U.S. Commercial Service:

[http://www.buyusainfo.net/docs/x\\_5183015.pdf](http://www.buyusainfo.net/docs/x_5183015.pdf)

## **SECTION IX. Import Procedures:**

As a member of the European Union (EU), Bulgaria follows all EU directives, regulations, and obligations where available. Since the EU is a customs union, all Member States apply the same import duties on goods imported from outside the EU based on tariff classification of goods and the customs value. Once import goods are cleared in one Member State, they can be moved freely throughout the EU territory.

Council Regulation 2913/92 establishes the Community Customs Code. Commission Regulation 2454/93 lays down provisions for the implementation of the Code. Regulation 450/2008 establishing the "Modernized Customs Code" was adopted in 2008 but is not yet applicable.

EU's applicable duties information can be found in the [on-line customs data base](#).

It is possible to obtain Binding Tariff Information (BTI) from a Member State Customs Authority. In the case of Bulgaria, Customs Agency ascribed to the Ministry of Finance, is the responsible entity. Contact data for Customs Agency can be found in **Appendix I**.

Other taxes applicable to agricultural products include the Value Added Tax (VAT) and inspection fees which are not harmonized throughout the EU.

A list of VAT rates applicable in the different Member States can be found in the [link](#). Bulgaria standard VAT rate is 20% percent. The reduced rate applicable to hotel and tourist services is set at 10 percent.

Animal products are subject to inspection fees. The information on the inspection fees payment process for plant and animal products can be consulted in the BFSA website.

## **Import Documentation and Process**

The following documents are required for ocean or air cargo shipments of food products into Bulgaria:

- Bill of Lading and/or Airway Bill
- Commercial Invoice
- Phyto-sanitary Certificate and/or Health Certificate when applicable
- See "**SECTION VI. Other Regulations and Requirements**"

- Import Certificate

Most food products require an Import Certificate issued by the competent Bulgarian authorities. This certificate must be obtained by a registered importer as it is intended for tariff classification purposes.

Documents required for border control on imports (certificates) for food products for human and non-human consumption

<http://www.nvms-gvc.com/>

<http://www.nvms-gvc.com/Sert.Products.htm>

Documents required for border control for imports (certificates) for feed and feed products

<http://www.nvms-gvc.com/Furaj.htm>

Documents required for border phyto-sanitary control for imports (certificates)

<http://www.nvms-gvc.com/Fito-control.htm>

The import process requires:

- Pre announcement by Common (veterinary) Entry Document (CVED or CED)
- Documentary Check
- Identity Check
- Physical check

EU legislation related to veterinary border inspection procedures

[http://www.nvms-gvc.com/Border\\_veter.-Legislation.htm](http://www.nvms-gvc.com/Border_veter.-Legislation.htm)

Agricultural products are examined when they enter Bulgaria by the Bulgaria Border Inspection Posts. There are 8 border inspections points in Bulgaria. TRACES software system is not applied yet but the BFSAs plan to introduce the system in the first quarter of 2014. Bulgaria has derogation for updating all BIPs to execute both veterinary and phyto-sanitary control until August 2014. Currently, four BIPs have this ability and the other 4 should be upgraded in the first half of 2014.

Regulation about Requirements to Border Inspection Points and Border Inspection Veterinary Control (last revision January 2007)

[http://bah.government.bg/uploads/File/Dokumenti\\_naredbi/naredba\\_47\\_granichen\\_kontrol.pdf](http://bah.government.bg/uploads/File/Dokumenti_naredbi/naredba_47_granichen_kontrol.pdf)

Order for phyto-sanitary inspections at BIPs (May 2011)

[http://bah.government.bg/uploads/File/Zapovedi\\_Granichen\\_k\\_l/Zapoved.pdf](http://bah.government.bg/uploads/File/Zapovedi_Granichen_k_l/Zapoved.pdf)

In addition to 8 approved by the EC border inspections posts /BIP/ for veterinary control, entry points are added as follows: Vrashka Chuca, Strazimirovtsi, Logodaj, Lesovo, Malko Tarnovo, Oltomantsi:

<http://www.nvms-gvc.com/granichnipunktove.htm>

Designated point of entry (DPE) in accordance with Regulation 284/2012 EC;

Designated point of entry (DPE) in accordance with Commission Decision 2008/298/ EC

[http://bah.government.bg/uploads/File/Aktualno\\_Border\\_controls/DPE%20284\\_2012%20and%20DPE%202008\\_289.pdf](http://bah.government.bg/uploads/File/Aktualno_Border_controls/DPE%20284_2012%20and%20DPE%202008_289.pdf)

First points of entry (FPE) in accordance with Regulation 1151/2009 EU

[http://babh.government.bg/uploads/File/Aktualno\\_Border\\_controls/FPE%20reg.1151\(1\).pdf](http://babh.government.bg/uploads/File/Aktualno_Border_controls/FPE%20reg.1151(1).pdf)

Designates point of entry (DPE) for import of food of non-animal origin in the EU according to Regulation (EC) № 1152/2009

[http://babh.government.bg/uploads/File/Laboratorni\\_deynosti/13-0351-5-Reg-1152.pdf](http://babh.government.bg/uploads/File/Laboratorni_deynosti/13-0351-5-Reg-1152.pdf)

Competent authority on certificates is the Bulgarian Food Safety Agency. Agency responsibility covers products intended for human consumption and those for non-human consumption.

Goods are only released for free circulation within the EU once the documentary and analytical requirements are checked and the import duty and other taxes that may be due are paid. Information on import duties can be consulted in the [EU on-line customs data base](#).

U.S. exporters interested in introducing a product into the Bulgarian market should obtain local representation and/or a local importer/distributor to gain knowledge of the market, up-to-date information, and guidance on trade laws and business practices, sales contacts, and market development expertise. As local importers have primary responsibility to the Bulgarian Government for imported food products entering Bulgarian territory, they are in the best position to provide guidance to U.S. exporters through the market-entry process. For additional information on the Bulgarian Market, please consult the latest Bulgaria's Exporter Guide.

### **Temporary Entry**

Temporary entry may be permitted for goods in transit (up to 24 months), manufacturing for re-export, and/or for temporary storage. Generally, the exporter must pay normally applied import duties and VAT, which are then reimbursed upon re-export of the merchandise to a destination outside of the EU.

## **Appendix I. Government Regulatory Agency Contacts:**

### **Ministry of Agriculture and Food**

Blvd. Hristo Botev 55 Sofia 1040 Bulgaria

Tel.: (+359) 2-985-11858;

Fax: (+359) 2-981-7955

Website: <http://www.mzh.government.bg>

### **Ministry of Health**

Sqr. Sveta Nedelya 5, Sofia 1000, Bulgaria

Tel.: (+359) 2-981-0111

E-mail: [press@mh.government.bg](mailto:press@mh.government.bg)

Website: <http://mh.government.bg>

Direction Public Health

Tel.: (+359) 2-9301-252

E-mail: [saltankova@mh.government.bg](mailto:saltankova@mh.government.bg)

### **Bulgarian Food Safety Agency**

Bul. Pencho Slaveikov 15A, Sofia 1606, Bulgaria

Tel.: (+359) 2-915-98-20

Fax: (+359) 2-954-9593

E-mail: [bfsa@bfsa.gov](mailto:bfsa@bfsa.gov)

Website: <http://www.babh.government.bg/en/>

### **Bulgaria Customs Agency, Ministry of Finance**

Str. Rakovski 47, Sofia 1202, Bulgaria

Tel.: (+359) 2-9594-210

Fax: (+359) 2-9859-4528

E-mail: [pr@customs.bg](mailto:pr@customs.bg)

Website: <http://customs.bg>

### **Ministry of Economy, Energy and Tourism**

Str. Slavyanska 8, Sofia 1000, Bulgaria  
Tel.: (+359) 2-940-71  
E-mail: [e-docs@mee.government.bg](mailto:e-docs@mee.government.bg)

Fax: (+359) 2-987-2190  
Website: <http://www.mi.government.bg>

### **National Drug Agency**

8 Damyan Gruev Str., Sofia 1303  
Tel.: (+359) 2-8903-555  
E-mail: [bda@bda.bg](mailto:bda@bda.bg);

Fax: (+359) 2-8903-434;  
Website: <http://en.bda.bg/>

### **National Center of Public Health and Analyses**

Acad. Ivan Evst. Geshov 15 blvd Sofia 1431 Bulgaria  
Tel.: (+359) 2-8056-444  
E-mail: [ncpha@ncpha.government.bg](mailto:ncpha@ncpha.government.bg)

Fax: (+359) 2-9541-211  
Website: <http://ncpha.government.bg>

### **Bulgarian Institute for Standardization**

Lachezar Stanchev" Str. Nr 13  
"Izgreve" Complex  
1797 Sofia, Bulgaria

Tel.: (+359) 2-8174-504 Fax: (+359) 2-8174-535  
Website: <http://www.bds-bg.org/en/contact/index.php>

### **Executive Agency Bulgarian Accreditation Services**

52 A "Dr. G. M. Dimitrov" Blvd. 1797 Sofia Bulgaria,  
Tel/Fax: (+359) 2-8735-303

E-mail: [ea\\_bas@abv.bg](mailto:ea_bas@abv.bg); [office@nab-bas.bg](mailto:office@nab-bas.bg) Website: <http://www.nab-bas.bg/bg/>

## **Major Bulgarian Trade Associations**

### **American Chamber of Commerce in Bulgaria**

Business Park Sofia, bld. 2, fl. 6. Sofia 1766 Bulgaria

Tel.: (+359) 2-9742

Fax: (+359) 2-9742-741

E-mail: [amcham@amcham.bg](mailto:amcham@amcham.bg)

Website: <http://www.amcham.bg>

### **Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry**

Str. Iskar 9, Sofia 1058 Bulgaria

Tel.: (+359) 2-811-740

Fax: (+359) 2-987-3209

E-mail: [bcci@bcci.bg](mailto:bcci@bcci.bg)

Website: <http://www.bcci.bg>

### **Bulgarian Industrial Association**

Str. Alabin 16-20, Sofia 1000 Bulgaria

Tel.: (+359) 2-932-0911

Fax: (+359) 2-987-2604

E-mail: [office@bia-bg.com](mailto:office@bia-bg.com)

Website: <http://www.bia-bg.bg>

Association of Producers, Importers and Traders of Spirits

NDK Prono fl. 15 offices 8&9, Sofia 1414 Bulgaria

Tel.: (+359) 2-963-1254  
E-mail: [apitsd@mail.bg](mailto:apitsd@mail.bg)

Fax: (+359) 2-963-1254  
Website: <http://www.apitsd.bg>

**Bulgarian Association of Food and Beverage Industries**

Address: 1606, София; ул. "Владайска" 29

Tel.: (+359) 2-952-0989

Fax: (+359) 2-952-0989

E-mail: [bafdi@mb.bia-bg.com](mailto:bafdi@mb.bia-bg.com)

Website: <http://www.bia-bg.com/member/26>

**Bulgarian Retail Association**

Sofia, 150 Kliment Ochridski Blvd

Tel.: (+359) 2-962-4055; (+359) 8-9702-0733

Fax: (+359) 2-962-0162

E-mail: [upr.savetbra@gmail.com](mailto:upr.savetbra@gmail.com)

Website: <http://bra-bg.org/>

**Bulgarian Association for Modern Trade**

Sofia 1756, Iztok area, 5 "Lachezar Stanchev" St.,  
Sofarma Business Towers, Tower B, fl. 4, office 1

Tel.: (+359) 8-957-7746 and (+359) 2-4433-444.

E-mail: [office@moderntrade.bg](mailto:office@moderntrade.bg)

Website: <http://www.moderntrade.bg/>

**Appendix II. Other Import Specialist Contacts:**

**European Union – Delegation of the European Union to the United States**

2300 M Street

NW, Washington, DC 20037

Tel.: (+1) 202-862-9500

Fax: (+1) 202-429-1766

**United States Mission to the European Union**

Office of Agricultural Affairs

27 Boulevard du Regent

1000 Brussels, Belgium

Tel.: (+32) 2-508-2760

Fax: (+32) 2-511-0918

E-mail: [AgUSEUBrussels@fas.usda.gov](mailto:AgUSEUBrussels@fas.usda.gov)

Website: <http://www.usda-eu.org>

**European Commission Mission to Bulgaria**

24, Rakovsky St., 1000 Sofia

Tel.: (+359) 2-933-5252

Fax: (+359) 2-933-5233

E-mail: [COMM-REP-SOF@ec.europa.eu](mailto:COMM-REP-SOF@ec.europa.eu)

Website: [http://ec.europa.eu/bulgaria/about\\_representation/contact/index\\_bg.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/bulgaria/about_representation/contact/index_bg.htm)

The USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service Office for Bulgaria located in Sofia, can also assist U.S. exporters in obtaining specific national legislation on all food product directives. You may contact us at the following address:

**Foreign Agricultural Service**

Office of Agricultural Affairs

American Embassy Sofia  
16, Koziak St. 1408 Sofia Bulgaria  
Tel.: (+359) 2-939-5720/5704/5774  
Email: [AgSofia@fas.usda.gov](mailto:AgSofia@fas.usda.gov)

Fax: (+359) 2-939-5744