



# DEBATES OF THE SENATE

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## **BULGARIA**

ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-NINTH ANNIVERSARY  
OF LIBERATION

Statement by:

The Honourable Yonah Martin

Wednesday, March 1, 2017

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### BULGARIA

#### ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-NINTH ANNIVERSARY OF LIBERATION

**Hon. Yonah Martin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):** Honourable senators, I have the distinct honour to rise today as Co-chair of the Canada-Bulgaria Inter-Parliamentary Friendship Group to mark the one hundred and thirty-ninth anniversary of Bulgaria's Liberation Day on Friday, March 3.

This national day celebrates the signing of the peace treaty of San Stefano between Russia and the Ottoman Empire, which provided for an autonomous Bulgarian state. It is a day for Bulgarians around the world to pause and pay tribute to the brave men and women who stood together and gave their lives in the hopes of a liberated Bulgaria from almost 500 years of Ottoman rule.

In 2016, the Republic of Bulgaria celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of their constitution and is now a thriving nation of over 7 million people governed by a strong parliamentary democracy. Also in 2016, Canada and Bulgaria celebrated 50 years of bilateral relations based on our shared values of freedom, democracy and the rule of law.

Today, Canada is home to over 30,000 people of Bulgarian heritage, who passionately share their vibrant culture, enriching the Canadian multicultural tapestry. Bulgarian-Canadians contribute immensely to our country — they are members of

the Canadian Armed Forces, entrepreneurs, teachers and leaders in various public and private sectors.

On February 23, I met once more with leaders of the Bulgarian community of B.C., to break bread and discuss 2017 priorities for the community. Each time I meet with these community leaders I am inspired by their unwavering devotion to community and family, their passion for Bulgarian heritage and culture, and their love of Canada. They were especially excited to tell me about what is taking place on Friday, March 3, Bulgarian Liberation Day, in the historic city of New Westminster, the first capital of B.C. The Bulgarian-Canadian community will gather to raise the national Bulgarian flag at city hall for the first time in the B.C. community's history. I will join them to show my respect and regard to the community.

I also commend His Excellency Dr. Nikolay Milkov for his ongoing leadership and service, as well as Consul General Petar Kraytchev in Toronto and Honorary Consuls Mr. Ignat Kaness in Brampton and Mr. Georges Panitchersky in Montreal, who share Ambassador's Milkov's commitment to Canada-Bulgaria relations.

Honourable senators, please join me in recognizing the Bulgarian-Canadian community in marking Bulgaria's Liberation Day on March 3 and in strengthening Canada's Bulgaria relations.

Thank you. *Blagodarya.*

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