

The Colliers logo is a blue square with the word "Colliers" in white serif font. Below the text are three horizontal stripes in yellow, red, and blue.

Colliers

NOV '23 | ISSUE 6

REAL ESTATE

&

Beyond

THE MAGAZINE OF COLLIERS

REAL ESTATE
&
Beyond

We are happy to present the sixth issue of the magazine of Colliers in Bulgaria.
Twice a year we are exploring a variety of real estate topics and beyond.
Our goal is to keep you well-informed about our industry. Along with that, we are keen to share
exciting updates outside of the strictly real estate themes, that might be of interest to you.
Enjoy!



Vesela Petrova
Editor

REAL ESTATE

Q3 2023 Market Snapshot Sofia / Bulgaria
5
Q3 CEE Market snapshot
9
Q3 EMEA Market snapshot
13
ESG – Riding ‘Europe’s Renovation Wave’
15
Office or a home desk?
20
Global Occupier Outlook
23
Flex Offices Survey
25
Retail Parks in Bulgaria – looking at Investors, Tenants and Consumers
27
Outlet Village Sofia – Interview with Stoyan Kolev, COO, Trinity Capital OOD
29
Elevating Homeownership: The Rise of Branded Residences
32
Updates from Colliers
36
Selected Colliers Deals
40

Beyond

The Latest from the Labour Legislation
43
Design Better Slides for a Hybrid World
45
Salaries & Additional Benefits – Trend Study
47
True Stories of Burnout
51
The New Kid on the Block – United Master Architects
55
Off Hours with Atanas Raykov, Rakuten Viber
60
Who you are when you are not...
62
After Colliers
63
Shtrak – your new favorite social space in the heart of Sofia
66
Architecture & Sights from Baku
68

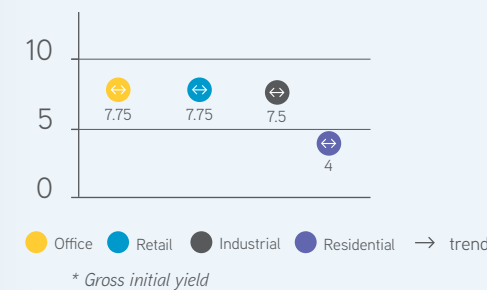
REAL ESTATE

SOFIA / BULGARIA | Q3 2023

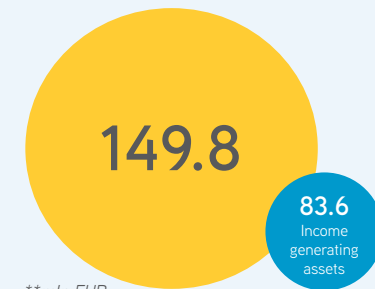
Investment

Bulgaria

YIELDS %*



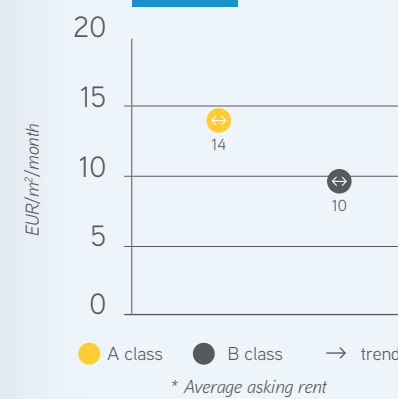
INVESTMENT VOLUME



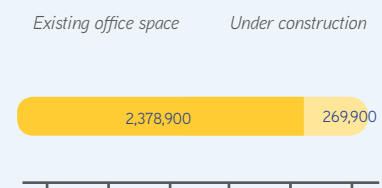
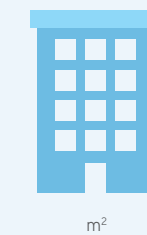
Office

Sofia

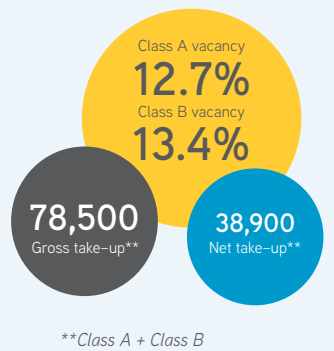
RENTS*



OFFICE STOCK



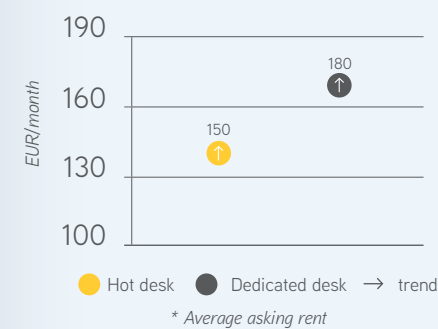
VACANCY RATES



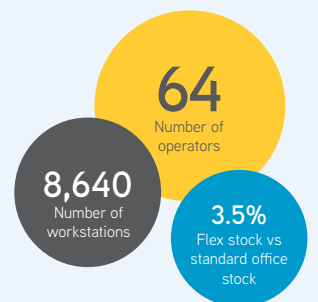
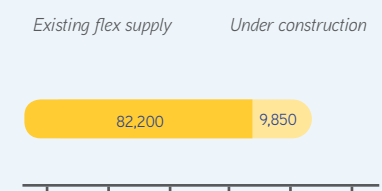
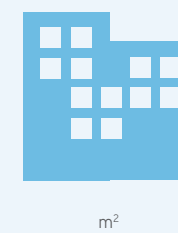
Flex

Sofia

RENTS*



FLEX STOCK

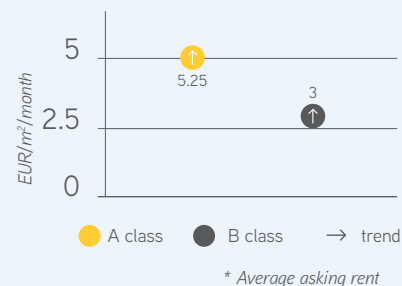


Retail, Industrial,
Residential >

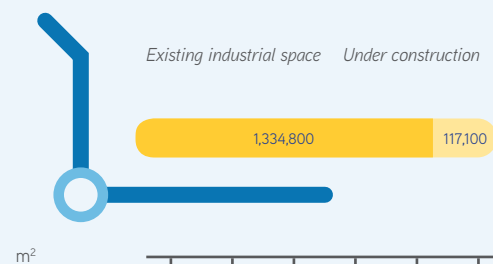
Industrial

Sofia

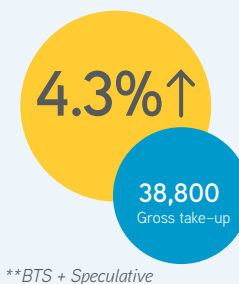
RENTS*



INDUSTRIAL & LOGISTIC STOCK**



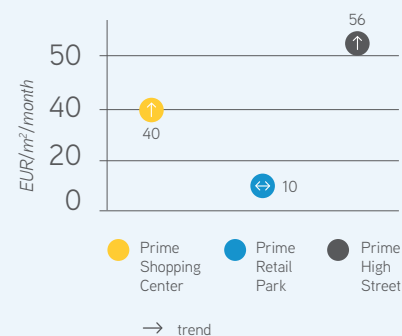
VACANCY RATES**



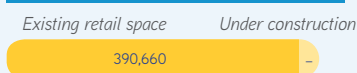
Retail

Sofia

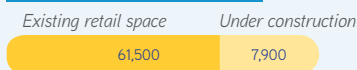
RENTS*



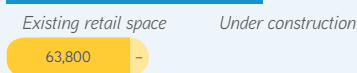
SHOPPING CENTERS STOCK**



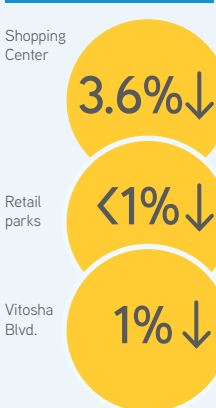
RETAIL PARKS STOCK



HIGH STREET STOCK



VACANCY RATES



Residential

Sofia

SALE PRICES

Average sales price* for:



RENT PRICES

Average rental price** for:



*Including VAT and a parking space
** Including VAT

RESIDENTIAL STOCK*



* Mid-plus and high-end market

DEVELOPMENT OF THE REAL ESTATE MARKET IN SOFIA IN THE THIRD QUARTER OF 2023

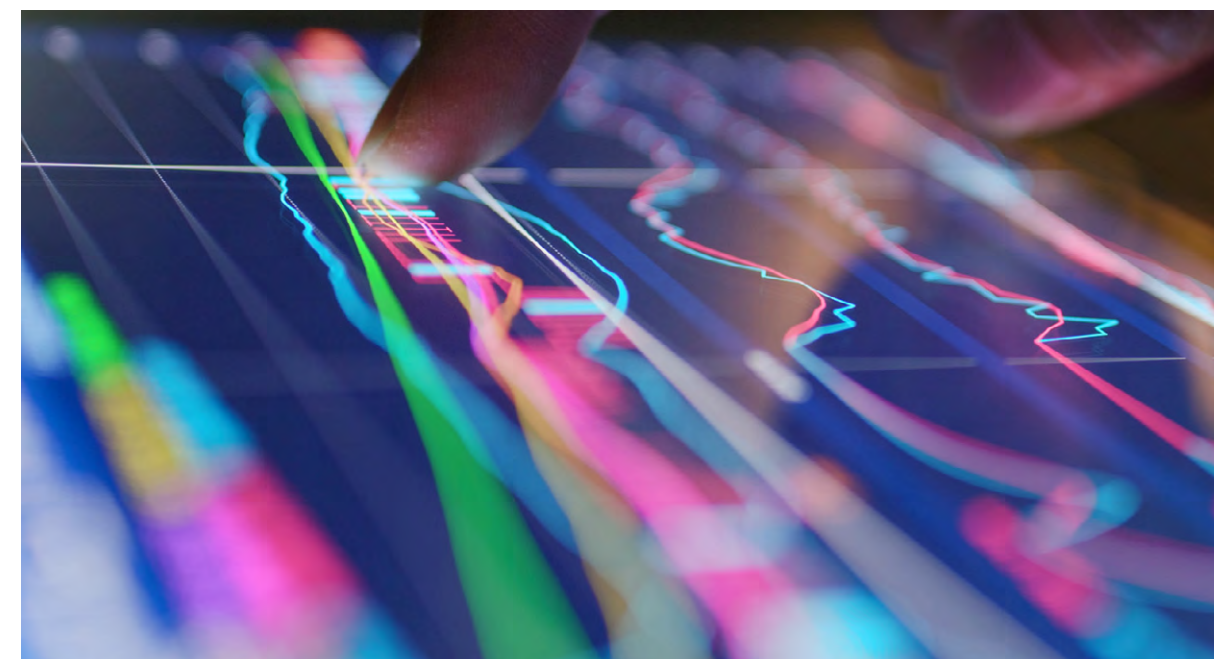
Colliers has published its data on the real estate market in Sofia in the third quarter of 2023. The report by the consulting company reveals that the yields in the main segments of the investment market in Bulgaria remain stable. They stand at 7.75% for offices and retail, 7.5% for industrial, and 4% for residential properties. The total investment volume reaches nearly 150 million euros, of which about 84 million euros are income-generating assets.

In the office segment, the average rental rates in the capital also remain consistent. They are 14 euros per square meter per month for Class A offices and 10 euros per square meter per month for Class B. At the time of Colliers' data publication, there were 269,900 sqm under active construction, with 78,500 sqm of gross leasable area and vacancy rates of 12.7% for Class A offices and 13.4% for Class B.

For flex offices in Sofia, the average rent for a dedicated desk is 180 euros per sqm per month, while for a hot desk it is 150 euros per sqm per month. The existing supply amounts to 82,200 sqm, with an additional 9,850 sqm expected to be introduced to the

market. There are 64 flexible workspace operators offering a total of 8,640 workstations. The overall flex office market, compared to Class A and B standard offices, represents 3.5%.

In the industrial property segment, there is an increase in rental rates, reaching 5.25 euros per sqm per month for Class A properties and 3 euros per sqm per month for Class B. The existing supply includes 1,334,800 sqm of completed ready to use space and 117,100 sqm under construction. Gross leased areas are 38,800 sqm, with an increased vacancy rate of 4.3% compared to the previous quarter.





Prime rents in shopping malls have increased to 40 euros per sqm per month. The same trend is observed on highstreets, where the indicator reaches 56 euros per sqm per month. Retail parks maintain their rents at 10 euros per sqm per month. There are no new projects planned in the shopping center segment, but 7,900 sqm of retail parks are under construction. The vacancy rate is decreasing, with 3.6% for shopping malls, 1% for highstreets, and less than 1% for retail parks.

High and upper-middle-class residential units offered on the Sofia market total 15,000, with an additional 5,060 under construction. The average offer prices for a two-bedroom apartment range from 180,000 to 230,000 euros, for a rowhouse, it's between 320,000 and 450,000 euros, and for a single house, it's above 486,000 euros.

Rent for a two-bedroom apartment can range from 1,000 to 1,300 euros per month, while for a house, it's over 2,150 euros per month.

By the end of 2023, we do not expect significant changes in the real estate market in Bulgaria. The country is still expected to maintain significantly better market stability compared to Central and Western Europe, where investment volumes have decreased by approximately 50% compared to 2022. Here the low level of debt and low interest rates help keep the market in excellent shape. In 2024, it is possible for the dynamics to change, including for Bulgaria. If this happens, it is likely to occur more through user markets (the dynamics between tenants/end users of properties and property owners) rather than through capital markets.

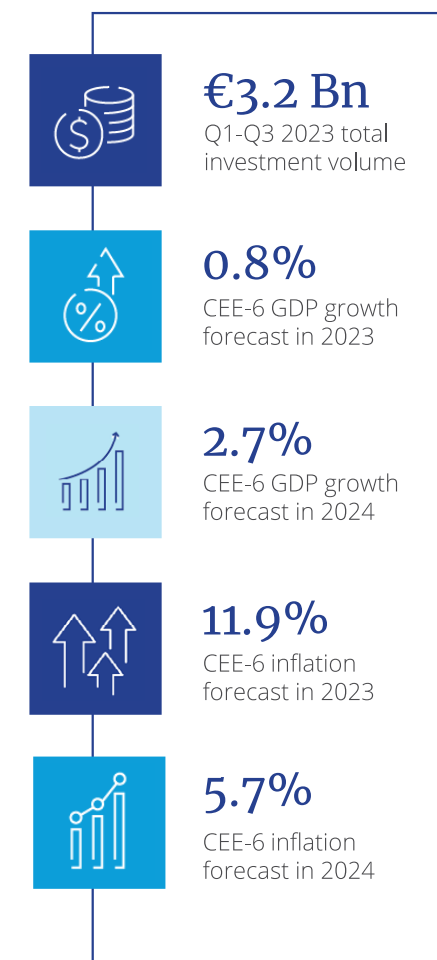
CEE-6 DOMESTIC CAPITAL HAS BEEN THE MOST ACTIVE SO FAR IN 2023, WITH AN IMPRESSIVE 56% SHARE OF TOTAL REGIONAL VOLUMES.

At €3.2 billion for Q1-Q3 2023, investment activity is at a 10+ year low (down 59% YoY). The pricing gap between Buyers' and Sellers' expectations remains a significant barrier to seeing volumes return to the 5 and 10-year average levels of €10 – 11 billion. However, real estate fundamentals in CEE remain fairly

robust. Lower levels of vacancy are being recorded and some good levels of rental growth in certain sectors have been noted, reveals Colliers in its latest "Q3 2023 CEE Investment Scene" report.

Silviu Pop, Director of Research for CEE and Romania explains: "The CEE-6 countries have so far managed to boost their economic sentiment indicators compared to Q2 2023, except for Romania and Hungary, which experienced a negligible decline. However, the external situation remains quite negative. Even without considering the global economy's somewhat poor state, the news from the European neighbourhood is concerning, as the Eurozone's Markit PMI hit a three-year low in October 2023. This is particularly worrisome because the Eurozone is the primary export destination for goods and services produced in the CEE-6 region, making this a significant downside factor."

"Nonetheless, there is a mitigating factor present in the CEE-6 region, applicable to



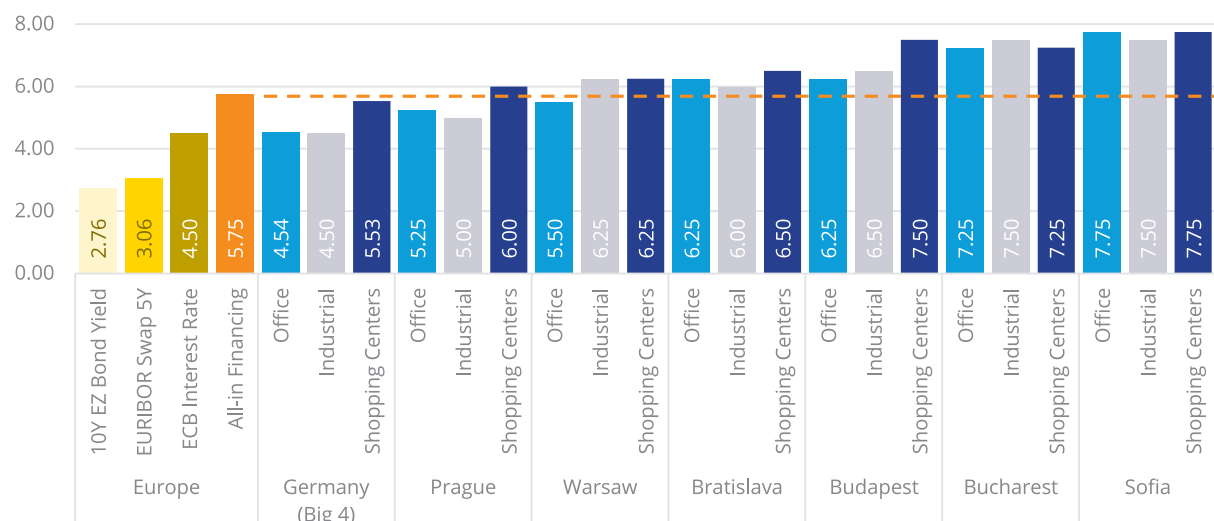
all six countries, albeit to varying degrees: a substantial inflow of capital, whether public or private. The region is currently experiencing a reshoring phase amid geopolitical shifts, and EU funds are pouring into these countries at historically significant levels, relative to their GDP" continues Silviu. Kevin Turpin, Regional Director of Capital



Markets, CEE adds: "Construction prices in the CEE region remain elevated, but stable, and may even be falling slightly. In addition, land in some of the most sought-after locations is scarce and more expensive making development more difficult to deliver given the development to exit yield spread being too narrow. Labour costs are also under upward pressure. All of which may lead to higher sales and/or rental prices, or reduced pipelines, and could eventually lead to undersupply in some markets and sectors".

Q3 2023 Prime yields

All-in financing costs are currently in the region of 5.75%, driven by significantly higher interest rates and interest rate swaps. Compared to other markets in Western Europe, there has been less of a pricing correction recorded in CEE over the past 12 months, which could lead to a slower recovery in transactional activity throughout 2024.



CEE Flows by sector

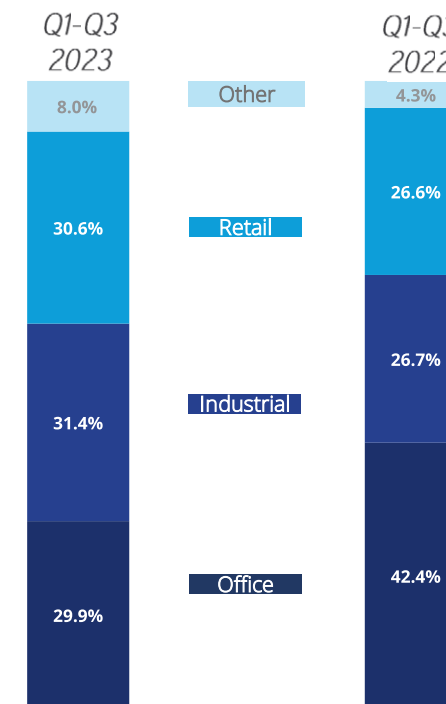
Office investment volumes have declined, both Globally and in CEE, accounting for just 29.9% of CEE volumes during Q1-Q3 2023. The I&L sector reclaimed the top spot with a 31.4% share, followed by retail with 30.6%. The largest transaction of the year so far was a €200 million acquisition (M&A) by NREP, of I&L projects and assets from 7R in Poland.

CEE Flows by origin of purchaser

CEE-6 domestic capital has been the most active so far in 2023, with an impressive 56% share of total regional volumes. Czech capital secured the highest share of volumes with 33%, with 10% in just 2 retail transactions. Other CEE regional capital picked up a further 23% and were followed by European (22%), USA (7%), APAC (7%) and Middle Eastern (5%) capital.

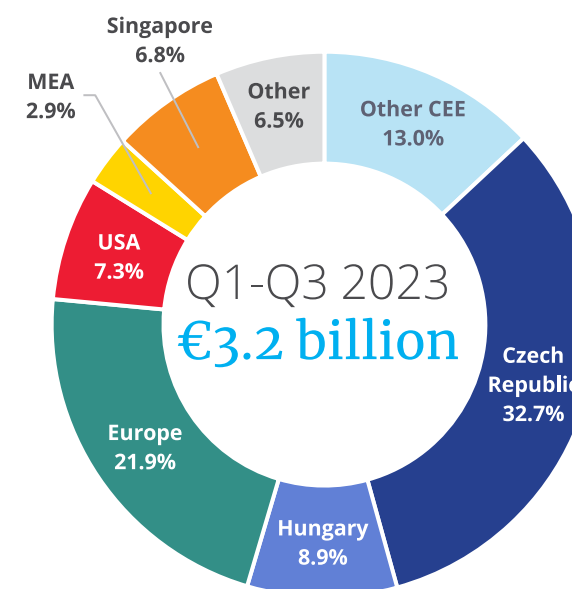
CEE Flows by sector (%)

Q1-Q3 2023 vs Q1-Q3 2022 (€ Bn)



CEE Flows by origins of buyer (%)

Q1-Q3 2023 (€ Bn)



Outlook for upcoming months

"Many potential sellers, if they are able to do so, are reassessing their strategies and business plans in order to 'survive until '25', which was a phrase that could be heard often at Expo Real in Munich. This may mean using the time to stabilise income/leasing, operational efficiency and ESG compliance upgrades. Some owners however may not have the option or resources to do this and may look to test the market appetite to limited pools of investors in 'off-market' deals. In fact, this has already been happening with varying levels of success. On the other hand, many buyers are simply waiting for opportunities from forced or distressed sales due to declining valuations, elevated interest rates and debt rollovers for example. However, so far, no major signs of distress have materialised", comments Kevin.

ESG-compliant buildings are slowly becoming the market norm, reflecting a broader commitment to sustainability from both developers, owners, investors, lenders and occupiers. Given the current market environment, timing in terms of related costs may well mean further implications to pricing that have not yet been factored in. However, increasing pressure is being applied to the property and financing industries in terms of their compliance with European ESG regulations.



CRE MARKET SENTIMENT ACROSS EUROPE REMAINS SUBDUED BUT SOME INVESTMENT BRIGHT SPOTS REMAIN

With investment in the mainstay office sector continuing to suffer from a protracted stand-off between buyers and sellers over pricing, it was other parts of the commercial real estate (CRE) market that injected some energy into Q3, according to the latest (Q3–23) Capital Markets Snapshot for Europe by Colliers, a global leader in CRE services and investment management.

Continued slowdown for office investment.

Offices have seen their supremacy challenged in recent years by a surge of investor interest in other asset classes. The office market is continuing to suffer from sharply lower volumes in 2023 as it adjusts to Europe's higher interest rate environment, and Q3 was no different, as the higher cost of financing and a stubborn bid-ask spread in major CRE markets persistently weighed on activity.

Student housing and light industrial among the brighter spots.

With offices in the doldrums, in Q3 it was student accommodation and long-lease transactions – mostly light industrial – that provided the bright spots, with some major deals in those spaces. Conversations at Expo Real in Munich in October also hinted that 2024 will see recovery, albeit not until the middle of the year as market players continue to strategise how to return to acquisitions.

"Everybody's still expecting some movement out in yields across most sectors and until that bottoms out many investors are going to remain in a wait-and-see mode," said Luke Dawson, Colliers' Head of Global & EMEA Capital Markets.

"Looking to Q4, we expect any big activity to centre on entity-level deals, rather than traditional asset sales," continued Dawson. "Refinancings, M&A, JVs, and sale and leasebacks; this is the area where we would look for upside in the market for the remainder of 2023."

ESG investing shifts from rhetoric to reality.

Value-add investing, in which buyers acquire a property with a plan to renovate it, is now largely synonymous with ESG investing, another major topic at Expo Real, noted Damian Harrington, Colliers' Head of Global & EMEA Capital Markets Research. "These 'brown-to-green' conversions have moved from a talking-point to a reality, as ever-tightening European regulations around the emissions of the built environment and high energy costs have created a market for upgrading older properties."

"Investors are beginning to think about real-estate assets in new ways and are experimenting with innovative approaches to unlock value even as conventional deal-making remains weak due to the interest-rate environment," said Harrington.

Student housing deal biggest in the UK in Q3.

A £500 million forward-funding deal for student housing was the standout transaction in the UK over the quarter, as Cain International moved to support the creation of 2,389 beds in purpose-build student accommodation in major university cities in England. More generally, UK CRE investment volumes this year are likely to come in at a decade-long low, although the Bank of England's decision to hold rates at its September meeting raised hopes that the financing picture will stabilise, supporting an eventual increase in market activity.

Office deal drought continues in Germany.

At around €7 billion, Germany saw an increase in volumes in Q3 compared to the previous two quarters, driven by food-anchored retail warehouses and logistics assets, but major office transactions were thin on the ground. This may change in the coming months, however, as mounting refinancing requirements for real estate assets motivate sellers to reconsider asking prices.

Buyers and sellers remain far apart in the Netherlands.

Although transaction volumes stabilized in Q3 in line with the previous two quarters, volumes in the Netherlands were down by around 70% year on year. The Dutch residential market remains in flux due to uncertainty around regulations and rent caps, while retail has been hit by multiple bankruptcies. Meanwhile offices continue to suffer from a wide gap between the expectations of buyers and sellers, with one newly developed office building in central Amsterdam being taken off-market because bids did not meet sellers' expectations.

Hotels again the star in Spain.

As was the case in the previous quarter, hotels provided the highlights in Spain in Q3, accounting for 35% of total volume. Student housing was another outperformer, but more generally Spain saw a slowdown in activity year on year. However, Colliers expects prices to bottom out over the next two quarters, as central banks end their series of interest rate rises and stability returns to the market. •



RIDING 'EUROPE'S RENOVATION WAVE'

The retrofitting race is on. Act now or risk stranded real estate assets, Colliers tells investors and owners in new ESG-focused paper.

In our new report, Europe's Renovation Wave, we explore the regulatory and societal pressures now driving an era of accelerated asset renovation, and the proactive actions investors, owners and occupiers can take, and are taking, to make sure their assets are not left behind and stranded in the race to decarbonise the built environment by 2050.

Key findings include:

- For those European real estate owners and investors already embracing their journey to net-zero-carbon through retrofitting, upfront spending has the potential for long-term rent and capital-value accumulation. Where significant energy saving modifications are introduced, Colliers estimates an average potential uplift of 10% in value via the

- capitalisation of an additional 'energy rent' at no additional cost to the tenant.
- However, for many investors uncertainties prevail with 44% unsure how much funding would be required for retrofitting assets (estimating up to 10% of the value of AUM) and 50% not clear how these upgrades would be financed. Once audited for retro-fitting suitability, 45% of investors anticipate the disposal of up to 20% of their portfolio (in next five years) where assets are deemed 'non-ESG' compliant.

"National and EU-wide goals for energy-efficient buildings are becoming transformational. Environmental, social and governance (ESG) regulations in relation to the built environment continue to tighten, impacting both occupiers and landlords/investors," commented Andy



Hay, Managing Director, EMEA Property Management and ESG at Colliers. "When it comes to the real estate market, the EU believes that the rate of renovation needs to be at least double its current rate but this is still significantly behind the pace of change recommended by other leading industry think-tanks."

MARKET FACTORS DRIVING THE RENOVATION WAVE

According to Colliers EMEA the renovation wave is accelerating the risk that some CRE assets will be left stranded if they fail to adapt to the new regulatory and market requirements. Investors, owners and occupiers are evaluating the steps they need to take to align their assets and processes with EU regulations, long-term financial performance and their own stated commitments to ESG standards.

"There is clear momentum in market activity concerning the retrofitting of assets. Notwithstanding the continued work of the EU and national governments and broader social pressure, this momentum is being pushed by market forces – including a drive to lower energy and occupational costs", explained Sam Addison, Head of Enterprise Project Management, EMEA Occupier Services at Colliers.

ROI RECORDED BY OWNERS AND OCCUPIERS

Colliers' analysis indicates that despite the upfront costs, investments in retrofitting can yield long-term rent and capital-value accumulation, and points to the success of Bupa, Electrolux and Manpower Group (as featured case studies) as illustrations of how owners and occupiers are already



reaping the benefits of proactive renovation strategies across their portfolios.

Addison continued: "Our calculations show that, where significant energy saving modifications are introduced, an average potential uplift of 10% in value can be achieved via the capitalisation of an additional 'energy rent' – at no additional cost to the tenant."

WHAT, HOW AND WHEN DO INVESTORS PLAN TO RETROFIT?

The top two focus areas for investors, when it came to asset retrofitting, were energy efficiency and operational carbon reduction, followed by reducing water usage and embedded carbon. However, Colliers' research (Global Investor Outlook Survey 2023) also found that there is still a lot of uncertainty amongst investors as to the costs and financing to deliver deep energy renovations.

Damian Harrington, Head of Research, Global Capital Markets & EMEA at Colliers, explained: "Nearly half of investors (44%) are still unclear as to how much energy adaptations will cost. The estimate is that

it could cost up to 10% of the value of assets under management – but some think it could be significantly higher."

"What's more, they don't know how or from where these upgrades can be financed. There might be some opportunity to leverage green financial instruments – like green bonds – but this will need to be assessed as part of a portfolio audit.

"It's important to do that sooner rather than later, as many investors already anticipate disposing of up to 20% of their portfolio (in the next five years) where assets are deemed 'non-ESG' compliant."

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Audit the existing portfolio to identify areas of clear opportunity for energy renovation, as well as assets for which renovation may not be viable and requires repurposing or disposal.
2. Consider partnerships to achieve decarbonisation. Partnering with organisations with dedicated and specialist ESG expertise, like Colliers, will accelerate progress and results.
3. Assess and identify green financial instruments (like green bonds) to underwrite the required renovations to meet tightening regulatory requirements.
4. Factor all CAPEX outlays into ROI calculations, including both the cost of retrofitting, certification and funding.
5. Tailor your investment strategy based on your key decarbonisation learnings.



OFFICE OR A HOME DESK?

Challenges and the future of hybrid work

A hybrid work model has already been implemented in 92% of organizations – according to the next edition of the “Hybrid and Beyond 2023” report by Colliers. However, not every company transitions to a hybrid model without problems – there is a significant discrepancy between the organization's preferences and employee's expectations. According to the “Hybrid and Beyond 2023” report, remote or hybrid work has already become the new norm, and 73% of respondents participating in a survey conducted by Colliers claim that their organizations consider the currently implemented work model to be an optimal solution. This number has increased compared to 2022 – then only 55% was noted. At the same time, organizations are trying to balance remote work with the work in an office, often taking various measures to encourage employees to return to the office. It is significant that 64% of organizations undertake such initiatives, and another 9% plan to introduce them in the near future. However, this is not an easy process. Among companies trying to encourage employees to return, the percentage of those encountering reluctance from employees increased year-on-year from 66% to 79%.

“Considering how much the hybrid work model has become part of our everyday life, especially in the mindset of employees, organizations should focus on adapting their activities, rather than striving to return to traditional solutions” – advises Dorota Osiecka, Partner, Director,

People & Places Advisory, Define. “Regardless of whether employees work remotely one day a week or three, effective implementation of a hybrid work model means changing the way the organization operates and adapting it to the new reality. What is now key is the ability to efficiently manage work models and flexibility in using new solutions, individually tailored to the company's goals, way of working and employees' expectations” – adds Dorota.

NEW MODEL, NEW CHALLENGES

Data presented in the Hybrid and Beyond '23 report indicate that the impact of hybrid work on organizations is complex and may bring both benefits and challenges. Over the past 12 months, the assessment of the impact of remote work on employees' work-life balance has significantly improved. The majority of surveyed organizations (65%) estimate that remote work has a very positive or positive impact on employee well-being. Year-on-year involvement in building individual and team relationships through regular one-to-one meetings and team sessions, as well as organizing regular social meetings, also increased significantly (from 46% to 64% and from 29% to 46%, respectively). A significant change has also occurred over the past year in the area of providing flexible working conditions (an increase from 47% to 70%).



However, as the report results show, working from home also has its disadvantages. As many as 70% of respondents indicated a decrease in the sense of belonging to a team as one of the negative effects of remote work. The deterioration of information flow within and between teams at the operational level was noticed by 52% of respondents, and 48% stated that remote work negatively affects cooperation. *“To minimize the negative impact of a hybrid work model on the organization's operations, it may be a good idea to conduct research to identify teams that effectively cope with the challenges of remote work. Their experiences and implemented methods of operation can be used to improve the hybrid work model in the entire organization” – advises Grzegorz Rajca, psychologist at Colliers and Colliers Define expert on the work environment and change management.*

“Many challenges that were identified in our research can be overcome by developing a work model in a hybrid environment” – adds Grzegorz.

MAPPING AND DIAGNOSIS

The challenges related to developing effective ways of functioning in a hybrid reality require the use of appropriate tools. “Hybrid Barometer” is a methodology designed by Colliers that focuses on diagnosing the functioning of an organization in a hybrid model. The tool allows you to quickly collect the most important information regarding key aspects of the functioning of distributed teams: information exchange, sense of team unity and coordination of activities. Thanks



to such a diagnosis, organizations can quickly identify potential risks, indicate teams that effectively cope with the hybrid reality, and those that need additional support.

“Hybrid Barometer not only indicates areas requiring intervention, but also promotes a culture of learning from others, promoting a “peer to peer learning” approach. As a result, companies receive a tool that helps sort out the complicated reality of hybrid work”, explains Dorota Osiecka.

The hybrid work model poses challenges to management staff not only related to adapting work logistics and the tools and technologies used, but also related to introducing effective management methods and developing key managerial skills. Among the numerous benefits of

flexibility, we must also recognize potential consequences, such as a loss of sense of belonging, barriers to communication, and the risk of burnout. The key to navigating this landscape in a successful way is an iterative approach – a method of constantly testing, evaluating and adapting. Organizations should engage employees in dialogue, monitor risk indicators and be ready to make quick changes in response to detected problems. In the era of work that is changing at a breakneck pace, the ability to recognize trends and adapt to them like never before is the key to success.

FLEXIBILITY BECOMES THE NORM AS BUSINESSES LOOK TO BUILD RESILIENCE IN THEIR REAL ESTATE PORTFOLIO AND WORKPLACE STRATEGY.

With the hybrid work model still in flux, and macroeconomic uncertainty rising, businesses are adopting a more agile approach to their workspace and commercial real estate investment decisions – according to Colliers’ latest report, ‘Global Occupier Outlook 2023: Navigating the Future of Change’.

Drawing on comprehensive data sources, Colliers’ own insights and interviews with global corporate occupiers (with presence in EMEA) – including Vodafone, SAP, Nokia and Nestle – the report explores key themes to support businesses with their workplace and workforce readiness including the return to the office, making portfolios more flexible, reducing the environmental impact of real estate, integrating inclusivity into workplace design, and making better use of data and technology.

“We’re in an intense period of transformation for the workforce and the workplace”,

explained Andrew Hallissey, Executive Managing Director – Occupier Services EMEA, Colliers. “Multiple complex factors, from inflation to geopolitical tensions and climate and energy crises, have combined to create the most challenging environment that companies have faced in decades.

“This uncertainty is impacting decision making too. There’s no real clarity on what office occupancy levels will look like and the competition for talent is getting fiercer as employees place more emphasis on flexibility. Occupiers need an agile approach to both their workplace and their workforce and many are now looking to shorter lease terms and flexible space as they look to drive efficiency and construct diverse, resilient portfolios that cater for different ways of working.”

Colliers found that:

- Flexibility has become the norm as businesses look to build resilience in their real estate portfolio and workplace strategy.
- There is still a bright future for offices but they will be occupied and utilised differently.
- Two-thirds (66.6%) of corporate occupiers in EMEA* anticipate that up



to 20% of their commercial real estate portfolio will move from traditional leases to flex leases within the next five years (*Colliers and CoreNet Global Summit 2022) and that 1 in 3 (34%) anticipate a material decrease in the amount of space per person that they will need.

- The organisations that will be most successful are those that remain agile and flexible to future-proof their investment and workplace strategies.

Among other themes explored in the 'Global Occupier Outlook 2023' are:

- The changing role of the office in winning, developing and retaining talent.
- The enhancement of employee experience through flexible, inclusive and collaborative workspaces.
- The importance of technology and data-led insights.
- The people and social benefits of investment in sustainability, in addition to environmental and financial dividends.

"Investors are beginning to think about real-estate assets in new ways and are experimenting with innovative approaches to unlock value even as conventional deal-making remains weak due to the interest-rate environment", said Harrington.

FLEX OFFICES ARE BECOMING INCREASINGLY PREFERRED AS WORKPLACES

In recent years, there has been significant development in the flex office space market in Sofia. A notable increase in demand for this type of workspace has been observed from freelancers, startup companies, newcomers, as well as existing local corporations. With the rise of remote working options, flexible offices have become an increasingly attractive choice for professionals seeking a work environment that fosters productivity and collaboration. As a result, the number of co-working spaces in Sofia is rapidly increasing, with new ones emerging throughout the city. The market is now highly competitive, motivating operators to continuously seek creative ways to differentiate themselves by offering unique services to their clients.

The essence of the co-working model lies in providing services in addition to office space. Consequently, the rent is not determined per square meter but for a fully furnished and equipped area per person, which includes expenses for meeting rooms, utilities, cleaning, events, snacks, and non-alcoholic beverages. One of the main characteristics of the co-working model is that the price for using the office is offered as a service with flexible contractual terms to meet the needs of businesses in a rapidly changing global environment. Both aspects allow for the creation of an "all-inclusive" product that provides higher profit margins. Data from Colliers in the last 24 months shows an

increase in fixed contractual terms for flexible space and a decrease for traditional office buildings.

In the middles of 2023, Colliers conducted a study on the shared office space market in Sofia. What can be seen in the company's report is that the concentration of such



spaces is in the suburban area of the city – 66% of the total floor area and 48% of active operators are located in that part of the city. Almost half (45%) of the locations are in old administrative buildings due to lower operating costs, 29% are in modern office projects, 23% are in residential buildings, and the rest are in hotels and commercial properties. Local operators dominate the



market, both in terms of the area they offer (with an 87% share) and the number of locations (with an 88% share). The average price for a one-day pass is 25 euros, for a hot desk – it is 140 euros per month, for a dedicated desk – 170 euros per month, and for a private office – 210 euros per month.

The plans for new projects with a total area of over 9800 square meters expected to open in the coming year testify to the interest in this office market segment. The majority of them will be located in the Broad Center.

Earlier this year, Colliers conducted a survey among leading flexible office operators in Sofia and their tenants. It revealed that nearly half of the existing demand for such space comes from large corporations, IT companies, and freelancers. The main challenges faced by operators are increased costs and the inability to offer additional workspaces.

Users shared that the primary factor influencing their choice of co-working location is the presence of a community of like-minded people. Other important factors include location and interior. Over 60% of respondents from the tenant side travel less than 20 minutes to their chosen flex office, and more than half work from there at least 5 days a week.

In conclusion, the prospects for the flexible office space market in Sofia are positive, with stable growth expected in the coming years. Although the segment is becoming increasingly competitive, there is still significant room for innovation and differentiation, and operators that can provide high-quality solutions with an emphasis on community-building and collaboration opportunities among users will be preferred.

RETAIL PARKS IN BULGARIA – LOOKING AT INVESTORS, TENANTS AND CONSUMERS

Over the past few years, retail parks have been gaining increasing popularity, offering consumers the convenience of finding a wide range of goods and services in one place. Bulgaria, with its growing economy and consumer spending, is no exception to global trends and has seen an increase in the construction of such facilities across the country. Retail parks are characterized by their strategic locations with easy access to public transportation and parking. They house both international and local brands for fashion, electronics, furniture, home accessories, sports goods, supermarkets, and more.

In 2023, Colliers published its latest report summarizing current data on the development of retail parks in Bulgaria. The total stock of contemporary retail park space in the country stands at over 376,800 square meters, distributed across 45 projects. In most cases, the owners are local investors, but international companies are actively seeking opportunities to enter the market. By mid-2023, a total of 13 retail parks were under active construction, with another 9 in the planning stage. Investors are focusing on larger projects that can offer diverse tenants and amenities for visitors. Approximately half of the retail parks currently under construction are located in cities with populations ranging from 50,000 to 100,000 residents. Smaller towns with fewer than 50,000 people are also attracting investor interest, with 37% of the construction areas concentrated there.

Tenant interest in retail parks remains high. This is due to the availability of large and flexible spaces that allow them to effectively showcase their products and services. Other advantages include lower rental rates compared to prime locations in city centers, lower maintenance costs, and better visibility due to high foot traffic. As a result, retail parks are preferred by both established and new retailers. According to the Colliers report, most of the space in these facilities is leased by representatives from categories like Fashion, Do-It-Yourself, and Grocery.





Rental prices for space in retail parks can vary significantly depending on location, size, city, population, and the mix of tenants. Average monthly rents range from 5 to 10 EUR per square meter, with a trend of increasing in response to growing demand for such space and increased competition among tenants. The average vacancy rate in existing retail parks is slightly under 5%. The maintenance fee, covering management and utilities for common areas of the property, is approximately 1.00 – 1.50 EUR per square meter of leased retail space per month.

In the middle of 2023, Colliers conducted a survey among the owners of leading retail parks in Bulgaria and their tenants. The results showed that the main challenges for both groups of respondents are related to increased costs (electricity, inflation, interest rates). Retailers express their intention to expand their brand presence in the country, especially in smaller towns. Their choice will be directed towards retail parks that offer a good mix of tenants, strategic location, and favorable commercial conditions.

In summary, retail parks in Bulgaria are in a period of stable growth due to an improved economic climate, increased consumer spending, and the interest of international retailers in expanding into the local market and leasing affordable retail space. This will drive the construction of such facilities in strategic locations across the country. The growing focus on sustainable construction on a global scale will strongly influence the concepts of future retail parks. It should be noted, however, that the market is approaching a mature stage. This means that new projects will be initiated with particular caution, only after careful planning and analysis. Colliers' forecast is that the retail park segment in Bulgaria will remain stable in the current year and continue to attract tenants and investors seeking development opportunities.



OUTLET VILLAGE SOFIA

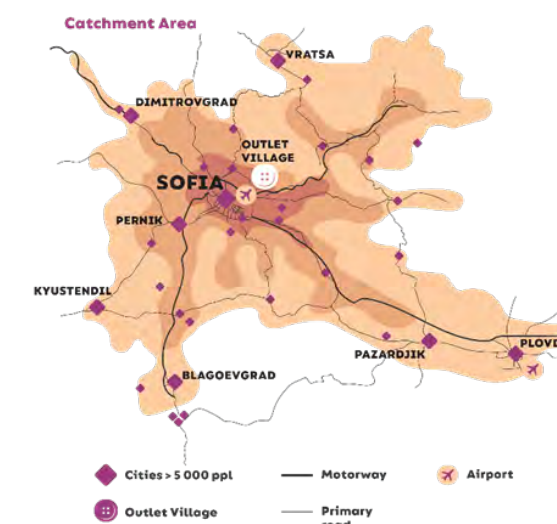
Outlet Village will be located at the northern entrance of Sofia, the capital city of Bulgaria. The project is part of Jumbo Plaza Retail Park, operating since 2011 and currently attracts more than 5,8 million people in footfall. This number is expected to increase to 8 million in the next 2 years.

With a total GLA of over 7,600 m., Outlet Village will be a stylish development with a variety of world-renowned brands, including a promenade area, café, restaurants and leisure. A total of 50 shops are planned to open in 2025. Outlet Village will be aiming to provide a flawless shopping experience to its visitors with a perfect brand mix of world-class outlet stores.

The architectural approach towards building "Outlet Village" draws inspiration from 16th century France. To create a staple in the city's silhouette we envisioned one clock tower and one gate that are not only used as waypoints that help the shoppers navigate the "Outlet Village", but they also work as symbols by themselves. The project is being developed and managed by Trinity Capital, a well-established commercial real estate and investment company.



7,600 sq.m. | **50** units | **1,800** parking spaces





INTERVIEW

Stoyan Kolev, COO, Trinity Capital OOD



We have found that in small towns, shopping parks become a gathering center not only for trade but also for spending leisure time.

We are also interested in acquiring other existing projects, as we believe that our expertise will add additional value to them.

In 2023, in partnership with AP Capital, we acquired Mega Mall in the Lyulin district, for which we have already started implementing an investment program aiming to introduce new and attractive retail units and renovate the common areas.

Our plans also include other businesses, but nevertheless, the main focus of the company will remain on investments in retail parks.

Retail parks have established themselves as one of the fastest growing segments of the real estate market in which Trinity Capital AD has managed to occupy a significant position in recent years. What is the direction of your future development plans?

The company will continue to develop simultaneously in several strategic directions. We have started work on the expansion of Jumbo Plaza, which will be realized in several stages, ultimately operating over 85,000 sq. m. of retail space. With this investment, we will have the responsibility of managing the largest retail park in the country and the Balkans.

For our existing retail parks, we plan improvements that will offer even greater satisfaction to our visitors, by adding more services, dining, and entertainment options.

What market trends do you believe will have the most significant impact on future investments in this sector?

Investors in commercial spaces in Bulgaria have still been spared from the negative global trends in the sector. The majority of our current and potential partners continue with an expansion strategy in the country. Modern trade has become significantly more prepared and resilient to international upheavals following the COVID pandemic. Of course, we recognize that our business is not immune to the economic consequences of conflicts and global economic downturns, which is most notably reflected in rising construction costs for new projects, as well as higher operational expenses. Still, there are successfully operating retail parks where operators report growing trading results, which maintains the



interest of retail chains in this concept. The traders themselves proactively approach partners like us, encouraging investment in retail parks. In this sense, we believe there is potential for more investments in this direction, but all participants will have increasingly higher criteria. The ultimate goal is clear: for traders to realize good sales, investors to fulfill their business plans, and customers to be satisfied with the final product.

What strategy do you implement to boost the growth of your retail park and to enhance its value?

At "Trinity Capital", we believe that in every project, we must achieve an uncompromising balance between property, construction, and management. However, above all, our primary goal is aligned with that of our partners – to realize more sales. Every decision we make in investing in a retail park is viewed through this lens. Of course, all factors must be analyzed to determine the optimal format of a retail park. But a fundamental rule in commerce is location–location–location; we believe that sustainable projects must follow this belief. Planning is a process that requires expertise and understanding of the needs of our partners and end clients. Each new project is inspiring for our team but also challenging, as regardless of retailers' interest, we must select a mix of tenants in a limited space with limited commercial potential. More and more of our partners expect us to justify the surveyed potential with concrete data, analyses, and a convincing concept of each proposed commercial project.

Selecting an attractive commercial mix, developing a clear and interesting marketing strategy, perfectly maintaining common

areas and parking lots, and excellent management by a team of professionals assisting our tenants throughout the contract term are all part of our commitment to customer satisfaction at Trinity Capital Inc.

Why Outlet Village? What makes you believe in the success of this project?

I have no doubt about the success of this business venture. Firstly, such a project does not yet exist in Bulgaria. Outlets have been around in Europe for 40 years, with about 200 to date, the most successful form being the so-called Outlet Villages – among the 20 most successful outlet projects in Europe, 15 are of the "village" type. This business type is the second fastest-growing retail channel after the online sector. The trend is for more consumers to look for "offer" or "special price" deals.

The location of our project is already a developed shopping destination with exceptionally easy access and great potential. The existing retail park and the planned expansion will contribute to ensuring the outlet's footfall, not only with the guaranteed customer flow but also with the planned dining, relaxation, and entertainment venues – a full-day destination for the whole family.

Our joint work with established international consultants and analysts, who have realized the most successful Outlet Villages in Europe, has given us the confidence to implement such an idea in a finished format without compromises to the end consumer.

We are already negotiating with world-famous high-class brands, which will open the first mono-brand outlet stores in Bulgaria. Who they will be, for now, I will keep a secret.

ELEVATING HOMEOWNERSHIP: THE RISE OF BRANDED RESIDENCES

Brande residences represent a category of accommodation units seamlessly integrated into residential or hotel complexes. These units are meticulously designed and, more often than not, expertly managed by prominent international hotel operators who specialize in the luxury segment. Branded Residences typically find their homes in exclusive locales, encompassing both urban hubs and idyllic vacation destinations.

They are tailor-made to cater to individuals with substantial wealth who seek a superlative luxury living experience. The association with a prestigious brand not only guarantees their inherent quality but also enhances their allure and intrinsic value. Renowned international hotel giants such as Marriott, Accor, and Four Seasons exemplify a handful of the enterprises actively participating in this burgeoning market. Furthermore, opulent brands like Armani, Bulgari, and Porsche Design, among others, have made resounding entries into this sector. The genesis of these real estate undertakings unfolds through a collaborative partnership between real estate developers and hotel/brand operators. Together, they craft a product that, while boasting features and amenities akin to a traditional private residence, offers the added value of striking design and an array of amenities akin to those cherished by guests of luxury hotels.

Buyers of branded residences enjoy a variety of services offered within the property. While



the specific offerings can differ significantly depending on the brand, location, and type of development, in general, the brand provides essential services that are included in the purchase price and the annual service fee, along with additional "à la carte" services offered by the residential complex or hotel management team. Among the most common basic services are concierge and front desk services, facilitating restaurant reservations, theater bookings, transportation arrangements, and activities, as well as mail/package handling, logistics for moving in or out, and waste removal. General maintenance services for common areas, pools, meeting rooms, gyms, and gardens are also provided, along with 24-hour security, and more. Furthermore, following the acquisition of a branded residence, buyers receive a variety of exclusive benefits.



These may include, among others, elevated status within the brand's loyalty program for several years and privileged discounts on accommodations, restaurants, spa services, and other brand-related amenities.

Increasing wealth globally has driven a significant expansion in the second homes and luxury residences markets over the past few decades. Although there has been a slight deceleration recently due to factors such as rising interest rates and geopolitical challenges, the prospects for wealth creation are promising, and are expected to fuel further growth in the branded residences sector. Over the past year, wealth creation has been affected by the underperformance of financial markets, leading to a decline in the total assets of individuals with ultrahigh net worth (UHNWIs). Nevertheless, a significant increase in the global UHNWI population is projected over the next five years, from 2022 to 2027. The average annual growth rate of UHNWIs is estimated to be 5.3% during this period. The broader segment of high-net-worth individuals (HNWIs), including those with assets exceeding \$1 million, is also experiencing substantial growth. Over the past year, this group grew by 2.9%, and it is expected to increase by an impressive 57% over the next five years, reaching a global population of over 109 million individuals.

The United States and China stand out as critical markets for wealth creation and, consequently, will be pivotal for the future demand for international second homes. Over the next five years, it is projected that these two countries will account for more than half of all new UHNWIs. However, global demand will also diversify to other countries such as Canada, Australia, India, Germany, and the United Kingdom, where significant increases in the UHNWI population are expected for the 2022–2027



period. This trend towards greater wealth concentration and the expansion of the UHNWI segment worldwide creates a conducive environment for the development and growth of the branded residences market. Developers have the opportunity to capitalize on the interest of high-net-worth individuals in various countries by offering luxury properties that meet their discerning quality and lifestyle expectations. As wealth creation continues to rise and the demand for luxury residences diversifies globally, the branded residences market positions itself as a strategic and appealing investment for investors and developers worldwide.

Colliers now offers for sale Tierra Viva, the first Lamborghini residences in Europe, developed by Dar Global (Dar Al Arkan), located in Costa Del Sol.

NEWS

Sharing knowledge and expertise

Colliers' representatives were speakers at:

- Balrec



Verka Petkova | Partner | Director Business Development



Dimitrinka Rakovska | Manager Retail Services



Georgi Kirov | Partner | Director Capital Markets



Hristo Karakostov | Senior Consultant | Office Services

- Building Innovations Forum 2023 GREEN
- Residential Forum



Georgi Kirov | Partner | Director Capital Markets



- Office Investment & Workspace Forum
- Industrial Property Conference



Hristo Karakostov | Senior Consultant | Office Services



Nikola Belchev | Consultant Industrial & Logistics Services

- Conference of the Chamber of Professional Valuers



Nikolay Georgiev | Valuation & Advisory Services

A great employer

For yet another year Glint measured Colliers employee engagement level. The results revealed that the company continues to be a great employer with an excellent engagement score. The top three strengths of the company, identified by employees, are high confidence in the company leadership, removing barriers that slow down our work and decision making. We have also made Forbes' list of World's Best Employers. We're proud to be recognized for our culture that enables our 18,000 professionals to be their authentic selves, act with agility for clients, and shape our industry.

Sustainability – roots for tomorrow

Together at Colliers we are committed to making a positive environmental impact. In October we devoted a day to volunteer activities – our team planted trees in Busmantsi near Sofia. Trees absorb carbon, provide oxygen, and support biodiversity – all in line with our dedication to corporate responsibility and sustainability.



Congratulations



Valeria Alexandrova was promoted to Real Estate Valuer



Janeta Doycheva was promoted to Consultant Retail Services



Natali Vodeva joined our Valuation & Advisory team as Assistant



Georgi Kirov celebrated a work anniversary – 20 years at Colliers



Reaching new heights together

We had a truly enjoyable teambuilding event set against the breathtaking backdrop of the beautiful mountains. This was a great experience that strengthened our bonds, enhanced collaboration and created lasting memories.



Top performers

Here are the employees with exceptional performance over H1 2023.



Welcome

Andreyana Merkova was hired as Office Coordinator. She is currently a student of International Economic Relations in English at the University of National and World Economy in Sofia, Bulgaria.



Colliers' babies

Diana Borisova, Administration Officer, became a mother of a baby girl – Daria.





Who: JYSK

Where: Retail Park Karlovo

Services: Landlord representation

Consultant: Ralitsa Yordanova, Janeta Doycheva



Who: Milestone Systems

Where: Garitage Park

Services: Project Monitoring, Legal Advisory

Consultants: Veselina Trionova, Vanya Ruteva, Ilia Arabadjiev



Who: KPMG ITS

Where: Business Park Sofia

Services: Re-negotiation

Consultant: Verka Petkova, Nikolay Mitov



Who: Technomarket, KiK, Zoo Center, Teodor

Where: Retail Park Knyajevo

Services: Tenant representation

Consultants: Dimitrinka Rakovska, Ralitsa Yordanova, Janeta Doycheva, Ivan Kalenski

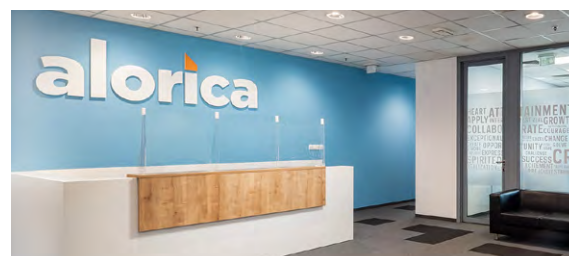


Who: KARE

Where: Capital Fort

Services: Tenant representation

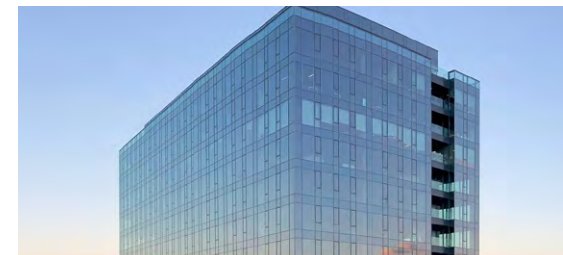
Consultants: Dimitrinka Rakovska, Ivan Kalenski



Who: Alorica

Services: Project Management

Consultants: Vanya Ruteva, Ilia Arabadjiev



Who: Deloitte

Services: Relocation

Consultant: Verka Petkova, Nikolay Mitov



Who: Domino`s Pizza

Where: Central Park

Services: Landlord representation

Consultant: Ralitsa Yordanova

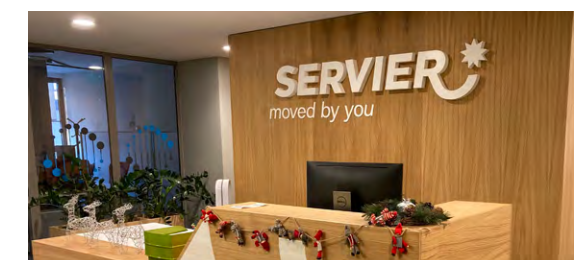


Who: DIGITALL

Where: Business Park Sofia

Services: Tenant representation

Consultant: Verka Petkova, Nikolay Mitov



Who: Servier Medical

Services: Office Reconstruction, WPA

Consultants: Verka Petkova, Vanya Ruteva, Ilia Arabadjiev



Who: DSK Bank

Where: 4 Buildings in Sofia

Services: WPA, Budget Preparation

Consultant: Verka Petkova, Vanya Ruteva, Keterina Gondova



Who: English Home

Where: Jumbo Plaza

Services: Landlord representation

Consultant: Janeta Doycheva



Beyond

ARE YOUR EMPLOYEES

Fully Informed

THE LATEST IN THE LABOR LEGISLATION

Snejana Stoycheva, Legal Counsel, Colliers

Snejana Stoycheva joined Colliers as Legal Counsel in the beginning of 2019. She provides in-house legal services and legal advisory to real estate clients. Snejana has expert knowledge in commercial, contractual, labour, real estate law and regulations. She has extensive experience in drafting various types of contracts and agreements, memorandums of advice and legal opinions. Snejana is a Master of Law, graduated from Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski.



Employers are obliged to provide employees with certain information regarding the employment relation (e.g. to give instructions for the performance of employment obligations and exercise of employment rights, present employees with the relevant internal labor regulations, health and safety rules, etc.). With the latest amendment of the Labour Code ("LC"), promulgated in issue No 62 of the State Gazette, in force as of 1st August 2022, the range of matters on which the employer must provide information to the personnel was expanded. Colliers Legal Practice presents summary of the latest amendments regarding the information to be provided to employees as per the labor legislation¹.

Information regarding grounds and terms for termination of the employment contract as per the Labor Code

With the latest amendments of the LC, employers are obliged to provide information to their employees for the grounds on which the employment contract may be terminated. Generally, when signing the

¹ The present article has informative purpose and does not represent legal advice. For legal advice and opinion, please contact Colliers Legal Practice at bulgaria@colliers.com

contract, the parties explicitly agree on the term for termination with prior notice. This term is equal for both parties and is usually between 1 and 3 months. However, the termination with prior notice is only a part of the termination grounds provided by the LC. Furthermore, this type of termination procedure has specifics for each party to the employment contract. For example, the employer may terminate the contract with prior notice only in cases (grounds) explicitly provided by the LC (e.g. closure of the enterprise, reduction of the work volume, in case the employee lacks qualities for effective performance of the work, etc.). The employee, on the other hand, may terminate the employment contract with a prior notice without giving any specific reason. The LC also provides that both parties to the employment relation may terminate it without giving prior notice. The grounds for each party are different and are explicitly stated by the law. The employment contract may also be terminated by mutual agreement of the parties or by initiative of the employer with the consent of the employee against compensation. All of the above-stated termination grounds are provided in detail by the LC and employers are obliged to inform their employees on their respective types and terms. The information may be provided as a part of the internal labor regulations or in a separate company procedure. It is recommendable that employees are presented with the information against signature as this is required for other internal acts of the employer.

Information about trainings provided by the employer

As per the LC the employer is obliged to provide conditions for maintaining and increasing the professional qualification of

employees for the effective performance of their obligations under the employment relationship. In this regard employers are required to provide suitable trainings in accordance with the requirements of the respective work performed and the future professional development of their employees. These trainings may be different for the different job positions and departments in the company. However, as per the latest amendments in the employment legislation, the employer must inform the employees for the trainings available to them. This may be done in a separate policy (in cases of repeating types of trainings) or by email or in person (in cases of one-off specific trainings). However, the presenting of the information should be done in way that may be easily proved in case of check by the labor authorities.

Information on the Internal salary rules of the employer

The Internal salary rules of the employer are part of the mandatory internal acts required by the law. They arrange various matters related to the employment remunerations in the company, e.g. the conditions, procedure and methods of formation of the funds for salaries, minimum value or range for the basic salaries for different position levels, the procedure and the methods for determination and alteration of additional employment remunerations, etc. With the latest amendment of the LC it is explicitly provided that the employer must present the Internal salary rules to the employees. It is recommendable that employees are presented with the information against signature as this is required for other internal acts of the employer.



BETTER SLIDES FOR A HYBRID WORLD

Damon Nofar, Creative Director, Founder, SLIDES



Damon is the founder of SLIDES™ – a presentation agency that helps companies worldwide build more impactful presentations, with storytelling and good design. Check out their website for more info <https://slides.agency>

Virtual presentations have changed the game when it comes to using slides and keeping our audience hooked. When we present live, slides are usually projected on a screen

behind us, while we (the speaker) take the spotlight. But now, in the virtual world, slides are front and center on people's screens during presentations. Forget being the star of the show, because most of us are just tiny faces in circles or squares. The real star? The slide, taking up most of the screen!

So, let's look at my five top tips for creating better (hybrid) slides:

1 Keep the flow going

Your virtual audience is just one mouse-click away from distractions like social media, or that "important" email that needs answering. So you need to keep your flow going, and not get stuck too long on one slide. Instead of having many ideas on one slide, break it up and keep only one idea per slide. This way, we can grab and re-grab the audience's attention each time we switch slides. Virtual fatigue is real and we need to keep that in the back of our minds when presenting online.

Now, many will argue that this will leave you with a huge amount of slides. A 30-slide deck might end up double in size if we break the content up into bitesized chunks. But is that really relevant? Do you think your audience cares? No. Don't worry about the number of slides, worry about how many people you will impact.



2 Break the pattern

You need to mix up your content to keep the attention of the viewer. Having just text on all slides is a safe formula to lose the attention of your audience. Instead, use a mix of visuals, striking images, inspiring quotes, interesting data – all of this matters. Avoid slides that all look the same, on a white background with bullet points. Mix it up! Throw in some full screen visuals where it makes sense, mix your white backgrounds with a darker shade for key slides, use big typography to highlight key messages. You get the idea.

3 Invite for interruption

Forget the whole idea of leaving the Q&A until the end, and having people on mute while you speak for 30 minutes. That does not work online. Let the audience interrupt you. Invite for dialogue throughout your presentation. One way of doing this is to address people directly by their first name. “Hey Julia, I would love to get your input on this topic and will ask you to chime in when I’ve shared my thoughts.” This gives them some time to prepare their answer, and it will make it more interactive. Another great way to make it more interactive is to use live polls. Ask the

audience for their input on that new strategy. Do a fun survey to awaken the energy in the (virtual) room. Nowadays you can easily incorporate polls into your presentations, since tools like Teams and Zoom have incorporated it into their softwares. Try it out! It’s very cool to see the results appear on your screen in real-time.

4 Use build up animations

All slides can obviously not be visual and minimal. Sometimes you need 5–6 bullet points to communicate your idea. Or maybe you want to show a flowchart with ten elements. What you can do here is to use build up animations. These are subtle, simple animations to bring in your points one by one, instead of showing all at once. With this tactic you can control the attention of your audience, and keep some tension for what’s coming next.

So next time you say, “here are three ways to implement this strategy”, bring in your points one-by-one controlled with your clicks. That way you will keep their attention until the third and final point.

5 Keep it simple

Presentations are hard, and bad slides only make it harder. The best thing you can do is to keep it ridiculously simple. Every time you are building a presentation, ask yourself these questions: “Do I need all these points in my slide?”, “What can I delete and put in the speaker notes instead?”, “Do my slides support me or take attention away from me?”. These three questions are a good starting point to make your slides more impactful. Now go ahead and bring some Power to your Points (did you see what I did there).

Salaries and additional benefits

TREND RESEARCH STUDY

Maria Dineva, Assert International



Serving as the Business Intelligence Team Lead for the past two years, Maria has been instrumental in shaping the company's HR reports, diving deep into data analysis, and steering their statistics.

The information is the currency of the 21st century.

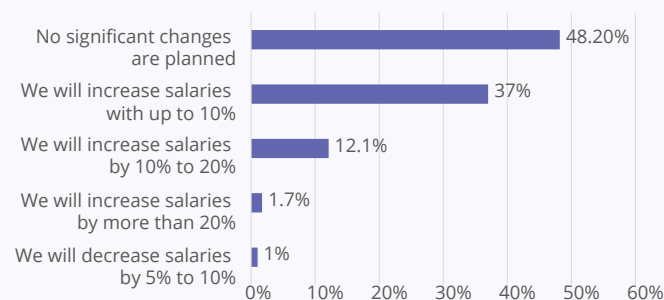
In the times of global data accessibility, overwhelmed with sources, one of the most crucial factors is credibility. It can be affirmed by posing critical questions, which subsequently gives rise to the need for validation. With this approach, following the monthly official statistics and publicly available data, Manpower Bulgaria, and now also Assert International Bulgaria, took on the task to validate the available data, to access new ones, and supporting expertise in order to meet the business needs for better information – about the labor market, the working people, the new generations, other businesses, and those trends that are still in the process of occurring and establishing themselves.

The idea for market research that could encompass all these topics while being detailed and accurate emerged during the

In the dynamic landscape of business and education, Maria Dineva stands out as a beacon of versatility and expertise. With a bachelor's degree in history under her belt, Maria spent seven formative years managing an educational centre dedicated to foreign languages. Her leadership there was a testament to her dedication and passion for education. However, it's in the corporate corridors of Assert International Bulgaria where Maria has made her most recent mark.

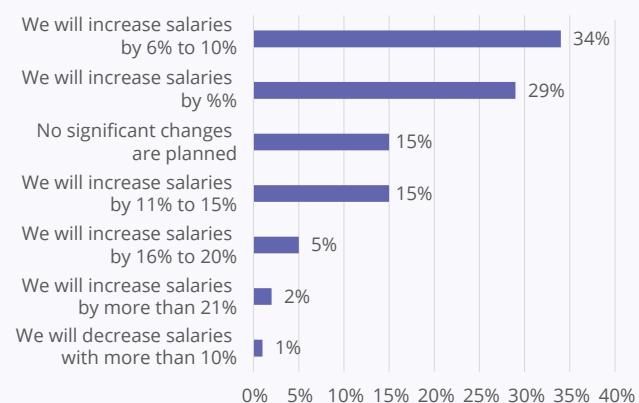
height of COVID-19. The stagnation that year reached its peak, presenting businesses with economic challenges, and to some extent, human potential challenges as well. On one hand, employees stopped looking for new jobs; on the other, companies reduced their budgets and even ceased searching for the required experts due to the uncertainties of business development. Immediately after, towards the end of 2021 and beginning of 2022, a trend known as The Great Resignation began, both globally and locally. Many people started changing their employers reaching a record height worldwide. As a result, salaries surged dramatically, and for some positions, they even doubled for a significantly short amount of time. And this is not all as they usually say in advertisements – another huge factor in the wage changes over the past two years came – the record heights of inflation.

Salary projection H2 2021



To analyze business attitudes during these dynamic and uncertain times, from 2021 onwards, we identified the need for the market research titled "Salaries, Additional Benefits, and Incentives – Trends", conducted biannually. Its purpose is to measure, on one hand, the changes that took place in the first half of each year (for employees) and, on the other hand, to forecast potential changes related to compensation and additional benefits for the next half a year period.

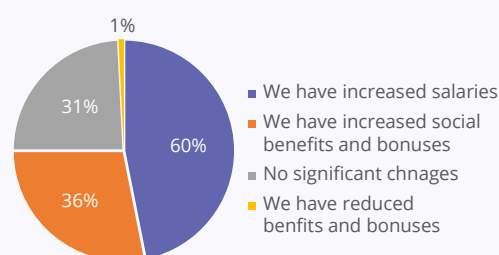
Planned changes in salaries H1 2022



In the second half of 2021, nearly half of the 500 companies that participated in the survey shared that they had no plans to change their compensations in H1/2022. Another 40% reported increases of up to 10% for their employees. In response to the same question in the first half of 2022, almost eighty percent confirmed their plans for H2/2022 were to raise compensations by an average (median) of 10.5%. During the second half, 60% of all respondents indicated that real changes had already taken place, both in compensations and in additional benefits and incentives.

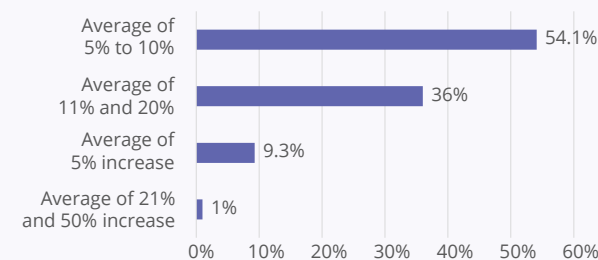
Comparing the planned changes shared in 2022 with their actual execution in 2023, we observe stability and a robust business response to the record-high (unofficial) local inflation levels, as well as an adaptation to the daily needs of the workforce. Given the

(H1 plan) Occurred changes in salaries H2 2022 (multiple choices)

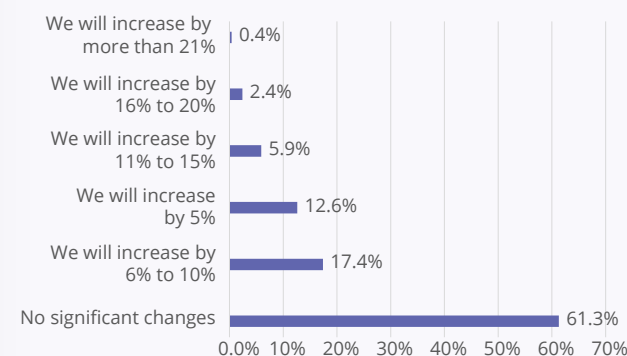


dynamics of the digital world, the economic crisis, and the staff shortage, changing the compensation is a step that not only addresses these challenges but also ensures the retention of people in organizations.

Salary projection H2 2021



Planned changes for monthly remunerations H2 2023



In 2023, our survey also posed additional questions aimed at confirming the reasons for the changes made and predicting expected ones by the end of the year.

Of all participants in H1/2023 survey, nearly 60% confirmed that they had increased their compensations at least once the previous year, and another 30% confirmed they made changes to salaries twice. Half of the respondents highlighted that one of the key factors in deciding to increase the financial package for employees was the inflation rate. The data shows that large organizations took into consideration higher inflation values for indexing, which

is why there were two increases in 2022. In both the first and second halves of 2023, small to medium-sized businesses managed to catch up with the indexing.

What does this mean for businesses?

Following the serious increases in 2022, in 2023, we observe stability in business decisions regarding pay raises. These adjustments now seem more aligned with planned budgets and internal talent development than in response to external factors such as inflation, turnover, and talent shortages. However, it is important to highlight that the digitalization of many business processes has led to a significant shift in the targeted talents and their expertise. This inevitably impacts compensation structures, ensuring that remunerations correspond proportionally to the expertise talents bring.

A fitting example is the evolution in the finance and accounting sector. If 5–7 years ago, being an accountant meant tasks largely revolving around analogue computations and financial statements, now accountants are those with expertise in at least two financial systems and a foreign language. Or at least one should be. This change is inevitably reflected in their pay, with increased compensation values matching what these professionals "bring to the table" upon entering organizations.

The same trend is expected to continue over the next few years. The sharp rise in compensations primarily affected the lower roles – those we term "blue-collar" jobs. But with the modernization and technological advancement of companies, even they can now be termed specialists. What they are expected to "bring to the table" is not just

manual labor and night shifts anymore, but a critical understanding of machinery, basic knowledge of at least one foreign language, and good technical literacy. Naturally, this leads to higher compensations, matching the criteria and knowledge these workers contribute to the business. Additional Benefits and Financial Incentives The topic of additional benefits and financial incentives cannot be excluded from the discussion about compensations. In 2023, workers have come to perceive some of these incentives, which once were considered "extra," as an integral part of the compensation they expect from organizations. On the other hand, parts of the larger business infrastructures – organizations in the Information Technology sectors and Shared/Outsourcing Service Centers – have changed the narrative surrounding the concept of "benefits." According to the survey data, the most commonly offered benefits by companies are listed in the table below.

Type of Bonus or Benefit	Yes, we offer the benefit	No, we do not offer the benefit	We will add it to the benefits package	Value of benefits in the range
Meal Vouchers	167	40	6	80 – 200 BGN+
Additional Health Insurance	162	38	2	–
Referral Bonus for New Employee	147	44	9	200 – 1000 BGN
Parking Space	116	65	0	–
Gym Membership	107	79	3	50 – 80 BGN
Cash Bonus	102	85	3	Schematically based on KPIs (Key Performance Indicators)
Additional Life Insurance	60	116	2	–
Flexible Benefits	53	122	4	100 BGN+
Fuel Vouchers	43	126	1	60 – 200 BGN+
Clothing Allowance	38	129	1	100 – 200 BGN
Additional Pension Insurance	22	138	1	–

In 2023 and likely into 2024, businesses are expected to maintain a stable approach to salary increases, focusing more on internal growth and budgeting than external pressures. The digital transformation will continue influencing talent recruitment and compensation, demanding expertise in emerging technologies and languages. Additionally, offering competitive benefits will be crucial for attracting and retaining talent, with a noticeable trend towards non-traditional benefits becoming standard.

**Assert International is a reliable business partner for complete HR solutions, part of Manpower family of companies. With a focus on analysis, assessment and development of people, teams and organizations, the company's experts build bridges between the current and desired state of organizations. With its 360-degree solutions to optimize human resource management strategies and foster a positive organizational culture, Assert International helps businesses thrive in today's competitive environment.*

True Stories

OF BURNOUT

Annie Vladimirova, Psychologist

Annie Vladimirova has an MA in Psychology, Pedagogy and History from Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski. She has certifications for an EMDR training with Dr. Woody Oren and Dr. Ignacio Harrero, NLP Master and Practitioner with Robert Dilts and M. Pelechatus. Annie is founder and manager of the first e-therapy website in Bulgaria. She has over 20 years of experience in the field of practical psychology.



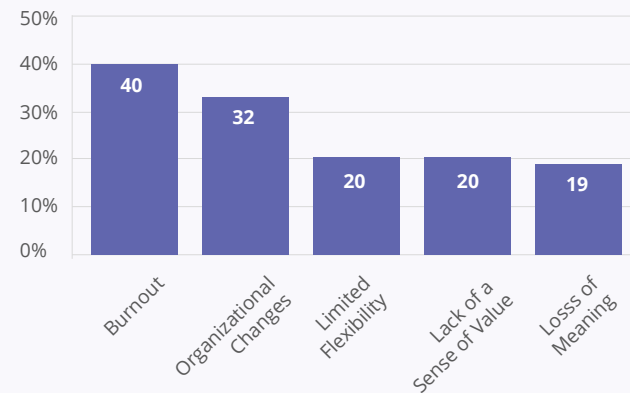
"The plague of the 21st century" – that's what they call the burnout phenomenon.

There are a lot of misconceptions about it – that it is easy to detect, that it is only due to bad coping strategies of the individual, that it is coming solely from lots of work-related stress. When we look more closely into it, we realize there are two sides of the coin when it comes to burnout. One is "prestigious" – the syndrome is perceived as a "disease" of the modern world, of the high-level professional with a burning desire to achieve, to advance in their career. The other is hidden behind a mask as burnout is accompanied by feelings of shame, pain, helplessness and resistance to give up and admit that one has to get off the merry-go-round to deal with the syndrome.

The case of Venelina (a lawyer) is among the most complicated ones. In Video 1 you will see the results of a burnout due to unresolved personal issues.

VIDEO 1 ▶

The World Health Organization's definition of burnout states, "burnout is a syndrome of failing to cope with chronic stress at work", and according to the 2021 Limeade report, 40% of people are leaving their jobs due to burnout.



*Report: Limeade, 2021

It's important to consider that along with burnout the other reasons shown in the chart have a psychological interpretation. Behind "organizational changes" (34%) stands the underlying personal insecurity, behind "limited flexibility" (20%) is an existential freedom deficit, the "lack of a sense of value" is synonymous with the absence of self-esteem, and the "loss of meaning" defines the lack of a purpose in life.

Going back to burnout, we will demonstrate with a few short videos (with real life cases) the axis behind burnout: behavioral manifestations – managerial evaluation – psychological causes.

Alexander, 25, is holding a senior position in an IT company. Suddenly he starts to underperform, loses focus, his behaviour becomes erratic and his mistakes random and illogical. His manager may assume that was due to low motivation, incompetence, inability to work in a team. However here are the actual reasons that led to Alexander's condition.

VIDEO 2

Michaela – 27 years old has an outgoing personality and she is talented in what she does. She is in the IT business, as

well. Her sudden tardiness, absenteeism, lack of concentration and irritability could be attributed to poor discipline, capriciousness, irresponsibility and disrespect of the work process. Here are the real reasons for her behavior.

VIDEO 3

Valentin Bratoev is a national volleyball player. He is 35. In the video he speaks about his transfer to China, where he had to leave the team after losing his temper during a match. His behavior can be defined as unreliable, ungrateful, irresponsible – see in the video what his leading motives were.

VIDEO 4

Maria is a top student in a prestigious high school. She is currently 21. She changes jobs frequently, turning down promotions offered to her. Her managers often doubt her loyalty and career ambitions. In the video you will see why she was having difficulty finding a vocation.

VIDEO 5

Anton is a scientist, marine biologist, 32 years old. His job as a chef does not match his competences, he is about to quit and avoids his colleagues. His managers are aware of the fact that he is overqualified and feeling "out of place", and it is only natural to doubt his motivation and commitment. See more in Video 6.

VIDEO 6

The above stories were shared to demonstrate that the reasons for unlocking



the burnout syndrome go beyond chronic stress at work. This type of stress actually breaks down the last barriers of control over unresolved personal issues, repressed traumas, and neglected imbalance in a person's life. However, knowing this does not make the situation any easier. In such cases employers might refer employees to a psychotherapist or decide to part ways with them.

What else could be done?

First of all, assess the likelihood of a conflict to occur. The feeling that a disagreement is arising, or when it is already a fact, usually frightens people, regardless of what hierarchical dependency they are in. This is a normal reaction because conflict makes us feel insecure, hurt and takes us out of our comfort zone. The existence of people with opposing views is inevitable, especially in workplace environments where teamwork is required, but that is rather an opportunity to make a necessary or meaningful change in the interest of the desired outcome.

This is why conflict shouldn't scare us. Furthermore it can even be beneficial if approached with the necessary seriousness and if adequate measures are implemented.

The resolution to a conflict situation in the business environment depends on the management decision -

to determine if they value the employee and prefer them to remain part of the team. In the event that an employer is faced with problematic behaviour similar to any of the cases, presented in the videos, and a conflict situation arises as a result, one of the possible and very effective solutions would be to seek a mediation process.

What is a mediation process?

Mediation is a method of out-of-court dispute resolution in which the parties are assisted by a third, neutral and impartial person – a mediator. It is very important



to note that participation in mediation is a voluntary act, declared by the two disputing parties. The mediator, in turn, guarantees them to observe the basic principles of mediation: equality, neutrality, voluntariness, impartiality and, most importantly, confidentiality! The mediator is not allowed to disclose circumstances and facts which have come to their knowledge during the mediation process.

This method is extremely successful in business disputes or arguments arising in teams, because in a joint conversation or in separate meetings, the mediator examines which interests or needs are violated and assists the parties to reach a mutually beneficial solution. It is through such an approach that the existence of a problem that has led to burnout, and subsequently to tensions within the team, can be clarified and resolved. It is essential to note that the mediator cannot offer specific solutions

but can assist with certain techniques to facilitate dialogue between the parties aiming at handling the conflict.

Our team is convinced that we should work to prevent burnout and constructively overcome disputes in teams in a multidirectional way. To this end, we create authentic video content in the "Two Sides of the Coin" podcast to illustrate and help recognizing issues before it is too late. We navigate through a mediation process in conflict situations to help build trust – and trust is the door that opens the way to individual therapy and team training. It is our belief that the burnout phenomenon is a red-light nailing attention to the importance and value of people in the workplace! The prevention of this syndrome is the way to protect mental health and foster harmonious interpersonal relationships both in the corporate world and in personal lives.

The New Kid on the Block

UNITED MASTER ARCHITECTS

Interview with architects Elitsa Panayotova and Dimitar Paskalev

Photo credit: Yana Lozeva



UNITED MASTER ARCHITECS is the new joint venture of SKICA STUDIO and ARCHITECTONIKA that the two companies created in early 2023.

With 20+ years of experience on the market and a well-established presence shaping the skyline of Sofia and of many other Bulgarian cities, the two lead architects Elitsa Panayotova and Dimitar

Paskalev united their practices, led by the idea to bring the sustainable architecture to another level. The aim is to enhance the connection between the urban grid and the individuality and uniqueness of each project while providing high-efficiency and modern technology of the design services.



Office building designed by United Master Architects – the new office of the studio is located in one of the hottest development areas in the city of Sofia.

HOW DO YOU SEE THE NEAR FUTURE OF ARCHITECTURE?

Elitsa: Carbon neutral. Regulations to control and reduce carbon emissions in the construction sector are becoming even stricter. The production of renewable energy by each building will be soon mandatory and this will be reflected in the design of the facades and roofs.

Dimitar: In terms of materials, the hottest trend in the world right now is processed wood. We are literally witnessing a race for the tallest wooden building, the largest wooden neighborhood, etc. Of course, the development of this technology requires increased planting and cultivating of new massifs for logging. If the cut trees are newly planted ones and not old forest, the biodiversity should not suffer.



Blagoevgrad Innovation Park



Other environmentally friendly construction technologies are being launched, such as eco-concrete.

Elitsa: Innovation in terms of materials is a huge niche. We are now beginning a partnership with a Bulgarian startup – PNEUMA, who are producing carbon-capturing materials from algae. The application opportunities are very diverse, and I am certain that very soon we will see the first products on the market.

at the edge of the impossible. Concert halls, stadiums, railway stations and airports will continue to challenge architects and industry in the application of new and high-end technologies that will place such buildings in the ranking of the new "wonders of the world".

Dimitar: We will be seeing two main types of city trends:

- The existing urban fabric will continue to densify, while achieving higher efficiency in the use of urban spaces and humanizing the overconstructed areas. There will be more high-rise buildings, well-connected pedestrian areas and shared transportation.
- At the same time, to oppose some of the failed urban models, brand new concepts will be launched: of floating cities, cities in the desert, cities at the North Pole, and perhaps on other planets. Today science fiction from the 60s seems more of a not-so-distant future.

WHAT ABOUT THE FUTURE OF CITIES?

Elitsa: The importance of cities in terms of economic and political power will continue to grow and outweigh little by little countries and nationalities. Cities will continue to be the trend setters in leading the competition in terms of design of public buildings and spaces.

The battlefield for creativity will continue to be in the large-scale and ambitious projects



Elitsa: It is also important to mention that remote work and mobility, in terms of people but also of buildings, will be a long-term trend. 3d-printed and modular homes, container-type as well as easily transportable capsules, will be entering the market and trying to offer more affordable, compact, fast-to-produce and ready-to-install homes, which at the same time can easily be relocated and installed in a new place.

Socially engaged projects will also continue to receive a lot of admiration in the public space. Reimagining social services in a



smarter and more sensitive world will produce increasingly exciting architectural results. We will witness a new type of schools, kindergartens, hospitals, homes for the elderly, for socially weak people.

AI IS IN THE CENTRE OF A HEATED DISCUSSION ON HOW IT WILL AFFECT OR EVEN CHANGE ARCHITECTURE. WHAT IS YOUR OPINION?

Elitsa: We will witness a real boom in the application of artificial intelligence in engineering and design. The speed of generating solutions will increase tremendously, which will shorten the design time. Attempts will be made to ignore man in the design of buildings and even more – of interiors and 3D visualizations.

AI could be a huge improvement in the speed of design, especially in terms of technical drawings and details. I do believe though that in terms of creativity and concepts the lead will stay with humans for quite a while still.

Dimitar: In the micro world of housing, smart technologies will continue to enter massively, which will allow rethinking of traditional functions such as kitchen, bedroom, bathroom. Multi-layer lighting, interactive control, integration with mobile applications, screens, clouds, etc. will be mandatory attributes in the living environment.

We are currently exploring a partnership with a leading developer of smart solutions to be able to transform spaces depending on the momentous need of the people that inhabit them and transforming not only the colours, lights, the microclimate, but also views through the “windows” – you can travel the world and have your dream panorama without even living your apartment.

The team behind United Master Architects (or UMA) consists of 21 architects and project managers thus ranking the office among the 10 largest in Bulgaria. Besides Elitsa

Panayotova and Dimitar Paskalev, the lead architects include their long-term partners and established professionals. The scope of services covers the entire life-cycle of each investment project – from urban and master planning, through building design, to interior design and project management.

The portfolio includes signature projects as: Sopharma and Litex Towers, Ring Mall Sofia, SiteGround and Hypoport Headquarters, Residential Park Sofia, Business Park Sofia, Sofia Airport Control Tower and many more.

United Master Architects' unique expertise in complex projects and façade design and already proven innovative, sustainable and ethical approach to architecture and urban design renders it as a preferred and reliable partner to progressive investors on the local and international markets.





Atanas Raykov, VP of Growth, Key Markets | Rakuten Viber



1. Please present yourself with a few words.

AR: I've been a tech enthusiast and geek all my life, fan of tennis and all kinds of nature. Father of two super cute & funny toddler twin boys and big believer in the positive power of community help – investing into the new generation of students and entrepreneurs.

2. What do you do for a living?

AR: I'm the global VP of Growth of Rakuten Viber, which means that I'm responsible for our Marketing, PR & Business development functions around the key regions in the world and across most time zones.

3. What do you like most about your work?

AR: That it's super global, very dynamic and it has positive impact in the lives of millions of people around the world. It's a very friendly and caring environment with rock-solid do-good company values that is constantly challenging the status quo in one of the most competitive industries in the world.

4. What are you usually engaged in off-hours?

AR: Spending as much time with my family – my wife and our twin toddlers. It's one of the



funniest and most rewarding things ever. I also try to squeeze in from time to time with catch-ups with friends, mentoring young people and start-ups, walks in the nature, sports and reading (all kinds of stuff).

5. What are you most proud of in your life?

AR: That I've managed to pursue a global career out of Sofia, while being close to my family, friends and supporting the local community. I've had many tempting chances and nudges to leave Bulgaria but I've always preferred to stay here and do my best for a better Bulgaria.

6. Who / what gives you inspiration?

AR: To look at the world through the curious eyes of my kids. It gives you such a clean and

unburdened perspective of the world that you feel rejuvenated.

7. Who was the person, who influenced your life most?

AR: Probably my late grandmother who was a true citizen of the world and an amazing woman that had a very long, vivid and impactful life. She thought me to be kind, to never take myself too seriously and to always look at the greater good.

8. Share an interesting fact about you.

AR: I'm 1/8 Italian (a long story) and even before I knew it I was a huge fan of everything Italian – as we say in Bulgaria “the blood doesn't turn into water” :)

Who you are,

WHEN YOU ARE NOT
SENIOR CONSULTANT, OFFICE SERVICES

Nikolay Mitov



What do you usually do when you are not at work?

Mostly spending time with my family, having walks in the parks or in the mountains.

Who do you usually spend your spare time with?

My “double-K” – Kaloyan (4.y.o.) and Kaya (1.y.o.).

One thing that others don't know about you?

I love nature, fishing, and spending time in the mountains. Camping was one of my biggest hobbies for the weekends back in the days. I also wanted to join the army and start a military career. So romantic, huh. :)

What was the last book you read?

„Щяло да вали” (It Was Going to Rain) – Ivaylo Gogov and “The Long Walk” by Stephen King. Currently, I'm reading the autobiography of Jurgen Klopp – one of the most successful football managers and leaders of all time.



What is your favourite saying/motto?

I don't have one. I believe that we're all born to be different, therefore I wouldn't stick to one, said by another person. I've been taught by experience, that we all have a path and need to forge our own success, so maybe I would say that “doing the right thing” on every occasion would lead to better living and success both in business and in personal life. Because if you do what's right, this will eventually get back to you.

What talents do you have other than those you apply regularly at work?

I've been 3 times national champion in kickboxing during my teenage years, I've won 2 golden medals in Judo and most of my life I've been spending in the sports hall. Back in the days, I've been also training football, swimming, volleyball, Kyokushin karate.



I have played for the official fan club “Liverpool Bulgaria” team for more than 7 years.

When I was much younger, I used to work as elevator technician, croupier and bartender – so I can fix elevators, train people to play blackjack and make great cocktails :)

After

COLLIERS

Introducing some of our talented interns

Nikola Petrov

In Colliers: Market Research Intern,
September – November 2010

- MBA | Hawai'i Pacific University
Business Administration & Management



What did you like best about Colliers?

Embarking on an internship journey with Colliers right out of college is a tremendous

advantage for any aspiring professional not only in the real estate industry. During my tenure as a market research intern at

Colliers, I was astounded by the scope of both the company's research methodologies and high caliber of people I had the pleasure to work with. Collaborating with seasoned professionals provided me with invaluable insights into the world of real estate, and their mentorship has been instrumental in my growth.

As I was just introduced to the workforce it was a bit overwhelming at first, however, I remember how accommodating the team was. I did not know much about the industry, yet the team made me feel very welcomed and as if I belonged there. That led me to enjoy going to the office. The people I had the privilege to collaborate with were very professional, knowledgeable, yet very relaxed

and kind. Their mentorship and camaraderie made my experience at Colliers not only professionally enriching, but also personally fulfilling. Some of those people turned out to become lifelong friends, which is what I loved most about Colliers.

Share a memorable or fun experience at Colliers?

I remember nervously walking into the office the first day of work. As I was being shown around the office it was pointed out there was a foosball table in the kitchen. What a big sigh of relief...there was at least one way for me to bring value to the team...I wonder if that foosball table is still around?

Dimitar Delchev

In Colliers: Internship at the Marketing Department, January – March 2007

- Bachelor Thesis with Colliers (Summer 2007). Topic: "Marketing and Financing Holiday Homes in Bulgaria: Lessons Learned from Spain and an Internship in Bulgaria"
- Master of Arts in Sales and Marketing (FH-Wiesbaden, Germany)



What did you like best about Colliers?

I received the opportunity to do an internship at a period (Winter 2007) that almost no other company could offer you in Bulgaria. Openness, free spirit, international team, professional; Great colleagues, great fun, lots of experience and memories for a lifetime.

Share a memorable or fun experience at Colliers?

Visiting the venue for Mall Varna and the corporate team building afterwards. All the

moments in the dining area around the table football :)

Tell us one thing you learned in Colliers that stayed with you ever since (as a life lesson)?

Hard work gets paid off.

What do you do now?

D.D.: IT Specialist at BMW Group in Munich, Germany (responsible for IT Core infrastructure) •

Deyan Yordanov

In Colliers: Intern, Valuation and Advisory Services, Summer 2022 (3 months)

- Bachelor's degree Property Economics (Valuation Surveying) RICS Accredited at Technological University Dublin.
- Currently studying Management of Built Environment at Politecnico di Milano



What did you like best about Colliers?

In my brief internship time of three months at Colliers, my foremost appreciation lies in the remarkable individuals comprising the organisation. From the moment of my arrival, I was greatly welcomed and introduced to the company's vision, mission, and, most importantly, the talented individuals who drive its success. Among the Real Estate companies in Bulgaria, I chose Colliers, because the company distinguished itself as a superlative choice for advancing my educational pursuits during the final year of my Bachelor's Degree. The unparalleled learning opportunities presented by Colliers have significantly enriched my academic journey, equipping me with invaluable insights and experiences that will undoubtedly contribute to my future endeavours.

Share a memorable or fun experience at Colliers?

During this unforgettable three-month employment at Colliers, a sequence of notable events highlighted the exceptional nature of this organisation. The company's energising team-building event, to which I invited, was one such highlight. This two-day getaway was a fantastic event that left an

unforgettable impact on my memory and a desire to go back to the experience. The thoughtful gesture of a welcome package and signs of appreciation from the individuals I had the pleasure of working alongside added to the warmth of my welcome. These gestures not only represented Colliers' commitment to creating a positive atmosphere, but also a sense of friendship and commonality that characterises the company's culture.

Tell us one thing you learned in Colliers that stayed with you ever since (as a life lesson)?

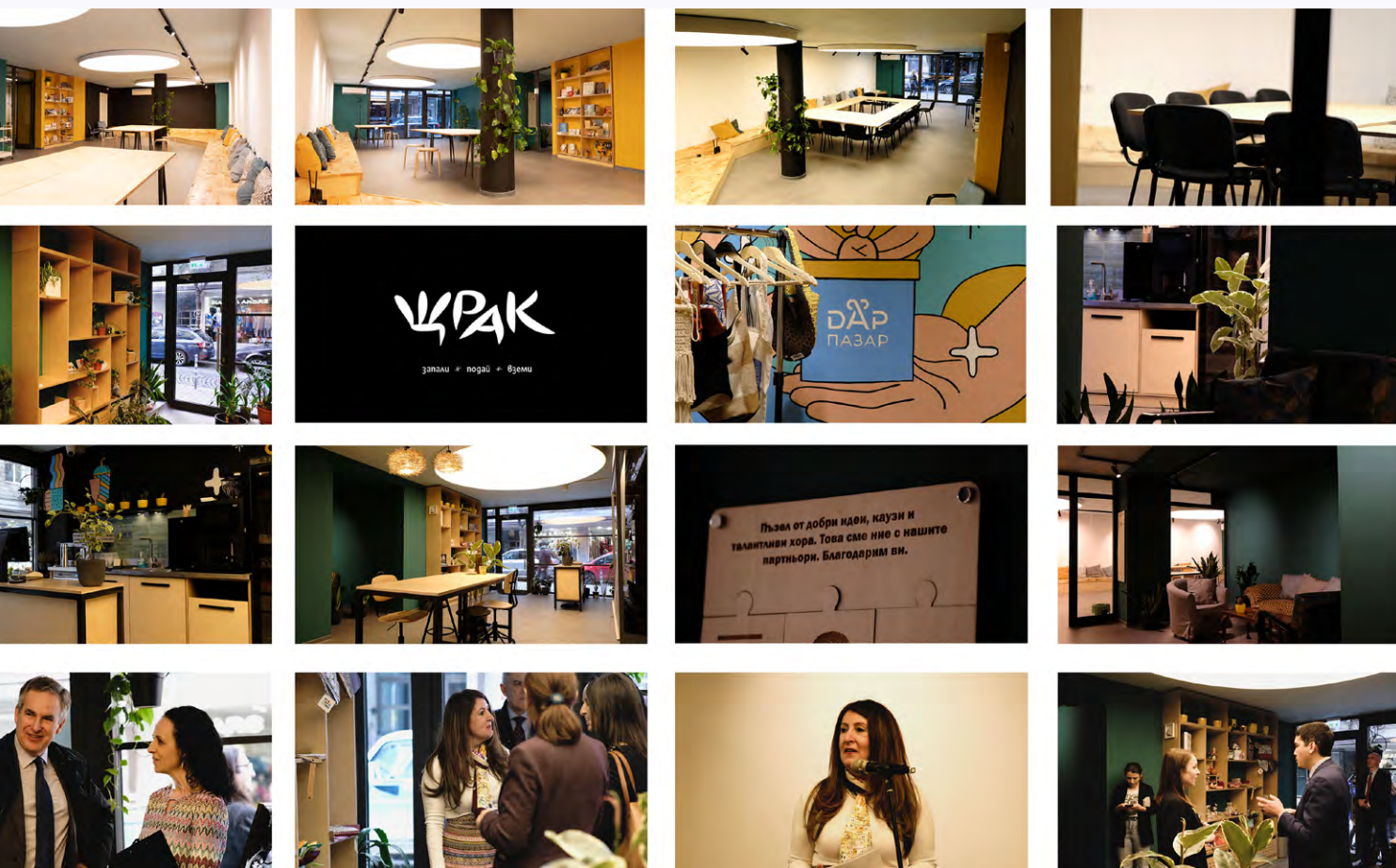
Continual Learning could be something that springs to mind, because we all know that we continue to learn new lessons and seek to enrich ourselves with new knowledge as long as we live.

What do you do now?

After completing my bachelor's degree, I moved to Milan, Italy to pursue a master's degree at Polimi with the intention of broadening my scope of competence and adding something new to my educational and professional portfolio, which could be beneficial when I return to Bulgaria.



YOUR NEW FAVORITE SOCIAL SPACE IN THE HEART OF SOFIA



Shtrak is a place where we tell good stories and celebrate achievements – yours, ours and those of Bulgarian social enterprises from all over the country. Together. This is what the new shared social space of the Bulgarian Center for Not-for-Profit Law, the Bulgarian Biodiversity Foundation and

JAMBA stands for. A hub that gives people with different abilities and from different communities a chance to engage in common collaborations. A place where people with different social vulnerabilities are being educated, trained and included in the labor market in a way that brings back their dignity.



In Shtrak, you can find products of social enterprises from DarPazar (online shop), which support various causes affecting the lives of all of us – from nature protection, culture development, preservation of traditions, employment of people in vulnerable situations, and many more.

People like Nadia from Maria's World Foundation who makes sure the venue is clean, tidy and well organized for every event. She also makes great coffee and she's very good in puzzle solving. Along with that, she develops her social, communication and team skills so that she feels the sense of belonging and responsibility.

Shtrak combines a café with a small bistro, an event space, as well as a shop with products of Bulgarian social enterprises. Here, talented creators and artists offer unique products, tackling a series of social problems. Single mothers supported by the Nativity of Christ Foundation find additional income, young people who grew up in institutions learn valuable skills in the Social Teahouse, refugees find the support they need thanks to Caritas, and people with mental health difficulties from the "Worlds" Workshop find a new way of self-expression.

Shtrak is a community. It's not just a good venue in the heart of Sofia with another souvenir shop. Here every corner and every piece of furniture can tell inspiring stories about overcoming fears, struggles and addictions. Even by purchasing a morning coffee with a croissant, one becomes part of our joint efforts to support those in need. This is how easy providing encouragement can be. It's that simple.



This is who we are and these are the heroes we're doing life with. Join us. You'll find Shtrak at 3 Hristo Belchev St., ground floor, where we learn together that support can take many forms.

Learn about us at www.shtrak.org
Follow us on Facebook and Instagram.

ARCHITECTURE AND SIGHTS FROM...

Baku



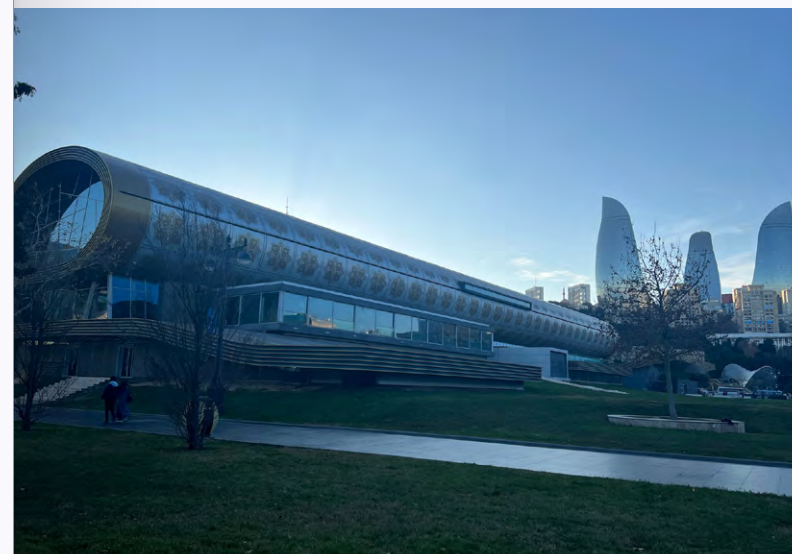
photography by
ILIYAN YANKULOV

Passionate traveller! Traveling is my way to relax, explore the world and give new aspects of my thoughts. During the last few years I've managed to visit many countries and cultures, met special and extraordinary people, and gathered impressions on how diverse and alike the world is. During my travel journeys, I have found another passion of mine – photography. I am not trying to get the perfect shots of a popular site, but I always try to find some small and authentic aspects of the places I visit and show them in the most colourful way. Therefore I intentionally don't read professional photography articles and don't use professional gear – an iPhone and a small Spark drone is all I need. :)





photography by
ILIYAN YANKULOV





Vesela Petrova
Operations Director | Editor
vesela.petrova@colliers.com

Colliers | Sofia
European Trade Center
115K Tsarigradsko Shose Blvd.
Build. B, 7th floor | 1784 Sofia
phone: +359 2 976 9 976

colliers.com



The content of this magazine is based upon public information sources, that are considered to be reliable, but for the completeness or accuracy of which we assume no liability. All articles and opinions in the magazine represent the independent judgment and opinion of their authors as of the date of the issue and Colliers International is not responsible for any judgment and opinion of the authors.

The content of this magazine is for information purposes only. The information is given on an 'as is' basis and should not be regarded as a substitute for obtaining individual advice. Readers are encouraged to consult their professional advisors prior to acting on any of the material contained in this magazine.

Neither Colliers International, nor any of its directors, officers and employees shall accept any liability whatsoever vis-à-vis any recipient of this magazine and/or any third party for any loss howsoever arising from the use of this document or its contents herewith.

The information contained in this magazine may not be redistributed, reproduced or published for any purpose, without prior consent by Colliers International.

Copyright © 2023 Colliers