

**Welcome address by Mr. Norbert Beckmann-Dierkes, Director, Bulgaria Office, KONRAD ADENAUER STIFTUNG**

Dear Dr. Shentov,  
Dear Commissioner,  
Dear Prime Minister,  
Mayor,  
Minister of Defense,  
Members of Parliament,  
Parliament on the communities,  
Dear Members of the economy, you are today the most important ones,  
and Dear Friends,

It is an honour and a pleasure for the Konrad Adenauer Foundation to support the 19th National Innovation Forum.

For the Konrad Adenauer Foundation innovation has always been a key area - not only in Germany but also in all other countries in which we work, including Bulgaria.

Our foundation attaches great importance to observing and analysing economic developments, challenges, and global innovations.

Changes with far-reaching economic implications are happening before our eyes nowadays. An accelerating process of digitalisation of the economy is under way, and the rapid rise of Asian economies, especially the Chinese economy, is creating tensions in terms of international trade and security.

The Economy and Innovation department of our Foundation provides policy recommendations for both a national and a European economic and innovation policy on how to achieve future prosperity.

Urgent questions: What products, services and business models will, in the future, help to create prosperity in Germany and Europe? What regulatory framework, what incentives and what ethical rules are needed to promote innovation and thus increase our competitiveness? How does European economic policy provide an overarching framework for the 27 member states and what are the priorities with respect to international partners?

Innovation must be sustainable, because traditional forms of innovation may result in profitable products, services, and processes – but also harm employees or over-exploit natural resources.

Sustainable innovation involves making changes to a company's products, services, or processes to generate long-term social and environmental benefits while creating economic profits for the firm.

Sustainable innovation does not come easy. Achieving it takes time, commitment, and effort.

The economic and socio-political regulatory framework for a balance between state and market represents the Christian Democratic concept of the social market economy. It is an essential pillar of the German economy and society. The social market economy calls for both state action as well as entrepreneurial freedom and competition. It has always been the bracket that holds together the principle of economic freedom with the principle of social balance and the preservation of mankind.

Let me thank our partners and all the participants of this conference.

I would like already now to congratulate the award winner 2023, although I don't know who he or she is.

The Konrad Adenauer Foundation wishes the National Innovation Forum all possible success in its work.