BULGARIAN ECONOMY

MONTHLY REPORT

Based on statistical data up to September 17, 2020

In March 2020 COVID-19 restrictive measures were widely introduced by all EU Member States, making a significant impact on economic development. In Bulgaria a State of emergency was introduced on 13 March and lifted in mid-May, while certain anti-epidemic measures still remain relevant in a declared state of an emergency epidemic situation. The effects of the containment measures are evident through different economic indicators in March-August.

Gross Domestic Product

In Q2 GDP decreased by 8.7% yoy. The highest negative contribution came from exports, down by 19.6%, as the sharp decline in services was decisive for the overall dynamic. At the same time, imports also dropped significantly and as a result net export had almost neutral effect on GDP. The restrictive measures due to COVID-19 in April and May led to a decrease in household consumption by 5.9%. Investments were down

by 21.3%, mostly due to lower inventories, while the decline in gross fixed capital formation reached 8.8%.

Gross value added decreased by 8% yoy. The biggest drops were recorded in arts, entertainment and recreation, in trade; transport; accommodation and in manufacturing.

Short-term Business Statistics

In July, after a temporary slow-down, the negative trend in short-term indicators intensified again. The yoy decline in industrial production accelerated, owing to electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply, manufacture of machinery and equipment and manufacture of fabricated metal products. The decrease in turnover also accelerated, mostly due to lower sales on the domestic market, as a result of higher negative contribution of electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply. In retail trade, the pace of decline on an annual basis remained almost unchanged

from a month ago, with the largest contribution coming from foods, beverages and tobacco and automotive fuels. After the reported positive dynamics in June, in July the construction output decreased again, led by lower building construction.

In August consumer confidence recovered the loss in July, but still remained below the pre-COVID level. Business climate indicator improved marginally in the month, up by 0.5 pts. The business climate in industry and construction was unchanged from a month earlier. At the same time a marked increase was recorded in services where higher demand was reported. The expectations in retail trade were pessimistic.

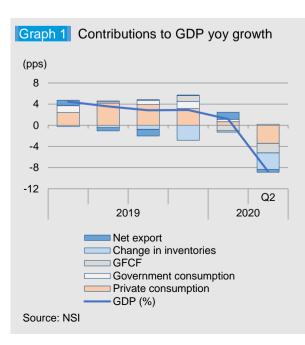
Labour Market

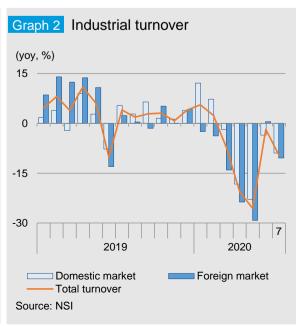
In Q2 the number of employed amounted to 3 514.4 thousand (according to ESA) and decreased by 3.3% yoy. led by the reduced economic activities in many sectors, due to the measures taken to limit the spread of COVID-19.

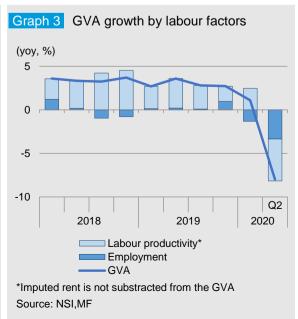
The largest decline was observed in employed in trade, transportation and storage, accommodation and food services activities, down by 10%, and in industry (except construction), down by 4%. The "60/40" measure, adopted to preserve the employment in the economy during COVID-19, fulfilled its goals and limited both the loss of jobs as a result of the restrictive measures, as well as the increase in unemployment. According to the MF estimates, about 170 thousand jobs were protected by the measure in the period March-June.

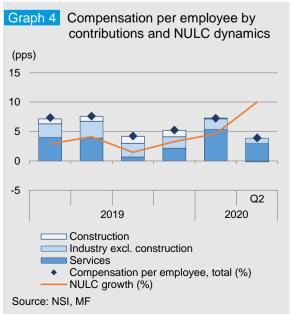
In Q2 the number of employees increased by 114 thousand people or 3.3% qoq, which means that the loss of employment on an annual basis is primarily due to much lower seasonal employment in 2020 than in previous years.

The decline in economic activity, together with the limited number of layoffs, led to a sharp increase in nominal unit labour cost (NULC), up by 10% vov. The introduced restrictive measures against the spread of COVID-19









resulted in lower growth in compensation per employee, down to 3.9% yoy in Q2 from 7.3% in Q1. In industry, the lower growth of compensations, up by 2.4%, and the decrease in employment failed to compensate for the decline in gross value added and NULC increased by 11.5% yoy. In services, the increase in compensation per employee slowed down to 4.7%, but the NULC growth was relatively lower than in industry – at 7.2%. In the most affected by the pandemic activity - trade, transport, accommodation and food services, a decrease of 7.8% yoy was observed in compensation of employees, and an increase in NULC of 11.8%. At the same time, for the other services NULC dynamics was more favourable than in Q1, which partially compensated the observed deterioration in the most affected sectors and determined the overall better NULC performance in services compared to industry.

Inflation

In August, consumer prices increased by 0.4% mom, due to the price increases in transport services and energy. Services prices and in particular the prices of international flights held the highest contribution. The latter usually go up in July and August, but this year, due to the COVID-19 crisis, the increase was only in August. Liquid fuel prices continued to rise

slightly because of the higher oil prices in July and August.

The annual inflation accelerated in August for the first time since the beginning of the year, up to 0.6% yoy, from 0.4% yoy in July. Dynamics was determined by the higher prices of services other than catering and the slowdown in the decline in energy prices. Food prices inflation in both unprocessed and processed foods slowed down in the last two months. In the latter group, the dynamics was close to the food producer prices for the domestic market. Core inflation increased to 1.9% yoy in August, up from 1.6% yoy in July.

External Sector

In June, the significant yoy decline in net travel receipts led to a lower monthly current account surplus than a year earlier. Export of travel services decreased by 59.7% yoy, as foreign visits dropped by 66.1% yoy. COVID-19 related travel restrictions impacted the tourist season and more than two-thirds of the decline in arrivals in June was due to lower holiday trips. *Travel* import was also negatively affected, but the decline in spending abroad could not offset the drop in receipts and surplus on travel dwindled by almost 90%. *Transport* and *other services* bal-

ances also worsened. Total services surplus went down by 76.3% yoy in June. Continuing the dynamics from previous months, remittances to the country kept decreasing, keeping the overall income balance lower yoy, while trade deficit improved as import declined faster than export. Nonetheless, in accumulated terms current account surplus remained higher than a year earlier and in H1 reached 1.3% of projected GDP.

At end-June gross external debt was little changed yoy and mom and stood at EUR 34.1bn or 56.9% of projected GDP. At the same time gross assets kept increasing, surpassing the debt by 6.4% of projected GDP.

Financial Sector

At end-July the annual growth rate of credit to the private sector continued to decline, down to 6% from 6.7% a month earlier, but there was a positive mom change. The slowdown was mainly driven by credit to non-financial corporations, up by 1.8% vs 2.8% in June. Credit to households also slowed down, up by 7.7% yoy at end-July compared to 8% at end-June. Both consumer and housing loans lost momentum, as their growth rates came down to 6.7% yoy and 12.7% yoy, respectively, from 7.1% and 13.3% in June. However, credit to both segments increased mom,

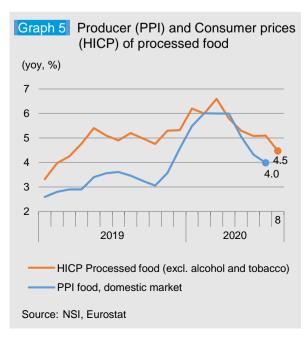
as a result of higher standard loans and lower bad and restructured loans.

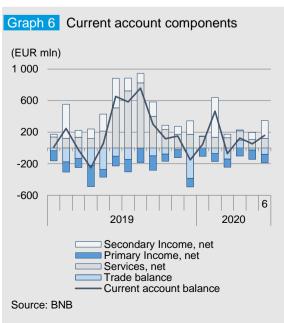
The weighted average interest rates on new loans to non-financial corporations and households increased in July, up by 31 and 13 bps, respectively. It was probably due to the tightening credit standards and increases in risk premiums by banks in line with the unfavourable macroeconomic environment.

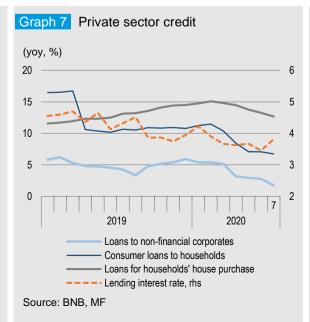
Fiscal Sector

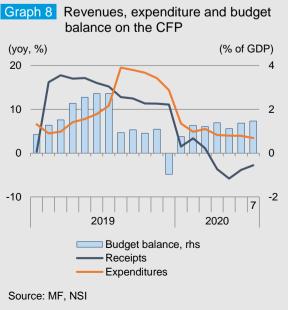
In January-July a surplus of 1.5% of projected GDP was reported on the Consolidated Fiscal Program. At end-July the decline in total revenue and grants slowed down to 2.7% yoy, after reaching 5.8% at end-May, as the drop in tax receipts wound down. The highest contribution to the total revenue decline had nontax revenues, down by 16.5% yoy. Regarding tax revenues, only social security contributions increased, up by 3.8%. Grants also went up by 26.7%. Expenditures increased by 3.5% yoy, as personnel and social spending, incl. scholarships, went up, while current maintenance, subsidies, interest and capital expenditure and the contribution to the EU budget decreased.

Government debt amounted to 20.9% of projected GDP.









Main economic indicators

Detailed data in xslx format are available <u>here</u>.

MAIN ECONOMIC INDICATORS	unit*	Α	NNUAL DAT	A		QU	ARTERLY D.	ATA							N	IONTHLY DA	TA					
—Gross Domestic Product ¹		2017	2018	2019	II'19	III'19	IV'19	l'20	II'20	08'19	09'19	10'19	11'19	12'19	01'20	02'20	03'20	04'20	05'20	06'20	07'20	08'2
GDP	%, yoy	3.5	3.1	3.4	3.6	2.9	2.9	1.2	-8.7													
Consumption	%, yoy	3.9	4.6	5.7	5.9	6.8	5.8	1.4	-4.2													
Gross fixed capital formation	%, yoy	3.2	5.4	2.2	0.9	0.9	5.6	-7.1	-8.8													
Export	%, yoy	5.8	1.7	1.9	0.3	3.7	-0.3	1.8	-19.6													
Import	%, yoy	7.4	5.7	2.4	1.2	6.3	-0.5	0.3	-18.9													
Agriculture	%, yoy	9.0	-2.0	3.6	4.5	4.0	4.2	1.4	-1.3													
Idustry excl. Construction	%, yoy	3.3	-1.5	2.6	0.6	2.7	5.8	-1.6	-12.3													
Construction	%, yoy	4.5	1.4	3.4	6.6	3.2	5.3	1.1	-9.0													
Services	%, yoy	4.1	5.8	3.0	4.5	3.4	1.3	1.9	-6.9													
Adjustments	%, yoy	-0.5	0.6	6.1	3.4	3.2	3.9	1.6	-13.0													
—Short-term business statistics ²		2017	2018	2019	II'19	III'19	IV'19	l'20	II'20	08'19	09'19	10'19	11'19	12'19	01'20	02'20	03'20	04'20	05'20	06'20	07'20	08'20
Industrial production	%, yoy	3.4	0.3	0.6	-0.2	-0.1	0.1	-2.3	-13.0	-2.7	1.8	1.9	-1.8	0.3	-0.5	-0.7	-5.4	-15.9	-18.3	-4.8	-5.9	
Industrial turnover	%, yoy	9.3	3.4	3.2	1.8	3.0	2.6	0.2	-16.1	1.9	2.9	3.1	0.8	4.1	5.6	2.4	-7.4	-20.6	-25.6	-1.8	-9.6	
Domestic turnover	%, yoy	4.9	6.3	2.3	1.1	4.9	2.3	5.9	-15.0	2.9	6.5	1.5	1.3	3.9	12.2	7.3	-1.9	-18.3	-22.9	-3.5	-8.9	
Foreign market turnover	%, yoy	15.1	0.2	4.4	2.7	0.5	3.1	-6.7	-17.5	0.4	-1.5	5.2	0.1	4.3	-2.4	-3.7	-14.0	-23.7	-29.3	0.5	-10.4	
Retail trade turnover	%, yoy	5.4	3.3	3.3	1.9	4.1	4.1	-2.4	-19.4	3.3	3.8	2.6	3.3	6.2	3.2	5.5	-14.2	-20.0	-20.7	-17.7	-17.7	
Construction output	%, yoy	4.6	1.6	3.9	3.2	5.4	2.1	-4.1	-10.2	0.5	9.2	3.4	-1.2	4.4	1.7	-2.1	-11.6	-15.5	-17.7	2.9	-3.8	
Total business climate	balance	26.6	28.8	27.9	30.3	27.4	26.1	26.7	-6.0	26.4	26.4	25.0	26.2	27.1	28.5	27.7	24.0	-17.7	-5.9	5.5	8.0	8.5
Industry	balance	26.9	28.1	24.7	27.2	23.5	21.3	25.0	0.6	23.9	21.8	20.8	21.1	21.8	26.8	26.8	21.6	-10.2	1.2	10.9	11.0	11.2
Retail trade	balance	37.9	41.4	42.7	44.1	43.2	42.7	39.0	-1.5	41.4	43.2	40.9	43.6	43.5	41.6	41.0	34.4	-17.6	-1.4	14.4	20.8	17.9
		24.6	28.3	30.8	34.3	31.5	28.8	31.1	2.9	29.5	30.3	26.4	28.7	31.3	30.3	30.8	32.2	-13.4	3.9	18.3	16.5	16.7
Construction	balance																					
Services	balance	16.7	18.3	16.8	18.7	15.6	16.4	13.5	-32.8	13.4	15.1	16.0	16.1	17.0	17.0	13.4	10.3	-36.8	-34.3	-27.3	-19.1	-14.5
Consumer confidence	balance	-19.6	-20.3	-24.2	-24.7	-23.5	-22.1	-22.5	-32.0	-25.5	-22.4	-21.2	-22.9	-22.2	-21.7	-21.1	-24.7	-36.9	-29.4	-29.6	-32.5	-29.8
—Labour market Participation rate (15+)		2017	2018	2019	II'19	III'19	IV'19	l'20	II'20	08'19	09'19	10'19	11'19	12'19	01'20	02'20	03'20	04'20	05'20	06'20	07'20	08'20
	%	55.4	55.3	56.6	57.0	57.4	56.4	55.0	55.2													
Employment rate (15+) Employment (SNA)	% %, yoy	51.9	52.4	54.2	54.7	55.3	54.0	52.4	52.0													
	.,,,	1.8	-0.1	0.3	0.2	0.1	1.0	-1.3	-3.3													
Unemployment rate (LFS)	%	6.2	5.2	4.2	4.2	3.7	4.1	4.6	5.9													
Unemployment rate (Employment agency)	%	7.2	6.2	5.6	5.4	5.3	5.8	6.4	8.7	5.3	5.3	5.6	5.8	5.9	6.3	6.2	6.7	8.9	9.0	8.3	7.9	7.5
Nominal wage	%, yoy	9.4	10.5	11.1	12.0	11.8	12.1	9.0	6.1	11.8	11.5	12.0	12.4	12.0	11.0	10.5	5.9	3.3	7.0	8.1		
Real wage3	%, yoy	8.1	7.7	8.4	9.0	9.4	9.6	5.9	5.0	9.1	9.8	10.2	10.0	8.6	7.3	7.2	3.5	2.0	5.9	7.2		
Labour productivity (GDP per employed)	%, yoy	1.7	3.2	3.0	3.4	2.8	1.9	2.5	-5.6													
Real ULC (GDP)	%, yoy	4.5	2.2	-1.6	-2.5	0.3	-1.3	2.9	8.1													
Nominal ULC (GDP)	%, yoy	8.7	6.3	3.0	4.1	1.5	3.3	4.6	10.0													
—Prices		2017	2018	2019	II'19	III'19	IV'19	l'20	II'20	08'19	09'19	10'19	11'19	12'19	01'20	02'20	03'20	04'20	05'20	06'20	07'20	08'20
National index of consumer prices (CPI)	%, yoy	2.1	2.8	3.1	3.3	2.7	3.1	3.6	1.6	2.9	2.3	2.4	3.0	3.8	4.2	3.7	3.0	1.8	1.3	1.6	1.2	1.2
Harmonized index of consumer prices (HICP)	%, yoy	1.2	2.6	2.5	2.8	2.2	2.3	3.0	1.1	2.5	1.6	1.6	2.2	3.1	3.4	3.1	2.4	1.3	1.0	0.9	0.4	0.6
Producer price index, domestic market	%, yoy	4.2	4.1	3.8	3.4	4.3	4.1	3.2	-1.2	4.5	4.5	3.8	4.0	4.5	4.7	3.1	1.7	-1.1	-1.6	-0.9	-0.7	
Producer price index, non-domestic market	%, yoy	6.0	3.9	2.0	1.7	2.1	1.0	-1.3	-8.9	2.0	2.5	0.0	1.0	2.1	3.7	-1.1	-6.2	-9.1	-10.7	-6.8	-4.2	
Consolidated fiscal program (cummulative)		2017	2018	2019	II'19	III'19	IV'19	l'20	II'20	07'19	08'19	09'19	10'19	11'19	12'19	01'20	02'20	03'20	04'20	05'20	06'20	07'20
Revenue and grants	BGN mln	35 317	39 651	44 049	22 286	32 799	44 049	10 977	21 432	29 306	32 798	36 318	39 854	44 049	3 775	7 464	10 977	14 623	17 637	21 431	25 267	
Total expenses	BGN mln	34 471	39 516	45 200	19 063	31 535	45 201	9 551	19 821	28 193	31 533	35 236	38 553	45 201	2 896	5 984	9 550	12 992	16 323	19 818	23 543	
Contribution to EU budget	BGN mln	888	1 083	1 193	718	998	1 193	374	689	904	998	1 091	1 136	1 193	187	305	374	474	615	689	755	
Cash deficit (-) / surplus (+)	BGN mln	846	135	-1 151	3 223	1 264	-1 152	1 426	1 610	1 113	1 264	1 083	1 301	-1 152	879	1 480	1 427	1 631	1 313	1 613	1 724	
	% of GDP	0.8	0.1	-1.0	2.7	1.1	-1.0	1.2	1.4	0.9	1.1	0.9	1.1	-1.0	0.7	1.3	1.2	1.4	1.1	1.4	1.5	
Government and government guaranteed debt	BGN mln	25 531	23 942	23 755	23 086	23 646	23 755	23 795	24 789	23 676	23 646	23 680	23 820	23 755	23 836	23 831	23 795	24 955	24 878	24 789	24 466	
	% of GDP	25.0	21.8	20.0	19.5	19.9	20.0	20.3	21.1	20.0	19.9	20.0	20.1	20.0	20.3	20.3	20.3	21.3	21.2	21.1	20.9	
Fiscal reserve	BGN mln	10 289	9 365	8 768	11 668	10 138	8 768	10 297	9 894	10 341	10 138	10 213	10 545	8 768	10 662	10 636	10 297	10 956	10 186	9 894	10 139	
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Intercompany lending % of GDP 24.8 23.5 38.8 22.2 22.0 38.8 40.1 39.6 22.0 22.0 38.8 38.7 38.8 39.1 39.2 39.6 39.0 39.3 39.6 Net external debt % of GDP 3.2 -2.5 -3.6 -3.2 -4.1 -3.6 -5.1 -6.4 -3.8 -4.1 -4.0 -3.4 -3.6 -3.5 -4.5 -5.1 -5.6 -5.9 -6.4 Short term GED % of GDP 23.4 23.9 24.7 24.1 24.5 24.7 23.3 23.2 24.4 24.5 24.5 24.7 24.7 24.2 24.1 23.3 23.5 23.1 23.2 -8.4 24.5 24.7 24.7 24.2 24.1 23.3 23.5 23.1 23.2 -8.4 24.5 24.7 24.7 24.7 24.2 24.1 23.3 23.5 23.1 23.2 -8.4 24.5 24.7 24.7 24.7 24.7 24.7 24.7 24.7 24.7
Net external debt % of GDP 3.2 -2.5 -3.6 -3.2 -4.1 -3.6 -5.1 -6.4 -3.8 -4.1 -4.0 -3.4 -3.6 -3.5 -4.5 -5.1 -5.6 -5.9 -6.4 Short term GED % of GDP 23.4 23.9 24.7 24.1 24.5 24.7 23.3 23.2 24.4 24.5 24.5 24.7 24.7 24.2 24.1 23.3 23.5 23.1 23.2 -8.1 -8.1 -5.6 -5.9 -6.4 Short term GED 8.1 -5.1 -5.6 -5.9 -6.4 Short term GED 9.1 -5.1 -5.6 -5.9 -5.1 -5.6 -5.9 -6.4 Short term GED 9.1 -5.1 -5.6 -5.9 -5.1 -5.6 -5.9 -6.4 Short term GED 9.1 -5.1 -5.6 -5.9 -5.1 -5.6 -5.9 -5.1 -5.6 -5.9 -6.4 Short term GED 9.1 -5.1 -5.6 -5.9 -5.1 -5.6 -5.9 -5.1 -5.6 -5.9 -6.4 Short term GED 9.1 -5.1 -5.6 -5.9 -5.1 -5.6 -5.9 -5.1 -5.6 -5.9 -5.1 -5.6 -5.9 -5.1 -5.6 -5.9 -5.1 -5.6 -5.9 -5.1 -5.6 -5.9 -5.1 -5.6 -5.9 -5.1 -5.0 Short term GED 9.1 -5.1 -5.6 -5.9 -5.1 -5.0 Short term GED 9.1 -5.1 -5.6 -5.1 -5.0 Short term GED 9.1 -5.1 -5.0 Short term
Short term GED % of GDP 23.4 23.9 24.7 24.1 24.5 24.7 23.3 23.2 24.4 24.5 24.5 24.7 24.1 24.2 24.1 23.3 23.5 23.1 23.2 — Balance of payments³ 2017 2018 2019 II'19 III'19 IV'19 I'20 II'20 08'19 09'19 10'19 11'19 12'19 01'20 02'20 03'20 04'20 05'20 06'20 07'20 08
- Balance of payments ⁸ 2017 2018 2019 II'19 III'19 IV'19 I'20 II'20 08'19 09'19 10'19 11'19 12'19 01'20 02'20 03'20 04'20 05'20 06'20 07'20 08'20
Current account EUR mln 1 825 774 2 452 461 1 644 117 439 338 758 302 118 151 -151 44 467 -71 126 52 160
Current account (moving average) % of GDP 3.5 1.4 4.0 3.5 3.2 4.0 4.4 4.2 3.0 3.2 3.7 4.0 4.0 4.1 4.5 4.4 5.1 5.1 4.2
Trade balance EUR mln -766 -1858 -1686 -601 -251 -487 -215 -10 -4 -100 -78 -23 -385 -4 -71 -141 98 -27 -81
Trade balance (moving average) % of GDP -1.5 -3.3 -2.8 -2.8 -3.0 -2.8 -2.5 -1.6 -2.9 -3.0 -2.7 -2.5 -2.8 -2.8 -2.6 -2.1 -1.6 -1.6
Export, f.o.b. EUR mln 26 950 27 744 29 094 7 061 7 542 7 467 7 119 5 904 2 418 2 454 2 758 2 650 2 058 2 477 2 422 2 220 1 852 1 841 2 212
%, yoy 16.6 2.9 4.9 4.4 3.8 2.2 1.4 -16.4 3.4 3.2 1.8 5.7 -1.6 6.4 4.9 -7.0 -21.1 -23.1 -4.7
Import, f.o.b. EUR mln 27 716 29 602 30 779 7 662 7 793 7 953 7 335 5 914 2 422 2 553 2 837 2 673 2 444 2 481 2 493 2 361 1 754 1 868 2 293
%, yoy 15.1 6.8 4.0 4.3 4.8 0.6 -0.5 -22.8 2.6 4.7 -2.9 0.0 5.9 5.0 0.3 -6.4 -31.8 -30.0 -5.4
Services Balance EUR mln 3053 3326 3764 842 1 951 577 406 346 826 402 233 173 171 142 135 129 118 107 120
Primary Income Balance EUR mln -2316 -2489 -1680 -489 -520 -301 -308 -326 -182 -183 -91 -100 -110 -103 -100 -104 -103 -118 -105
Secondary Income Balance EUR mln 1854 1795 2055 709 464 328 557 328 118 183 54 101 173 8 503 45 13 89 226
Capital account EUR mln 530 602 891 238 253 207 189 286 51 68 36 79 92 -24 182 30 99 83 104
Financial account EUR mln 2 423 1 655 3 122 438 1 750 358 -943 -278 1 613 -71 447 -457 368 287 417 -1647 -776 786 -288
Net Foreign Direct Investments EUR mln -1 313 -740 -796 -126 -374 -202 -119 0 64 81 -140 -33 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
Net Portfolio Investments EUR mln 2 615 1 466 1 571 361 349 605 503 753 200 213 153 182 269 246 -38 295 99 252 402
Net Other Investments EUR min 1 145 885 2 386 230 1 757 -43 -1 334 -856 1 460 -276 415 -558 101 71 538 -1 943 -733 523 -647
Change in BNB reserve assets EUR mln -99 1 362 -559 33 -186 -273 1 538 1 345 -901 460 -416 273 -130 -442 214 1 766 816 -157 686

Notes:
Ratios to GDP are calculated using GDP data as follows: 2017 - BGN 102 307.9 mln, 2018 - BGN 109 694.8 mln, 2019 - BGN 118 668.8 mln and MF projections for 2020 - BGN 117 306 mln;
Growth rates derived from chain-linked (2015) level series, not seasonally adjusted data;

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2. Not seasonally adjusted data;
3. HICP deflated;

3. HICP deniated;
4. Data on purpose of the loans has been revised for August 2018 – August 2019 and data on loans quality - for February 2018 – May 2019.
5. Weighted average interest rate on new credit to households, NPISHs and non-financial companies by type, currency and maturity;
6. Weighted average interest rate on new time deposits of households, NPISHs and non-financial companies by type, currency and maturity;
7. Annual Percentage Rate of Charge on new loans to households by original maturity, weighted by currency and maturity;
8. Application proportion (PDMC)

8. Analytical presentation (BPM6).