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THE ATLANTIC CLUB OF BULGARIA

Bulgaria Carries Out in the EU The Fifth European Freedom + the Newest Human Right: Universal Access to Wi-Fi Internet

Six years after Dr Solomon and Gergana Passy's June 2011 [open letter](#) to the European Commission, and their [pilot article in the 24 Hours daily](#), launching the project for universal Wi-Fi Internet access at EU public areas, this Bulgarian project is now a European decision! In their letter, the Passys stated: "Access to the Internet should be regarded as the newest, Fifth Freedom of the EU, alongside the free movement of goods, capitals, services and people" and "one of the basic human rights..." of our time.

[On the 29th of May 2017, the EU institutions \(Commission, Parliament, Council\) reached an agreement](#) on the funding and realization of the #WiFi4EU policy, with an initial budget of €120 million, which will be granted to 6-8000 municipalities from all Member States. The Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker stated that the WiFi4EU will contribute to providing "every European village and every city with free wireless internet access around the main centres of public life by 2020." The local authorities willing to provide Wi-Fi in areas where a similar public or private offer does not yet exist will be able to apply for funding via a simple and non-bureaucratic process.

On the occasion of #WiFi4EU, the Director-General of UNESCO Irina Bokova points out in a specially released [statement](#): "I welcome this initiative as major step forward to increase digital access to all women and men across Europe. This is especially important to bridge digital divides, for women, in rural areas, to ensure the digital revolution is a development revolution for all."

The previous initiative of the Passy's team – the USB standardized GSM charger in the EU – was carried out between 2008 and 2014, for which the European Minister Gergana Passy was decorated with Légion d'Honneur from the President Nicolas Sarkozy, and was elected a National Digital Champion. She and Solomon, with the efforts of their inspiring [Atlantic Digital Net](#) team, carried out several pioneering Free WiFi actions, which demonstrated the efficiency of this policy. There were also failures, like Solomon's one in 2013, when he based his electoral campaign in Plovdiv on providing free Wi-Fi.

On the occasion of #WiFi4EU, Solomon and Gergana stated: "We are satisfied that Bulgaria generated once again a progressive European digital policy and that the EU united is more efficient than states and governments alone. WiFi4EU will draw the peripheric municipalities nearer to the capitals, will boost social inclusion and through technology will consolidate Europe. We are optimists about synergy on this project with the future Bulgarian EU Commissioner Mariya Gabriel, who, with the digital portfolio may develop #WiFi4EU on a pan European scale. We believe that this project has a global potential, to be taken forward across the world, as [highlighted by the Director-General of UNESCO](#)."

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