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**AMBASSADOR
OF THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA**

Ministerie van Financiën
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**H. E. Mr. Jeroen Dijsselbloem
Minister of Finance
Kingdom of the Netherlands**

25 April 2013

Your Excellency,

With reference to media reports in Bulgaria, which were followed by media reports in The Netherlands as well as by official statements on abuse of welfare benefits in The Netherlands by Bulgarian citizens, I would like to request your assistance in receiving the following information:

- The total number of persons claiming welfare benefits by the end of 2012 compared to the number in 2011;
- The number of non-Dutch EU citizens claiming welfare benefits by the end of 2012 compared to the number in 2011;
- The number of Bulgarian citizens claiming welfare benefits by the end of 2011 and of 2012.

I take this opportunity to reiterate the firm commitment of the Embassy of Bulgaria and the competent Bulgarian authorities to cooperate with the relevant authorities of The Netherlands in investigating the allegations for organized crime involvement and in fighting the serious offences with the welfare benefit system.

Please accept, your Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration,

Nikola KOLEV

**Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
of the Republic of Bulgaria**





Ministry of Finance

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Subject Benefits

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Your Excellency,

Also on behalf of the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Social Affairs and Employment, I would like to respond to your letter of the 25th of April. First of all I thank you for the strong Bulgarian authorities' commitment in fighting the offences against the Dutch benefit system. I understand that the first steps of cooperation between our administrations have been taken and I am confident that this cooperation will be fruitful in the near future.

Further to your letter, I can inform you that for the year 2012 in total 6.582.113 and for the year 2011 in total 6.512.209 citizens received benefits (rent benefit, health care benefit, childcare benefit and/or child budget). For the year 2012 137.163 non-Dutch EU citizens received benefits: 7.832 of them have the Bulgarian nationality. For the year 2011 141.320 non-Dutch EU citizens received benefits: 6.344 of them have the Bulgarian nationality.

Yours sincerely,

Frans Weekers
State Secretary of Finance of the Netherlands