

Step-by-Step Property Buying Process

From initial inquiry to title registration – your complete roadmap near Burgas, Bulgaria

Legal Framework

Property purchases in Bulgaria are governed by the Ownership Act (ZS), the Notaries and Notarial Activity Act (ZNND), the Registration Act, and the Property Register Rules. All transactions involving real property must be concluded by a **Notarial Deed** – electronic or written – before a licensed Bulgarian notary with territorial jurisdiction over Burgas District.

STEP 1 Initial Research & Property Selection

Visit the development, review the developer's company registration (Commercial Register extract), check their track record and any ongoing litigation (available at the Burgas District Court). Confirm the property is registered in the Cadastre (AGKK) and that the developer holds clean title (Ownership Certificate from the Registry Agency).

STEP 2 Reservation Agreement & Deposit

A Reservation Agreement (Dogovor za Rezervatsiya) temporarily removes the unit from sale. Typical deposit: 1–3% of purchase price. This is NOT a preliminary contract and confers limited legal protection. Ensure refundability conditions are clearly stated. EU Consumer Rights Directive 2011/83/EU grants a 14-day cooling-off right for distance contracts; confirm applicability with your lawyer.

STEP 3 Due Diligence (Legal Check)

Your independent lawyer (see Doc 5) must: (a) verify title chain; (b) obtain an Encumbrance Certificate (Udostoverenie za Tegobite) from the Registry Agency confirming no mortgages, liens, or seizures; (c) verify planning and permit compliance (Act 16 status); (d) check for unpaid property taxes or utilities; (e) confirm the developer has no insolvency proceedings.

STEP 4 Preliminary Contract (Predvariteen Dogovor)

A binding private contract under Art. 19 Obligations and Contracts Act (ZZD). It specifies: exact property description and cadastral ID, purchase price and payment schedule, longstop completion date, penalties for breach, title transfer conditions. Typical deposit at this stage: 10%. The preliminary contract can be registered at the Registry Agency (Art. 19(3) ZZD) to protect the buyer against third-party claims – strongly recommended.

STEP 5**Obtaining a Bulgarian Personal Identification Number**

EU citizens: obtain a BULSTAT / personal number from the BULSTAT Register (Registration Agency). British buyers: also register, and may additionally need an EGN (Edinstveno Grazhdansko Nomer) if residing in Bulgaria. This number is mandatory for the Notarial Deed and for Property Tax registration.

STEP 6**Final Payment & Mortgage Arrangements**

If financing: Bulgarian banks (UniCredit Bulbank, DSK, Raiffeisenbank Bulgaria) offer mortgages to foreign buyers, typically up to 70% LTV with proof of income. EU-based lenders may also provide cross-border mortgages. Payment is typically transferred directly to the developer's Bulgarian BGN or EUR bank account. All transfers must comply with EU Anti-Money Laundering Directive (AMLD6, 2021).

STEP 7**Notarial Deed Signing**

The Notary of Burgas District prepares the Notarial Deed (Notarialen Akt) based on documents submitted by both parties. Both buyer and seller (or power-of-attorney holders) sign in person before the notary. The notary verifies identity, reads the deed aloud, and confirms informed consent. Fees are calculated on a state sliding scale (approx. 0.1–0.5% of declared value) under the Notary Fee Ordinance.

STEP 8**Registration of Title**

The notary electronically submits the deed to the Burgas Registry Agency (Imoten Registar) on the same day. Registration is complete within 1–3 working days. The buyer then appears in the Property Tax Register of Burgas Municipality within 2 months (Art. 14 Local Taxes and Fees Act) to register for annual property tax.

STEP 9**Utility Connections & Handover**

After registration, the buyer signs utility contracts with: ElektroHold (electricity), ViK Burgas (water/sewage), Overgas (natural gas where available). A handover protocol (Protokol za Predavane i Priemane) is signed between developer and buyer listing any snags – retain this as it activates the statutory warranty period (see Doc 6).

STEP 10**Owners' Association (Etazha Sobstvenost)**

Under the Condominium Ownership Management Act (ZUES), if the property is in a multi-unit building, an Owners' Association must be established or joined. This governs common areas, maintenance budgets, and building rules. EU buyers have full voting rights; British buyers have the same rights under Bulgarian domestic law.

Typical Costs Summary

Cost Item	Typical Amount	Notes
Notarial Deed fee	0.1 – 0.5% of value	State sliding scale, max BGN 3,000

Registry fee	0.1% of value	Paid to Registry Agency
Local transfer tax	2 – 3%	Set by Burgas Municipality
Lawyer fee	1 – 2%	Independent lawyer (recommended)
Translation & apostille	EUR 100 – 300	For non-Bulgarian docs
Annual property tax	0.15%	Of assessed (tax) value, Burgas rate

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