

## Bulgaria Hotels Face Threat of Being Demolished and Turned into Parks

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Bulgaria might soon follow in Spain's footsteps, where the State is purchasing hotels and is demolishing them in order to turn them into green zones. Photo by Nadiya Kotseva (Sofia Photo Agency)

Many Bulgarian hotel owners, who are deep in debt, are currently making attempts to sell their real estate properties, according to the Chair of the Varna Real Estate Association Dobromir Ganev, who spoke before Darik radio on Wednesday.

The hotels offered for sale in the vicinity of the Bulgarian Black Sea capital Varna are located primarily in the beach resorts, but so far there has been no interest on the part of prospective buyers.

Poor infrastructure and service, the lack of enough entertainment, the overbuilding and the global financial crisis have been to blame for the insufficient development of the hotel business in the country lately.

Ilyana Bozhkova, manager of a Varna hotel predicts that the business will be hit hard by

the global crisis in the very near future. Bozhkova expects that the hotel she manages is also going to suffer the negative effects, despite the fact that the hotel owners do not have to repay any bank loans. Bozhkova's proposal to deal with the threat of the total collapse of hotel business in Bulgaria is for the government to buy back hotels, and turn them into public parks.

As early as July of 2008, the Chair of the National Tourism Agency in Bulgaria, Aneliya Kruchkova, stated that the country was following in Spain's footsteps, where the State is purchasing hotels and is demolishing them in order to turn them into green zones.

"We paid a top price to cover our resorts with cement and destroy nature; now we will pay an even higher price to restore it," Kruchkova stated in July.

Dimitar Lefterov, Chair of the Varna Association of Restaurant and Hotel Owners is another supporter of the idea to demolish part of the hotels on the Bulgarian Black Sea Coast and turn their plots into parks - a good solution, long overlooked by those in power, according to Lefterov.