

Voluntary Report – Voluntary - Public Distribution

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Report Name: Oilseeds and Products Market Update

Country: Bulgaria

Post: Sofia

Report Category: Oilseeds and Products

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Report Highlights:

In marketing year (MY) 2024/25, Bulgaria harvested its smallest oilseed crop in 15 years due to hot and dry summer weather negatively impacting yields. Based on the final official harvest data, the Bulgarian sunflower crop fell to only 1.45 million metric tons (MMT), the smallest crop since 2013 while the rapeseed crop decreased to 175,000 MT, the lowest level since 2008. Despite the small crop, rapeseed crushing is estimated to reach a new record this marketing year, leading to rising imports. The sunflower crush has been pressured by a local and regional deficit for sunflower seeds and weak crushing margins. As a result, leading sunflower crushers have been forced to switch from sunflower to rapeseed crushing, a new trend for the local industry. This change is projected to impact domestic consumption of oilseed meals, with declining use of sunflower meal replaced by imported soybean meal and/or local rapeseed meal.

Executive Summary

Bulgarian oilseeds production in MY 2024/25 was the lowest in the last 15 years at 1.63 MMT (Graph 1, Table 1) compared with 2.0 MMT in MY 2023/24. This has led to significant changes in the usual trade and domestic consumption patterns. The country continued its position as a net importer of rapeseed for a second consecutive year, while sunflower seed exports, which traditionally are large, are projected to be sharply down. These changes are driven by shifts in domestic crush with considerable growth expected in rapeseed processing and a decline in sunflower crush, which in turn will impact exports of respective processed products. Such a switch from sunflower to rapeseed crush is unprecedented, and it may signal a new trend for industry diversification in light of market challenges. Domestic consumption of rapeseed meal, traditionally accounting for the smallest share in total oilseed meals, is increasing at the expense of sunflower meal. Sunflower meal is also being substituted with soybean meal, and imports of soybean meal are growing.

Weather Overview

Fall weather was mixed but generally favorable for the development of winter rapeseed for the 2025 harvest. The sowing campaign started at the optimal time although dry topsoil was challenging for field work in some areas. December and January weather was typical for the winter season with good snowfall which helped to boost the sub-surface soil moisture, while temperatures were not critically low. Abundant snowfall in the second half of February led to a sharp growth in the percentage of soil moisture, as well as in the surface and subsurface moisture reserves while the average temperatures declined sharply lower than those in the last year and below the norm (Graph 6), increasing the risks for winterkill in fields with no snow cover. The satellite images about the vegetation index (NDVI) (Map 3 and Graph 6) demonstrate that the vegetation index is slightly below average in February, especially in western parts of the country. Overall, winter rapeseed is in good condition. ([JRC MARS Bulletin September 2024 Vol 32 №9](#), [JRC MARS Bulletin October Vol 32 №10](#), [JRC MARS Bulletin November Vol 32 №11](#), [JRC MARS Bulletin October Vol 32 №12](#), [Crop Explorer](#) and [Bulgaria data](#)). Please, see Maps 1-7 and Graph 6 in the Appendix, and GAIN report [BU2024-0021](#)).

MY 2025/26

Rainy weather in early September supported a timely start of rapeseed planting for MY 2025/26. Farmers made efforts to increase planted area, encouraged by favorable prices and active domestic crush demand. The Ministry of Agriculture (MinAg) reported 101,100 hectares (HA) planted under rapeseed, about three percent more than a year ago (GAIN report [BU2024-0021](#)). Currently, the prospects for the rapeseed crop are positive and FAS/Sofia currently forecasts production to recover to 230,000 MT compared to 175,000 MT in MY 2024/25.

Indications are that farmers plan to increase the area planted under sunflower. The sunflower crop remains more resilient to summer weather risks and more cost-efficient compared to growing corn, while domestic crush demand remains strong. FAS/Sofia forecasts sunflower area to grow to 930,000 HA and production to 2.0 MMT compared with 1.45 MMT in MY 2023/24.

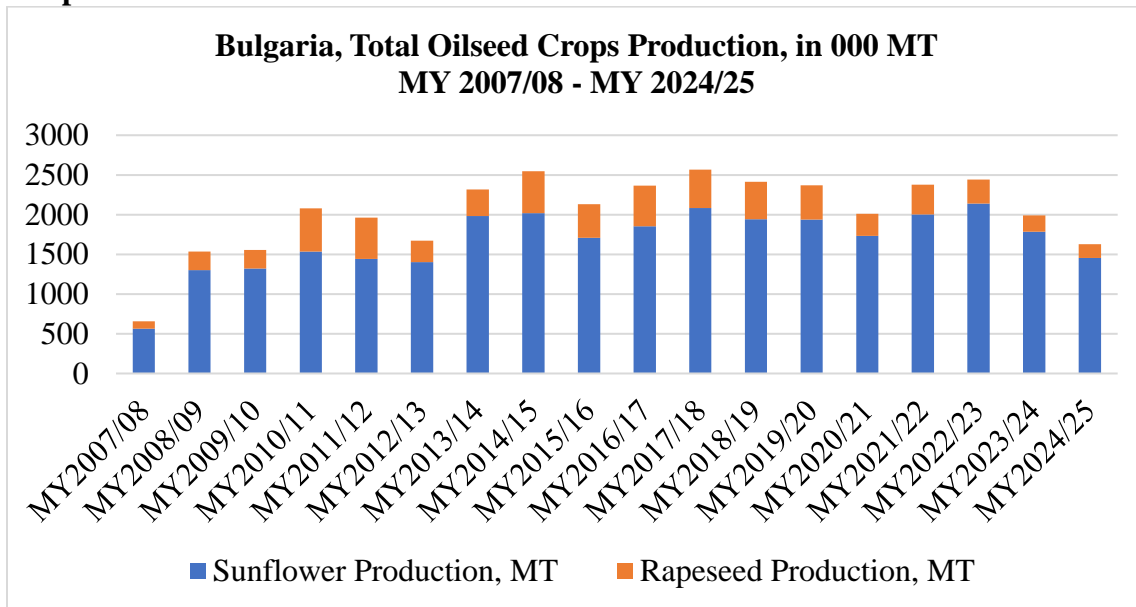
MY 2024/25 Production and Crush Demand

Total production of oilseed crops (rapeseed, sunflower, and soybeans) decreased to a very low level in MY 2024/25 at 1.63 MMT, compared to about 2.0 MMT last year (Graph 1, 2, 3 and Table 1). With expanded crush capacities in recent years estimated at about 5.0 MMT for both sunflower and rapeseed, this situation has become a significant challenge for the local crushing industry (GAIN report [BU2024-](#)

0021). In addition, the lower and inconsistent oil content of this year’s sunflower crop has negatively impacted crush margins.

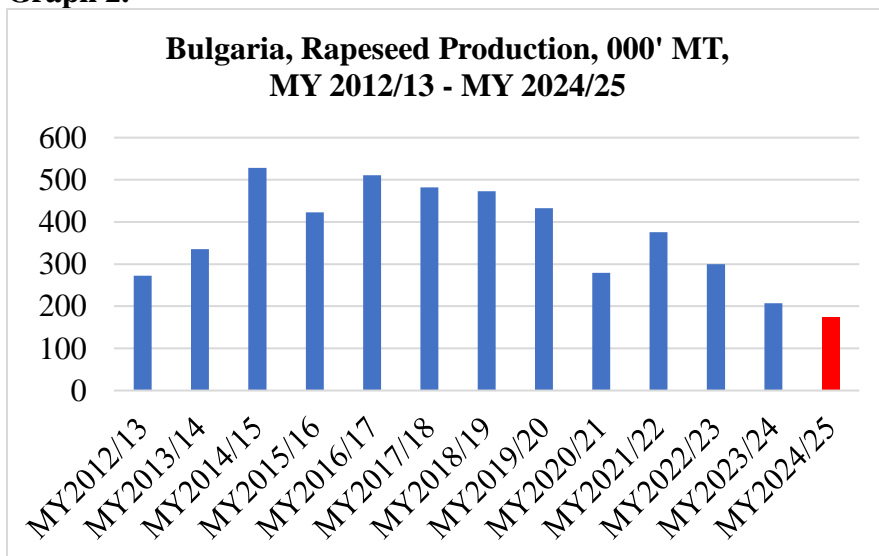
Bulgaria had to undertake imports of larger volumes of oilseeds at a time of regional and global oilseed deficit. Rising prices of oilseeds and depressed prices for processed oilseed products have led to weak crush margins. Leading crushers have increasingly switched from sunflower to rapeseed, mainly sourced from imports. Others have reduced crush or had to operate at a minimal level and oilseed crush capacities will likely remain greatly underutilized for a third consecutive year. (Note: Bulgaria does not have soybean crushing facilities).

Graph 1.



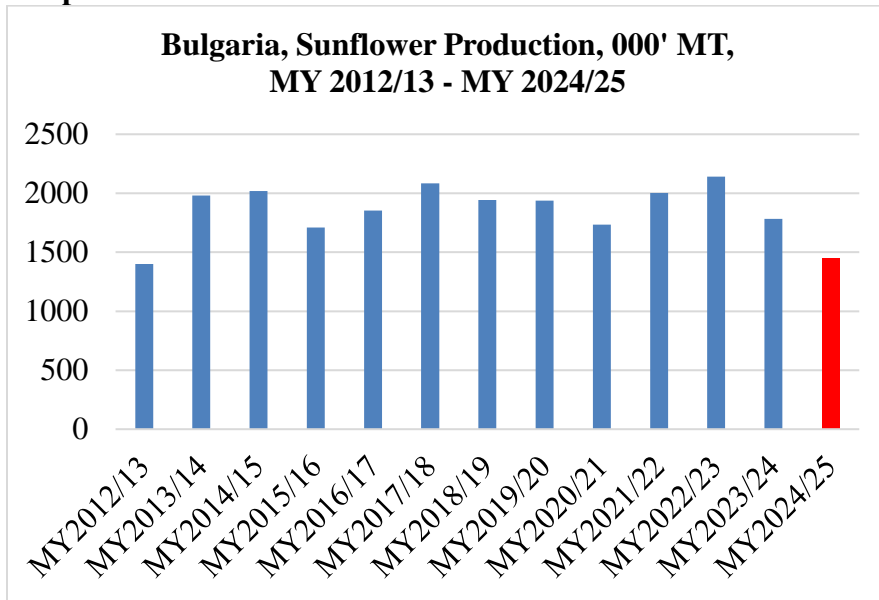
Source: Eurostat, as of February 23, 2025

Graph 2.



Source: Eurostat, as of February 23, 2025

Graph 3.



Source: Eurostat, as of February 23, 2025

Rapeseed Crush:

Domestic rapeseed crush has strengthened significantly due to the expansion of crushing facilities for biodiesel. In addition, crush margins have been better for rapeseed compared to those for sunflower seeds. This has caused sunflower crushers to increasingly switch from sunflower seed to rapeseed crush. According to MinAg data, rapeseed crush as of the middle of February increased sharply to 250,000 MT, 53 percent more than a year ago. This is also more than the annual MY 2023/24 crush, estimated at 230,000 MT.

Most of the rapeseeds crushed have been sourced from imports. Per MinAg data, MY 2024/25 imports of rapeseed as of mid-February were 215,000 MT, 43 percent more than imports in the corresponding period a year ago. Industry sources estimate total MY 2024/25 imports to exceed 300,000 MT with most shipments expected from non-EU origins, mainly from Canada. Conversely, exports were at 64,000 MT, compared to 70,000 MT exported a year ago (Table 2). As a result of the elevated crush, exports of processed products (rapeseed oil and meal) are also expanding from MY 2023/24 (Table 3).

Greater availability of rapeseed meal is reportedly changing domestic patterns of oilseed meal consumption. Traditionally, rapeseed meal is not widely used and accounts for the smallest share in total meal use, following sunflower meal and soybean meal. Improved availability, however, and competitive prices attracted new users that are substituting tight and expensive sunflower meal supplies with rapeseed meal. However, although some share of sunflower meal is being replaced by rapeseed meal, most users still prefer to switch to imported soybean meal.

Sunflower Crush:

In the first four months of the marketing year, the sunflower crush increased due to lower sunflower seed prices and still positive margins. With limited domestic sunflower seeds, demand for imports was strong (GAIN report [BU2024-0021](#)). Crushers made every effort to source price-competitive sunflower seeds both from domestic producers and from imports, however, trade has been challenging due the

regional Black Sea and EU deficit. Since November/December the situation changed, and crush margins weakened. According to MinAg data, sunflower crush as of the middle of February declined by 15 percent from last year to 723,000 MT.

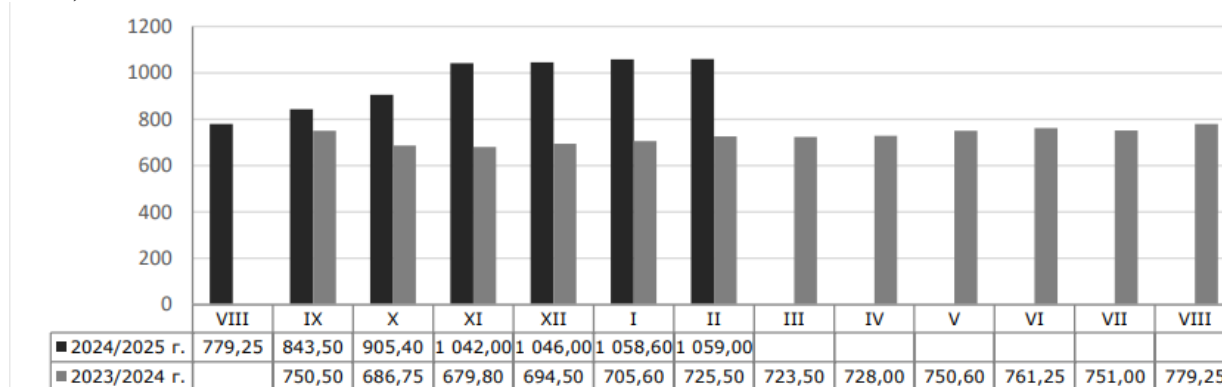
MY 2024/25 sunflower imports as of mid-February were at 400,000 MT, 80 percent more than imports in the corresponding period a year ago. It is believed that there is only limited potential for further growth in imports due to depleting global stocks. Instead, typical sunflower crushers will likely switch from sunflower seeds to rapeseed in the second half of the marketing year.

Conversely, exports of sunflower seeds were at only 47,000 MT, 66 percent lower than exports a year ago (Table 2, Graph 5). Due to the small crop and low availability, exports are declining (Graph 5). As a result of the reduced crush, exports of processed products (sunflower oil and meal) are also expected to decline from the levels seen in the previous year (Table 3).

Demand for sunflower de-hulling/processing has been more active than that for crush since the processors can afford to increase the prices of the finished product destined for food industries and/or exports. Per MinAg data, the quantity of sunflower seeds used for de-hulling as of the middle of February was 13 percent more than a year ago.

Farm-gate sunflower seed prices have increased, exceeding the levels seen in the previous year (Graph 4). In February, sunflower seed prices were considerably higher at 46 percent more than a year ago, reflecting the local decline in the crop and the deficit market. However, even stronger price growth for sunflower seeds has been somewhat constrained by poor crush margins. Currently, crushers prefer to switch to rapeseed rather than to procure expensive local or imported sunflower seeds. At the same time, farmers seem reluctant to sell in anticipation of further price growth and have begun to accumulate stocks. According to industry estimates, if market dynamics stimulate further switching from sunflower seed to rapeseed crush, this could lead to unusually high ending stocks of sunflower seeds at the farm level, reaching roughly 400,000 MT.

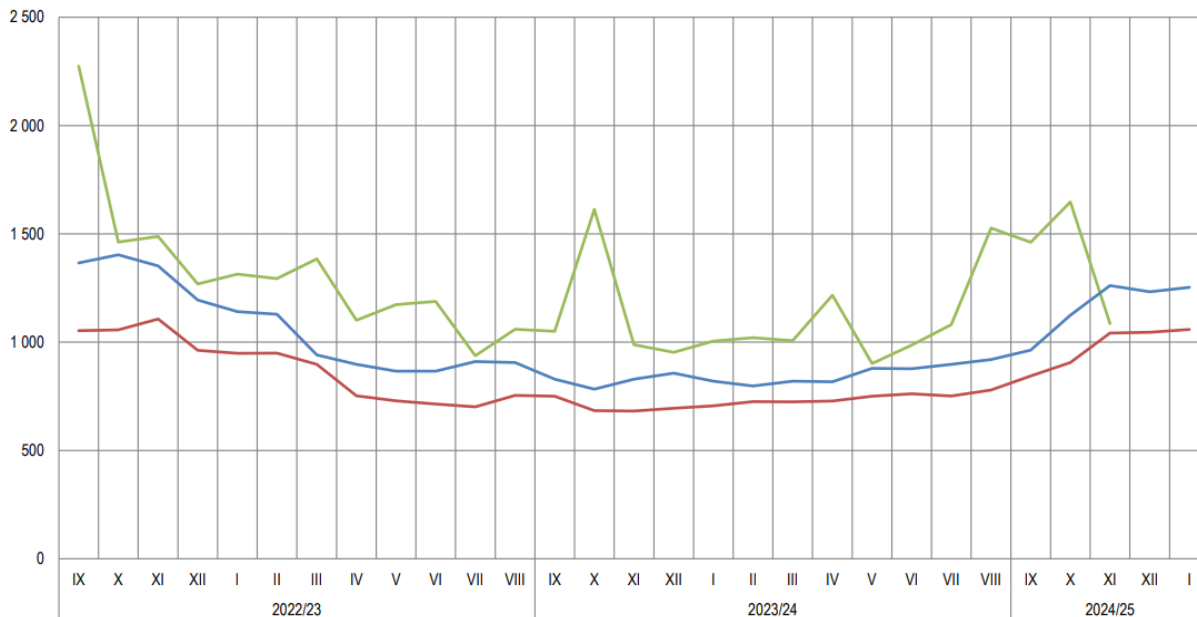
Graph 4. Sunflower Monthly Market Prices, MY 2024/25 vs MY 2023/24 in BGN/MT (February 2025)



*The chart shows prices for the MY, which begins in September, with MY 2024/25 in dark black and MY 2023/24 in grey. The graph also includes August due to early harvest in 2024 when most of the sunflower crop was harvested and began to be traded.

Source: Bulgarian Ministry of Agriculture Monitoring of Commodity Markets Weekly Bulletins

Graph 5. Sunflower Average Monthly Prices, MY 2022/23 – MY 2024/25, BGN/MT



Red line- Bulgarian ex-farm prices, sunflower seeds, in Bulgarian leva (BGN) per MT

Blue line – EU export price FOB Bordeaux, sunflower seeds, BGN/MT

Green line – Bulgarian CIF export price, sunflower seeds, BGN/MT

Source: Bulgarian MinAg [Dashboard](#) Grains and Oilseeds, February 2025

Appendix:

Table 1. Oilseed Crops Final Production Data MY 2024/25 and MY 2023/24, February 2025

Crops	Area Harvested (000 HA)		Production (000 MT)	
	MY 2024/25	MY 2023/24	MY 2024/25	MY 2023/24
Rapeseed	69.00	79.79	173.89	207.04
Sunflower	922.00	869.92	1452.79	1783.99
Soybeans	1.00	3.67	1.03	6.07
Total	992.00	953.38	1,627.71	1,997.1

Source: Eurostat data based on EU standard moisture content- updated as of February 2025

Table 2: Trade in Major Oilseed Crops, as of February 14, 2025

Types of Oilseeds	Imports, MT	Exports, MT
Rapeseed, MY 2024/25	214,862 MT	64,541 MT (61,341 MT for the EU market and 3,200 MT for non-EU markets)
Sunflower, MY 2024/25	397,065 MT	47,015 MT (31,291 MT for the EU market and 15,724 MT for non-EU markets)

Source: MinAg weekly bulletins;

Note: The Bulgarian Ministry of Agriculture uses September 1-August 31 as a MY for sunflower.

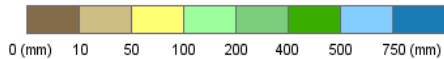
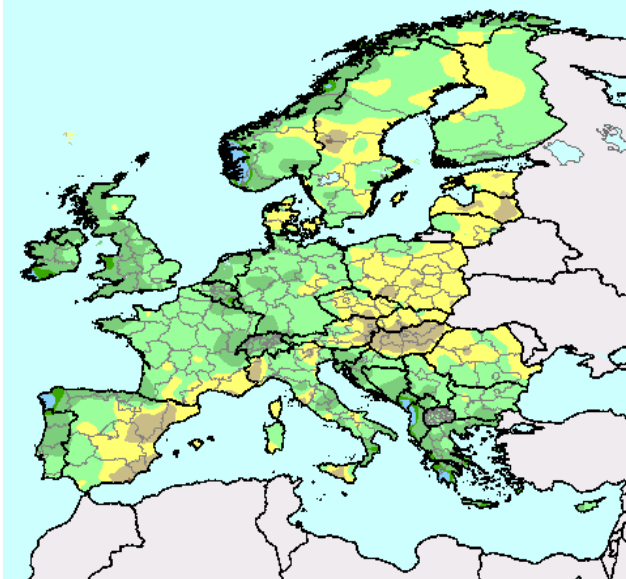
Table 3: MY 2023/24 Trade in Major Oilseeds and Processed Products

Types of Oilseeds	Imports, MT	Exports, MT
Rapeseeds	134,908 MT: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 53,799 MT from Ukraine- 59,259 MT from Moldova- 18,419 MT from Romania	116,659 MT: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 56,357 MT to the Netherlands- 31,011 MT to Germany- 28,636 MT to the United Kingdom
Rapeseed Meal	9,368 MT: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 7,738 MT from Romania- 1,127 MT from Germany	149,824 MT: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 63,638 MT to Spain- 61,191 MT to Israel- 19,205 MT to Morocco- 2,737 MT to Turkey
Rapeseed Oil	7,679 MT: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 4,065 MT from Ukraine- 2,984 MT from Romania	48,611 MT: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 15,928 MT to Spain- 13,303 MT to Belgium- 8,015 MT to Italy- 6,026 MT to the Netherlands
Sunflower Seeds	780,447 MT: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 528,595 MT from Romania- 114,116 MT from Moldova- 77,484 MT from Ukraine- 31,394 MT from Serbia	624,130 MT: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 185,034 MT to the Netherlands- 79,336 MT to Germany- 57,432 MT to China- 48,336 MT to the United Kingdom- 51,289 MT to the United States
Sunflower Meal	56,462 MT: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 35,867 MT from Ukraine- 19,106 MT from Moldova	638,667 MT: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 370,756 MT to China- 60,845 MT to Greece- 39,770 MT to France- 36,380 MT to Morocco- 27,025 MT to the Netherlands- 20,542 MT to Turkey- 20,164 MT to Romania- 18,984 MT to Germany
Sunflower Oil	362,628 MT: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 273,839 MT from Ukraine- 54,744 MT from Romania- 12,847 MT from Poland- 11,864 MT from	676,979 MT: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 131,996 MT to Greece- 105,677 MT to South Africa- 79,417 MT to Iraq- 53,576 MT to Spain- 41,790 MT to Egypt

	Moldova	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 36,825 MT to Morocco - 32,518 MT to Italy - 29,363 MT to France - 28,823 MT to China
Soybeans	285 MT	31 MT
Soybean Meal	119,504 MT: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 87,124 MT from Romania - 25,999 MT from Greece - 2,456 MT from Serbia 	298 MT
Soybean Oil	23,573 MT: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 15,075 MT from Serbia - 6,016 MT from Ukraine - 1,425 MT from Greece 	91 MT
Source: Trade Data Monitor (TDM)		

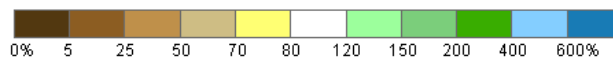
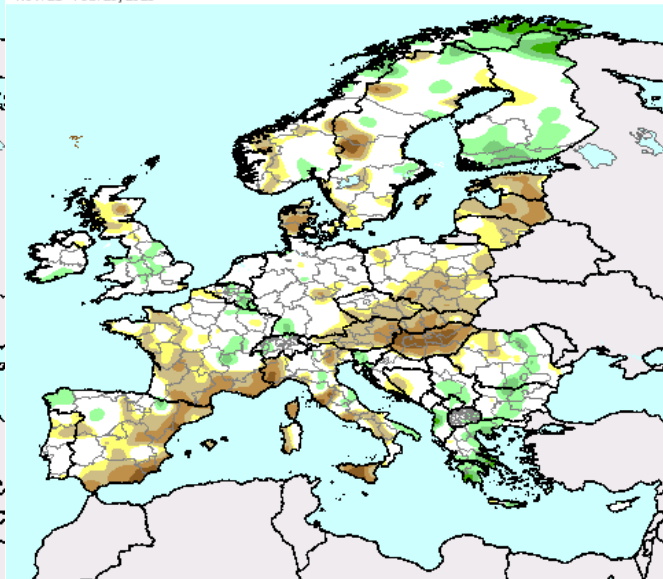
Map 1: USDA [Crop Explorer](#), Europe (including Bulgaria), Precipitation and Percent of Normal Precipitation, November 21, 2024 to February 20, 2025.

Precipitation 3-Month (CPC)
Nov. 21 - Feb. 20, 2025



Source: NOAA/CPC

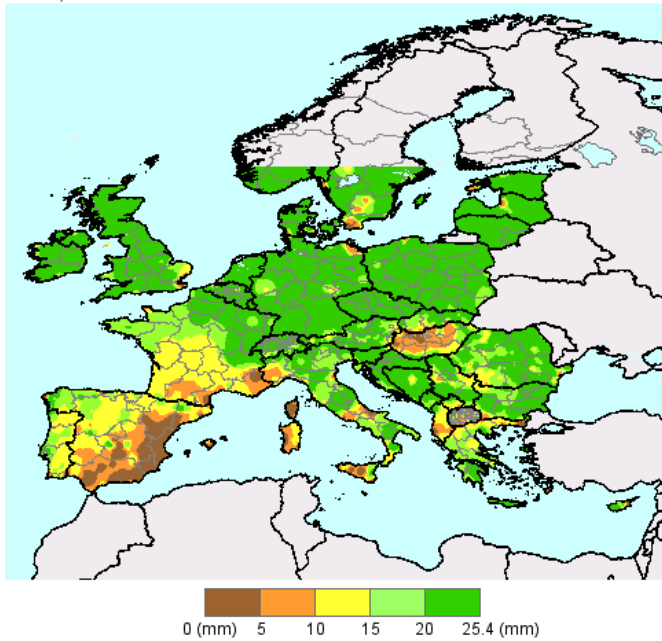
Percent of Normal Precipitation 3-Month (CPC)
Nov. 21 - Feb. 20, 2025



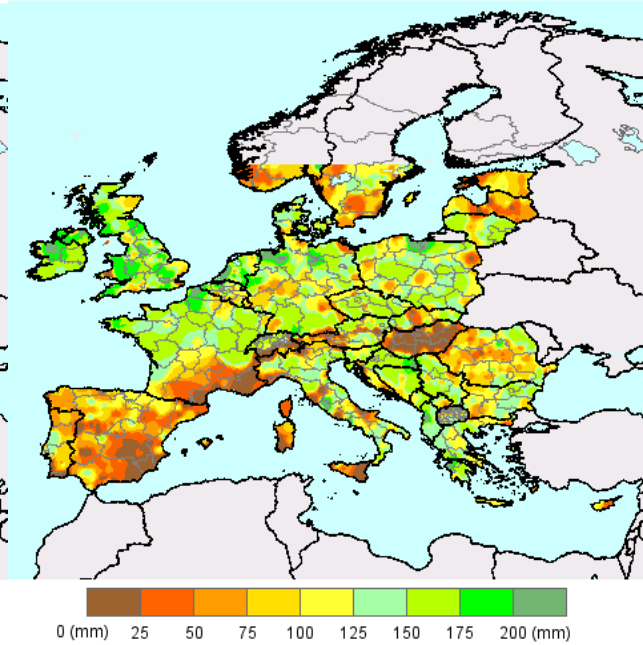
Source: NOAA/CPC

Map 2: USDA Crop Explorer, Europe (including Bulgaria), Surface and Subsurface Soil Moisture; Percent of Soil Moisture and Soil Moisture Ranking as of February 20, 2025

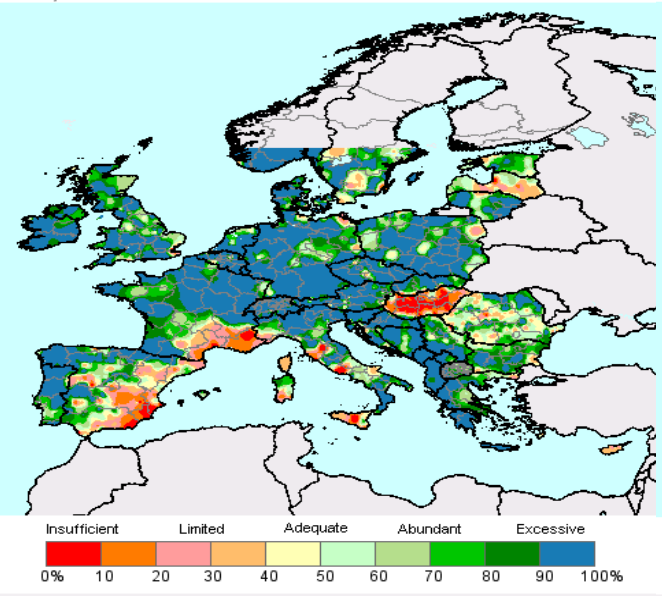
Surface Soil Moisture (WMO)
Feb. 20, 2025



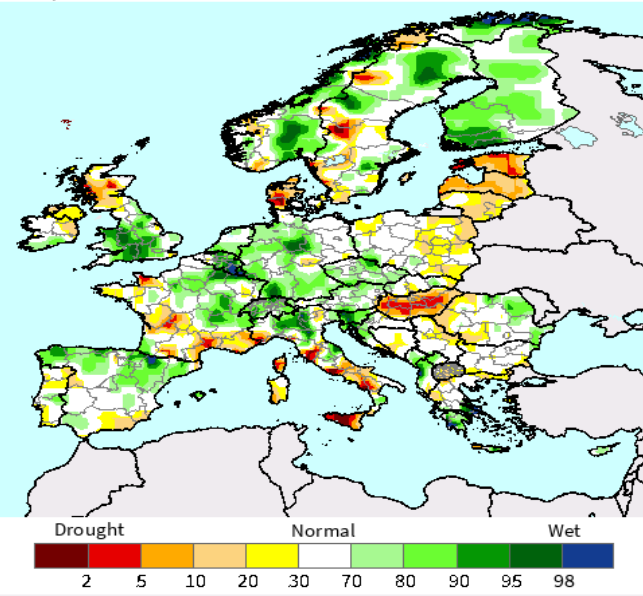
Subsurface Soil Moisture (WMO)
Feb. 20, 2025



Source: World Meteorological Organization
Percent Soil Moisture (WMO)
Feb. 20, 2025



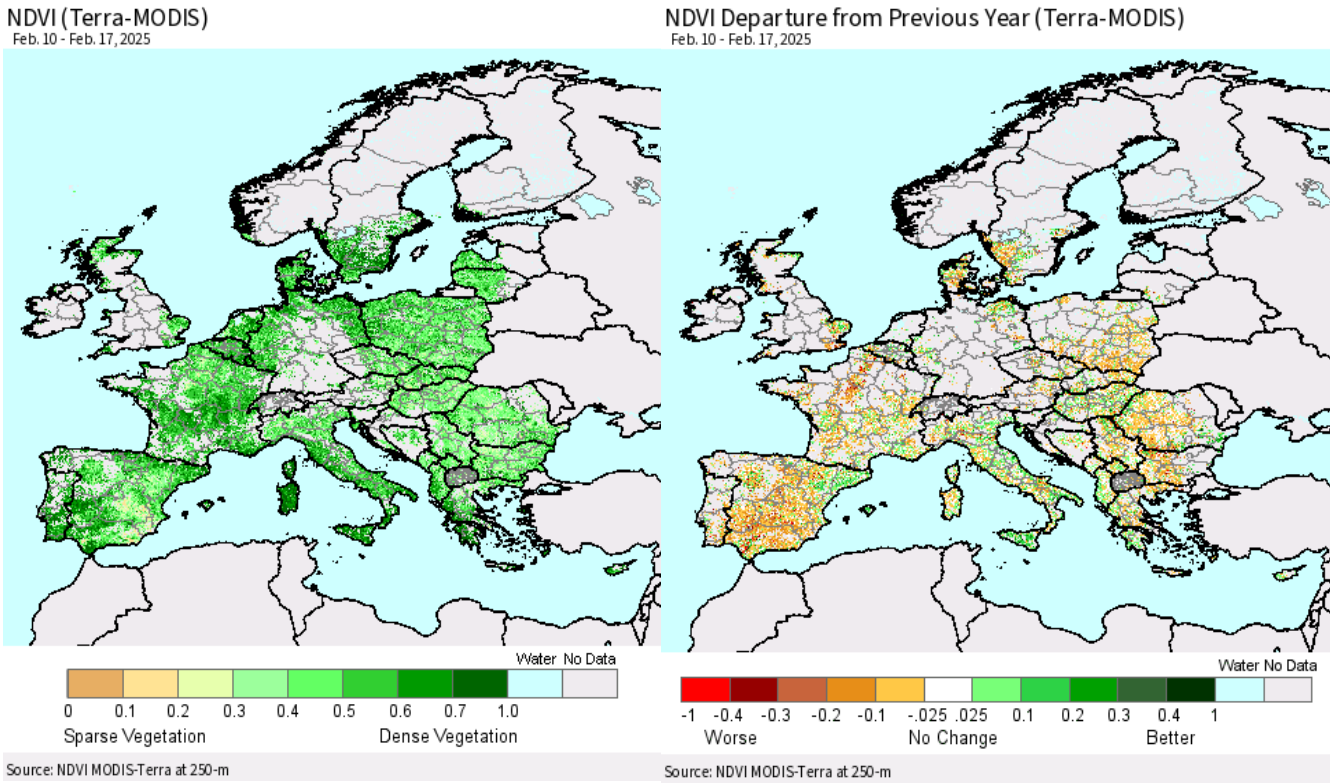
Source: World Meteorological Organization
CPC Soil Moisture Ranking Percentile (Leaky Bucket)
Feb. 20, 2025



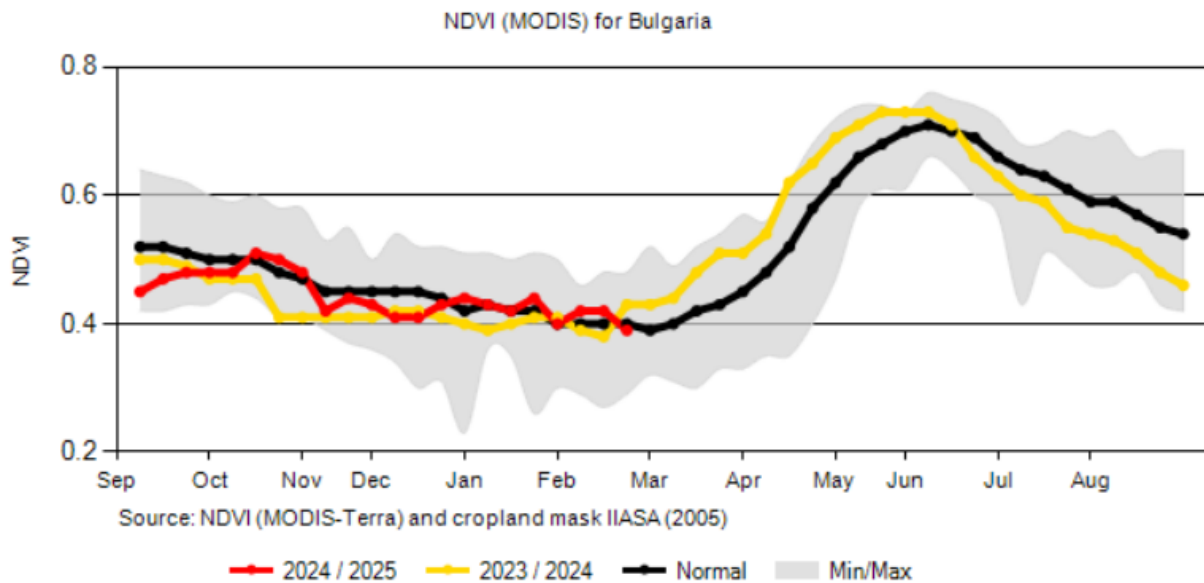
Source: World Meteorological Organization

Source: NOAA/CPC

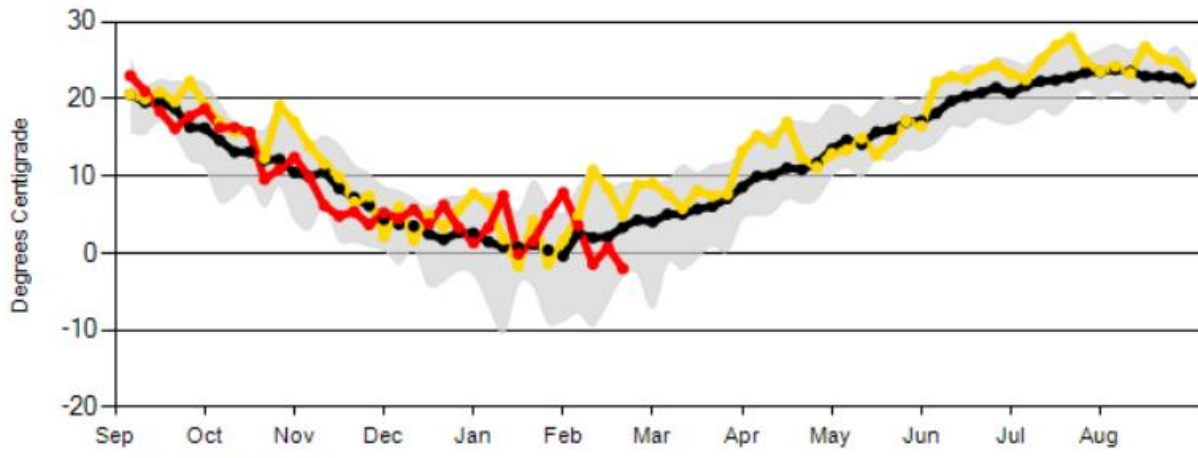
Map 3. USDA Crop Explorer, Europe (including Bulgaria), NDVI (Vegetation Index) for February 10-17, 2025 and NDVI Departure from the Previous Year



Graph 6. USDA [Crop Explorer](#), Bulgaria, Vegetation Index (NDVI), Average Temperature, Percent of Soil Moisture, Surface and Subsurface Soil Moisture, as of February 17, 2025



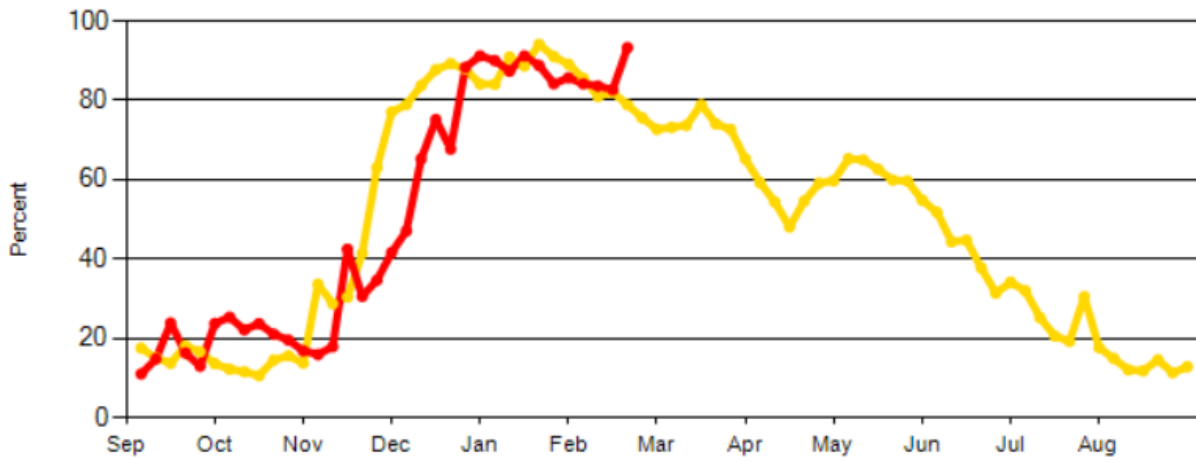
Average Temperature (CPC) for Bulgaria



Source: NOAA/CPC

— 2024 / 2025 — 2023 / 2024 — Normal — Min/Max

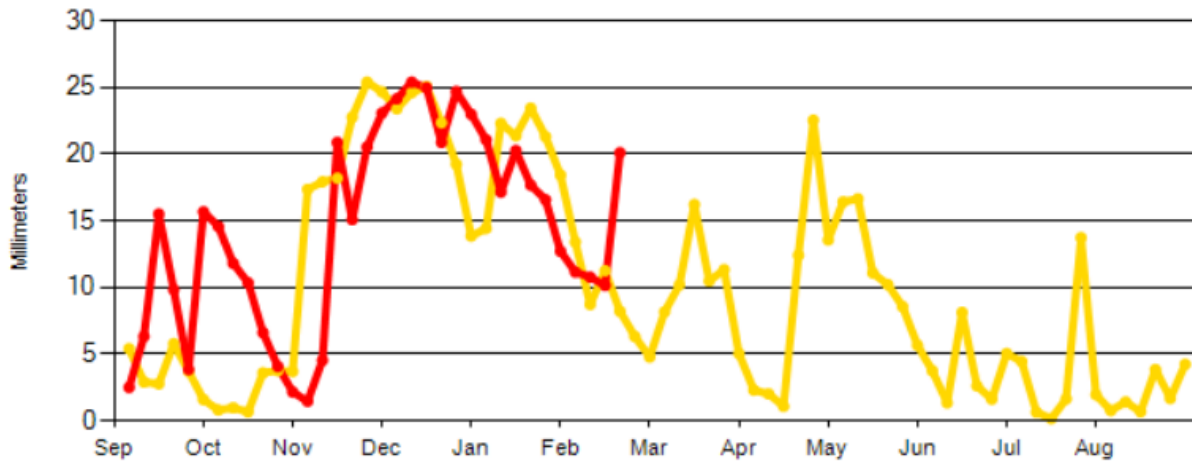
Percent Soil Moisture (WMO) for Bulgaria



Source: World Meteorological Organization

— 2024 / 2025 — 2023 / 2024

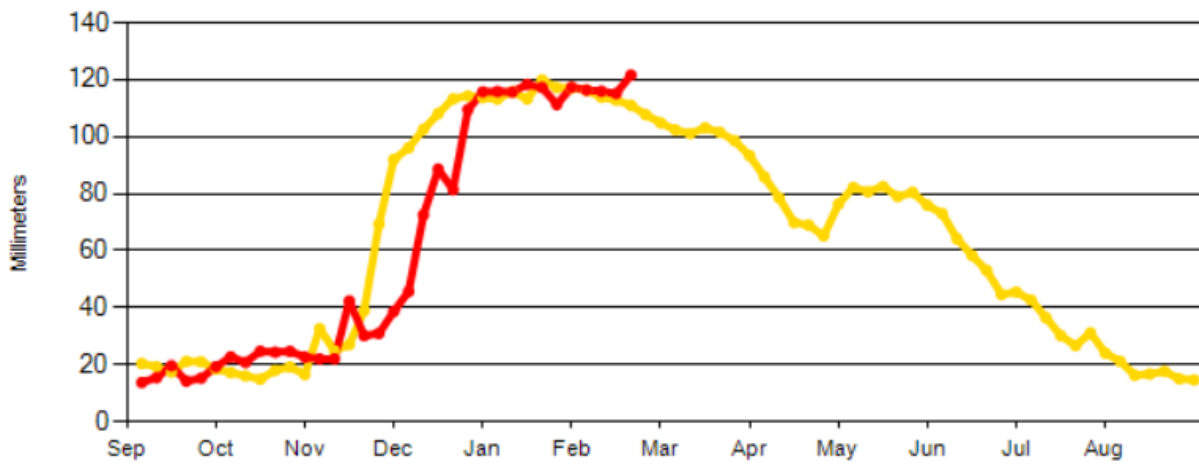
Surface Soil Moisture (WMO) for Bulgaria



Source: World Meteorological Organization

— 2024 / 2025 — 2023 / 2024

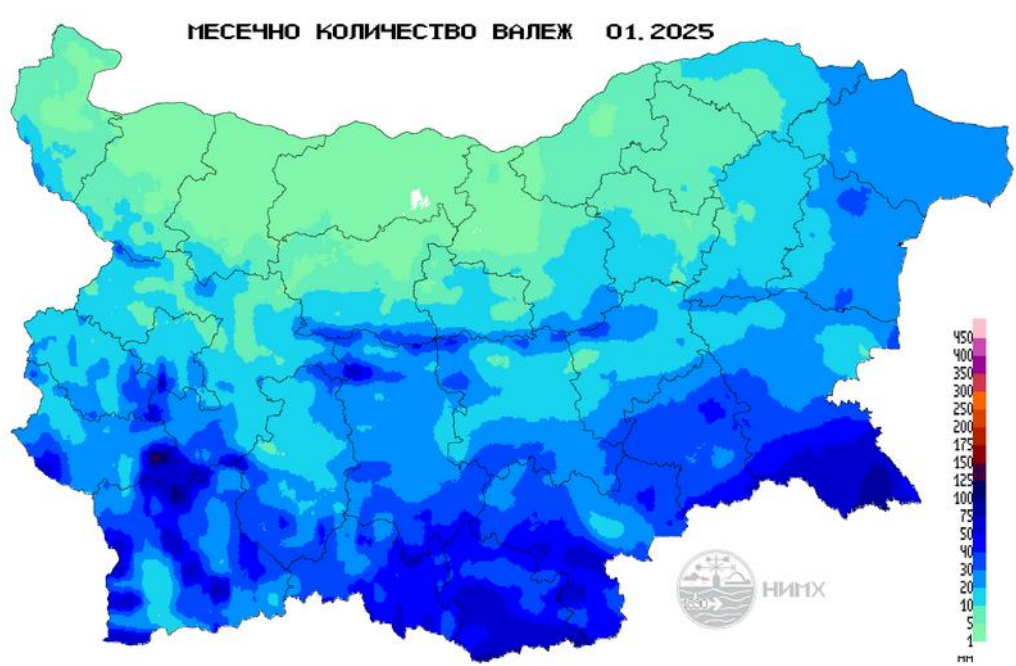
Subsurface Soil Moisture (WMO) for Bulgaria



Source: World Meteorological Organization

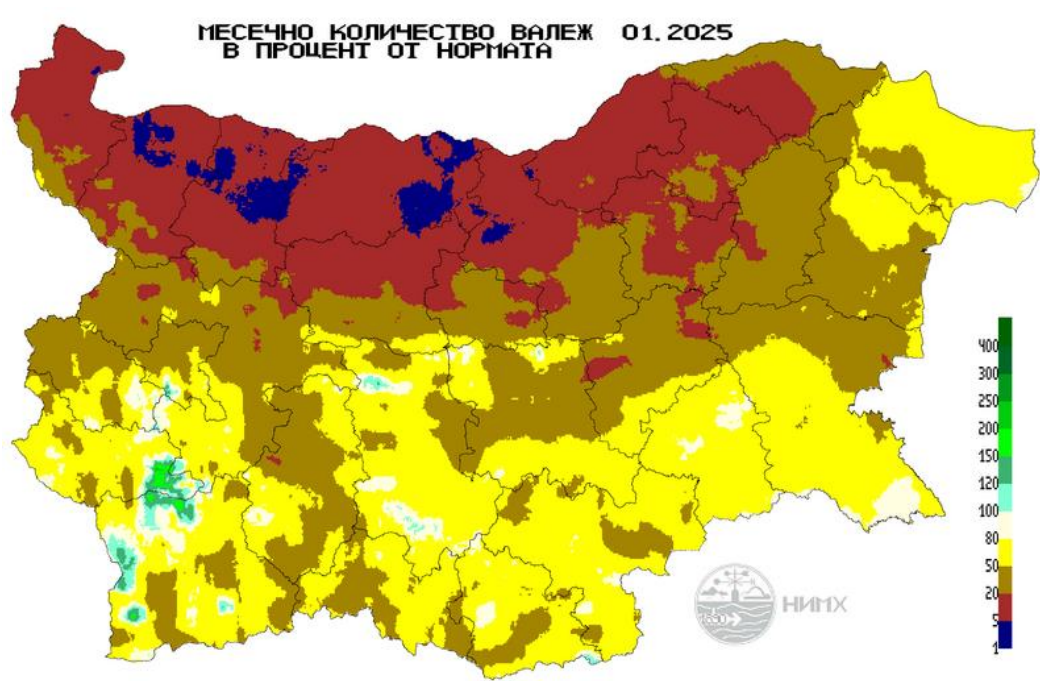
— 2024 / 2025 — 2023 / 2024

Map 4. January Rainfall 2025



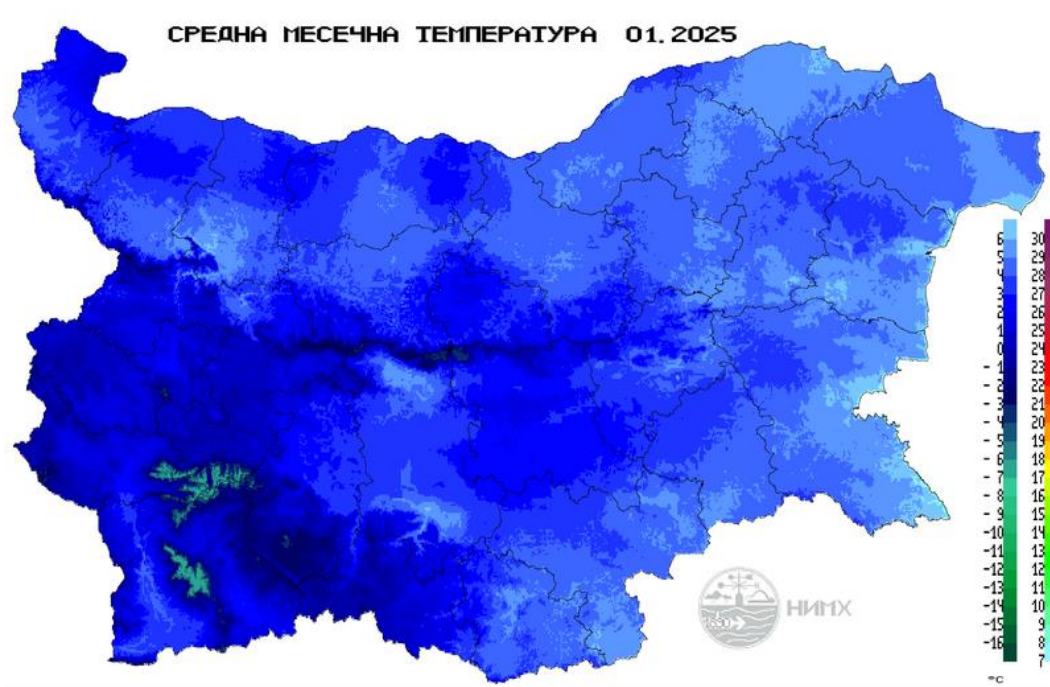
Source: [Bulgarian National Institute of Meteorology and Hydrology](#)

Map 5. January Rainfall 2025 as a percent of Monthly Norm



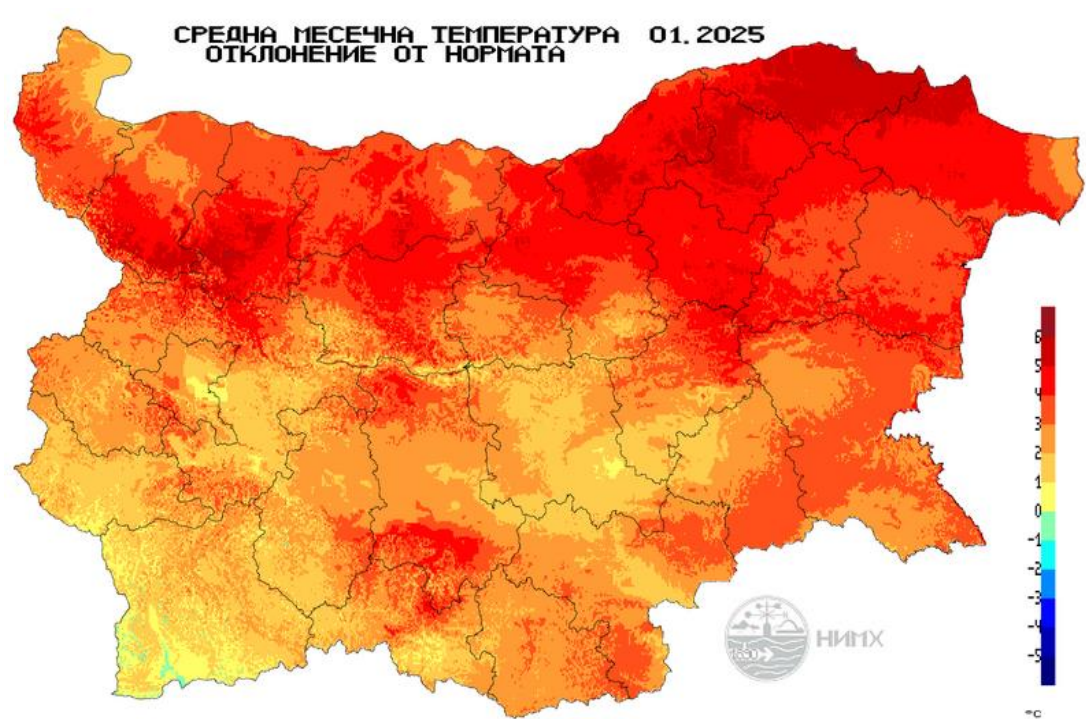
Source: [Bulgarian National Institute of Meteorology and Hydrology](#)

Map 6. Average Temperature January 2025



Source: [Bulgarian National Institute of Meteorology and Hydrology](#)

Map 7: January 2025: Deviation from the Average Temperature Norm



Source: [Bulgarian National Institute of Meteorology and Hydrology](#)

Attachments:

No Attachments.