

GENERAL INFORMATION

Dear participants in the **6th SWAN Progress Meeting**, that will take place in Sofia, Bulgaria,

Please find below some general information on the country and its capital.

Language

The official language in [Bulgaria](#) (България) is [Bulgarian language](#). The Bulgarian alphabet is based on the [Cyrillic script](#). Follow the hyperlinks for additional information.

The younger generation often speaks English as second language. The elder generation usually speaks Russian. Other common foreign languages are German, French, Spanish, Italian. Don't hesitate to ask for help and assistance, if you need it. Bulgarians are usually very helpful.

Useful smartphone translation applications, that also translate camera input, are:

For Android: [Google Translate](#)

For iPhone: [Photo Translator](#)

For Windows Phone: [Translator](#)

Currency

Bulgaria is a member of the European Union since 2007, but it is **NOT in the Eurozone**. The currency is **Bulgarian Lev (BGN)** and the exchange rates are approximately:

1 USD ~ 1.70 BGN (changing every day)

1 EUR = 1.96 BGN (fixed exchange rate)

1.00 lev = 100 stotinki

It is recommendable to **use BANKS for currency exchange**.

For up to date exchange rates, please check:

<http://bnb.bg/statistics/stexternalsector/stexchangerates/sterforeigncurrencies/index.htm>

Payments with **credit card** are **NOT very common** in Bulgaria. It gains popularity, especially in Sofia, but make sure that you always have some cash in your pocket. For

example, **you can NOT pay your taxi or public transport with credit card – ONLY cash.**

If you need to **exchange cash at Sofia Airport**, please make sure to **DO that at the BANK OFFICES** located at your terminal:

<https://www.sofia-airport.bg/en/passengers/services/other-services>

The **Exchange Currency Offices** at the airport (BUREAUX DE CHANGE - <https://www.sofia-airport.bg/en/passengers/services/other-services>) usually have **VERY BAD RATES. DO NOT USE THOSE OFFICES!**

MAKE SURE THAT THE EXCHANGE RATES ARE CLOSE TO THE ONES MENTIONED ABOVE!

Visa

There are **NO visa requirements for the SWAN project partner countries**. Anyway, you can check the visa requirements for all countries in the attached document.

Weather

April is spring in Bulgaria and the weather can be very dynamic. In best-case scenario, which is not so unlikely for the end of April, we can get sun and 20°C.

For information on the weather, check: <http://weather.sinoptik.bg/sofia-bulgaria-100727011>.

Tourist information

Sofia

Diverse information about Sofia can be found in the [Tourist Information Center](#), located in Sofia downtown, on walking distance from the hotel (address and map in the hyperlink). On the center website you can find information about the weather, events, tourist attractions and other: <http://www.visitsofia.bg/en/>.

Similar websites with a lot of information are:

<http://www.sofia-guide.com/>

<http://www.visitbulgaria.net/en/sofia/sofia.html>

Bulgaria

For general tourist information:

http://bulgariatravel.org/en/official_tourism_portal/

<http://www.bgtraveller.com/en/index.html>

<http://ranica.eu/#!en,map>

<http://www.tmbulgaria.com/en/index.html>

<http://www.bulgariamonasteries.com/en/>

<http://waterfallsbg.info/en>

UNESCO sights in Bulgaria:

<http://whc.unesco.org/en/statesparties/bg>

If you are a history lover:

<http://www.visitbulgaria.net/en/articles/history.html>

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/bulgaria/history>

If you are interested in our Thracian heritage, check:

http://www.omda.bg/public/engl/history/bulgarias_thracian_heritage.htm

<http://info-bg.narod.ru/heritage1.htm>