

# Bulgaria

## Geography of Bulgaria:

Bulgaria is part of the Balkan Peninsula in south-east Europe. It has common borders with Greece and Turkey to the south, Serbia and Macedonia to the west, and Romania to the north. Its boundary with Romania is the river Danube except in the east most region of Dobrudzha. The eastern coast of Bulgaria is on the Black Sea which links it directly with the countries on the Mediterranean by way of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles.

Bulgaria has a total area of 110 993 sq m (43 000 sq miles). Its population is 7 973 671 people. Both in area and population it is one of the smaller European countries.

Its importance is due mainly to its geographical position at the junction of the main routs which connect Western to Northern Europe with the Middle and Near East.



Bulgaria has a great variety of landscape: high mountains, wooded hills, wide fertile plains and valleys. The Balkan Mountains stretch from the Serbian border to the Black sea. They are the longest mountain range in the Balkan Peninsula to which they have given their name. Their highest peak is Mount Botev – 2 376 m (7 795 ft). The Rila Mountains, on the south-west include the highest peak of the Balkan Peninsula – Mount Moussala – 2 925 m (9 596 ft). The snow – clad mountain tops and lakes make Rila Mountains a very beautiful range with

an Alpine character. The Pirin Mountains have preserved their natural wilderness with lots of rare animal and plant species. The mountain called “Vitosha” is an integral part of the scenery of the Bulgarian capital and has been declared a National park. The Rhodopes are the largest range of mountains in Bulgaria; their southernmost part extends into Greek territory.

Only the north – eastern part of the Strandzha Mountains is in Bulgaria while the rest lies in Turkey. Between the Danube and the Balkan Mountains lies the rolling Danubian Plain. Together with the flat Plain of Dobrudzha, it is the granary of Bulgaria. Another large plain is the Plain of Upper Thrace which lies between Stara Planina Mountains and the Rhodopes. There vineyards and orchards alternate with fields of wheat, rice, hemp, cotton and tobacco.

The famous valley of the Roses lies between the Balkan Mountains and Sredna Gora Mountains. Its sheltered position is ideal for the cultivation of roses. It is the centre of production of attar of roses.



## Brief History

The Bulgarian state was founded in 681 AD as a union of several tribes – newly-settled Proto Bulgarians, Slavs and local Thracian tribes. The newly established country managed to preserve its independence through numerous wars and obtained national unity with the application of the Slavic Alpha-

bet and the adoption of the Orthodox Christianity in 864.

The First Bulgarian State stretched from Romanian territory in the north to the Aegean Sea in the south, the Black Sea in the east and the Adriatic Sea in the west. It fell to the Byzantine rule in the year 1018 and was ruled for five centuries.

After the Byzantine domination was thrown off the Second Bulgarian State was established in the year 1185, settling a new capital in the town of Veliko Turnovo and reinstating the country's borders. A Golden Age began in which Bulgaria bordered on three seas, intensive cultural life and education for the people.

From 1396 to 1878 the country was under the rule of the Ottoman Turks. When Bulgaria liberated from that rule Sofia became capital of the country and in 1879 the present Constitution was accepted under the name ‘The Veliko Turnovo Constitution’.



In 1946 Bulgaria was proclaimed People's Republic and was such until 1989, when the country peacefully declared itself a Democratic Republic.



## State Bodies

Bulgaria is a parliamentary re-

public headed by the President. The Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria was adopted by the National Assembly on July 12, 1991. It reflects and sanctions the social, economic and political foundations of the state, the functions and competence of the organs of government, the rights and duties of the people, and the electoral system.

## The Government:

The National Assembly is the supreme legislative authority of the state. It expresses the sovereign will of the people in the system of the state apparatus. The National Assembly is an elective body of 240 members and it directs the main lines of home and foreign policy, votes over the budget, appoints and can replace all other organs.

The Council of Ministers or the Government operates under the guidance of the National Assembly and is accountable to it for all its work. It is responsible for initiating and directing administrative, economic and cultural activities; for public order, national defence and foreign relations.

The Local Bodies of Government act in all 9 districts in which Bulgaria is divided. These administrative units have their locally elected councils which are responsible for public order, economic development and cultural activities in their respective region.

The Courts and the Public Prosecutors are entrusted with the task of defending the existing social systems, as established and legislatively reaffirmed by the Constitution and the laws and of safeguarding the constitutional rights of citizens. These are independent of other state bodies.