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Burgas Free University



Erasmus+

GUIDE FOR INCOMING ERASMUS+ STUDENTS

BURGAS FREE UNIVERSITY

www.bfu.bg



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WELCOME NOTE

Dear Erasmus+ Students,

We have the pleasure of welcoming you to Burgas Free University!

Leaving your home to go and study abroad in another country or city is an exciting and sometimes difficult and frightening project. We would like to assure you that many new and positive experiences are waiting for you in Burgas.

The Guide for incoming Erasmus+ students aims at providing you with helpful and practical information that could be necessary during your study. We would like you to know that we are always at your service to help you and make your participation in the Erasmus+ Student Mobility easy and enjoyable!

We wish you an exciting and rewarding mobility period at Burgas Free University!

Prof. Dr. Milen Baltov

Erasmus+ Institutional Coordinator

Image: Burgas Free University



ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY

General Description, Mission and Academic Profile

Burgas Free University /BFU/ was established with an Act of The Great National Assembly on 18 September 1991 . It is one of the first non-state universities in the country, located in the biggest industrial and cultural centre in the south-eastern region of the country.

BFU is a modern and innovative university, caring for its students and their professional realization, and which has significant academic achievements and an internationally recognized status:

- BFU is a member of the European Universities Association /EUA/;
- It has signed Agreements of Cooperation with 36 universities and organizations in Europe, America, Asia and Africa;
- It implements students and staff exchange programmes with 24 universities in Europe;
- It participates in the ECTS;
- It works under joint international projects with more than 100 universities and organizations;
- BFU is a partner of UNESCO under the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme, and is a host institution of UNESCO Chair on Culture of Peace and Human Rights.

It is the mission of Burgas Free University to be a flexible, enterprising and socially responsible institution, which provides training of undergraduates and graduates with skills for quick professional realization and a career in a dynamic and globalizing environment.

Academic profile

Burgas Free University provides education and training in the following academic areas:

- Legal, Social and Economic Sciences;
- Humanities;
- Technical and Computer Sciences.

Accreditations and Certificates

International Quality Standard Certificate ISO 9001 :2008

Burgas Free University is certified according to the quality standards of the International Organization for Standardization /ISO/. In 2005 BFU was certified under ISO 9001:2000 and in 2010 - under ISO 9001:2008. All the University's main activities have been certified, as well as its degree programmes: education of students in Bachelor, Master and PhD programmes, qualification, research and international relations activities.

Institutional Accreditation

Burgas Free University is accredited by the National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency /NEAA/. In 2012 it achieved a new five-year accreditation with a capacity for training 7200 students.

NEAA is a government authority which recognizes the license of universities to provide higher education services by evaluating the quality of their main activities: educational process, research, international relations, quality management system, employment of graduates and competitiveness. All the undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes at the University have also been accredited.



Organisational Structure

Faculties:

- Faculty of Legal Studies
- Faculty of Business Studies
- Faculty of Humanities
- Faculty of Computer Science and Engineering

Academic Centres:

- UNESCO Chair on Culture of Peace and Human Rights
- Technology Transfer Office
- Laboratory for Psychological and Social Research
- Laboratory for Psychological Support and Development
- Law Clinic
- CISCO Academy
- Robotics and Programming Academy
- Foreign Languages Department
- Centre for Distance Education
- Student Centre for Career Development
- University Library



Image: Burgas Free University

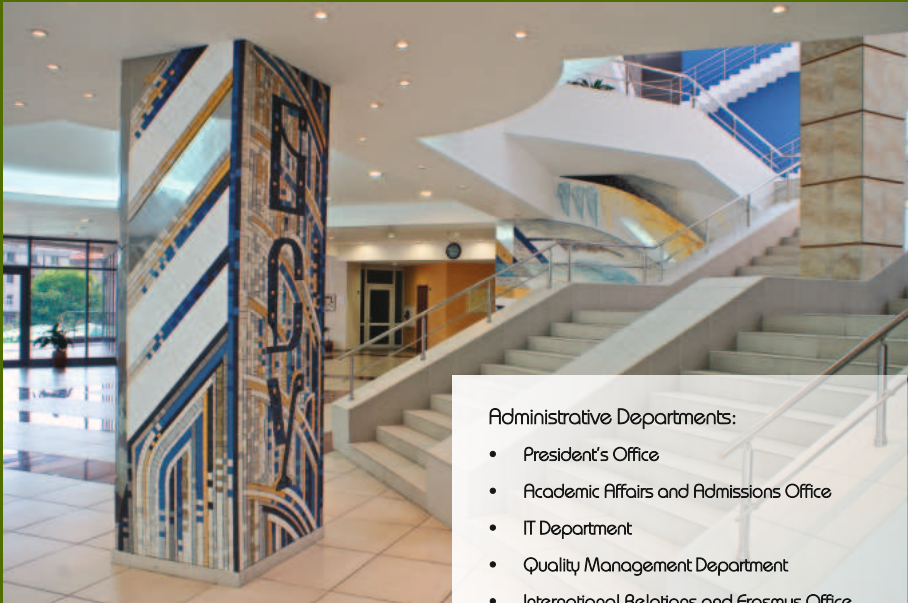


Image: Burgas Free University

Administrative Departments:

- President's Office
- Academic Affairs and Admissions Office
- IT Department
- Quality Management Department
- International Relations and Erasmus Office
- Accounting and Finance Department
- HR Department
- Administrative and Maintenance Department

University Management

President of BFU
Prof. Petko Chobanov, PhD
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Vice-Rector of Academic Affairs
and Accreditation
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Rector of BFU
Prof. D. Sc. Galya Hristozova
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Vice-Rector of Research and
International Cooperation
Prof. Milen Baltov, PhD
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Faculties and Programmes

Faculty of Legal Studies

Dean

Prof. Momyana Guneva, PhD

mguneva@bfu.bg

Bachelor Programmes:

- Law
- Public Administration

Master Programmes:

- Public Administration
- Tax Administration
- Customs Intelligence and Investigation
- Administration and Management of the National Security System



Image: Burgas Free University

Faculty of Business Studies

Dean

Prof. Vasil Yankov, PhD

vjankov@bfu.bg

Bachelor Programmes:

- Finance
- Accounting
- Marketing
- Business Administration
- International Economic Relations
- Economics and Marketing of Tourism

Master Programmes:

- Finance
- Accounting
- Marketing
- Marketing and Management of Tourism Business
- Business Administration (Management)
- Bank Management
- International Economic Relations (distance education)
- Business Administration (International Business) – in English
- Marketing and Digital Communications – in English



Image: Burgas Free University

Faculty of Computer Science and Engineering

Dean

Prof. Radostin Dolchinkov, PhD

rado@bfu.bg

Bachelor Programmes:

- Informatics and Computer Science
- Software Engineering
- Applied Informatics and Multimedia
- Communications and Electronization for Renewable Energy Sources
- Computer Systems and Technologies
- Communication Technics and Computer Networks
- Electric Energy Distribution and Electrical Equipment

Master Programmes:

- Software Engineering
- Information Security
- Communications and Electronization for Renewable Energy Sources
- Computer Systems and Technologies
- Communication Technics and Computer Networks
- Electric Energy Distribution and Electrical Equipment
- Forensic Engineering and Technical Expertise
- Traffic Accident Investigations and Traffic Safety Management
- Safety Management and Electrical Auditing
- Business Information Technologies (distance education)

PhD Programmes:

- Computer Science

Faculty of Humanities

Dean

Assoc. Prof. Mariya Alexieva, PhD

malex@bfu.bg

Bachelor Programmes:

- Psychology
- Public Communications and Social Psychology
- Journalism
- Public Relations
- Social Work and Counselling

Master Programmes:

- Strategic Communications and Media Management
- Child and Adolescent Psychology
- Social Counselling and Psychology
- Public Communications and Social Psychology (distance education)

PhD Programmes:

- Organization and Management of Social Work



Image: Burgas Free University

Study Facilities

Burgas Free University provides all state-of-the-art facilities for working and studying in a friendly academic environment.

BFU has the most modern and newest facilities in the system of higher education in Bulgaria. Its building was constructed in 2004 and has a total area of 22,500 square meters. The building of BFU was awarded the "Building of the Year" Prize for 2004 in a competition organized by the Ministry of Regional Development of Bulgaria, in the area of architecture and civil engineering, and its architect was elected "The Architect of the Year".

The university campus is located in the city centre. There are a total of: four lecture rooms seating 100 to 200 students, 40 seminar rooms seating between 20 and 60 people, 2 phonetic language laboratories, 10 computer rooms with a capacity of up to 40 workstations each, a laboratory complex of 12 specialized engineering and technical laboratories, a media centre with a professional radio and TV studio, a psychology laboratory, a simulation courtroom.

Together with the lecture halls and laboratories, there is a big multi-functional conference centre designed with an aula with 400 seats, a hall with 200 seats for audio-visual sound recording and simultaneous translations, and several seminar rooms for the purpose of organizing various events.

The 3-storey atrium with panoramic glass elevators is used for official ceremonies, concerts and other events. A big service centre is designed for the needs of the students. It includes a book shop, a copy centre, bank service spots, a trade centre, a fitness hall, 1 restaurant, 2 cafes, 1 night club, outdoor and underground parking lots, as well as a hotel.

BFU has a modern information system which supports the study process and the administrative services, as well as high technological facilities - high-speed and non-stop access to the Internet in all the study and conference rooms, offices and the library; wireless network infrastructure with guaranteed full coverage in the whole building.

The University Library

The university library occupies an area of 1 800 sq.m. on 2 floors, with 3 book depositories for 1 20000 volumes of books and periodicals in different fields of knowledge and in different languages, a borrowing service, several computerized reading rooms with full access to the Internet, rich bibliography fund; Bulgarian and foreign databases. The electronic catalogue includes bibliographic information about the whole library fund, enriched with images of book covers and contents. It also gives information about the new books, as well as it allows access to the foreign full-text databases and specialized databases. The library provides quiet areas for studying and also offers common areas to facilitate group study and collaboration. Self-managed remote access is provided to the full-text scientific databases ProQuest, Scopus, ScienceDirect, Web of Knowledge. The library of BFU is a member of the Association of the University Libraries and the Bulgarian Library and Information Association.

Working hours:

Monday to Friday

9:00 - 17:00

Saturday 9:00 - 15:00

The Library is closed on Sundays.

Contacts:

Director

Diana Adamova

diadams@bfu.bg



Image: Burgas Free University

Facilities for Students with Special Needs

Burgas Free University has well established facilities and provides accessible environment for students with special needs to move either independently or with a companion.

Burgas Free University enrolls disabled people with reduced working capacity as students under relieved procedure and conditions. The mode and way of conducting the entrance examinations are defined in compliance with the applicants with special needs, in regard to the level of disability and at applicants' request.

The students with special needs are provided with personal methodological assistance during their studies – additional consultations. They have free access to the library and all electronic issues. There is also a specialized programme for blind students.

Student Council

Contacts:
Student Council
BFU, office 209
ss@bfu.bg

The Student Council is a body for protection of the students' rights and interests at the university, acting according to the Law for Higher Education. It involves students from all faculties and aims at observing the principles of equality, efficiency and utility of higher education and the university autonomy.

The Student Council participates in the processes of quality management of BFU through making proposals on behalf of the students for the improvement of the study process and the services provided, through involving students in research activities, through development of new forms of participation in student clubs, cultural and sports events.

The Student Council establishes domestic and international educational and cultural contacts with similar organisations in the country and abroad and contributes to the image building of the university and the academic community.

Burgas Free University



ERASMUS+
PROGRAMME
AT
BURGAS
FREE
UNIVERSITY

Overview

Burgas Free University has been awarded the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE) for the full duration of the Erasmus+ programme 2014-2020. The ECHE provides the general quality framework for European and international cooperation activities to be carried out within the Programme.



Image: Burgas Free University



Burgas Free University's¹⁷ Erasmus Charter:

81115-LA-1-2014-1-BG-E4AKA1-ECHE
ID Code: BG BOURGAS01

Erasmus+ is the new EU programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sport for 2014-2020. It replaces seven programmes bringing together the Lifelong Learning Programme (Erasmus, Leonardo da Vinci, Comenius, Grundtvig and Jean Monnet), the Youth in Action programme, five international cooperation programmes (Erasmus Mundus, Tempus, Alfa, Edulink, the programme for cooperation with industrialised countries).

Erasmus+ provides grants for a wide range of actions and activities in the fields of education, training, youth and sport. The programme gives opportunities to students, trainees, staff and volunteers to spend a period abroad to increase their skills and employability. It supports organisations to work in transnational partnership and to share innovative practices in the fields of education, training and youth.

The key actions of the Erasmus+ programme are:

- Key Action 1 – Learning Mobility of Individuals;
- Key Action 2 – Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices;
- Key Action 3 – Support for policy reforms.

For over 25 years, Europe has funded the Erasmus programme, which has enabled over three million European students to spend part of their studies in another higher education institution in Europe. Erasmus+ now opens up these opportunities, allowing for mobility from and to other parts of the world, between the so-called "Programme" and "Partner Countries". Programme Countries are those countries participating fully in the Erasmus+ programme. To do so, they set up a National Agency and contribute financially to the programme. The Programme countries participating in the Erasmus+ programme are the 28 Member States of the European Union, as well as the non EU countries - Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Switzerland, Turkey and Macedonia. The Partner Countries are all the other countries in the world.

European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)

The Erasmus+ Programme provides students with access to other European higher education systems without any additional tuition fees and guarantees full academic recognition of the period spent at the hosting institution. This is made possible through the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). ECTS credits are based on the workload which is needed to achieve expected learning outcomes during the students' period of study. ECTS makes teaching and learning in higher education more transparent across Europe and facilitates the recognition of all studies. The system allows for the transfer of learning experiences between different institutions, greater student mobility and more flexible routes to gain degrees.



Image: Burgas Free University

Grading system

Students' knowledge and skills are evaluated according to a six-point grading system: Excellent (6), Very good (5), Good (4), Satisfactory (3) and Fail (2). An exam is considered successfully passed if the student has earned a minimum result of "Satisfactory (3)". Since 2004, ECTS grading has been applied to all students along with the national system grading.

National Grading System		ECTS Grade
Excellent	6	A
Very good	5	B
Good	4	C
Satisfactory	3	D, E
Fail	2	Fx, F

Description of the national grading system:

- 6 = Excellent - outstanding performance
- 5 = Very good - above the average standard but with some errors
- 4 = Good - generally sound work with notable errors
- 3 = Satisfactory - fair but with significant shortcomings
- 2 = Fail - considerable further work is required

ECTS grading scale:

- A = Excellent - outstanding performance with only minor errors
- B = Very good - above the average standard but with some errors
- C = Good - generally sound work with a number of notable errors
- D = Satisfactory - fair but with significant shortcomings
- E = Sufficient - performance meets the minimum criteria
- Fx = Fail - some more work required before the credit can be awarded
- F = Fail - considerable further work is required

Erasmus+ Coordinators

Institutional ERASMUS+ Coordinator:

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Image: Burgas Free University

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Image: Burgas Free University



Image: Internet - SOFIA

BULGARIA AT A GLANCE



Brief History

Bulgaria (Republic of Bulgaria) is located in South-eastern Europe, in the Eastern part of the Balkan peninsular. The country is bordered by Romania to the North, Serbia and Macedonia to the West, Greece and Turkey to the South, and the Black Sea to the East. With a territory of 110,994 square kilometres, Bulgaria is Europe's 14th-largest country. The population of Bulgaria is 7.11 million people or 1.5% of the EU population, thus ranking the country at the 16th place immediately after Austria. The population is predominantly urban and mainly concentrated in the administrative centre of its 28 provinces.

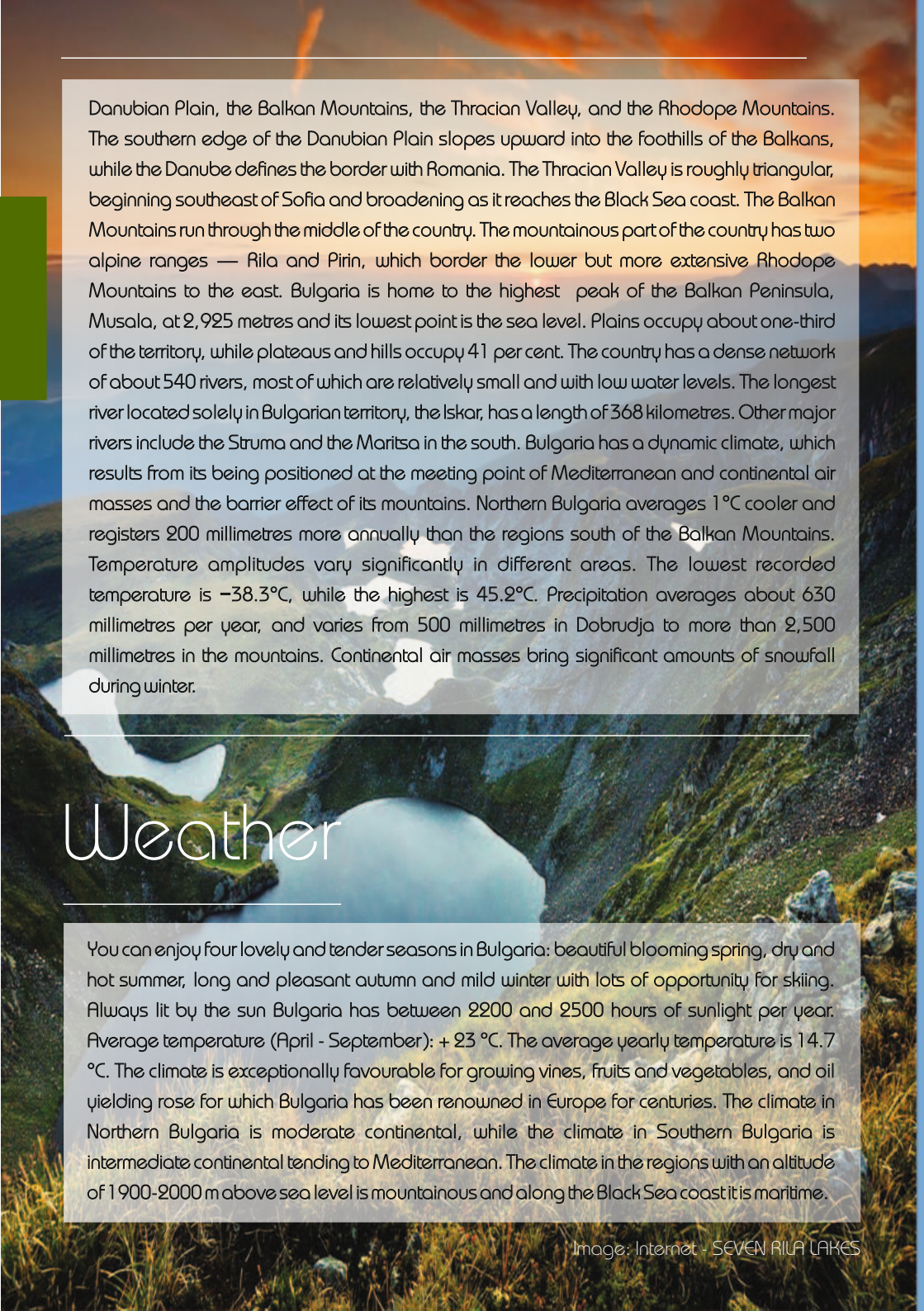
Most commercial and cultural activities are concentrated in the capital Sofia. The strongest sectors of the economy are heavy industry, power engineering, and agriculture, all relying on local natural resources.

The current political structure dates back to the adoption of a democratic constitution in 1991. Bulgaria is a parliamentary republic with a high degree of political, administrative, and economic centralization. It is a member of the European Union, NATO, and the Council of Europe; a founding state of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE); and has taken a seat at the UN Security Council three times.

For more information about the history of Bulgaria:
<http://bulgariatravel.org>

Geography

Bulgaria occupies a part of the Eastern Balkan Peninsula, bordering five countries—Greece and Turkey to the south, Macedonia and Serbia to the west, and Romania to the north. The land borders have a total length of 1,808 kilometres and the coastline has a length of 354 kilometres. Its total area of 110,994 kilometres ranks it as the world's 105th largest country. The most notable topographical features are the



Danubian Plain, the Balkan Mountains, the Thracian Valley, and the Rhodope Mountains. The southern edge of the Danubian Plain slopes upward into the foothills of the Balkans, while the Danube defines the border with Romania. The Thracian Valley is roughly triangular, beginning southeast of Sofia and broadening as it reaches the Black Sea coast. The Balkan Mountains run through the middle of the country. The mountainous part of the country has two alpine ranges — Rila and Pirin, which border the lower but more extensive Rhodope Mountains to the east. Bulgaria is home to the highest peak of the Balkan Peninsula, Musala, at 2,925 metres and its lowest point is the sea level. Plains occupy about one-third of the territory, while plateaus and hills occupy 41 per cent. The country has a dense network of about 540 rivers, most of which are relatively small and with low water levels. The longest river located solely in Bulgarian territory, the Iskar, has a length of 368 kilometres. Other major rivers include the Struma and the Maritsa in the south. Bulgaria has a dynamic climate, which results from its being positioned at the meeting point of Mediterranean and continental air masses and the barrier effect of its mountains. Northern Bulgaria averages 1°C cooler and registers 200 millimetres more annually than the regions south of the Balkan Mountains. Temperature amplitudes vary significantly in different areas. The lowest recorded temperature is -38.3°C, while the highest is 45.2°C. Precipitation averages about 630 millimetres per year, and varies from 500 millimetres in Dobrudja to more than 2,500 millimetres in the mountains. Continental air masses bring significant amounts of snowfall during winter.

Weather

You can enjoy four lovely and tender seasons in Bulgaria: beautiful blooming spring, dry and hot summer, long and pleasant autumn and mild winter with lots of opportunity for skiing. Always lit by the sun Bulgaria has between 2200 and 2500 hours of sunlight per year. Average temperature (April - September): + 23 °C. The average yearly temperature is 14.7 °C. The climate is exceptionally favourable for growing vines, fruits and vegetables, and oil yielding rose for which Bulgaria has been renowned in Europe for centuries. The climate in Northern Bulgaria is moderate continental, while the climate in Southern Bulgaria is intermediate continental tending to Mediterranean. The climate in the regions with an altitude of 1900-2000 m above sea level is mountainous and along the Black Sea coast it is maritime.

Culture and education

The culture in Bulgaria is a mixture of the cultures of the ancient Thracian tribes, the Bulgarians, the Slavs and the influence of the Byzantine and the Ottoman empires. 86 % of the citizens are Christians and 11 % are Muslims. The official language is Bulgarian.

Electricity

The electrical network works under 220 V.

Money and payments

The currency of Bulgaria is the Lev (BGN)- or in the plural form - Leva. The coins are called "stotinka" or "stotinki" (in plural). The exchange rate to Euro is: 1 EUR = 1.95583 BGN (~2 BGN). You can find current currency information on the site of the Bulgarian National Bank: www.bnb.bg

Banknotes are in denominations of 100, 50, 20, 10, 5 and 2. Coins are in denominations of 1 Lev and 50, 20, 10, 5, 2 and 1 stotinki. You can exchange money at banks, at large hotels and at private independent currency exchange offices, where the rates are clearly displayed.

Debit/credit cards of the types American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard and Visa are accepted in large cities, in larger hotels and car hire offices, and in some restaurants and shops, mainly in the big cities. However, Bulgaria is still a country that operates mainly on cash. ATMs are widespread, although it is best to check with the relevant bank/card provider

Time

The winter time (from October till March) is defined when you add 2 hours to GMT, and the summer time (from April till September) when you add 3 hours to GMT.

Office hours are 9 – 17 Monday to Friday. Banks work with clients from Monday till Friday from 9 a.m. till 3 p.m. Shops' working time is from 10:00 to 21:00 during the week and from 10:00 to 16:00 at weekends.

Local time

Standard time zone:	UTC/GMT +2 hours
Daylight saving time:	+1 hour
Current time zone offset:	UTC/GMT 3 hour
Time zone abbreviation:	EEST-Eastern European Summer Time

Religion

Bulgaria has been traditionally a Christian state since the adoption of Christianity as state religion in 865, and therefore the dominant confession is Eastern Orthodoxy of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church. During the Ottoman rule of the Balkans Islam established itself in the territories of Bulgaria, Roman Catholicism had roots in the country since the Middle Ages, and Protestantism arrived in the 19th century. The Constitution of Bulgaria designates Orthodoxy as the "traditional" religion of the country, but guarantees the free exercise of religion. Bulgaria has not experienced any significant scale ethnic-religious confrontation as was the case in the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s and 2000s. The religious communities in the country coexist peacefully. In fact, the capital Sofia is known for its so-called Triangle of Religious Tolerance.

Bulgarian people

Bulgarian people are hospitable, cordial and friendly with foreigners. They have a good sense of humour and a warm southern personality. The Bulgarians are well educated, not very religious and tolerate towards the other religions and ethnic groups.

Bulgarian language

Bulgarian is the official language in the Republic of Bulgaria. Bulgarian is an Indo-European language, part of the Southern branch of the Slavic languages. Other languages belonging to that family are Russian, Polish, Czech and Macedonian. Bulgarian is a language with about 12 million speakers mainly in Bulgaria, but also in Ukraine, Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey, Greece, Romania, Canada, USA, Australia, Germany and Spain. Bulgarian is mutually intelligible with Macedonian, and fairly closely related to Serbian, Croatian, Bosnian and Slovenian.

Bulgarian is the first "Slavic" language attested in writing. It is written in Cyrillic script (unlike English – in the Latin script). Nowadays the national languages of Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Mongolia, Montenegro, Russia, Serbia, Tajikistan, Ukraine, etc. use the Cyrillic script. With the accession of Bulgaria to the European Union on 1 January 2007, the Cyrillic became the third official alphabet of the EU. The basis of the Cyrillic alphabet is the Glagolitic. The Glagolitic script was developed by the brothers St. St. Cyril and Methodius in the 9th century A.D. and later on – elaborated by their disciples. They used to call it "Slavic language". In 11th – 12th century A.D. it was officially renamed to Bulgarian language. In the late 19th century, the Bulgarian language has adopted a large number of words from Western European languages, transcribed phonetically into Cyrillic (French and German for instance).

Gestures

The Bulgarian gestures for "Yes" and "No" often confuse people from other countries. Shaking your head from side to side indicates "Yes" and an up and down movement means "No." "No" is also expressed with a sudden downward jerk of the head and a clicking sound made with the mouth. Many children use this method.

Bulgarians greet each other by shaking hands. Close female friends may kiss one another on the cheek. The most common formal greetings are: Как сте? [kak ste] ("How are you?") and Здравейте! [Zdraveite] ("Hello").

Bulgarian cuisine

Bulgarian food does not particularly differ from the European cuisine. The traditional Bulgarian cuisine is a mixture of classic Bulgarian meals, intertwined with heritage from Slavonic, Greek, Turkish, and lately, other central and western European cuisines.

The basic food products of the traditional Bulgarian cuisine are beans, sour and fresh milk, cheese, tomatoes, paprika, potatoes, onions, apples, water-melons and grapes. Food products can be purchased in all food stores and supermarkets, as well as on the direct producer-consumer market.

Cooked food is served in catering establishments, pizza stands and restaurants, the prices depending on the category of the catering establishment.

The most frequent meat specialities are kebapcheta (minced-meat rolls) and kyufteta (meatballs), shish kebab (grilled meat) on skewers, steaks, and loukanka (salami). Some other favourite dishes are tarator (cold summer soup made of yoghurt, water and cucumber), cheese a la Shopski, breaded yellow cheese, beans soup cooked in a monastery manner, banitsa (sheeted pastry with cheese), paprika stuffed with eggs and cheese, Russian salad, aubergine puree, Shopska salad and caramel custard.

Traditional for all the Bulgarian foods is the use of many and various spices.

Bulgarian sour milk is worldwide famous – cow's milk, sheep's milk and buffalo-cow's milk – all of various taste and cream content.

A breakfast in an ordinary restaurant costs about 3 Leva, a dinner - 8 Leva, and supper - around 10 Leva.

Alcoholic drinks are on sale in most food shops, and in numerous specialised pubs. Bulgarian wines are famed for their exceptional quality; indeed, Bulgaria is one of the world's major wine exporters. The price of one bottle of 0.75 litres of good dry wine varies between 4 and 10 Leva.

The strong alcoholic drink traditional for Bulgaria is called rakiya. The price of a 0.5-litre bottle varies between 5 Leva and 15 Leva, depending on the quality of the product, the manufacturing technology and the region of origin.

Image: Internet - BURGAS

THE CITY OF BURGAS



Geographic Location, Landscape and Climate

The town of Burgas is situated on the coast of the Black Sea in Burgas Bay on a flat country known as Burgas plate. The average altitude is 17 m. To the north and to the south of Burgas there are salt lakes, which are protected areas because of the fact that they are a part of the Via Pontica route of migrating birds. The climate is of the moderate continental type with a definite influence of the sea. Summer is pleasantly fresh because of the constant movements of the air. The average day temperature of the air during the summer is 26.4° C, and the temperature of the sea water – 24.8° C. There are between 24 and 27 sunny days per month during the summer period with an average of 10-11 sunny hours in a 24-hour period. The winter is mild with no snow. The average day temperature of the air during the winter is 4.6° C, and that of the sea water – 7.4° C. Because of the influence of the sea the autumn is long and warmer than it is in the country, and the spring is comparatively cold and usually comes one month later than normal.

History

The favourable living conditions in the fertile flat country near the sea attracted people in this area thousands of years ago. The first signs of life date back to the bronze era and the beginning of the iron era. The Region of Burgas is rich with archaeological remains dating back to the Thracian era (4th century before Christ). The name of Burgas comes from the Latin word "burgos", which means a tower. There are legends about the Roman passenger station, which used to be located in the area of the contemporary port of Burgas. Fifteen centuries later the settlement that started to bear the name of Pirgos was mentioned in the works of the Byzantine poet Manuil Fil. During the 18th century Burgas was the biggest port south to the Balkans. The first map that shows the town plans of Burgas dates back to 1854. The first Bulgarian school and church were founded in 1868. On 6 February 1878 Burgas was liberated from the Ottoman empire by the contingent of colonel Lermontov, who was the brother of the great Russian poet Mihail Lermontov. On 7 February 1878 the first Bulgarian municipality was founded. In 1888 the municipality library was founded and three years later the first town plan of Burgas was developed and officially approved. In the first decades of the 20th century the town goes under accelerated industrialization. A cultural uplift begins – many community centres are founded, the archaeological society, the town museum. The Trade Gymnasium and the State mechanical school were founded. The port was enlarged and modernized, the airport was built. The building of the biggest petrol refinery on the Balkans was started.

Modern Burgas

Burgas is a municipal and regional centre as well as the fourth biggest town in Bulgaria with a population of about 200 000 inhabitants. According to the economic indicators the Municipality of Burgas is second among the other Bulgarian municipalities. Burgas is an important industrial, commercial, transport and tourist center. The biggest petrol refinery on the Balkan peninsula – LUKOIL BULGARIA is located near Burgas. Nowadays the city has great economic potential: its well-developed chemical industry, machine building, fishing and agriculture make an important contribution to the national economy. The city has also a thriving furniture and textile industry. Burgas has the biggest port in the country with the only petrol terminal south to the Balkan mountain. The railway and road networks are well developed. The airport has the best atmospheric conditions on the Balkan peninsula and is the only airport to accept ultrasonic airplanes. Since 1989 Burgas has been known as a Duty Free Zone. Burgas is the centre of the tourism industry on the southern Bulgarian Black Sea coast. It is also a starting point for visiting the Black Sea summer resorts and vacation villages around the city – Sunny Beach, Elenite, Dunes, the towns – museums Nessebar and Sozopol, the Ropotamo reserve, the Strandzha nature park.

Image: Internet - BURGAS

Infrastructure and Transport

Burgas has the structure and planning typical for the Bulgarian towns – a central city part, in which the main administrative buildings, the cultural institutions and the trade areas are located, and suburb parts where the living areas are located with their infrastructure and recreation parks. What is typical for Burgas is its orientation to the east – to the sea. The old part of Burgas has the form of a rainbow open to the beach and the sea garden – the two most attractive places in the town. Nearby are the administrative buildings, the main pedestrian and trade areas, all cultural institutions and the greater part of the entertainments. The residential areas are situated around the central part. In the periphery and along the sea coast the town passes through quarters with low buildings to the typical

l for Bulgaria sea tourist villages. The pedestrian areas are well developed and this allows for the easy walking through the central part to the sea garden and the beach without transport means. The connection with the living areas is made by bus and trolleybus. The price of a bus ticket is 1 BG lev. This is equal to 0,50 Euro. You can travel to Sofia by train or by bus. Every day there are two express trains travelling to Sofia and 6 quick trains. The price of a train ticket for the express is 18-20 levs. There is a regular bus service. A bus ticket to Sofia costs 28-32 levs. This kind of transport is more popular.

Schools and Universities

There are 31 primary and secondary schools, 11 professional high-schools, 4 colleges and 2 universities in Burgas. Burgas is also proud of its 4 specialized language schools, the secondary school of economics, the secondary technical school of civil engineering, the secondary technical school of industrial chemistry, the sports school, the musical school, the school of mathematics. There is a good level of education in the town and the region, which is comparatively higher than the average for the country. What is more important – it is not a problem for a foreigner who does not speak Bulgarian to talk to a Bulgarian in one of the European languages

Churches

Bulgarians treat the Christianity and the Bulgarian Orthodox church with great respect. Together with the education they are the most important factors that helped to preserve the Bulgarian spiritual culture and the national identity during the 13-century history of Bulgaria. The Orthodox churches in Bulgaria are spiritual and cultural centres rather than religious buildings. In Burgas the cathedral church “St. St. Cyril and Methodius” is such a centre – an example of the Orthodox arts. The other churches are smaller, but the inside presents an interesting example model of the church art, which in this region is influenced by the Greeks. There is a free entrance to the churches. In Burgas there are also active Catholic and Protestant churches.

Theatre

The theatre "Adriana Budevskia" bears the name of one of the most famous Bulgarian theatre players. It has a long history and is one of the most important symbols of the town and part of its magic. The active season in Burgas is from October till May, but actually it does not stop throughout the year because during the summer the cultural life of the country is transferred to the resort cities on the Black Sea coast. The Burgas theatre performs on its own stage and on the stage of the opera theatre. For guest-performances they use the halls of the Military Club and the Performance Hall of the "LUKOIL" Chemical Company. The price of the tickets varies from 10 to 20 BG levs.

Opera, ballet and classical music

Burgas is one of the few Bulgarian towns, which have their own opera theatre with a ballet group. Its repertoire includes classical and Bulgarian compositions and operetta classics. The hall of Burgas opera, which is also used by the philharmonic orchestra, has a modern design and excellent acoustics. Prices of tickets vary from 8 to 15 BG levs.

Art galleries

There are more than ten art galleries in Burgas. The biggest and most famous one is the City Art Gallery. Its exposition is placed in an ex-Jewish synagogue, built at the beginning of the 20th century on the design of Italian architects. Today it is declared a culture monument. In the Gallery there are pieces of work of all Bulgarian classic artists, contemporary Bulgarian artists and the richest collection of icons from the Strandja Region.



Cinema

In the town there is one cinema "Cinema City" in Mall Galleria with 10 cinema halls. The prices of the tickets vary from 6 to 12 levs.

Music

Burgas is a town with a rich musical history and even richer musical presence. You can even say that after Sofia, Burgas is the only Bulgarian town, which after the reforms period managed to keep its musical talents. There are many concerts being organized here especially during the summer period, when the sea attracts the cultural life and the Bulgarian bohemians.

Literature, libraries, publishing activity

Burgas takes part of its charm from the very many poets and writers that have lived or are living here. Burgas is the home town of the poetess Petya Dubarova who died tragically at a very young age, as well as the spiritual place of the classic Hristo Fotev. Apart from the university libraries, which have a strict and regulated access, in Burgas there is one big library and some smaller community centres' libraries. The regional library "Peyo K. Yavorov" bears the name of one of the greatest Bulgarian poets and playwrights. It was established in 1888. During its century-long history the library has developed an extremely rich book-stock – fiction, scientific and reference books, textbooks and handbooks, periodicals and musical records. The library has a department for foreign language literature, which could be used in the reading rooms. You can register at the beginning against minimum payment, and the lending of books is free of charge. One of the most modern houses of the book in Bulgaria is the "Helicon" bookshop in Burgas. It is true that it is almost the only bookshop in the country, which complies with the highest European standards. For many years it has been working not only as a trading place but also as a temple of the spirituality. Many literature readings, books promotions, presentation of young authors, etc. are held here.

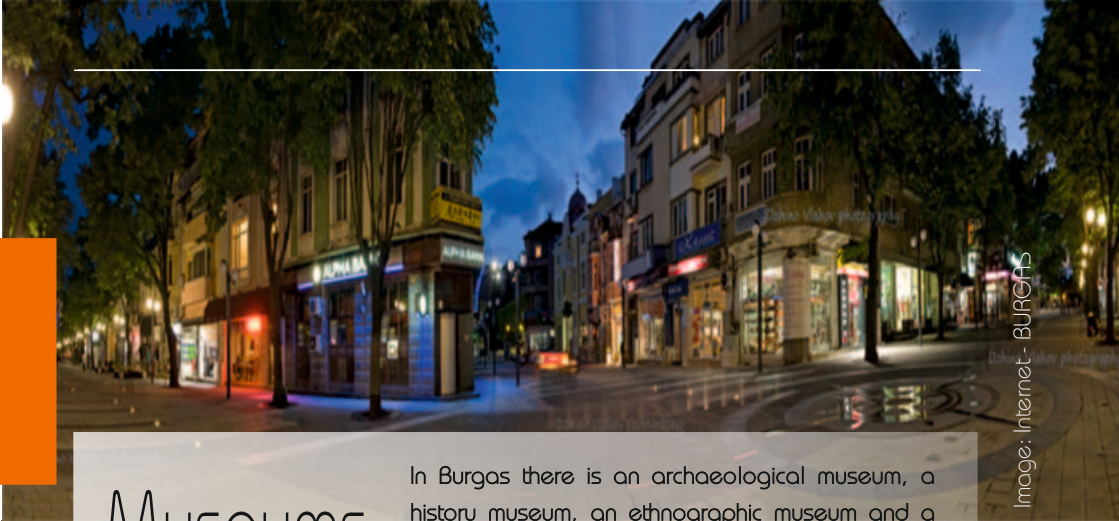


Image: Internet - BURGAS

Museums

In Burgas there is an archaeological museum, a history museum, an ethnographic museum and a natural history museum. The entrance fee is 2 BG leva (1 Euro) for students.

Festivals

Burgas is known as the town of the festivals. Every summer the festival of the Bulgarian pop song "Burgas and the Sea" is organized in the summer open-air theatre in the Sea Garden. The open-air theatre hosts the International Folklore Festival as well, during the summer. On open stages in the Sea Garden various festivals are held - Beer Fest, Festival of the Bulgarian Rock Music "Rock Explosion", Blues Fest, Theatre Festival "On the Shore". In October each year Burgas is a host of the Autumn literature fests. Every 3 years Burgas becomes a host of the Week of the sea accompanied by a rich cultural programme. The musical festival is also a traditional one. It bears the name of the famous Bulgarian conductor Emil Chakarov, a student of Herbert von Karajan.

In August 2008 the MTV pop festival "Spirit of Burgas" was held for the first time on the beach of Burgas. The TV shows of the festival were broadcasted on 9 MTV channels in 36 countries. The festival has been held annually since then.

Two times a year – in May and September, Burgas becomes a paradise of the flowers. In pavilions especially designed for the purpose and also in the open in the Sea Garden there is an international flower exhibition "Flora – Burgas".

Burgas' patron is St. Nicola Miracle maker. The fest of the town of Burgas is the day of St. Nicola – 6th December. Usually in the weeks before and after the 6th of December under the patronage of the Municipality of Burgas there are many events in the town, which often come into the Christmas holidays and thus form a month of joy and happiness.

Sport

Burgas offers a great variety of sports facilities and possibilities for active sport. There are two football teams in town, which play in the Higher League of Bulgaria. There are also two stadiums. Burgas is proud of its comparatively new stadium "Neftochimic". It has a total of 24,550 seats, 13,000 of which are under shelters, grass area and lights which correspond to the world standards. In fact, this is the most modern sports facility in Bulgaria. It has also a fitness centre, tennis courts, training rooms, training yards in the open and a hotel. Burgas has also two sports halls. The "Izgrev" hall is used for competitions on team sports. The "Mladost" hall is used for cultural events too. Many continental and world youth competitions are held there. Each year it hosts tournaments on gymnastics and sports dances.

Burgas offers good facilities for amateur sports. The fitness centre are more than ten and have the necessary conditions, equipment and trainers. Prices vary depending on the type of the service and the category of the hall.

For all types of services a subscription is offered – single subscription or family subscription cards, which make the price of the service lower. The pupils and the students use discounts from 30 to 50 %.

For those who like swimming Burgas offers two 50-meter long swimming pools and a warm sea from May till October.

Tennis fans may play tennis on three tennis grounds in town against payment. Most preferable ones are the tennis courts in the Sea Garden, which are the biggest ones and combine a good ground and sea air.

For those who love jogging the Sea Garden offers the most perfect conditions – an appropriate climate (in Burgas it is rare that the temperatures are below the zero), well preserved alleys, proximity to the sea. The Garden is also a pleasant place for walks and social contacts.

During the high tourist season you can also surf or do water skiing in Burgas Bay.

In Burgas and around Burgas there are no high mountains and there is rarely snow. However, in Bulgaria there are many famous winter resorts that offer ski facilities – the Pamporovo resort in the Rhodopi mountains is about 4-5 hours away from Burgas by car; the Borovets resort in the Rila mountains is about 6 hours drive. 6-7 hours away are Yundola, Dobrinishte and Bansko – all famous mountain resorts. All winter resorts offer a full equipment to rent. The tracks are comfortable for skiing from November till the end of March, sometimes till the middle of April.

Leisure and Tourism

The central city part is a favourite place for walks. The citizens of Burgas say that when the weather is fine, on the main street "Bogoridi" there is a river of people walking. This street naturally ends in the Sea Garden where it forms a terrace from which you can see the Bay and you can also reach the sea. One of the attractions of the town is are the fishermen on the town pier. It is for sure that there is no other town in Bulgaria like Burgas to have so many cafes, confectionaries, clubs and discotheques. They have a specific atmosphere because in them you can meet the culture of the east and the west, the European standards and the spirit of the Balkan south.

To rest in Burgas during the summer means to go to the beach. The warm sea, the sandy beaches and the south sun give a specific atmosphere to the town of Burgas. These make it a resort town.

For those who like travelling Burgas and its region offer a rich variety of opportunities. To the north of Burgas 120 km away is Varna – the other big sea town in Bulgaria. It takes about two hours by car or bus to reach Varna. It will take you only half an hour to go to Sunny Beach – one of the most famous summer resorts in Bulgaria, and to the vacation village "Elite". In the same direction is the old town of Nessebar – a town-museum which has kept the ruins of the ancient Roman town Messemvria. To the south of Burgas there are also many summer resorts and vacation villages – Chernomorets, Primorsko, Kiten, Lozenetz, Tsarevo, Ahltopol. In the same direction there is the town-museum Sozopol, the vacation village Dunes, the International Youth Centre – Primorsko and the Ropotamo reserve. In the most southern part of the Region of Burgas is the Strandja mountain. It is the biggest natural park in Bulgaria. It has an extremely rich natural collection of flora and fauna – over 50 % of the flora in the country. This park is a kind of an ethnographic reserve – on its territory you can find the village Bulgari, in which the ritual of the fire dancing is preserved.

Image: Internet - OLD NESSEBAR

Entertainment in Burgas – markets and restaurants

The main market areas in town are along the streets "Alexandrovska", "Aleco Bogoridi" and "Ferdinandova". These are also the main pedestrian areas with many cafes, restaurants, bars and clubs. There are two malls in the city – Mall Galleria and Mall Burgas Plaza.

For further information: <http://gotoburgas.com/en>

HOW TO PREPARE YOUR STUDY

Before Mobility

If you chose Bulgaria as your Erasmus+ destination you have to contact the Erasmus coordinator of your University to check if there are bilateral agreements signed between your University and Burgas Free University. If yes, you can apply for a study mobility period in Bulgaria in your subject area.

Your Home Institution has to select you as an Erasmus participant and send to the International Relations Office of BFU your Nomination. Then you need to fill in the following Application documents:



- Application form for Incoming ERASMUS Students.
- Learning Agreement, signed and stamped
- Certificate of Education issued by the home university.
- Transcript of Records issued by the home university.
- Short CV.
- Copy of Identity Card/Passport.
- Copy of Health Insurance Card.
- 3 Photos (4,5 x 3,5 cm);

Deadline for application:

- Winter semester – no later than 15th August
- Summer semester – no later than 15th December

Documents should be sent by post to:

Burgas Free University
International Relations Office
62, San Stefano Street
8001 Burgas
Bulgaria

Visa

- A foreigner may enter the Republic of Bulgaria with a regular foreign travel document or another equivalent document, as well as with a visa, if required.
- Citizens of the European Union member states, EEC (Norway, Iceland and Lichtenstein) and Switzerland do not need to obtain a visa for studies, irrespective of the duration of their stay.
- Students from other countries may need to obtain a visa before leaving their country. For information about the visa procedure, please contact the Bulgarian Embassy or Consulate in your home country.
- Holders of valid Schengen visas have the right to enter and reside in the Republic of Bulgaria for a period of no more than three months in any six-month period from the date of the first entry, without need to have a Bulgarian short-stay visa.
- In any case, all Erasmus students are advised to contact the Bulgarian Embassy and/or Consular Sections in their home country to find out detailed information on the specific requirements and procedures for staying in Bulgaria.
- For further information: <http://www.mfa.government.bg/en/pages/1109/index.html>

Health Insurance

- Citizens of the EU member states or of Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland, planning to stay temporarily (usually up to 90 days) in Bulgaria, should obtain the European Health Insurance Card to be issued in their home country. It gives access to medically necessary, state-provided healthcare, under the same conditions and at the same cost as Bulgarian people who are insured. It guarantees reimbursement of the medical costs on the spot, or soon after return home. For more information, please visit: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=559>
- Citizens of any other countries should check with their national authorities if they are entitled to free or subsidized health treatment in Bulgaria as part of a reciprocal health agreement between their home country and Bulgaria. If there is no such an agreement, then they should obtain health insurance documents in their home country for the period of their stay in Bulgaria.

Upon Arrival in Burgas

- Upon arrival in Burgas, all incoming Erasmus students should first register for their studies at the International Relations Office of BFU.
- EU citizens staying for a period longer than 3 months are obliged within 5 days after their entry in the country to declare in writing the address of their residence at the Regional Migration Unit within the Ministry of Interior in Burgas.
- After this registration the students will obtain an official permission to stay in the country for the duration of their studies. This permission is granted upon submission of a study certificate issued by Burgas Free University to certify that they have been registered as Erasmus students at the university.
- Students who are not EU citizens and arrive to Bulgaria with a valid long-term visa type D, must also register at the Regional Migration Unit and obtain a residence permit from the Migration Directorate.

After Mobility

Prior to departure the International Relations Office will issue:

- Transcripts of Records;
- Certificate of Attendance.



Image: Burgas Free University

Transport

Arrival by plane (at Burgas Airport)

The most convenient way to reach Burgas is a charter flight to Burgas Airport. It is the second largest airport in the country, located in a picturesque bay on the southern Bulgarian Black Sea coast, 10 km north-east of the town of Burgas.

From the Airport you may take the public bus Nr. 15 running to the city centre. You may buy a ticket from the driver. The price of one ticket is 1.00 Bg lev (about 0,50 EUR). You can also take a taxi or rent a car.

Arrival by plane (at Sofia Airport)

From Sofia airport you can reach the Central Bus/Railway station by underground (metro) or by taxi.

Sofia Metro Line 1 connects Sofia Airport to the city centre and some of the large residential areas in close proximity. Changing trains from line 1 to line 2 at Serdika Metro Station, passengers can travel from the airport to Sofia Central Bus and Railway Stations within less than half an hour. The metro trains on the route to the airport operate from 5:30 am to midnight on weekdays and weekends/holidays. The metro station at Sofia Airport is located in the eastern part of Terminal 2. Sofia Airport also provides free-of-charge transportation between the two terminal buildings.

If you would prefer to travel by taxi, we recommend the services of the taxi operator OK Supertrans AD as a contractual partner of Sofia Airport. You can request the service at the offices of OK Supertrans in the Arrivals of Terminal 1 and Terminal 2, at tel: +359 2 973 21 21, website: www.oktaxi.net or at the designated taxi stands. We recommend that you do not use taxi services offered outside the office of the taxi operator or in front of the terminal to avoid the risk of overcharging.

Arrival by bus (Sofia Central Bus Station and/or Burgas Central Bus Station)

There are many companies, both international and Bulgarian, operating regular bus services between major European cities and Sofia and/or Burgas. Both international and domestic buses arrive at the Central Bus Station in Sofia, next to the Central Railway Station on Maria Louiza Blvd.

There are scheduled trains and buses connecting Sofia and Burgas.

There are two day-time express trains, four day-time fast trains, and one night train to Burgas. The day-time express or fast train is seat-assignment tickets only, whereas the night train offers sleeping carriages. The trip takes about 7-8 hours. The price of a train ticket for the express is 18-20 levs.

Every day there is a regular bus service connecting Sofia and Burgas. A bus ticket costs 28-32 levs. This kind of transport is more popular and preferable, because the trip takes only about 5 hours depending on the weather and road conditions, and it is more comfortable. The buses leave from the Central Bus Station in Sofia and arrive at the Bus Station Terminal "South" in Burgas, close to the Central Train Station in the town.

For more information on the local transport in Burgas you may visit the "Integrated Urban Transport of Burgas" project website!

<http://www.transportburgas.bg/en/index>

Accommodation



Image: Burgas Free University

BSU Hotel

BFU has a new modern hotel for students and staff. It is equipped with central air-conditioning, cable TV and high-speed Internet. The hotel is ideally located in the centre of Burgas in close proximity to the university, at 34A Vardar Street. It offers accommodation in 20 spacious and soundproof rooms, of which 12 have twin beds and 8 are with bedrooms. All rooms are soundproof, with a nice view, work area and rest area, bathroom with toilet and shower enclosure. They are equipped with LCD TVs with cable television channels, air conditioning, mini-bar, Wi Fi, telephone.

Price: 25 Euro per night (single occupancy); 13 Euro per night (double occupancy)

Pictures and website:

<http://hotel.bfu.bg/en/stai>

Accommodation in apartments

It is common for the students to rent a room or an apartment in the town. The prices vary depending on the area, the size of the apartment, the term of renting. Students may rent a whole apartment or a house on their own, or they can live in a room in an apartment with a landlord. The prices of the small apartments (for single use – with one bedroom only) vary between 130 and 170 Euro rent per month. A two-bedroom apartment is offered at prices between 200 and 500 Euro per month in the central city part. A three-bedroom apartment rent costs between 250 and 600 Euro. We do not have apartments at our disposal to use and offer to students, but we will assist you in finding a suitable place to live. Most of the apartments are offered through real estate agencies, which will charge you a commission at the amount of 50 % of the one-month rent. Plus the rent for the first month should be paid, as well as a deposit at the amount of one-month rent which will be returned at the end of the stay, if everything is ok with the property.

Mobile Operators and Internet Providers

There are three big companies providing mobile services in Bulgaria: Vivacom, M-Tel & Telenor. You have two options when it comes to paying for your mobile communications: Pre-Paid (pay-as-you-go) and Post-Paid (contract services).

Pre-Paid Services – you must register any pre-paid SIM cards at the time of purchase. This means you must have valid ID when taking your new pre-pay SIM card. This is the best choice for a short stay in Bulgaria. Documents you will need: National ID (passport, etc.).

Post-Paid Services – as an international student you will be asked to provide proof of residence and you are allowed (as a foreigner) to sign a contract of between 12 and 24 months. There are many different tariffs to choose. Documents you will need: National ID (passport, etc.).

USEFUL LINKS AND CONTACTS

Burgas Free University	www.bfu.bg
Human Resource Development Centre (acting as National Agency)	www.hrdc.bg
European Commission– Erasmus+ programme	http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/index_en.htm
Erasmus Student Network - Bulgaria	http://esnbg.org/info/

Burgas Free University



It is the greatest honour for me to receive an honorary Doctorate today from Burgas Free University, the day on which so many young people graduated and the year in which Bulgaria acceded to the European Union. I wish to thank the people of Bulgaria for all their kindness and the University for enabling me to participate in this important occasion. I wish you all good luck in the years ahead.

Polly HUNTER
Member of the European Parliament

With great interest and admiration for the achievements of the Free University of Bulgaria, and pride in joining its efforts to promote the rule of law and international co-operation.

Thomas A. Mensah

It was a great honour and a privilege to become Doctor Honoris Causa at the so highly respected Sofia University. The graduation Ceremony I had the honour to attend was the perfect occasion to see a new generation of "Masters" finish their stay at their Alma Mater. I was impressed!

Jeroen de Hoop Scheffer
Secretary General of NATO.

With my deep appreciation for your efforts dedicated to education of new generation.

En. Anastasia

Changing Lives. Opening Minds.



International Relations Office

Visiting hours:

Monday to Friday

8.00 am - 12.00 am

1.00 pm – 5.00 pm

Burgas Free University

62, San Stefano Street

floor 4, room 412

valia@bfu.bg



Image: Burgas Free University

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 facebook.com/bfuniversity



Burgas Free University



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