

# Bulgaria

## Business Guide

Compiled by:

**Bulgarian – Swiss Chamber of Commerce**

Sofia, January 2020

### ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

The Bilateral Agreements between Switzerland and the European Union on the Free Movement of Persons give Swiss citizens the same rights as EU citizens: EU citizens do not need a visa to stay in Bulgaria. They may enter and leave the territory of Bulgaria with an identity card or passport for up to three months. When the conditions of EU law are met, Swiss citizens may reside in Bulgaria for longer than five years or permanently, for the purpose of which a certificate is issued.

For further information visit:

[www.eda.admin.ch/eda/de/home.html](http://www.eda.admin.ch/eda/de/home.html)

[www.eda.admin.ch/sofia](http://www.eda.admin.ch/sofia)

[www.eda.admin.ch/eda/de/home/leben-im-ausland/auswandern.html](http://www.eda.admin.ch/eda/de/home/leben-im-ausland/auswandern.html) Information on emigrating

[www.europa.admin.ch](http://www.europa.admin.ch)

Federal Department of Foreign Affairs  
Swiss Embassy in Sofia

Swiss policy on the European Union

### LANGUAGES USED FOR BUSINESS

About 60% of the working age population (25-64 years) speak at least one foreign language. Around two thirds of the students in the country learn English or German. In a business context English is widely used, followed by German and French.

### PUBLIC HOLIDAYS IN 2020

New Year's Day	Wed, Jan 1, 2020
Bulgaria Liberation Day	Tue, Mar 3, 2020
Good Friday (Eastern)	Fri, Apr 17, 2020
Orthodox Easter	Sun, Apr 19, 2020
Orthodox Easter Monday	Mon, Apr 20, 2020
Labour Day	Fri, May 1, 2020
Saint George's Day (Eastern)	Wed, May 6, 2020
Slavonic Literature and Culture Day	Sun, May 24, 2020
Unification Day	Sun, Sep 6, 2020
Independence Day	Tue, Sep 22, 2020

Eastern Orthodox Christmas Eve  
Orthodox Christmas Day  
2nd Day of Christmas

Thu, Dec 24, 2020  
Fri, Dec 25, 2020  
Sat, Dec 26, 2020

## **HEALTH AND INOCULATIONS**

Good medical care available, no particular vaccinations required.

## **TIME ZONES**

Eastern European Time (EET), Standard Time = GMT+2, Summer Time = GMT+3.

## **TIME DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SWITZERLAND AND BULGARIA**

1 hour

## **ELECTRICITY SUPPLY**

220 V

## **METHODS OF PAYMENT**

Currency: BGN (Bulgarian Lev, pl. Leva) fixed rate of exchange 1 EUR : 1.95583 BGN  
Payments via bank transfer, credit cards (all major credit cards accepted), cheques.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

Traveling to and within Bulgaria:

### **BY AIR**

Direct flights Zurich – Sofia – Zurich operated by Bulgaria Air.  
Wizz Air low cost direct flights Sofia – Geneva – Sofia and Sofia – Basel – Sofia (only in summer season).  
Regular internal flights Sofia – Varna and Sofia – Burgas (Varna and Burgas are the major Bulgarian Black Sea ports and resort centres).

### **BY ROAD**

Rental cars are generally available in numerous locations all over Bulgaria.  
There are no toll roads for cars in Bulgaria while an electronic vignette system is applied for traveling out of the cities. You can obtain a weekend (car – 10 BGN), a weekly (car – 15 BGN), monthly (car – 30 BGN), quarterly (car – 54 BGN) or yearly (car – 97 BGN) electronic vignette at all major gas stations or online at [www.bgtoll.bg](http://www.bgtoll.bg)

### **BY RAIL**

Rail transport in Bulgaria is readily accessible and generally comfortable, and the rail network serves all the larger populated places in Bulgaria. The railway lines cross all land borders of Bulgaria. The European Orient Express service also crosses the country. Tickets can be purchased at railway stations, at transport offices in towns and cities, and at the tourist agencies. Further information at: [www.bdz.bg](http://www.bdz.bg)

## **HOTELS**

Bulgaria offers a wide selection of hotels for every budget and requirement. Below some useful links when looking for accommodation:

[www.tripadvisor.com](http://www.tripadvisor.com)  
[www.booking.com](http://www.booking.com)  
[www.hotels.com](http://www.hotels.com)  
<http://pochivka.bg>  
<http://bghotelite.com>

## **COMMUNICATION**

International dialling code: +359 (+ area code + phone number)

Online databases for phone numbers in Bulgaria:

<http://www.goldenpages.bg/en>  
<http://yellowpages.bg/bg>  
<http://www.vivacom.bg/online/cgi-bin/wpd.cgi?temp=home.html&ls=0#>

## **CELL PHONES**

In order to avoid roaming costs while in Bulgaria and using a Swiss cell phone, a prepaid Bulgarian SIM card can be easily purchased with local service providers presenting proper identification, such as an identity card or a valid passport.

## **BUSINESS HOURS**

Offices:

Monday through Friday, 9.00 – 12.00 and 12.30 – 17.30

Banks:

Monday through Friday, 8.30 – 12.00 and 12.30 – 17.00

Shops:

Monday through Saturday, 9.00 or 10.00 – 18.00 or 19.00

Most shops are open at lunch-time and in metropolitan areas also on Sundays.

## **ADDRESS AND OPENING HOURS OF THE EMBASSY OF BULGARIA IN SWITZERLAND**

Embassy of Republic of Bulgaria in Bern, The Swiss Confederation

Address: Bern 3005, Bernastrasse 02-04

Telephone: +41 31 351 14 55, +41 31 351 14 56

Fax: +41 31 351 00 64

Out-of-hours hotline: +41 79 824 38 22

Office hours:

Mon - Fri, 9.00 am - 12.00 pm

Email: [Embassy.Bern@mfa.bg](mailto:Embassy.Bern@mfa.bg)

Web: <http://www.mfa.bg/embassies/switzerland/en/2340/index.html>

## **ADDRESS OF THE SWISS EMBASSY IN BULGARIA**

Embassy of Switzerland

ul. Chipka 33

1504 Sofia

P.O. Box 132

Bulgaria

Tel. +359 2 942 01 00

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Fax +359 2 946 16 22  
Email: [Msof.vertretung@eda.admin.ch](mailto:Msof.vertretung@eda.admin.ch)

Web: <https://www.eda.admin.ch/sofia>

The Swiss Embassy in Sofia is the competent representation for diplomatic relations with Bulgaria. However, for all consular affairs please contact the Swiss Embassy in Bucharest/Romania at [Mbuc.vertretung@eda.admin.ch](mailto:Mbuc.vertretung@eda.admin.ch)

### **TIPS FOR INITIATING BUSINESS CONTACTS**

It is customary to set an appointment via phone or e-mail. Prior to the first meeting we recommend to send a short “letter of presentation” introducing your company and explaining your objectives.

During your first meeting, pay attention to your outfit. Don't forget to be on time. Bulgarian businessmen appreciate punctuality and expect it as a Swiss trade-mark.

### **BUSINESS PRACTICES**

Bulgarian bureaucracy and legal systems are slow and complicated. Consequently, decisions and business actions may take time.

The organisational structure in companies is rather hierarchical with a clear division between the ranks and a great respect for authority, power and age. It is very common that only senior managers make decisions. During meetings it is not unusual to express disagreement openly.

### **SPECIAL FEATURES ON THE MARKET**

As of the beginning of 2012 the Bulgarian-Swiss Chamber of Commerce provides information and services to business and investor community in co-operation with the Swiss Embassy in Sofia. For more information: [www.bscc.bg](http://www.bscc.bg)

Date: January 2020

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