Bulgaria (ˌbʌlgərɪə, bʊl-; (listen); Bulgarian: България, tr. България), officially the Republic of Bulgaria (Bulgarian: Република България, IPA: [rɛˈpublika bolˈɡarija]), is a country in southeastern Europe. It 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. The capital and largest city is Sofia; other major cities are Plovdiv, Varna and Burgas. With a territory of 110,994 square kilometres (42,855 sq mi), Bulgaria is Europe’s 16th-largest country.

During the Neolithic period, organized prehistoric cultures appeared in the lands that would one day become Bulgaria. In Antiquity (6th–3rd century BC), the region became a battleground for Thracians, Persians, Celts and Macedonian Greeks until it was conquered by the Roman Empire in 45 AD. The Eastern Roman, or Byzantine, Empire lost some of these territories to an invading Bulgar horde in the late 7th century. The Bulgars then founded the first unified Bulgarian state in 681 AD which dominated most of the Balkans and functioned as a cultural hub for Slavs during the Middle Ages. The First Bulgarian Empire lasted until the early 11th century, when Byzantine emperor Basil II conquered and dismantled it. A successful Bulgarian revolt in 1185 established a Second Bulgarian Empire which reached its apex under Ivan Asen II (1218–1241). After numerous exhausting wars and feudal strife, the Second Bulgarian Empire disintegrated in 1396 and its territories fell under Ottoman rule for nearly five centuries. The Russo-Turkish War of 1877–78 resulted in the formation of the current Third Bulgarian State. Many ethnic Bulgarian populations were left outside its borders, which led to several conflicts with its neighbours and an alliance with Germany in both world wars. In 1946 Bulgaria became a one-party socialist state and part of the Soviet-led Eastern Bloc. The ruling Communist Party gave up its monopoly on power after the Revolutions of 1989 and allowed multi-party elections. Bulgaria then transitioned into a democracy and a market-based economy.

Since the adoption of a democratic constitution in 1991, Bulgaria has functioned as a unitary parliamentary republic with a high degree of political, administrative, and economic centralisation. Most commercial and administrative activities are concentrated in its capital and largest city of Sofia. The predominantly urbanized population of seven million people mainly inhabits the primary cities of the 28 provinces. Bulgaria’s market economy is part of the European Single Market and is largely based on services, agriculture, and a sizeable industrial sector focused on mining and machine building.

Bulgaria is a member of the European Union, NATO, and the Council of Europe; it is a founding state of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and has taken a seat at the UN Security
Council three times. It is also notable for its biodiversity, its achievements in sports and science, and its historical influence on Slavic cultures through its Medieval literary schools and the Cyrillic script. However, it continues to struggle with crippling corruption and severe demographic decline.

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### Etymology

The name *Bulgaria* is derived from the *Bulgars*, a tribe of Turkic origin that established the country. Their name is not completely understood and difficult to trace back earlier than the 4th century AD, but it is possibly derived from the Proto-Turkic word *bulğha* ("to mix", "shake", "stir") and its derivative *bulgak* ("revolt", "disorder"). The meaning may be further extended to "rebel", "incite" or "produce a state of disorder", i.e. the "disturbers". "To mix" or "of mixed stock" is a disputed interpretation of the word referring to the supposed mixing of the *Oghurs* and the *Huns* that initiated the Bulgars' ethnogenesis.

Such mixing, however, may have occurred earlier. Scholar Sanping Chen has noted analogous groups in Inner Asia, with phonologically similar names, who were frequently described in similar terms: during the 4th century, the Buluoji, a component of the "Five Barbarian" groups in Ancient China, were portrayed as both a "mixed race" and "troublemakers". Another suggested etymology of *Bulgare* is a derivation from a compound of the Proto-Turkic *bel* ("five") and *gur* ("arrow" in the sense of "tribe"), a proposed division within the *Utigurs* or *Onogurs* ("ten tribes").
Human activity in the lands of modern Bulgaria can be traced back to the Paleolithic. Organized agricultural societies, like the Vinča culture, arose in the Neolithic. The eнеolithic Varna culture (fifth millennium BC) is credited with inventing gold metallurgy. The associated Varna Necropolis treasure contains the oldest golden jewellery in the world with an approximate age of over 6,000 years. The treasure has been valuable for understanding social hierarchy and stratification in the earliest European societies.

The Thracians, one of the three primary ancestral groups of modern Bulgarians, appeared on the peninsula some time before the 12th century BC. Even though they excelled in metallurgy and gave the Greeks the Orphean and Dionysian cults, Thracians remained tribal and stateless. The Achaemenid Empire conquered most of present-day Bulgaria in the 6th century BC and retained control over the region until 479 BC. The invasion became a catalyst for Thracian unity, and the bulk of their tribes united under king Teres to form the Odrysian kingdom in the 470s BC. It was weakened and vassalized by Philip II of Macedon in 341 BC, attacked by Celts in the 3rd century, and finally became a province of the Roman Empire in 45 AD.

By the end of the 1st century AD, Roman governance was established over the entire Balkan Peninsula and Christianity began spreading in the region around the 4th century. The first Christian monastery in Europe was founded in 344 by Saint Athanasius near modern-day Chirpan, and the Gothic Bible—the first Germanic-language book—was created by Gothic bishop Ulfilas in what is today northern Bulgaria around 381. The region came under Byzantine control after the fall of Rome in 476. However, the Byzantines were engaged in prolonged warfare against Persia and could not defend their Balkan territories from barbarian incursions. This enabled the Slavs to enter the Balkan Peninsula as marauders, primarily through an area between the Danube River and the Balkan Mountains known as Moesia. Gradually, the interior of the peninsula became a country of the South Slavs, who lived under a democracy. The Slavs then assimilated the partially Gothicized, Hellenized and Romanized Thracians. Not long after the Slavic incursion, Moesia was once again invaded by the Bulgar horde of Khan Asparukh. The horde was a remnant of Old Great Bulgaria, an extinct tribal confederacy situated north of the Black Sea in what is now Ukraine. Asparukh attacked Byzantine territories in Moesia and conquered the Slavic tribes there in 680. A peace treaty with the Byzantine Empire was signed in 681, marking the foundation of the First Bulgarian Empire. The Bulgars gradually mixed with the local population and forged a common language based on Slavic dialects.

Succeeding rulers strengthened the Bulgarian state throughout the 8th and 9th centuries. Krum introduced a written code of law and checked a major Byzantine incursion at the Battle of Pliska where Byzantine emperor Nicephorus I was killed. Boris I abolished paganism in favour of Eastern Orthodox Christianity in 864. The conversion was followed by a Byzantine recognition of the Bulgarian church and the adoption of the Cyrillic alphabet developed at the capital of

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Preslav. The new religion and script strengthened central authority and helped the Slavs and Bulgars fuse into a unified people. A cultural golden age began during the 34-year rule of Simeon the Great, who also oversaw the largest territorial expansion of the state.

After Simeon's death, wars with Magyars and Pechenegs and the spread of the Bogomil heresy weakened Bulgaria. Preslav was seized by the Byzantine army in 971 after consecutive Rus' and Byzantine invasions. Under Samuil, the empire briefly recovered from the attacks, but this recovery ended when Byzantine emperor Basil II defeated the Bulgarian army at Klyuch in 1014. Samuil died shortly after the battle, and by 1018 the Byzantines had ended the First Bulgarian Empire.

Second Bulgarian Empire

After the conquest of Bulgaria, Basil II prevented revolts by retaining the rule of local nobility and relieving their lands of the obligation to pay taxes in gold, allowing tax in kind instead. The Bulgarian Patriarchate was reduced to an archbishopric, but retained its autocephalous status and its dioceses. Byzantine domestic policies changed after Basil's death and a series of unsuccessful rebellions broke out, the largest being led by Peter Delyan. In 1185 Asen dynasty nobles Ivan Asen I and Peter IV organized a major uprising which resulted in the re-establishment of the Bulgarian state. Ivan Asen and Peter laid the foundations of the Second Bulgarian Empire with Tarnovo as the capital.

Kaloyan, the third of the Asen monarchs, extended his dominion to Belgrade and Ohrid. He acknowledged the spiritual supremacy of the pope and received a royal crown from a papal legate. The empire reached its zenith under Ivan Asen II (1218–1241), when its borders expanded as far as the coast of Albania, Serbia and Epirus, while commerce and culture flourished. Ivan Asen's rule was also marked by a shift away from Rome in religious matters.

The Asen dynasty's downfall in 1257 was followed by internal conflicts, incessant Byzantine and Hungarian attacks and Mongol suzerainty. In 1277, swineherd Ivaylo led a great peasant revolt that chased the Mongols out of Bulgaria and briefly made him emperor. Ivaylo was overthrown in 1280 by the feudal landlords whose factional conflicts caused the Second Bulgarian Empire to disintegrate into small feudal dominions by the 14th century. These fragmented rump states—two tsardoms at Vidin and Tarnovo and the Despotate of Dobrudzha—became easy prey for a new threat arriving from the Southeast: the Ottoman Turks.

Ottoman rule

The Ottomans were employed as mercenaries by the Byzantines in the 1340s but later became invaders in their own right. Sultan Murad I took Adrianople from the Byzantines in 1362; Sofia fell in 1382, followed by Shumen in 1388. The Ottomans completed their conquest of Bulgarian lands in 1393 when Tarnovo was sacked after a three-month siege, and then the Battle of Nicopolis which brought about the fall of the Vidin Tsardom in 1396. The Bulgarian nobility was subsequently eliminated and the peasantry was enserfed to Ottoman masters, while much of the educated clergy fled to other countries.

Christians were considered an inferior class of people under the Ottoman system. Bulgarians were subjected to heavy taxes (including devshirme, or blood tax) and their culture was suppressed, and they experienced partial Islamisation. Ottoman authorities established a religious administrative community called the Rum Millet.
which governed all Orthodox Christians regardless of their ethnicity. Most of the local population then gradually lost its distinct national consciousness, identifying only by its faith. However, the clergy remaining in some isolated monasteries kept their ethnic identity alive, enabling its survival in remote rural areas and in the militant Catholic community in the northwest of the country.

As Ottoman power began to wane, Habsburg Austria and Russia saw Bulgarian Christians as potential allies. The Austrians first backed an uprising in Tarnovo in 1598, then a second one in 1686, the Chiprovtsi Uprising in 1688 and finally Karposh’s Rebellion in 1689. The Russian Empire also asserted itself as a protector of Christians in Ottoman lands with the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca in 1774.

The Western European Enlightenment in the 18th century influenced the initiation of a national awakening of Bulgaria. It restored national consciousness and provided an ideological basis for the liberation struggle, resulting in the 1876 April Uprising. Up to 30,000 Bulgarians were killed as Ottoman authorities put down the rebellion. The massacres prompted the Great Powers to take action. They convened the Constantinople Conference in 1876, but their decisions were rejected by the Ottomans. This allowed the Russian Empire to seek a military solution without risking confrontation with other Great Powers, as had happened in the Crimean War. In 1877 Russia declared war on the Ottomans and defeated them with the help of Bulgarian rebels, particularly during the crucial Battle of Shipka Pass which secured Russian control over the main road to Constantinople.

Third Bulgarian state

The Treaty of San Stefano was signed on 3 March 1878 by Russia and the Ottoman Empire. It was to set up an autonomous Bulgarian principality spanning Moesia, Macedonia and Thrace, roughly on the territories of the Second Bulgarian Empire. The other Great Powers immediately rejected the treaty out of fear that such a large country in the Balkans might threaten their interests. It was superseded by the Treaty of Berlin, signed on 13 July, which provided for a much smaller state only comprising Moesia and the region of Sofia, leaving large populations of ethnic Bulgarians outside the new country. This significantly contributed to Bulgaria’s militaristic foreign affairs approach during the first half of the 20th century.

The Bulgarian principality won a war against Serbia and incorporated the semi-autonomous Ottoman territory of Eastern Rumelia in 1885, proclaiming itself an independent state on 5 October 1908. In the years following independence, Bulgaria increasingly militarized and was often referred to as “the Balkan Prussia”. It became involved in three consecutive conflicts between 1912 and 1918—two Balkan Wars and World War I. After a disastrous defeat in the Second Balkan War, Bulgaria again found itself fighting on the losing side as a result of its alliance with the Central Powers in World War I. Despite fielding more than a quarter of its population in a 1,200,000-strong army and achieving several decisive victories at Doiran and Monastir, the country capitulated in 1918. The war resulted in significant territorial losses and a total of 87,500 soldiers killed. More than 253,000 refugees from the lost territories immigrated to Bulgaria from 1912 to 1929, placing additional strain on the already ruined national economy.

The resulting political unrest led to the establishment of a royal authoritarian dictatorship by Tsar Boris III (1918–1943). Bulgaria entered World War II in 1941 as a member of the Axis but declined to participate in Operation Barbarossa and saved its Jewish population from deportation to concentration camps. The sudden death of Boris III in the summer of 1943 pushed the country into political turmoil as the war turned against Germany and the communist guerrilla movement gained momentum. The government of Bogdan Filov subsequently failed to achieve peace with the Allies. Bulgaria did not comply with Soviet demands to expel German forces from its territory, resulting in a declaration of war and an invasion by the USSR in September 1944. The communist-dominated
Fatherland Front took power, ended participation in the Axis and joined the Allied side until the war ended.\[88\] Bulgaria suffered little war damage and the Soviet Union demanded no reparations; however, all wartime gains, with the notable exception of Southern Dobrudzha, were lost.\[89\]

The left-wing uprising of 9 September 1944 led to the abolition of monarchical rule and the executions of some 1,000–3,000 dissidents, war criminals and members of the former royal elite.\[90\][91][92] However, it was not until 1946 that a one-party people’s republic was instituted following a referendum.\[93\] It fell into the Soviet sphere of influence under the leadership of Georgi Dimitrov (1946–1949), who established a repressive, rapidly industrializing Stalinist state.\[89\] By the mid-1950s standards of living rose significantly and political repressions were lessened.\[94\][95] The Soviet-style planned economy saw some market-oriented policies emerging on an experimental level under Todor Zhivkov (1954–1989).\[96\] Both national and per capita GDPs quadrupled by the 1980s,\[97\] although severe debt spikes took place in 1960, 1977 and 1980.\[98\] Zhivkov’s daughter Lyudmila bolstered national pride by promoting Bulgarian heritage, culture and arts worldwide.\[99\] Facing declining birth rates among the ethnic Bulgarian majority, in 1984 Zhivkov’s government forced the minority ethnic Turks to adopt Slavic names in an attempt to erase their identity and assimilate them.\[100\] These policies resulted in the emigration of some 300,000 ethnic Turks to Turkey.\[101\][102]

The Communist Party gave up its political monopoly on 10 November 1989 under the influence of the Revolutions of 1989. Zhivkov resigned and Bulgaria embarked on a transition to a parliamentary democracy.\[103\] The first free elections in June 1990 were won by the Communist Party, now rebranded as the Bulgarian Socialist Party.\[104\] A new constitution that provided for a relatively weak elected president and for a prime minister accountable to the legislature was adopted in July 1991. The new system initially failed to improve living standards or create economic growth—the average quality of life and economic performance remained lower than under communism well into the early 2000s.\[105\] A 1997 reform package restored economic growth, but living standards continued to suffer.\[106\] After 2001 economic, political and geopolitical conditions improved greatly.\[107\] and Bulgaria achieved high Human Development status in 2003.\[108\] It became a member of NATO in 2004\[109\] and participated in the War in Afghanistan. After several years of reforms it joined the European Union and single market in 2007 despite concerns about government corruption.\[110\] Bulgaria hosted the 2018 Presidency of the Council of the European Union at the National Palace of Culture in Sofia.\[111\]

### Geography

Bulgaria occupies a portion 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 (1,123 mi), and the coastline has a length of 354 kilometres (220 mi).\[112\] Its total area of 110,994 square kilometres (42,855 sq mi) ranks it as the world’s 105th-largest country.\[113\] Bulgaria’s geographic coordinates are 43° N 25° E.\[114\] The most notable topographical features are the Danubian Plain, the Balkan Mountains, the Thracian Plain, and the Rhodope Mountains.\[112\] 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 Plain is roughly triangular, beginning southeast of Sofia and broadening as it reaches the Black Sea coast.\[112\]

The Balkan mountains run laterally through the middle of the country. The mountainous southwest has two distinct alpine ranges—Rila and Pirin, which border the lower but more extensive Rhodope Mountains to the east.\[112\] Musala peak, at 2,925 metres (9,596 ft), is the highest point in both Bulgaria and the Balkan peninsula, and the Black Sea coast is the country’s lowest point.\[114\] Plains occupy about one-third of the territory, while plateaus and hills occupy 41 per cent.\[115\] Most of the rivers are short and with low water levels. The longest river located solely in Bulgarian territory, the Iskar, has a length of 368 kilometres (229 mi). Other major rivers include the Struma and the Maritsa in the south.\[116\][112]
Bulgaria has a dynamic climate, which results from being positioned at the meeting point of the Mediterranean and continental air masses combined with the barrier effect of its mountains.[112] Northern Bulgaria averages 1 °C (1.8 °F) cooler, and registers 200 millimetres (7.9 in) more precipitation, than the regions south of the Balkan mountains. Temperature amplitudes vary significantly in different areas. The lowest recorded temperature is −38.3 °C (−36.9 °F), while the highest is 45.2 °C (113.4 °F).[117] Precipitation averages about 630 millimetres (24.8 in) per year, and varies from 500 millimetres (19.7 in) in Dobrudja to more than 2,500 millimetres (98.4 in) in the mountains. Continental air masses bring significant amounts of snowfall during winter.[118]

Biodiversity and environment

The interaction of climatic, hydrological, geological and topographical conditions have produced a relatively wide variety of plant and animal species.[119] Bulgaria's biodiversity, one of the richest in Europe,[120] is conserved in three national parks, 11 nature parks, 16 biosphere reserves and 565 protected areas.[121][122][123] More than 35 per cent of its land area is covered by forests,[124] where some of the oldest trees in the world, such as Baikushev's pine and the Granit oak,[125] grow. Most of the plant and animal life is central European, although representatives of Arctic and alpine species are present at high altitudes.[126] Flora includes more than 3,800 vascular plant species of which 170 are endemic and 150 are considered endangered.[127] A checklist of larger fungi of Bulgaria reported that more than 1,500 species occur in the country.[128] Fauna is primarily represented by owls, rock partridges, wallcreepers,[126] red deer, pheasants and jackals.[129]

In 1998, the Bulgarian government approved the National Biological Diversity Conservation Strategy, a comprehensive programme seeking the preservation of local ecosystems, protection of endangered species and conservation of genetic resources.[130] Bulgaria has some of the largest Natura 2000 areas in Europe covering 33.8 per cent of its territory.[131] It also adopted the Kyoto Protocol and achieved its objective of reducing carbon dioxide emissions by 30 per cent from 1990 to 2009.[132][133]

However, pollution from factories and metallurgy works, and severe deforestation, continue to cause major problems for the health and welfare of the population.[134] Particulate matter levels are the highest in Europe,[135] especially in urban areas affected by automobile traffic and coal-based power stations.[136][137] One of these, the lignite-fired Maritsa Iztok-2 station, is causing the highest damage to health and the environment in the entire European Union.[138] Pesticide usage in agriculture, and antiquated industrial sewage systems, produce extensive soil and water pollution from chemicals and detergents.[139] An improvement of water quality began in 1998 and has maintained a sustainable trend of moderate improvement. Over 75 per cent of surface rivers meet the standards for good quality.[140] According to Yale University's 2012 Environmental Performance Index, Bulgaria is a "modest performer" in protecting the environment.[141]

Politics

Bulgaria is a parliamentary democracy where the prime minister is the head of government and the most powerful executive position.[107] The political system has three branches—legislative, executive and judicial, with universal suffrage for citizens at least 18 years old. The Constitution of Bulgaria also provides possibilities of direct democracy,
namely petitions and national referenda. Elections are supervised by an independent Central Election Commission that includes members from all major political parties. Parties must register with the commission prior to participating in a national election. Normally, the prime minister-elect is the leader of the party receiving the most votes in parliamentary elections, although this is not always the case.

Unlike the prime minister, presidential domestic power is more limited. The President of Bulgaria serves as the head of state and commander-in-chief of the armed forces, and has the authority to return a bill for further debate, although the parliament can override the presidential veto by a simple majority vote of all members of parliament. Political parties gather in the National Assembly, a body of 240 deputies elected to four-year terms by direct popular vote. The National Assembly has the power to enact laws, approve the budget, schedule presidential elections, select and dismiss the prime minister and other ministers, declare war, deploy troops abroad, and ratify international treaties and agreements.

Overall, Bulgaria displays a pattern of unstable governments. Boyko Borisov is serving his third term as prime minister since 2009, when his centre-right, pro-EU party GERB won the general election and ruled as a minority government with 117 seats in the National Assembly. However, his first government resigned on 20 February 2013 after nationwide protests caused by high costs of utilities, low living standards, corruption and the failure of the democratic system. The protest wave was notable for self-immolations, spontaneous demonstrations and a strong sentiment against political parties.

The subsequent snap elections in May resulted in a narrow win for GERB, but the Bulgarian Socialist Party eventually formed a government led by Plamen Oresharski after Borisov failed to secure parliamentary support. The Oresharski government resigned in July 2014 amid continuing large-scale protests. A caretaker government took over and called the October 2014 elections, which resulted in a third GERB victory, but a total of eight parties entered parliament. Borisov’s party formed a coalition with several right-wing parties. Borisov resigned again after the candidate backed by his party failed to win the 2016 Presidential election. The March 2017 snap election was again won by GERB, but with 95 seats in Parliament. They formed a coalition with the far-right United Patriots, who hold 27 seats.

Freedom House has reported a continuing deterioration of democratic governance after 2009, citing reduced media independence, stalled reforms, abuse of authority at the highest level and increased dependence of local administrations on the central government. Bulgaria is still listed as "Free", with a political system designated as a semi-consolidated democracy, albeit with deteriorating scores. The Democracy Index defines it as a "Flawed democracy".

Legal system

Bulgaria has a civil law legal system. The judiciary is overseen by the Ministry of Justice. The Supreme Administrative Court and the Supreme Court of Cassation are the highest courts of appeal and oversee the application of laws in subordinate courts. The Supreme Judicial Council manages the system and appoints judges. The legal system is one of Europe's most inefficient, and the lack of transparency and corruption are pervasive. Law enforcement is carried out by organisations mainly subordinate to the Ministry of the Interior. The General Directorate of National Police (GDNP) combats general crime and maintains public order. GDNP fields 26,578 police officers in its local and national sections. The bulk of criminal cases are
transport-related, followed by theft and drug-related crime; homicide rates are low.[172] The Ministry of the Interior also heads the Border Police Service and the National Gendarmerie—a specialized branch for anti-terrorist activity, crisis management and riot control. Counterintelligence and national security are the responsibility of the State Agency for National Security, established in 2008.[172]

Administrative divisions

Bulgaria is a unitary state.[174] Since the 1880s, the number of territorial management units has varied from seven to 26.[175] Between 1987 and 1999 the administrative structure consisted of nine provinces (oblasti, singular oblast). A new administrative structure was adopted in parallel with the decentralisation of the economic system.[176] It includes 27 provinces and a metropolitan capital province (Sofia-Grad). All areas take their names from their respective capital cities. The provinces subdivide into 264 municipalities. Municipalities are run by mayors, who are elected to four-year terms, and by directly elected municipal councils. Bulgaria is a highly centralized state where the Council of Ministers directly appoints regional governors and all provinces and municipalities are heavily dependent on it for funding.[143]

1. Blagoevgrad  15. Ruse
2. Burgas        16. Shumen
3. Dobrich       17. Silistra
5. Haskovo       19. Smolyan
8. Lovech        22. Targovishte
13. Plovdiv      27. Yambol
14. Razgrad

Foreign relations and security

Bulgaria became a member of the United Nations in 1955 and since 1966 has been a non-permanent member of the Security Council three times, most recently from 2002 to 2003.[177] It was also among the founding nations of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) in 1975. Euro-Atlantic integration has been a priority since the fall of Communism, although the Communist leadership also had aspirations of leaving the Warsaw Pact and joining the European Communities by 1987.[178][179][180] Bulgaria signed the European Union Treaty of Accession on 25 April 2005,[181] and became a full member of the European Union on 1 January 2007.[110] In addition, it has a tripartite economic and diplomatic collaboration with Romania and Greece,[182] good ties with China,[183] and Vietnam[184] and a historical relationship with Russia.[185][186][187][188]

Bulgaria deployed significant numbers of both civilian and military advisors in Soviet-allied countries like Nicaragua[189] and Libya during the Cold War.[190] The first deployment of foreign troops on Bulgarian soil since World War II occurred in 2001, when the country hosted six KC-135 Stratotanker aircraft and 200 support personnel for the war effort in Afghanistan.[21] International military relations were further expanded with accession to NATO in March 2004[109] and the US-Bulgarian Defence Cooperation Agreement signed in April 2006. Bezmer and Graf Ignatievo air bases, the Novo Selo training range, and a logistics centre in Aytos subsequently became joint military training facilities cooperatively used by the United States and Bulgarian militaries.[191][192]
Domestic defence is the responsibility of the all-volunteer Bulgarian army, branched into land forces, navy and an air force. The land forces consist of two mechanized brigades and eight independent regiments and battalions; the air force operates 106 aircraft and air defence systems in six air bases, and the navy operates various ships, helicopters and coastal defence weapons. Active troops dwindled from 152,000 in 1988 to 31,300 in 2017, supplemented by 3,000 reservists and 16,000 paramilitary. The inventory consists mostly of Soviet equipment like Mikoyan MiG-29 and Sukhoi Su-25 jets, S-300PT air defence systems and SS-21 Scarab short-range ballistic missiles.

Economy

Bulgaria has an open, upper middle income range market economy where the private sector accounts for more than 70% of GDP. From a largely agricultural country with a predominantly rural population in 1948, by the 1980s Bulgaria had transformed into an industrial economy with scientific and technological research at the top of its budgetary expenditure priorities. The loss of COMECON markets in 1990 and the subsequent "shock therapy" of the planned system caused a steep decline in industrial and agricultural production, ultimately followed by an economic collapse in 1997. The economy largely recovered during a period of rapid growth several years later, but the average salary of 1,036 leva ($615) per month remains the lowest in the EU. More than a fifth of the labour force are employed on a minimum wage of $1.16 per hour.

A balanced budget was achieved in 2003 and the country began running a surplus the following year. Expenditures amounted to $21.15 billion and revenues were $21.67 billion in 2017. Most government spending on institutions is earmarked for security. The ministries of defence, the interior and justice are allocated the largest share of the annual government budget, whereas those responsible for the environment, tourism and energy receive the least amount of funding. Taxes form the bulk of government revenue at 30 per cent of GDP. Bulgaria has some of the lowest corporate income tax rates in the EU at a flat 10 per cent rate. The tax system is two-tier. Value added tax, excise duties, corporate and personal income tax are national, whereas real estate, inheritance, and vehicle taxes are defined by local authorities. Bulgaria also has the third-lowest public debt in the Union at 28.7 per cent of GDP in 2016. Strong economic performance in the early 2000s reduced government debt from 79.6 per cent in 1998 to 14.1 per cent in 2008.

The Yugozapaden planning area is the most developed region with a per capita gross domestic product (PPP) of $26,580 in 2016. It includes the capital city and the surrounding Sofia Province, which alone generate 42 per cent of national gross domestic product. PPP GDP per capita and the cost of living in 2017 stood at 49 and 48.4 per cent of the EU average, respectively. National PPP GDP was estimated at $143.1 billion in 2016, with a per capita value of $20,116. Economic growth statistics take into account illegal transactions from the informal economy, which is the largest in the EU as a percentage of economic output. The Bulgarian National Bank issues the national currency, lev, which is pegged to the euro at a rate of 1.95583 leva per euro.

After several consecutive years of high growth, repercussions of the financial crisis of 2007–2008 resulted in a 3.6 per cent contraction of GDP in 2009 and increased unemployment. Industrial output declined 10 per cent, mining by 31 per cent, and ferrous and metal production marked a 60 per cent drop. Positive growth was restored in 2010 but intercompany debt exceeded $59 billion, meaning that 60 per cent of all Bulgarian companies were mutually indebted. By 2012, it had increased to $97 billion, or 227 per cent of GDP. The government issues the national currency, lev, which is pegged to the euro at a rate of 1.95583 leva per euro.
implemented strict austerity measures with IMF and EU encouragement to some positive fiscal results, but the social consequences of these measures, such as increased income inequality and accelerated outward migration, have been "catastrophic" according to the International Trade Union Confederation.[226]

Siphoning of public funds to the families and relatives of politicians from incumbent parties has also resulted in fiscal and welfare losses to society.[227][228] Bulgaria ranks 71st in the Corruption Perceptions Index[229] and experiences the worst levels of corruption in the European Union, a phenomenon that remains a source of profound public discontent.[230][231] Along with organized crime, corruption has led to a rejection of the country’s Schengen Area application and withdrawal of foreign investment.[232][233][234] Government officials reportedly engage in embezzlement, influence trading, government procurement violations and bribery with impunity.[164] Government procurement in particular is a critical area in corruption risk. An estimated 10 billion leva ($5.99 billion) of state budget and European cohesion funds are spent on public tenders each year;[235] nearly 14 billion ($8.38 billion) were spent on public contracts in 2017 alone.[236] A large share of these contracts are awarded to a few politically connected[237] companies amid widespread irregularities, procedure violations and tailor-made selection or award criteria.[238] Despite repeated criticism from the European Commission,[234] EU institutions abstain from taking measures against Bulgaria because it is not seen by Brussels as a "problem country" like Poland or Hungary.[230]

Sectors

The labour force is 3.36 million people,[239] of whom 6.8 per cent are employed in agriculture, 26.6 per cent are employed in industry and 66.6 per cent are employed in the services sector.[240] Extraction of metals and minerals, production of chemicals, machine building, steel, biotechnology, tobacco and food processing and petroleum refining are among the major industrial activities.[241][242][243] Mining alone employs 24,000 people and generates about five per cent of the country’s GDP; the number of employed in all mining-related industries is 120,000.[244][245] Bulgaria is Europe’s fifth-largest coal producer.[245][246] Local deposits of coal, iron, copper and lead are vital for the manufacturing and energy sectors.[247]

Two-thirds of food and agricultural exports go to OECD countries.[248] Although cereal and vegetable yields dropped by 40 per cent between 1990 and 2008,[249] output has since increased, and the 2016-2017 season registered the biggest grain yields in a decade.[250][251] Maize, barley, oats and rice are also grown. Quality Oriental tobacco is a significant industrial crop.[252] Bulgaria is also the largest producer globally of lavender and rose oil, both widely used in fragrances,[21][253][254][255] Of the services sector, tourism is a significant contributor to economic growth. Bulgaria has emerged as a travelling destination with its inexpensive resorts and beaches outside the reach of the tourist industry.[256] Most of the visitors are Romanian, German, Turkish, British and Russian.[257] Sofia, Plovdiv, Veliko Tarnovo, coastal resorts Golden Sands and Sunny Beach and winter resorts Bansko, Pamporovo and Borovets are some of the locations most visited by tourists.[258]

Science and technology

Spending on research and development amounts to 0.78 per cent of GDP,[259] and the bulk of public R&D funding goes to the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (BAS).[260] Private businesses accounted for more than 73 per cent of R&D expenditures and employed 42 per cent of Bulgaria’s 22,000 researchers in 2015.[261] The same year, Bulgaria ranked 39th out of 50 countries in the Bloomberg Innovation Index, the highest score being in education (24th) and the lowest in value-added manufacturing (48th).[262] Chronic government underinvestment in research since 1990 has forced many professionals in science and engineering to leave Bulgaria.[263]

Despite the lack of funding, research in chemistry, materials science and physics remains strong.[260] Three per cent of economic output is generated by the information and communication technologies sector where 40,000[264] to 51,000 software engineers are employed.[265] More than a quarter of them are women, the highest percentage of females in ICT in any EU country.[266] High levels of female participation are a legacy of the Soviet era.[267] when the
country was known as a "Communist Silicon Valley" due to its key role in COMECON computing technology production. Bulgaria is also a regional leader in high performance computing and operates Avitohol, the most powerful supercomputer in Southeast Europe.

Bulgaria has made numerous contributions to space exploration. These include two scientific satellites, more than 200 payloads and 300 experiments in Earth orbit, as well as two cosmonauts since 1971. Bulgaria was the first country to grow wheat and vegetables in space with its Svet greenhouses on the Mir space station. It was involved in the development of the Granat gamma-ray observatory and the Vega program, particularly in modelling trajectories and guidance algorithms for both Vega probes. Bulgarian instruments have been used in the exploration of Mars, including a spectrometer that took the first high quality spectroscopic images of Martian moon Phobos with the Phobos 2 probe. Cosmic radiation en route to and around the planet has been mapped by Liulin-ML dosimeters on the ExoMars TGO. Variants of these instruments have also been fitted to the Chandrayaan-1 lunar probe and the International Space Station. Bulgaria's first geostationary communications satellite—BulgariaSat-1—was launched by SpaceX in June 2017.

**Infrastructure**

Telephone services are widely available, and a central digital trunk line connects most regions. Vivacom (BTC) serves more than 90 per cent of fixed lines and is one of the three operators providing mobile services, along with A1 and Telenor. Internet penetration stood at 66 per cent, or 4.66 million users, in late 2017.

Bulgaria's strategic geographic location and well-developed energy sector make it a key European energy centre despite its lack of significant fossil fuel deposits. Coal accounts for 40% of national energy production, followed by nuclear power from the Kozloduy reactors (35%) and renewable sources (20%). Biofuel from solid waste has become the primary source of renewable power after more than a decade of growth in the sector.

The national road network has a total length of 19,512 kilometres (12,124 mi), of which 19,235 kilometres (11,952 mi) are paved. Railroads are a major mode of freight transportation, although highways carry a progressively larger share of freight. Bulgaria has 6,238 kilometres (3,876 mi) of railway track and currently a total of 81 kilometres (50 miles) of high-speed lines are in operation. Rail links are available with Romania, Turkey, Greece, and Serbia, and express trains serve direct routes to Kiev, Minsk, Moscow and Saint Petersburg. Sofia and Plovdiv are the country's air travel hubs, while Varna and Burgas are the principal maritime trade ports.

**Demographics**

The population of Bulgaria is 7,364,570 people according to the 2011 national census. The majority of the population, or 72.5 percent, reside in urban areas. As of 2017, Sofia is the most populated urban centre with 1,325,429 people, followed by Plovdiv (345,000), Varna (344,000), Burgas (209,000) and Ruse (160,000).

Bulgarians are the main ethnic group and comprise 84.8 percent of the population. Turkish and Roma minorities comprise 8.8 and 4.9 percent, respectively; some 40 smaller minorities comprise 0.7 percent, and 0.8 percent do not self-identify with an ethnic group. Former Statistics head Reneta Indzhova has disputed the 2011 census figures, suggesting the actual population is smaller than reported and a higher percentage of citizens are of Romani
The Roma minority is usually underestimated in census data and may represent up to 11 percent of the population.\[299\]

Bulgaria is in a state of demographic crisis.\[300\] It has had negative population growth since the early 1990s, when the economic collapse caused a long-lasting emigration wave.\[301\] Some 937,000 to 1,200,000 people—mostly young adults—left the country by 2005.\[302\] The total fertility rate (TFR) was estimated at 1.46 children born per woman in 2017.\[303\] The majority of children are born to unmarried women.\[304\] Furthermore, a third of all households consist of only one person and 75.5 percent of families do not have children under the age of 16.\[305\] The resulting birth rates are among the lowest in the world\[306\] while death rates are among the highest.\[307\]

More than 80% of all deaths are due to cancer and cardiovascular conditions.\[308\] Mortality rates may be amenable with timely, adequate health care, which the current system fails to provide fully. Although healthcare in Bulgaria is universal,\[309\] out-of-pocket expenses account for nearly half of all healthcare spending, and significantly limit access to medical care.\[310\] Other problems disrupting care provision are the emigration of doctors due to low wages, understaffed and under-equipped regional hospitals, supply shortages and frequent changes to the basic service package for those insured.\[311\]

Public expenditures for education are far below the European Union average as well.\[312\] Educational standards were once high,\[313\] but have deteriorated significantly over the past decade.\[314\] Bulgarian students were among the highest-scoring in the world in terms of reading in 2001, performing better than their Canadian and German counterparts; by 2006, scores in reading, math and science had dropped. Although average literacy stands at 98.4% with no significant difference between sexes,\[315\] functional illiteracy is significant. The PISA study of 2015 found 41.5% of pupils in the 9th grade to be functionally illiterate in reading, maths and science.\[316\] The Ministry of Education and Science partially funds public schools, colleges and universities, sets criteria for textbooks and oversees the publishing process. Education in primary and secondary public schools is free.\[317\] The process spans through 12 grades, where grades one through eight are primary and nine through twelve are secondary level. Higher education consists of a 4-year bachelor degree and a 1-year master's degree.\[318\] Bulgaria's highest-ranked higher education institution is Sofia University.\[319\]

All ethnic groups speak Bulgarian, either as a first or as a second language. Bulgarian is the only language with official status and native for 85.2 percent of the population. The oldest written Slavic language, Bulgarian is distinguishable from the other languages in this group through certain grammatical peculiarities such as the lack of noun cases and infinitives, and a suffixed definite article.\[320\]

More than three-quarters of Bulgarians subscribe to Eastern Orthodoxy.\[321\] Sunni Muslims are the second-largest religious community and constitute 10 percent of Bulgaria's overall religious makeup, although a majority of them are not observant and find the use of Islamic veils in schools unacceptable.\[322\] Less than three percent of the population are affiliated with other religions, 11.8 percent do not self-identify with a religion, and 21.8 percent do not state their beliefs.\[323\] The Bulgarian Orthodox Church gained autocephalous status in 927 AD,\[324\] and currently has 12 dioceses and over 2,000 priests.\[325\] Bulgaria is a secular state with guaranteed religious freedom by constitution, but Orthodoxy is designated as a "traditional" religion.\[326\]

Culture
Contemporary Bulgarian culture blends the formal culture that helped forge a national consciousness towards the end of Ottoman rule with millennia-old folk traditions. An essential element of Bulgarian folklore is fire, used to banish evil spirits and illnesses. Many of these are personified as witches, whereas other creatures like zmey and samodiva (veela) are either benevolent guardians or ambivalent tricksters. Some rituals against evil spirits have survived and are still practised, most notably kukeri and survakari. Martenitsa is also widely celebrated. Nestinarstvo, a ritual fire-dance of Thracian origin, is included in the list of UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Nine historical and natural objects have been inscribed in the list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites: Pirin National Park, Srebrna Nature Reserve, the Madara Rider, the Thracian tombs in Sveshtari and Kazanlak, the Rila Monastery, the Boyana Church, the Rock-hewn Churches of Ivanovo and the ancient city of Nesebar. The Rila Monastery was established by Saint John of Rila, Bulgaria's patron saint, whose life has been the subject of numerous literary accounts since Medieval times.

During the Middle Ages, the establishment of the Preslav and Ohrid literary schools in the 10th century is associated with a golden period in Bulgarian literature. The schools’ emphasis on Christian scriptures made the Bulgarian Empire a centre of Slavic culture, bringing Slavs under the influence of Christianity and providing them with a written language. Its alphabet, Cyrillic script, was developed by the Preslav Literary School. The Tarnovo Literary School, on the other hand, is associated with a Silver age of literature defined by high-quality manuscripts on historical or mystical themes under the Asen and Shishman dynasties. Many literary and artistic masterpieces were destroyed by the Ottoman conquerors, and artistic activities did not re-emerge until the National Revival in the 19th century. Ivan Vazov’s enormous body of work covered every genre and touched upon every facet of Bulgarian society, bridging pre-Liberation works with literature of the newly-established state. Notable later works are Bay Ganyo by Aleko Konstantinov, the Nietzschean poetry of Pencho Slaveykov, the Symbolist poetry of Peyo Yavorov and Dimcho Debelyanov, the Marxist-inspired works of Geo Milev and Nikola Vaptsarov, and the Socialist realism novels of Dimitar Dimov and Dimitar Talev. Tzvetan Todorov is a notable contemporary author, while Bulgarian-born Elias Canetti was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1981.

A religious visual arts heritage includes frescoes, murals and icons, many produced by the medieval Tarnovo Artistic School. Like literature, it was not until the National Revival when Bulgarian visual arts began to reemerge. Zahari Zograf was a pioneer of the visual arts in the pre-Liberation era. After the Liberation, Ivan Mrkvička, Anton Mitov, Vladimir Dimitrov, Tsanko Lavrenov and Zlatyu Boyadzhiev introduced newer styles and substance, depicting scenery from Bulgarian villages, old towns and historical subjects. Christo is the most famous Bulgarian artist of the 21st century, known for his outdoor installations.

Folk music is by far the most extensive traditional art and has slowly developed throughout the ages as a fusion of Far Eastern, Oriental, medieval Eastern Orthodox and standard Western European tonalities and modes. Bulgarian folk music has a distinctive sound and uses a wide range of traditional instruments, such as gadulka, gaida, kaval and tupan. A distinguishing feature is extended rhythmical time, which has no equivalent in the rest of European music. The State Television Female Vocal Choir won a Grammy Award in 1990 for its performances of Bulgarian folk music. Written musical composition can be traced back to the works of Yoan Kukuzel (c. 1280–1360), but modern classical music began with Emanuil Manolov, who composed the first Bulgarian opera in 1890. Pancho Vladigerov and Petko Staynov further enriched symphony, ballet and opera,
which singers Ghena Dimitrova, Boris Hristov and Nikolay Gyaurov elevated to a world-class level. Bulgarian performers have also gained acclaim in other genres like electropop (Mira Aroyo), jazz (Milcho Leviev) and blends of jazz and folk (Ivo Papazov). Cultural events are advertized in the largest media outlets, including the Bulgarian National Radio, and daily newspapers Trud, Dnevnik and 24 Chasa. Bulgarian media were described as generally unbiased in their reporting in the early 2000s and print media had no legal restrictions. Since then, freedom of the press has deteriorated to the point where Bulgaria scores 111th globally in the World Press Freedom Index, lower than all European Union members and membership candidate states. The government has diverted EU funds to sympathetic media outlets and bribed others to be less critical on problematic topics, while attacks against individual journalists have increased. Collusion between politicians, oligarchs and the media is widespread.

Bulgarian cuisine is similar to those of other Balkan countries and demonstrates a strong Turkish and Greek influence. Yogurt, lukanka, banitsa, shopska salad, lyutenitsa and kozunak are among the best-known local foods. Oriental dishes such as moussaka, gyuvech, and baklava are also present. Meat consumption is lower than the European average, given a notable preference for a large variety of salads. Bulgaria was the world's second-largest wine exporter until 1989, but has since lost that position. The 2016 harvest yielded 128 million litres of wine, of which 62 million was exported mainly to Romania, Poland and Russia. Mavrud, Rubin, Shiroka melnishka, Dimiat and Cherven Misket are the typical grapes used in Bulgarian wine. Rakia is a traditional fruit brandy which was consumed in Bulgaria as early as the 14th century.

Sports

Bulgaria's first Olympic appearance was at the 1896 games, when it was represented by gymnast Charles Champaud. Since then, Bulgarian athletes have won 52 gold, 89 silver, and 83 bronze medals, ranking 25th in the all-time medal table. Weight-lifting is a signature sport for Bulgaria. Coach Ivan Abadzhiev was instrumental in developing innovative training practices that have produced many Bulgarian world and Olympic champions in the sport since the 1980s. Bulgarian athletes have also excelled in wrestling, boxing, gymnastics, volleyball and tennis. Stefka Kostadinova is the reigning world record holder in the women's high jump at 2.09 metres (6 feet 10 inches), achieved during the 1987 World Championships. Grigor Dimitrov is the first Bulgarian in the Top 10 ATP Rankings. Grigor Dimitrov at the 2015 Italian Open

Football is, by far, Bulgaria's most popular sport. The national football team's best performance was a semi-final at the 1994 FIFA World Cup, when the squad was spearheaded by forward Hristo Stoichkov. Stoichkov is the most successful Bulgarian player of all time; he was awarded the Golden Boot and the Golden Ball and was considered one of the best in the world while playing for FC Barcelona in the 1990s. CSKA and Levski, both based in Sofia, are the most successful clubs domestically and long-standing rivals. Ludogorets is remarkable for having advanced from the local fourth division to the 2014–15 UEFA Champions League group stage in a mere nine years. Placed 39th in 2018, it is Bulgaria's highest-ranked club in UEFA. See also

- Outline of Bulgaria
- International rankings of Bulgaria
- List of twin towns and sister cities in Bulgaria
Footnotes

1. These figures have been disputed due to methodological and procedural flaws reported in the 2011 census. In particular, the number of Romani citizens may be significantly lower than the actual number. See Demographics.

2. 19 February in the Julian calendar used at the time.

3. 22 September in the Julian calendar used at the time.

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2. NSI Census data 2017.


16. Roberts, Benjamin W.; Thornton, Christopher P. (2009). “Development of metallurgy in Eurasia” (https://www.academia.edu/371376/Development_of_metallurgy_in_Eurasia). Department of Prehistory and Europe, British Museum. p. 1015. Retrieved 28 July 2018. “In contrast, the earliest exploitation and working of gold occurs in the Balkans during the mid-fifth millennium BC, several centuries after the earliest known copper smelting. This is demonstrated most spectacularly in the various objects adorning the burials at Varna, Bulgaria (Renfrew 1986; Higham et al. 2007). In contrast, the earliest gold objects found in Southwest Asia date only to the beginning of the fourth millennium BC at as Nahal Qanah in Israel (Golden 2009), suggesting that gold exploitation may have been a Southeast European invention, albeit a short-lived one.”


Caucasus, and they controlled the upper Volga area, the territories of the former Volga Bulghar state, Siberia, the northern

16 September 2011

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63. "Bulgaria – Ottoman rule" (https://www.britannica.com/place/Bulgaria/The-second-Bulgarian-empire#ref42728). Encyclopædia Britannica. Retrieved 21 December 2011. "With the capture of a rump Bulgarian kingdom centred at Edirne (Vidin) in 1396, the last remnant of Bulgarian independence disappeared. ... The Bulgarian nobility was destroyed—its members either perished, fled, or accepted Islam and Turkicization—and the peasantry was enserfed to Turkish masters.”


67. Fishman, Joshua A. (2010). Handbook of Language and Ethnic Identity: Disciplinary and Regional Perspectives (https://books.google.com/?id=7oAUeUVt58C&pg=PA276&dq=there+were+almost+no+remnants+of+a+Bulgarian+ethnic+identity%3B&v=onepage&q=there%20were%20almost%20no%20remnants+of+a+Bulgarian+ethnic+identity%20s%20identity&f=false). Oxford University Press. p. 276. ISBN 978-0195374926. "There were almost no remnants of a Bulgarian ethnic identity; the population defined itself as Christians, according to the Ottoman system of millets, that is, communities of religious beliefs. The first attempts to define a Bulgarian ethnicity started at the beginning of the 19th century.”


71. The Final Move to Independence.


74. San Stefano, Berlin and Independence.


77. Historical Setting.


85. Chenoweth, Erica (2010). Rethinking Violence: States and Non-State Actors in Conflict (https://books.google.com/?id=JyD_AmGnu34C&pg=PA129&dq=bulgaria%20refugees%20economy&f=false). Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs. p. 129. ISBN 978-0-262-01420-5. “Bulgaria, for example, had a net surplus of refugees and was faced with the daunting task of absorbing thousands of Bulgarian refugees from Greece over a relatively short period. While international loans from the Red Cross and other organizations helped to defray the substantial costs of accommodating surplus populations, it placed a strenuous financial burden on states that were still recovering from the war an experiencing economic downturn as well as political upheaval.”

86. Bulgaria in World War II. The Passive Alliance.

87. Wartime Crisis.


89. The Soviet Occupation.


94. Domestic Policy and Its Results:Quote: “...real wages increased 75 percent, consumption of meat, fruit, and vegetables increased markedly, medical facilities and doctors became available to more of the population...”

95. After Stalin.

96. The Economy.


100. Bulgaria in the 1980s.


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331. “Bulgaria – The arts” (https://www.britannica.com/place/Bulgaria/The-arts). Encyclopædia Britannica. Retrieved 28 July 2018. “The early impetus of Bulgarian traditions in the arts was cut short by the Ottoman occupation in the 14th century, and many early masterpieces were destroyed. ... the foundations were laid for later artists such as Vladimir Dimitrov, an extremely gifted painter specializing in the rural scenes of his native country ... At the beginning of the 21st century, the best-known contemporary Bulgarian artist was Christo, an environmental sculptor known for wrapping famous structures”


Bulgarian–Macedonian Folk Music (https://books.google.com/?id=wOOfVFJWMLC&pg=PA52&dq=bulgarian%20music%3V%3Eonepage%3&q=bulgarian%20music%3Ffalse). University of California Press. p. 52. Retrieved 20 December 2011. “Bulgaria’s scales are numerous, and it may be demonstrated that they are a fusion of Eastern and Western influences. ... first, Oriental scales; second, church modes: the osmoglasie ... third, the conventional scales of Western Europe. ... Among the scales which have come to the Balkans from Asia, the pentatonic is one of the most widely used in Bulgaria. Whether it came from China or Japan, as Dobri Hristov suggests...”


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External links

- Bulgaria (https://curlie.org/Regional/Europe/Bulgaria) at Curlie (based on DMOZ)
- Wikimedia Atlas of Bulgaria
- Geographic data related to Bulgaria (https://www.openstreetmap.org/relation/186382) at OpenStreetMap
- Bulgaria Profile (http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/bulgaria) from Balkan Insight
- President of The Republic of Bulgaria (https://www.president.bg/)