



Reaching the heights for the rights of the child

**Council of Europe Strategy
for the Rights of the Child
2016-2021**

**High-Level Launching Conference
Sofia, 5-6 April 2016**

Information for participants



Bulgarian Chairmanship
Council of Europe
November 2015 – May 2016
Présidence de la Bulgarie
Conseil de l'Europe
Novembre 2015 – Mai 2016



Organisers

- Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Bulgaria
- State Agency for Child Protection, Bulgaria
- Council of Europe (www.coe.int)

Webpage of the Conference

- Accessible via the web portal: <http://www.coe.int/en/web/children/sofia2016>

Conference venue

The conference will be held at *Sofia Hotel Balkan*.

The Sofia Hotel Balkan is a five-star hotel and one of Sofia's architectural landmarks. It is located in the very heart of Sofia within walking distance from the business and commercial district and the government offices.

Sofia Hotel Balkan

5 Sveta Nedelya Square

1000 Sofia, Bulgaria

tel. (359) 2 981 65 41, fax (359) 2 980 64 64

sofia.sheraton@luxurycollection.com

www.sofiabalkan.com

Registration of participants

All participants are invited to register to the conference online. Participants will receive a link to the online registration form with their invitation.

Please note that each Council of Europe member state may send a maximum of **three** delegates to the Conference.

The deadline to register is 4 March 2016.

Working languages

Simultaneous interpretation into English, French and Bulgarian will be provided during the plenary meetings and one of the three parallel thematic sessions.

Catering facilities/Social Programme

Presidential Reception, 4 April 2016

A reception for the conference participants will be hosted by the President of the Republic of Bulgaria on **4 April at 7.00 pm** at the National Archaeological Institute and Museum.

National Archaeological Institute and Museum

2 Saborna Str., 1000 Sofia

Bulgaria

Tel +359 2 988 24 06

Important information on security checks:

Entrance to the National Archaeological Institute and Museum will be possible from 6.15 to 6.50 pm. Participants are requested to bring with them a valid passport or identity card and to comply with the security checks which will be in force.

The doors will close at 6.50 pm sharp.

Meals/coffee breaks

The organisers are offering conference participants lunches and coffee breaks on 5 and 6 April. A social event/dinner will be offered to participants on 5 April, at the Central Military Club.

Central Military Club

Tsar Osvoboditel Blvd 7, 1000 Sofia

Bulgaria

(Situated at the intersection of the two main roads of Sofia - str. "Rakovski" and Boulevard "Tsar Osvoboditel")

Travel arrangements

Participants whose expenses are covered by the Council of Europe will receive a personal reference code from the Secretariat. They are requested to complete the relevant section of the registration form. Their travel tickets will be booked for them by Sirma Travel Ltd.

All other participants are required to make their own arrangements for travel to Sofia.

Hotel booking

Participants whose expenses are covered by the Council of Europe will have a room booked for them in the **Sofia Hotel Balkan**, via the conference registration form.

Participants covering their own expenses may book their hotel accommodation via the conference registration form, at either the Sofia Hotel Balkan or the Grand Hotel Sofia. Participants wishing to book rooms at these hotels are requested to fill in the relevant hotel booking form (downloadable from the conference registration form), and are required to provide the hotel with their credit card details to guarantee their hotel reservation.

Special conference rates are available at both hotels as follows:

Hotel Sofia Balkan

Please note that only a limited number of rooms are available at the Hotel Sofia Balkan until 4 March 2016, on a first-come, first-serve basis, at the following preferential rates:

Room type	Preferential rates
Classic Rooms	€ 100
Executive Rooms	€ 120
Deluxe Rooms	€ 140
Junior Suites	€ 160
Executive Suites	€ 190

- The above preferential rates are valid for single occupancy and quoted per room, per night, inclusive of breakfast, 9% VAT and tourist tax.
- VAT and city tax are subject to legal charge.
- Supplement for second person sharing room/suite - €10.-/night, incl. breakfast and VAT.

Grand Hotel Sofia

Rooms at preferential rates will also be available at the Grand Hotel Sofia, nearby the conference venue, as follows:

Grand Hotel Sofia (5 stars)

1 Gurko Street

1000 Sofia, Bulgaria

Reception tel: +359 2 811 0811

Reservations tel: +359 2 811 0800

Fax (359) 2 811 09 53

<http://www.grandhotelsofia.bg/>

Room type	Preferential rates
Superior room (SSS)	€ 95 .-
Executive room (ER)	€ 115 .-
Corner suites (CS)	€ 175 .-
Panorama suites (SP)	€ 345 .-

- Preferential rates are valid for single occupancy, incl. of 9% VAT and the following **complimentary benefits**: Grand buffet breakfast, Wi-Fi high speed Internet, gym, indoor parking.
- Rates are subject to tourist tax of EUR 0.67.-/person/night.
- Supplement for second person sharing room/suite - € 26.-/night, incl. breakfast and VAT.

Please, note that after 20 February 2016, the organisers cannot guarantee availability of rooms at the Grand Hotel Sofia at the preferential rates.

Visas

Participants requiring a visa to enter Bulgaria must make their own visa applications. The Council of Europe Protocol department can assist by issuing a "note verbale" to support their application. Participants requiring this assistance are requested to complete the relevant part of the registration form as soon as possible.

Airport

The closest international airport is **Sofia Airport**.

Information tel. (359) 2 937 2211 – 24 hours a day

www.sofia-airport.bg/en/passengers/

Transport from/to airport

Shuttle bus transfers between the airport and the hotels

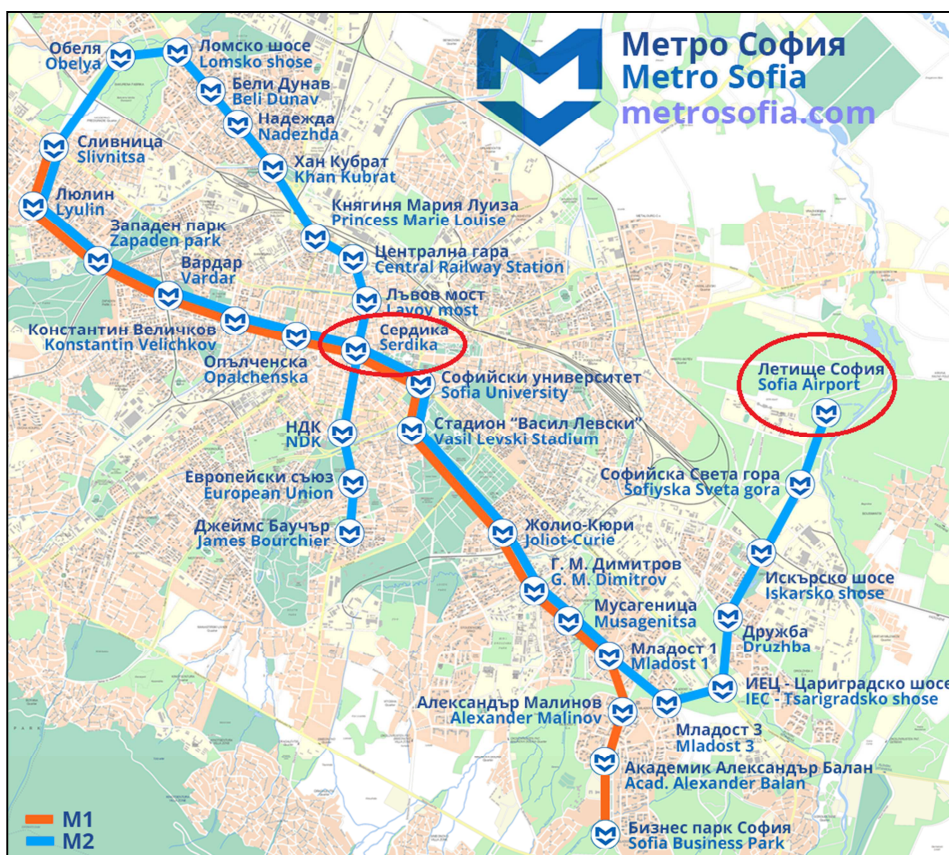
A welcome point will be set up at the airport and the organizers will arrange transportation to the hotels for participants arriving in Sofia on 4 April and departing on 7 April.

Public transportation is also available to and from the airport.

Sofia **Metro** connects airport to the city centre. The metro station at airport is located in the eastern part of Terminal 2. You can reach it by following the floor markings in blue at the public area of Terminal 2. The journey time from Sofia Airport to the city centre is approx. 18 min.

Ticket machines for metro tickets are located at Sofia Airport Metro Station. The ticket machines accept Bulgarian banknotes and coins, and one of them accepts credit cards as well.

The nearest metro stop to Sofia Hotel Balkan (2-3 minute walk) and Grand Hotel Sofia (9 minute walk) is *Serdika*.



Participants who choose to travel by **taxi** will find the taxi kiosks inside in the airport's building. The taxi service can be requested at the offices of the taxi companies in the Arrivals of Terminal 1 and Terminal 2. The floor markings in yellow will lead you to the taxi stand area.

Please note that the airport authorities recommend that participants do not use taxi services offered outside the office of the taxi operator or in front of the terminals.

Information stand

As the space to exhibit materials at the venue will be limited, participants who wish to display information material are kindly asked to contact the organisers **by 29 February 2016**.

General information about Bulgaria

The local **currency** in Bulgaria is the Bulgarian lev (BGN). The plural of lev is *leva* and 1 Lev = 100 *stotinki* (Bulgarian cents). The exchange rate with the euro is about 1,95 leva for 1 euro. Credit cards are accepted, but not popular everywhere yet.

Bulgarian is the national **language** in Bulgaria, but most of the people speak English and/or Russian as well.

For **more information** in English **about Sofia** (public transport, sights, events, etc.), you can visit the official touristic website of the city - www.visitsofia.bg/en/.

Weather forecast: <http://weather.sinoptik.bg/sofia-bulgaria-100727011?location>

Contacts

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State Agency for Child Protection

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Sirma Travel Ltd, Sofia, Bulgaria

Responsible for the registration form, tickets and accommodation in both hotels – Grand Hotel Sofia and Sofia Hotel Balkan

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