



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



ADMINISTRATIVE CIRCULAR/ PRACTICAL INFORMATION

**International Expert Conference for Exchange of Best Practices on:
“Equal enjoyment of human rights and freedoms by persons with disabilities:
achievements and challenges”**

22 March 2016, Sofia, Bulgaria

The above cited conference is being organised by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy of the Republic of Bulgaria in partnership with the Council of Europe, within the programme of the Bulgarian Chairmanship of the Council of Europe.

We would like to welcome you to Sofia and we hope you will enjoy our hospitality. We believe this Administrative Circular will facilitate your participation.

1. CONFERENCE WEBSITE

The draft programme, concept note and administrative circular/practical information for the Conference will be uploaded on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities website of the Council of Europe: http://www.coe.int/t/dg3/disability/DisabilitySofiaConference2016_en.asp.

2. VENUE

The conference will take place at the **Boyana Residence**
16, Vitoshko Lale str.
Boyana district
BG-1618 Sofia
Website: <http://boyana-residence.sofiahotelbulgaria.com/en/>.



The Boyana Residence is located 10 km south of the centre of Sofia. It is a governmental residence, surrounded by a large park at the foot of the Vitosha Mountain.

3. TRAVEL AND ACCOMMODATION

The Council of Europe will cover the travel expenses for the participants according to the Rules concerning the reimbursement of travel and subsistence expenses.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy of the Republic of Bulgaria will cover two nights accommodation – 21 and 22 March 2016.

An additional night's accommodation - 23 March 2016 - for members of the Task Force on preparing the future Council of Europe disability strategy (2017 - 2023) will be covered by the Council of Europe.

All participants will stay at the Boyana Residence (the venue of the Conference) and where a block reservation has been made. Please note that there is no convenient public transport to the Boyana Residence.

Participants do not need to book their own accommodation. Based on their registration to the Conference, reservations will be made by the organisers.

Accommodation in the Boyana Residence includes free of charge: high speed internet, interior pool, fitness centre and sauna. Extra charges (phone calls, mini-bar, double room, etc.) shall be paid by the participants.

4. TRANSPORTATION

The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy will organise the transfers from/to the airport.

Sofia airport/SOF is the main airport and is located 5 km east of the city centre. For more information please see <https://www.sofia-airport.bg/en>.

5. SECRETARIAT

The conference secretariat will be available at the Boyana Residence during the period 21-22 March 2016 and a computer, printer and photocopier will also be at the disposal of the participants.

6. LUNCH AND DINNERS

All participants are invited to a welcome dinner on 21 March, and to a lunch, a cultural visit and a Conference dinner on 22 March.

7. INTERPRETATION

The working documents are in English and French. During the conference simultaneous interpretation will be available in Bulgarian, English and French. If required, sign language interpretation will be provided.

8. LIABILITY

The organisers shall not be liable for personal accidents, loss or damage to personal property of the participants.

9. GENERAL INFORMATION

10.1. Information about Sofia can be found on the Official website of the Sofia Municipality (<http://www.sofia.bg/en/>) or the Official Tourism Portal of Bulgaria (<http://bulgariatravel.org/en/object/234/sofia>).

10.2. Other useful information

Language: Bulgarian is the official language, but it should not be very difficult to find information in English.

Time zone: Bulgaria is located in the Eastern European Time Zone, which is GMT (Greenwich Mean Time) +2 hours.

Climate: The climate in the country is temperate continental, with Mediterranean influence in the southern parts. The Black Sea influences the climate in the eastern part of the country. There are about 2,000 sunny hours from May to October. During the winter, the mountains are particularly suitable for winter sports. The average temperature in March is expected to be 10-15°C.

Electric voltage: 220 V, 50 Hz.

Emergency number: 112

International dial code for Sofia: + 3592

Currency: The monetary unit in the Republic of Bulgaria is the lev (BGN), which is equal to 100 stotinki (st.). The value of the lev has been fixed to the Euro, at a fixed rate of 1 EUR – 1.95583 BGN.

Current currency information can be found on the site of the Bulgarian National Bank: <http://www.bnb.bg/?toLang= EN/>.

Currency can be exchanged in banks or in any of the city's many currency exchange offices. Some of these exchange offices also work on holidays. Euro-cheques can be exchanged in banks.

Credit cards: Most Bulgarian hotels and large shops accept VISA, MasterCard, American Express and Diners Club credit cards. Large shops work with debit cards as well.

Smoking: Smoking is prohibited in all indoor public places by law. The law covers all workplaces, restaurants, bars, public transportation, cinemas, theatres, all hotels, administrative buildings, in the yards or nearby day care centres and schools, in playgrounds, at outdoor children events, open air performance venues and sports facilities.

Shop opening hours: Most shops in Sofia close at 7.00 pm.

Communication: Three mobile service operators provide Bulgaria with almost complete 2G and 3G network coverage both on its territory and territorial waters. There is internet coverage almost everywhere in the country. In the larger towns and cities, there are Wi-Fi spots with free Internet access. These are located mainly in the trade centres, railway stations and bus stations.

Communication operators in Bulgaria:

- Vivacom – stationary and mobile telephone services (www.vivacom.bg)
- Mtel – stationary and mobile telephone services (www.mtel.bg)
- Telenor – stationary and mobile telephone services (<http://www.telenor.bg>).

11 CONTACT PERSONS

For general queries pertaining to the conference, please contact:

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For specific issues in respect to the organisational matters- as below.

1. Registration/international travel

Mr Alexander BARTLING
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2. Logistical matters

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3. Airport and transportation

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4. Accommodation

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