



# INFORMATION PACKAGE

## I. GENERAL INFORMATION

### Courses Venue:



Shipka Hotel,  
34A Totleben Blvd.  
Sofia 1606  
Bulgaria

<http://www.hotel-shipka.com/>

### Registration

All participants are kindly requested to apply via Registration Form, available at [www.cmdrcoe.org](http://www.cmdrcoe.org) as soon as possible. Please notice that the course will not take place with less than 10 participants. The maximum number of participants is 30.

### Accommodation

Rooms at Shipka Hotel will be booked by CMDR COE Administration office upon participants' request stated in the Registration form and they will be at the attendees' expense. If you have other accommodation preference, please let us know. Please note that payment at Shipka Hotel is in cash and in Bulgarian (BGN) currency only. Credit or debit cards are not accepted.

### Transportation

Public transport from Sofia Airport to Shipka Hotel is well organized - for more information see Section II.

## **Course Fee and Costs**

For 2016 CMDR COE Courses have a fee set at 100 euro per participant (excluding speakers, and those participants from CMDR COE sponsoring nations). The course fee covers the Icebreaker event, the Coffee Breaks, the Rent of the Halls, Guest-lecturers expenses and other administrative expenses. The tuition fee is collected and a receipt for the amount is provided during the in processing on day 1. Other costs (travel, accommodation, meals) are at the expense of the attendees. Participants may book their own accommodation but no transportation will be organized by CMDR COE.

## **Language**

The course will be held in English (high level of proficiency is required). The English level of the participants should meet the criteria stated in STANAG 6001-3333. Please note that interpretation services will not be provided.

## **Target Audience**

NATO and Partner nations' military officers and civil experts from state administration, as well as representatives of NGOs with responsibilities or special interest in crisis management and disaster response field are highly encouraged to take part in all CMDR COE courses. The course will not take place with less than 10 participants. The maximum number of course participants is 30.

## **Dress Code**

Service uniform for military and business (suit and tie) for civilian attendees is required.

## **Alimentation**

Breakfast is provided for all guests of Shipka Hotel. Lunch and dinner are not hosted. Several restaurants are located near the CMDR COE premises and it will be pleasure for our team to help in choosing the most proper bistro for you.

## **Icebreaker**

At the end of the first day, an Icebreaker event will be hosted by the CMDR COE Director.

## **Classification**

NATO Security Clearance is not required. The overall classification of CMDR COE's courses is NATO Unclassified Releasable to Partners.

## Point of Contact

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## II. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### Arrival to Sofia

A valid passport is required for entry to Bulgaria for some non-EU countries. For further information and visa requirements, please contact the Embassy/Consulate of the Republic of Bulgaria in your respective country. For more details – <http://www.mfa.bg/en/pages/view/85>. Participants from EU countries can use their ID cards.

There are direct flights to Sofia from the most major European airports. Generally, the international flights arrive at Terminal 2 of Sofia Airport. The drive from there to the downtown takes 20-30 minutes.

Both Sofia`s Central Rail Station and the International Bus Station are located close to the city centrum.

If arriving by car, be aware of the numerous speed traps at the entrances to the city as you will end up with a not insignificant spot fine.

### Local Transport

The taxi services in Sofia are cheap and reliable and there are a small percentage of frauds. All taxis should be colored in yellow and operate by meter – it`s worth checking if the meter is on. The CMDR COE strongly recommends the services of companies such as *OK Supertrans*, *Eurolease*, *Yes* and *Yellow333*. Their cabs are recognizable by their call-centers always well shown on vehicle`s sides. It is recommended to check the prices before you enter the car to avoid overcharge. At the airport use the official taxi booth inside and out of the Terminal 2. Use of unofficial taxi may result in overcharge up to 10 times the normal fare. A taxi ride to the

central parts of Sofia should not be more than 20-25 BGN. The payment should be made in Bulgarian currency only. You can exchange currency at the airport or use the ATM.

The public transport in Sofia is composed of buses, trolleybuses, tram networks and an underground as well. The city is amply covered by an interlocking network with services running from about 05:00 to 23:30. Single-journey ticket costs 1.00 BGN and can be bought from street kiosks at the stops or from the driver. Ticket must be validated on board using the metal punchers near the windows. A single-trip ticket may be issued by on-board vending machine in trams and trolleys for each journey. The metro tickets have the same price (1.00 BGN) but are different from those used in ground transport, and can only be purchased from ticket counters in the underground stations themselves.

### **Miscellaneous**

Sofia has an area of 1310 sq. km and population of 1 177 577 inhabitants.

**CLIMATE:** Winters in Sofia can be extreme. Temperatures are typically around freezing but can reach -10 degrees Celsius for particular periods. Frigid temperatures are accompanied by precipitation of snow or rain. Please bring suitable clothing.

**LOCAL TIME:** GMT+2.

**CURRENCY:** Bulgaria's unit of currency is the Lev (pl. leva), code – BGN. It is in fraction of 100 *stotinki* (singular: *stotinka*). The denomination is coin of 1 Lev and banknotes of 2, 5, 10, 20, 50 and 100 Levs. The exchange rate against the euro is fixed at BGN 1.95583 for €1.

**EXCHANGE:** Many international banks and Foreign-Exchange Offices operate in Sofia. Currency exchange at the airport on arrival or departure, and in the hotels, is also possible. Do not exchange money in the streets or outside financial offices despite the bargain rate offered: you risk being cheated!

**BANKING HOURS:** From Monday to Friday 09:00 – 17:00. Most of Foreign-Exchange Offices are open until 6 PM, and some around the clock. For more information on the actual rates it is better to consult with the Bulgarian National Bank (BNB) website: [www.bnb.bg](http://www.bnb.bg). Most of the banks have very friendly web portals where can find concerning information as well as the location of their ATMs.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS: International direct-dialing access code for Bulgaria: +359, for Sofia: +359 2. Cell phones are widely available where mobile services are provided by three operators M-tel, Telenor and Vivacom.

DRINKING WATER: The tap water is safe to drink but not always pleasant in taste or appearance. Bulgaria's vast supplies of mineral water are widely available in 0.5 litre and 1.5 litre bottles. They are very tasty and not expensive. Stick to well-known brands such as Gorna Banya, Devin or Bankia and check that the bottles are properly sealed.

ELECTRICITY: Main voltage 220 V/50 Hz, round two-pin plugs.

MOTORING: Drive on the right, overtake on the left, cross only when the traffic light is green, give right of way to vehicles approaching from the right at crossroads and to buses in urban areas, carry your International Driving Permit, ride with lights on at all times. The use of seat belts is mandatory for all passengers, except pregnant women. Speed limits are 50 km/h urban, 90 km/h outside and 130 km/h highways.

EMERGENCY: CALL 112.

Useful web links:

<http://www.discover-bulgaria.com/>

<http://bulgariatravel.org/en/>

<http://www.freesofiatour.com/>

<http://www.sofia.bg>

<http://www.sofiatraffic.bg/en/>

<http://www.sofia-guide.com/>

<http://www.novinite.com/>

<http://www.map-guide.bg/>

<http://www.bgMaps.com/en>

<http://www.meteo.bg/en/bgtoday>