



CRISIS MANAGEMENT AND DISASTER RESPONSE CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE

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NATO Science for Peace and Security (SPS) Programme

INFO PACKAGE



Advanced Research Workshop:

**“Implications of Climate Change and Disasters on Military Activities:
Building Resiliency and Mitigating Vulnerability in the Balkan region”**

05-07 July 2016, Arena di Serdica Residence Hotel

**Sofia, Bulgaria
2016**



*This workshop
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I GENERAL INFORMATION



Useful information in assistance to your visit in Bulgaria.

VENUE:

Arena di Serdica Residence Hotel
2 Budapesta Str., Sofia 1000, Bulgaria

Strategically located in the downtown, it is right next to historical places of interest. During the early construction works of what came to be the Arena di Serdica Hotel, the ancient amphitheater of Roman town of Serdica was accidentally discovered in 2004. In the modern cityscape of Sofia, the ruins lie south of Knjaz Dondukov Blvd, between the Goethe-Institut headquarters and the embassy of the United Kingdom.

In July 2006 came across further ruins, however, it was not clear that the unearthed Roman structure was indeed part of a large arena. The east gate and the section of the amphitheater within the hotel lot was preserved and incorporated into the hotel's ground floor. It is freely accessible for tourists during the day, except on Mondays, and includes small expositions of coins and ceramics unearthed on the site.



CO-ORDINATION/ADMINISTRATION.

- a. Project Directors: COL Orlin NIKOLOV, CMDR COE, Sofia, BULGARIA, and COL Katarina STRBAC Dr., Ministry of Defence, Belgrade, SERBIA;
- b. POC: MAJ Stoyan STOYANOV, CMDR COE, Sofia, BULGARIA, natosps@cmdrcoe.org; phone: +359 2 92 24718

REGISTRATION. Please fill in and submit your Registration Form NLT 2 June 2016. More information related to the event could be found at:
http://cmdrcoe.org/menu.php?m_id=2&c_id=45 .

The Workshop language will be English and interpretation services to and from other languages will not be provided.



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ARRIVING IN SOFIA

A valid passport is required for entry to Bulgaria. Participants from EU countries can use ID cards instead. It is required non-EU citizens to obtain a visa and is kindly recommended to contact with the Embassy/Consulate of the Republic of Bulgaria in their respective country.



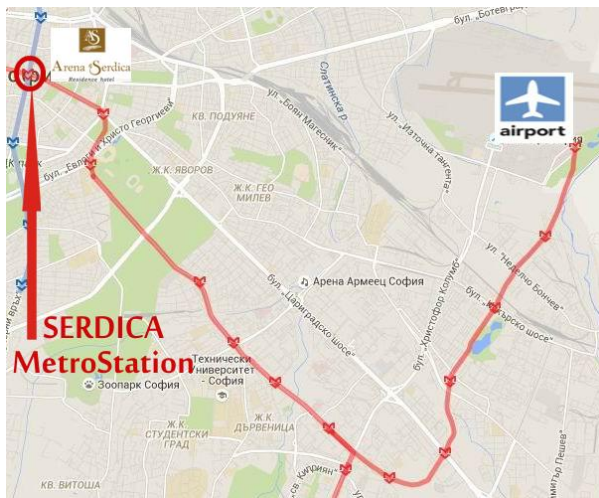
There are direct flights to Sofia from the biggest European airports. Generally, the international flights land at Terminal 2 of Sofia Airport. The drive from there to the city center is a short one and should not take more than 30 minutes.

Both Sofia's Central Rail Station and the International Bus Station are located close to the downtown.

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 is a small percentage of frauds, however check the prices before you enter the cab to avoid misleading. The taxi should not



be more than 20-25 BGN for a ride to the central parts of Sofia. The payment should be made in Bulgarian currency only. You can change a small amount of money at the airport or use the ATM. All taxis are colored in yellow and operate by meter – it's worth checking if the meter is on. The reputable companies are OK Supertrans, Eurolease, Yes and Yellow333, and the CMDR COE strongly recommends their services. Their cabs are recognizable by their call-centers always well shown on vehicle's sides.

The public transport in Sofia is composed of buses, trolley and tram networks and an underground as well. The services run from 5 am to midnight. 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.

To avoid rush hours best way is to run downtown on a tube train as shown on the pics.



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MISCELLANEOUS

CLIMATE: The weather in the end of February`2016 is expected to be cloudy with a little drizzle as the day temperatures to vary between -5 to 0°C in the morning to 5-6°C at noon.

LOCAL TIME: EET (UTC+2) between late October and late March.

CURRENCY: Bulgarian 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 as in 1999 the Lev's value was pegged to that of the German deutsch-mark, which was replaced by the euro in 2001. Since then due to the Currency Board it is easy to calculate the rate – it lasts BGN to € as 2:1.

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: 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. 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—MTel, Telenor and VivaCOM. Another one is MaxTelecom however it is specialized in Wi-Fi supply.

DRINKING WATER: 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:

www.cmdrcoe.org

www.discover-bulgaria.com/

www.sofia-guide.com/

www.bgmaps.com/en

www.weather.sinoptik.bg



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II ACCOMMODATION

There will be a block booking for all participants in the workshop.

Arena Di Serdica*****

Arena di Serdica is a 5-star Residence Hotel, affiliated to the FPI Hotels & Resorts chain. It is the only place in Sofia where hotel hospitality and historical heritage are combined. The property houses an ancient ruins dating from the end of the 3rd century. At that moment in the past Sofia (then named Serdica) was the capital of the Roman province Dacia Mediterranea.

Free Wi-Fi, fitness and parking are provided.

Note: The Registration Form (http://cmdrcoe.org/menu.php?m_id=2&c_id=45) is sufficient for accommodation purposes.

Please address all accommodation issues to **POCs**

Terms & Conditions: *Your reservation is absolutely secure. All personal data is encrypted and will be processed in a secure manner.*

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

ICEBREAKER: All participants are invited to a hosted dinner which will be held at Arena di Serdica Residence Hotel Restaurant on 04rd July 2016 at 19.30 hrs.



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