

MISSIONARY ATLAS PROJECT

EUROPE

Bulgaria

Country Name: Republic of Bulgaria
Locally known as Republika Balgariya

Country Founded in: March 3, 1878

Population: 7,385,367

Government Type: Parliamentary Democracy

Geography/location in the world: South East Europe
Bordering the Black Sea

Number of people groups:
35

Picture of flag:



Religion Snapshot

Major Religion and % of population:

Bulgarian Orthodoxy—82.6%

All religions and % for each:

Bulgarian Orthodoxy—82.6%

Islam—12.2%

Christian (other than Orthodox)—1.2%

Other—4%

Government interaction with religion: Freedom of religion was established after the fall of communism. There is no state religion.

Bulgaria Profile

Basic Facts

Country Name

Republic of Bulgaria

Locally known as Republika Balgariya

Demographics

Bulgaria's 2006 records reflect a population of 7,385,367.

Bulgaria's population growth rate is on the decline, as reports reflect a growth rate of -0.86%. There has been an increasing move towards urbanization in recent years, where approximately 75% of the population currently lives in urban areas. In 1900, less than 20% of the population lived in urban areas, by 1945 it was 24%, and by 1990 66% had moved to the cities.

The capital and largest Bulgarian city is Sofia, with a population of 1.3 million.

Age Structure—

- 0-14 years—13.9%
- 15-64 years—68.7%
- 65+ years—17.3%

Median Age—40.8

- Male—38.7 years
- Female—42.9 years

Sex Ratio—0.93 Males/Female

Life Expectancy—72.3 years

- Males—68.68 years
- Females—76.13 years

1.38 children are born per woman.

Birth Rate—9.65 births/1000 population

Death Rate—14.27 deaths/1000 population

The majority of those living within Bulgaria are Bulgarian. The net migration rate is -4.01%.

Population Ethnicity—

- Bulgarian—83.9%
- Turkish—9.6%
- Roma—4.1%
- Other—1.8%

Bulgarians have recently been experiencing a population crisis. In fact, statistics reflect that if the trend continues, Bulgaria will lose a third of its population within a few decades. The population decline is due to various factors including emigration, rural poverty, and low birth rates. Large numbers, especially of the younger generations are flocking into other European countries to find work and to make money; this is only anticipated to increase once Bulgaria joins the EU.

http://www.photius.com/countries/bulgaria/society/bulgaria_society_internal_migration.html
 (world fact book 2006) www.cia.gov
www.bbc.co.uk

Language –

Bulgarian is the official language of Bulgaria. It is spoken by 83.9% of the population. Bulgarian is a member of the southern branch of Slavic languages, belonging to the Indo-European language family. Bulgarian uses the Cyrillic alphabet, rather than the Roman alphabet. The Cyrillic alphabet is the second most widely used alphabet in the world, and the alphabet actually originated and developed in Bulgaria.

The Bulgarian and Macedonian languages are very similar. Bulgarian differs from the other Slavic languages in multiple ways, for instance the absence of noun declension, the lack of a verb infinitive, the presence of the proto-Slavic verb system, and the presence of a suffixed definite article. The two languages are for the most part mutually intelligible.

Turkish and the Roma language are also spoken by minority groups. Turkish is spoken by about 9.6% of the population, and Roma 4.1%.

English is more widely spoken in Sofia than the rest of Bulgaria, especially among the younger population.

Society/Culture –

The Bulgarians have a rich cultural heritage due to their prime crossroads location. The Bulgarian lands have been occupied for thousands of years, providing the Bulgarian culture plenty of time to be enriched and develop. Through the ages numerous cultures have migrated through, not the least of which were the Thracians, Greeks, and Romans of antiquity. As the cultures interacted with the Bulgarians they left lasting marks within the culture.

Bulgarians have developed a sense for creativity and art through the ages, and have produced many outstanding artists known worldwide. Bulgarian folk music is lively and complex, and known and appreciated by folk dancers world wide.

The Bulgarians are proud of their heritage and proud of their land. They proudly hold claim to the treasures and structures that remain from antiquity, from cave drawings, to bronze tools, to

gold relics, to ruins of ancient cities. These in themselves are enough to draw in tourists, not to mention the natural beauty of Bulgaria, from rolling mountains to beaches along the Black Sea.

Bulgarians have a fear of public opinion, and do not commonly express their individuality.

Bulgarians greet one another with a handshake. Personal zones are a bit smaller than those of Western Europeans and Americans, thus people tend to sit closer, speak louder, and make more physical contact with one another more than Westerners. Also, some gestures, such as “yes,” and “no” are reversed from that of other Westerners, making it somewhat confusing for Western visitors. Nodding the head up and down implies “no” where shaking the head back and forth means “yes.”

The overall *Happiness Net* of the Bulgarian population is -24%. On a recent World Values Survey reported on NationMaster, 62% of Bulgarians reported to be “not very or not at all happy,” 31% reported to be “quite happy,” and only 7% reported to be “very happy.” Accordingly, on a similar survey on *Life Satisfaction*, Bulgarian scored a 4.5 on a scale from 1-10, with 1 being dissatisfied and a 10 being satisfied.

Holidays:

- January-1, 2 New Year's
- January-6 Epiphany, St Jordan
- January-7 St. John's Day
- January 21 Grandmother's Day
- February-14 Trifon Zarezan (Wine-grower's Day)
- March-1 Baba Marta
- March-3 National Day—Liberation Day (Independence from the Ottoman Empire)
- March-25 The Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin
- April-14 Good Friday
- April-16 Easter
- April-17 Easter Monday
- April-23 Lazarouane
- May-1 Labor Day
- May-6 Army Day
- May-11 Sts. Cyrilus and Methodius Day
- May-24 Day of Slavonic Script (Education Day)
- June-1 The Festival of Roses, Valley of the Roses
- June-2 Botev Day (Day of Botev and heroes died for Bulgarian freedom)
- June-29 St. Peter & St. Paul Day
- July-20 St. Elijah's Day
- August-6 The Transfiguration
- August-15 Assumption Day
- September-6 Unification Day
- September-22 Days of Liberation
- October-14 Petkouden
- October-26 St. Demetrius Day

- November-8 St. Michael's Day
- December-6 St. Nicholas Day
- December-24 Christmas Eve
- December-25 Christmas Day
- December-27 St. Stephen's Day
- December-31 New Year's Eve

Christmas is one of the most important holidays for Bulgarians, and it is a special three day family time. The whole family gathers on the 23, and they go and buy groceries for the holiday, as well as a Christmas tree. Once they return home, they begin decorating the tree and home. The decorating and cooking continues through the next day, when extended family begins to arrive to celebrate as well.

Traditional Christmas foods include white bean soup, dried red peppers stuffed with white beans, and prunes. Another tradition includes baking a loaf of bread with a coin baked inside. Once it is broken and shared at a meal, the one who has the piece with the coin is thought to prosper financially in the upcoming year. Bulgarian children also participate in *Sooroovachka*, which is another tradition where the children move around through the room patting their family and visitors with a special stick decorated for the occasion. While patting they wish for wealthy, happiness, health to the one receiving the pat.

The Christmas celebration continues through the 27, which is St. Stephen's day.

Families are highly valued and tend to be fairly close. Single young adults will typically live with their parents until they marry, and often time even young married couples live with one set of parents until they can afford to live on their own. It is also common for elderly grandparents to move in with and be taken care of by their children.

<http://www.geocities.com/nomer6/bulgaria.html>

www.earthcalendar.net

www.nationmaster.com

Government

Bulgaria is an independent republic with a civil and criminal law based upon Roman law. Their constitution was adopted on July 12, 1991. They are divided into 28 administrative provinces, including the capital city Sofia. Bulgaria recognizes universal suffrage at the age of 18 and accepts the compulsory International Court of Justice jurisdiction.

Government Branches:

- Executive Branch
 - Chief of State—President; elected by popular vote for five year term, for a maximum of two terms.
 - Head of Government—Prime Minister; nominated by the president and elected by the National Assembly
 - Cabinet—Council of Ministers; nominated by the prime minister and elected by the National Assembly.
- Legislative Branch

- Unicameral National Assembly—240 seats, elected by popular vote for 4 year terms.
- Judicial Branch
 - Supreme Administrative Court
 - Supreme Court of Cassation
 - Constitutional Court
 - Supreme Judicial Council

In 2005 a study was done by NationMaster on the corruption level of the world's countries. The report evaluated corruption, including police, business, and political corruption on a scale from 1-10 (1 being the most corrupt and 10 being clean.) Bulgaria scored in at a 4.

The Confederation of Independent Trade Unions of Bulgaria and The Podkrepa Labor Confederation are political pressure groups within Bulgaria. Bulgaria also has various regional, ethnic and national interest groups creating political pressure.

(world fact book 2006) www.cia.gov

Economy

Bulgaria's economy has been steadily improving since their major economic struggles associated with the fall of their socialist government in 1996. At that time, their new government chose to commit to economic reform and effectively strove to join the European Union, which they in January 2007.

Minerals, such as coal, copper, and zinc, have played major roles in Bulgarian industry. Since 2000, Bulgaria has steadily averaged a 4% economic growth, and has successfully attracted foreign investors. Bulgaria's biggest areas of concern are corruption within public administration, a weak judiciary, and organized crime.

Budget—

- Revenues—\$11.18 billion
- Expenditures—\$10.9 billion

Public Debt—31.9% of Gross Domestic Product

GDP Purchasing Power Parity—\$71.67 billion

GDP Official Exchange Rate—\$25.79 billion

GDP Real Growth Rate—5.5%

GDP Per Capita--\$9,600

GDP Composition By Sector—

- Agriculture—9.3%
- Industry—30.4%
- Services—60.3%

Labor Force—3.34 million (2004)

Unemployment Rate—11.5% (2005)

Population below poverty line—13.4% (2002)
Inflation Rate—5%

Agriculture Products—

- Vegetables
- Fruits
- Tobacco
- Wine
- Wheat
- Barely
- Sunflowers
- Sugar beets
- Livestock

Industries—

- Electricity
- Gas
- Water
- Food
- Beverages
- Tobacco
- Machinery and equipment
- Base metals
- Chemical products
- Coke
- Refined petroleum
- Nuclear fuel

World Fact Book 2006 www.cia.gov

Literacy

Those 15 years old and older that can read and write:

- Total population—98.6%
 - Males—99.1%
 - Females—98.2%

Land/Geography

Bulgaria is located in southeastern Europe within the Balkan Peninsula. They actually Bulgaria borders the Black Sea, and lies between Turkey and Romania. In total, Bulgaria shares borders with Greece, Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, and Turkey. Bulgaria is slightly larger than the US state of Tennessee.

Bulgaria's climate is temperate. They have cold, damp winters and hot, dry summers.

Bulgaria is mountainous, but does have some lowlands in the far north and in the southeast areas. Only 29.94% of the land is arable. Bulgaria is prone to both earthquakes and landslides.

Bulgaria suffers from various environmental issues and is plagued with pollution. They suffer from air pollution, particularly in Sofia, due to industrial emissions; river pollution due to raw sewage, metals and detergents; forest damage due to the air pollution which brings on acid rain; and also contaminated soil as a result of the metallurgical plants and wastes.



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<http://www.localization-translation.com/globalization-guide/localization-countries/localization-bulgaria.html>

History

Bulgaria's Medieval history is commonly divided into three sections—the First Bulgarian Kingdom, Byzantine domination, and the Second Bulgarian Kingdom.

First Bulgarian Kingdom

The Bulgarians have occupied their current lands for several centuries. While various Bulgar tribes migrated to and began occupying European lands as early as the 2nd century, the first Bulgarian kingdom and the state considered as modern day Bulgaria was originally established in 681 AD.

The Bulgarians today are a blend of a group of these early Bulgar invaders and Slavic tribes who merged in the 7th century. The native population of ancient Thracians also somewhat integrated with the new Bulgarians. The Bulgars were an Asian Turkish tribe that eventually migrated across the Danube River in the 7th century to claim what is now Bulgarian territory, and the Slavs had traveled from the Carpathian Mountains to the Balkan area in the 6th century.

The Bulgarian people adopted language and culture from the Slavs, but acquired their name and political structure from the Bulgars. The two groups originally merged in order to attack the expanding Byzantine Empire. The merger was primarily successful. Historian Dimiter Markovski has recorded a quote from Theophanes the Confessor concerning the treaty the Byzantines made with the new Bulgarian state in the 8th century, “the emperor made peace with them, undertaking to pay an annual tax to the disgrace of the Byzantines . . . It is a wonder for all people, both far and near, to hear that the man who had made all people to the East, West, North and South pay taxes to him, was defeated by this new people.”

The Bulgarians were able to retain their independence from Byzantium for several centuries, having hopes of eventually conquering Constantinople and inheriting the empire. Byzantium however resented Bulgaria, for settling on imperial territory, and repeatedly tried to subdue the new nation. Despite many years of success and expansion, Bulgaria's success quickly came crashing down. Byzantium conquered the Bulgarians in 1018, and held domination until 1187.

The determined Bulgarians however, refused to give in and submit to Byzantium without a fight. The nation was already a stable community, and they fought to resist the new foreign domination. They repeatedly led out in revolts throughout the empire. In fact, in two of the uprisings, one in 1040 and the other in 1072, the Bulgarians actually declared their own kings. Then in 1185 a liberation movement began in the empire, between the Balkan Range and the Danube, where two brothers, Assen and Peter, who claimed to be heirs of the royal family of the First Bulgarian Kingdom, set out to reclaim the nation. The movement last until 1187 when Byzantium was successfully overthrown, initiating the Second Bulgarian Kingdom.

Regardless of the struggles and competition between the Byzantine Empire and Bulgaria, Byzantium without a doubt had a lasting influence. This is evidenced in Bulgaria's decision to become Christian. As a primarily early political move, the Bulgarian Kingdom officially became Christianized and associated with the Eastern Orthodox Church in 865. The decision, however, did not come painlessly, as Christianity was more or less forced upon the population in efforts to pull Bulgaria up to the same level as the advanced states of the time. Markovski records in his history of Bulgaria, "At great expense of effort and bloodshed, not even sparing the first-born son, Prince Boris overcame the internal rejection of contemporary Bulgarian society and imposed Christianity as the official state religion."

After 886, the Bulgarians began to readily use the Slavonic language in religious activities, using the script provided by Slavic Missionaries Cyril and Methodius. At an ecumenical council in Preslav in 893, there was a vote to officially adopt the Slavic language spoken by the majority of Bulgaria's population for both state and church matters. This early language of the Bulgarians came to be known as Slav-Bulgarian or Old Bulgarian. While the rest of Medieval Europe was using Latin and Greek, the very fact that the Bulgarians had this unique literary language of their own, aided and furthered their independent development, establishing a rich heritage.

Cyril and Methodius in fact actually contributed more to the Bulgarians than a language; they further encouraged education with their written works and encouraged the Bulgarians to become familiar with the rich philosophy and writings of the Graeco-Hellenic and Roman times. As the Bulgarians began to grow in culture, they further developed spiritually. This growth was outwardly evidenced as they built impressive churches and palaces.

At the close of the 12th century, Byzantium was conquered by the Fourth Crusade and the Latin empire emerged. During this time, Bulgaria re-emerged as a principle power in southeastern Europe. Bulgaria's Tsar at the time, Kaloyan formed a union with the Roman Curia in order for Bulgaria to be officially recognized as a state. Through the next few years, under the leadership of Tsar Ivan Assen II, Bulgaria's territory was greatly extended to its greatest former

boundaries being the Aegean Sea, the Black Sea, and the Adriatic Sea. Furthermore, Ivan Assen's young daughter was betrothed to the young Latin Emperor Baldwin, again extending and enlarging Bulgaria's power and status. Ivan Assen II was now titled the "King of Bulgarians and Greeks." During his reign, Bulgaria conquered most all of southeastern Europe. And then in 1235, the Bulgarian church regained its independence as the Bulgarian Patriarchy received blessing from all of the Eastern patriarchs.

As Bulgaria grew politically stronger through the 12-14th centuries, they also began to develop socio-economically and culturally. The kingdom issued and circulated their own coins, cities developed and expanded, and stable trade was established with parts of the West, including some of the Balkan states and Northern Italy. Turnovo School of Art began thriving, influencing cultural arts throughout the kingdom. The school is remembered for its murals, such as those found within the Boyar's houses and the Boyana Church, and for the book illuminations that began to develop and be placed in the official literature of the 14th century. As the Bulgarian language, known as Old Bulgarian was officially established, along with an official alphabet, literature began appearing throughout the land. Serbia, Walochia, Moldavia, and Russia eventually adopted this language and script.

One of the major contributions of Bulgarian literature was Bulgarian apocryphal writings and cultural writings, the latter of which were sometimes referred to as Heretic Traditions. These writings often crossed Bulgarian borders and entered various countries, aiding Bulgaria's relationship and contacts with the world, particularly the West. Some of the most popular of the Heretic Traditions are known as the Bogomil movement. These writings combined elements of Christianity as well as elements of the Anatolian religious dualism.

In the early 13th century the Bulgarians experienced a time of extreme crises and oppression, which led to peasant revolts. In 1277 there was such a revolt, led by Ivailo, which led to the first medieval peasant war. Ivailo ascended to the throne, but only briefly. Also beginning about the same time, the Tartars began trying to work their way into Bulgarian domestic matters. The Bulgarians were eventually able to defeat the Tartars, reconsolidate the empire, and push forward developmentally. Nevertheless, all around the empire, most of the Eastern Slavs had been conquered by these Russian Tartars of the Golden Horde.

Byzantine Domination

During the mid 14th century, the Islamic Ottoman Turks began making their way into the Balkan Peninsula. After fifty years of continual and violent attacks, Bulgaria was defeated, and the Turks continued on in their westward expansion. In 1453 the Turks conquered Constantinople, making it their capital. The Ottomans' conquest was not blocked until they reached Vienna. While the Turks could not continue moving westward, they did occupy and control much of southeastern Europe for centuries. Through the years, their control extended into the Middle East and North Africa.

As the Ottomans were about to take over Bulgaria, the Bulgarian population split into two kingdoms and into independent feudal systems. The population count was estimated at 2,500,000. Sadly however, upon Turkish occupation, the population was almost immediately cut

in half, as many Bulgarians died in war or were captured and sold into slavery. From the 15-18th centuries, the Bulgarian population found themselves in a severely oppressive feudal system worse than those they had encountered in previous times. The Ottoman ruler, referred to as Sultan, owned all of the land, distributing it as he chose to his subordinates. Bulgarian territories were reorganized as the Beyerlik or Rumili, including Moesia, Thrace, and Macedonia.

The Bulgarian Patriarchate was abolished, and the Christian Bulgarians were forced to integrate into the Constantinople Patriarch. Greek clergy were given control over Bulgarian leadership positions, thus the Bulgarian language and culture suffered decline. However, while Christianity was not completely abolished, the Turks primarily sought to spread and establish Islam, and the Christians were denied many of the rights of the Muslims. In fact, the heaviest tax collected by the Ottomans was the tax on non-Muslims. In many cases, the Turks practiced forms of Islamization, where the Turks forced conversion on the conquered people. Islamization was further evidenced through forcing the Bulgarian families to hand over their best young sons to be taken away and educated in Muslim fanaticism, abducting Christian women in order to force them to marry Muslims, forcing Bulgarians to resettle within the Islamic Anatolia region, and even sometimes extermination.

While the Bulgarians were stripped of their independence and power, and were forced to live in primitive conditions, some found areas of refuge and were able to preserve Bulgarian nationality and culture. Nevertheless, after the Turks had conquered all of the major cities throughout Bulgarian territory, the cultural centers and works of literature were for the most part destroyed. As other regions of Europe were culturally developing, Bulgaria experienced a long state of isolation and slumber.

Throughout Ottoman occupation, the Bulgarians tried to throw off their foreign oppressors and regain independence. The first revolt occurred in 1408, when two Bulgarian nobles led the opposition, successfully liberating a few regions for a few years. The next revolts came in 1598 and 1686, known as the First and Second Tarnovo Uprisings. These were followed by the Chiprovtsi Uprising in 1688 and a Macedonia revolt under the leadership of Karposh in 1689 which were both instigated by Austria. All of these revolts were devastatingly unsuccessful.

In 1739 the Austrians and Ottomans signed the Treaty of Belgrade, serving to end Austrian involvement in the Balkans. In the 18th century, a few centuries after Russia had gained their independence, Russia signed the Treaty of Kuchuk-Kainarji of 1774 with the Ottomans, giving the Russians the right to defend the Christians of the empire and intercede on behalf of the Bulgarians,

The Turks continued to rule over the Bulgarians until 1878, when the Treaty of San Stefano came into play. The Russians waged war against the Turks, as they crossed over the Danube into Bulgarian lands in June 1877. Thousands of Russians and Romanians, as well as tens of thousands of Bulgarians, are thought to have perished in this war. It was not until eight months later that the peace treaty of San Stefano was signed. The treaty, which was signed March 3, provided virtual independence of Bulgaria, allowing Bulgaria to be an autonomous

district. Nevertheless, the Great Powers had already taken matters into their own hands, and the Congress of Berlin actually diminished this autonomy provided by the San Stefano treaty.

In June and July of 1878, the Congress ruled that a section of Bulgaria must be completely returned to Turkey, that the northern part of Bulgaria should be an independent principality under Turkish authority, and that the southern region of Bulgaria must remain under Turkish rule as an autonomous province. Dimiter Markovski records in his Bulgarian history, “what was won in blood was dismembered in ink.”

With the help and guidance of the Provisional Russian Administration, Bulgaria made attempts to reorganize and reconstruct themselves. Thus, Bulgaria was able to unite their country in 1885, seven years after the divisions caused by the Treaty of Berlin. From 1887 to 1894, under the leadership of Stefan Stambolov, Bulgaria worked to consolidate their administration and economy. These actions as well were assisted by the Provisional Russian Administration. The Russians even helped the Bulgarians develop their constitution, known as the Turnovo Constitution. The Turnovo Constitution, which was in effect from April 1879 until December 1947, called for a democratic, constitutional monarchy. In 1908, Bulgaria declared themselves an independent kingdom, completely free from the Turks. Ferdinand of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, a ruling Bulgarian prince, assumed the title of Tsar.

During the First Balkan War, which began in October 1912, Bulgaria joined the anti-Turkish coalition, which was also made up of Greece, Macedonia, and Serbia. The goal of the joint effort was to push the Turks out of Macedonia and Adrianople Thrace. The efforts were successful and the war ended in May of 1913, but shortly after, due to disagreements over Macedonia, a Second Balkan War began. This time Bulgaria was up against Greece, Romania, Serbia, and Turkey, and effectively suffered a grave defeat. The war took place from June to July of 1913.

Bulgaria began being stripped of its territory. As a result of the Treaty of Bucharest at the culmination of the Second Balkan War, Bulgaria lost southern Dobrudja as well as a large part of present day Macedonia. Then, after siding with the Central Powers in World War I, the Treaty of Neuilly forced Bulgaria to surrender more of its southern region, now being deprived of extending to the Aegean Sea.

World War I in effect did more than strip land away from Bulgaria, as the country was now forced to pay huge amounts of gold francs to re-compensate losses, the country's transport was completely worn out, and famine and disease wiped out much of the population. Furthermore, droves of refugees began flocking into the region and their accommodation in the country became a serious problem. The Balkans soon became known as “the smoking peninsula,” and a breeding ground for hostilities.

About this same time, in 1919, Tsar Ferdinand abdicated his throne, giving rule to Boris II, his son, who ruled over Bulgaria until his death in 1943. Boris established a military government in 1934 and assumed the role of dictator in 1935.

Second Bulgarian Kingdom

As the Second World War broke out, Bulgaria sought to establish an alliance with Germany, and hoped to recover some of their lost lands. In 1940, Romania returned southern Dobrudja, and Bulgaria occupied Macedonian and Thrace down to the Aegean Sea. In 1941 Bulgaria became a satellite of fascist Germany. But in September of 1944, Russian troops entered and declared war on Bulgaria. Bulgaria attempted to quickly sever ties with Germany and join forces with the western Allies, but their efforts were in vain. A coalition government known as the Fatherland Front was established on September 9, 1944, and with Russian efforts it quickly fell under the leadership of the Communist Party.

From 1944 until 1989, Bulgaria was known as the “People’s Republic of Bulgaria,” and was controlled by the Bulgarian Communist Party. In 1990, the party changed their name to the Bulgarian Socialist Party, which still is a part of the governing coalition government.

There was a brief period of Stalinism in Bulgaria, where extreme Stalinist Vulko Chervenkov ruled Bulgaria. This phase only lasted about five years. During this time many changes took place, including an accelerated process of industrialization, collectivized agriculture, and crushed rebellions. The Church was placed under the control of the state, US diplomatic relations were cut off, and the Orthodox Patriarch was restricted to a monastery. Once Stalin died in 1953, Chervenkov was removed from his office as the Party Secretary and replaced by Todor Zhivkov, yet he remained the Bulgarian Prime Minister until 1956. He was eventually removed from that role as well, and was replaced by Anton Yugov.

As ruler of the Communist Party, Zhikov ruled Bulgaria for the next three decades. While he was loyal to the Soviets, he ran a more moderate policy in Bulgaria, allowing some limited freedom of expression and putting an end to Church persecution. Once he retired in 1962, Zhivkov became both Prime Minister and Party Secretary. Eventually he promoted himself as Head of State when Bulgaria adopted the new Constitution in 1971. Bulgaria was revered as the Soviet Union’s most loyal Eastern European satellite.

In February of 1990, the Communist Party in Bulgaria voluntarily relinquished its absolute power hold, and by June 1990, the first free elections were conducted since 1931. This played a large role in paving the way to Bulgaria’s multiparty democracy.

In 1991 the National Assembly passes a new constitution, actually making Bulgaria the first Eastern Bloc country to adopt a new basic law. Zhelyu Zhelev was named president. Bulgaria’s first non-Communist government since WWII was headed up by Filip Dimitrov of the Anti-Communist Union of Democratic Forces. He set out to tackle ambitious reforms, but found a lack of cooperation from the Socialists. Bulgaria, like many other post-Communist Eastern European nations, found the switch to capitalism to be more difficult and painful than they had anticipated. The privatization efforts were accompanied by substantial unemployment, and the Socialists added to the stress as they played the role of the defender of the poor against the enemy of the free market. This reaction against the free market and economic reform helped Zhan Videnov of the Bulgarian Socialist Part to win the elections and take office in 1995. The

Socialist Party also struggled in helping the government, and so in 1996, Petar Stoyanov of the UDF was elected as president. He strove to crack down on the crime and corruption which plagued Bulgaria, and to institute strong economic reforms. Slowly, the economy began to stabilize, and has continued to improve.

Bulgaria joined the European Union in January of 2007.

www.wikipedia.com

www.bulgaria.com/history

“Bulgaria A Brief History Outline,” Dimitar Markovski. www.digsys.bg/books/history/bulga-relation.html

WorldMark Encyclopedia of Cultures and Daily Life, Volume 4, 1997.

Christian History

Christian churches were established in Bulgarian lands as early as the 2nd century. The first known ones were founded at Anchialus and Debelum, which is near Burgas on the east coast along the Black Sea. Despite the various surges and invasions from barbaric groups such as the Goths, Huns, Slavs, Bulgars, and Avars throughout the Balkan region, the Christian communities somehow survived.

As the Slavic and Bulgar tribes began to mix and settle in Bulgaria, they also adopted parts of the culture of the land. Since Constantinople had power in the region, Christianity was a basic element included in the culture. As the Bulgars and Slavs were assimilating to the culture, Rome sent missionaries into Bulgaria and the Byzantine Empire sent leaders down as well.

Boris I served as Bulgaria’s first Christian king. While he initially wanted to be baptized according to western rites, various conditions including an invasion by the Byzantine Empire caused him to be secretly baptized by the Greeks in 864, serving to provide peace with Byzantium and to align Bulgaria with the Eastern Church. Boris was still not content in establishing his kingdom and church according to the Eastern rites, and ended up seeking aid from Rome. Pope Nicholas I sent a group of missionaries to Bulgaria in order to train and convert Bulgaria according to the Catholic tradition. This served to have Catholic converts scattered throughout Bulgaria.

This alignment with the Roman Catholic Church angered Photios, the Eastern Orthodox Patriarch. This led to what is known as the Photian Schism, as Photios responded by denouncing the western rite as well as the Pope’s involvement within Bulgaria. The Photian Schism deepened the rift already in existence between the eastern and western churches. Eventually Bulgaria became frustrated with Rome, and thus Boris sought alliance with Constantinople again. Bulgaria was granted its desire, as the Fourth Council of Constantinople in 870 granted the Bulgarian Orthodox Church the status of autocephalous archbishopric. In 889 Boris abdicated the throne, giving his son Simeon, who had previously been a monk, the throne. Boris himself then entered a monastery. Regardless of Constantinople’s disdain, under Simeon’s reign, the Bulgarian bishopric established a Bulgarian Patriarch. Thus the bishopric declared the Bulgarian church to be autocephalous under the Bulgarian patriarch. Upon Simeon’s death in 927, Bulgaria was an independent Christian nation with its own church. The Bulgarian Orthodox Church is the oldest Slavic Orthodox church.

At the turn of the century, in 1018, the Bulgarian kingdom fell to the Byzantine Empire. At this time, the Bulgarian patriarch was terminated. Nevertheless, once Bulgaria regained their freedom and independence in 1186, they worked to get the patriarch re-established, which occurred in 1235.

Just a little more than a century passed however, when the Turks invaded and the Islamic Ottoman Empire encapsulated Bulgaria. Thus, for nearly 500 years, while western and central Europe was experiencing the Protestant Reformation, the Islamic Turks controlled the Bulgarian church. In 1870 the Turks approved the re-establishment of a national Bulgarian church, but the church was excommunicated by the Greek Orthodox council in 1872.

Bulgaria began to regain its independence in 1876, but never fully acquired it in 1908.

Before World War II, approximately 85% of the Bulgarian population was associated with the Orthodox Church. A second survey done in 1962 reflected only 27% of the population was still a member of the Orthodox Church. The war cost the Orthodox Church more than members however, as they also lost much property and institutions. While the monasteries were initially all stripped away, in 1953, after the church officially pledged loyalty to the Communist government, they were returned. Only two of the church's institutions, Tcherepich Seminary and Sofia Theological Academy, continuously remained open and functioned to serve hundreds of students.

Meanwhile, the Catholic Church in Bulgarian never even held any legal status until after the war, but yet they lost it again in the 1950s. Before the war, they had only existed as missions. Due to the war they struggled as they lost most of their institutions, buildings, schools, and orphanages to the government. Furthermore, Catholicism was viewed as the religion of fascism, thus it received much persecution from the Communists. The Bulgarians in particular viewed the Church as anti-Bulgarian because it, unlike the Orthodox Church, was anti-Russian. The leadership greatly suffered as all foreign religious personnel was removed in 1948, and the most of the others were imprisoned. Somehow, nevertheless, the Catholic Church survived. However, until Zhivkov, the Bulgarian President, traveled to Rome in 1975, the Latin rite jurisdictions had been without bishops since the Bishop of Nicopoli was executed in 1952.

American Congregationalist missionaries brought Protestantism to Bulgaria in 1856. American Methodists arrived in 1857 and Russian Baptists in 1865. The Pentecostal movement was established in 1921.

As of 1971, Bulgaria drafted a new constitution which included Freedom of conscience and of religion for all citizens as well as separation of church and state. While separation of church and state was acknowledged, the Bulgarian Orthodox Church was recognized as the traditional Bulgarian religion. Also, all churches were still required to register with the government, and registration was limited.

After Communism fell in 1991 in Bulgaria, a schism preoccupied the Orthodox Church, preventing them from regaining a central role in Bulgarian life. Nevertheless, Communism's fall

allowed for a new era and atmosphere of freedom and growth. Relations between the Church and State improved in regards to the Catholic Church, and as of 2000, the Holy See has had diplomatic relations and representatives in Bulgaria. During the 1990's, the Evangelical churches sustained great growth. After the fall of Communism, the Evangelicals immediately began evangelistic endeavors and received several thousand Turkish converts as well as Bulgarian Roma and often saw entire villages come to faith in Christ. From 1992 to 2001, the protestant percentage of the population grew from 21,878 to 42,308. The Orthodox Church opposed these aggressive moves by the Evangelicals, protesting that they were attacking the Orthodox Church and Bulgarian culture.

World Christian Encyclopedia, 2nd Edition, 154-155.
www.wikipedia.com

Religions

Non-Christian

- *Atheism*
 - During the early years of Communism, atheism was prevalent and widely professed.
 - Atheism is on the decline. 1970—22% Atheist, and 2000—7%
- *Islam*
 - Makes up the largest Non-Christian Bulgarian Religion. 12.2% of Population—966,978
 - 3 Major Groups
 - Turks (the most numerous group)—731,000
 - Gypsies (Scattered throughout the country in small groups)—131,000
 - Bulgarians (Pomaks)—103,000
 - They tend to live mainly in the southeastern area of Bulgaria, where religion was actively oppressed by Communism. Most of these communities no longer actually profess or practice Islam.
 - Others—20,000
 - Most Bulgarian Muslims are Sunni Muslims
 - 1,267 Mosques as of 1987
- *Judaism*
 - In 2001 Census—Jewish Population in Bulgaria—1,363
 - Bulgaria served to protect their Jewish population (48,000) from being deported to concentration camp.
 - 90% of the Jewish population left Bulgaria for Israel after WWII
 - There are currently no recognized rabbis in Bulgaria.

Christian cults

- *Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormon)*
 - 1,100 Members and 12 Units
- Jehovah's Witnesses
- 23 Congregations, 1500 Members

- 3,687 in Memorial Attendance
- 90 Were baptized in 2005

Catholics/Orthodox

- Bulgarian Orthodox Church
 - Bulgarian Orthodoxy is the most prevalent religion professed in Bulgaria, with of the majority of the population included as at least nominal members.
 - 82.6% of population profess to be members—approximately 6.5 million people.
 - There are 13 dioceses throughout Bulgaria.
- Roman Catholic Church
 - Roman Catholicism comprises the third largest religious community in Bulgaria.
 - 64,000 Roman Catholics were reported in Bulgaria in 2004.
 - 2 Dioceses—Sofia and Plovdiv
 - Most of the Roman Catholics live in the Plovdiv region—(34,000)
- Catholic Uniate Church
 - These churches recognize the Pope as their spiritual guide, yet practice according to the Eastern Orthodox rite.
 - 10,000 Members

Protestant/Evangelicals/Pentecostals

- *Methodists*
 - 30+ Congregations, 2000 Members
 - 32 Full Time pastors
 - The Methodists have been working in Bulgaria for more than 150 years.
- *Advent Christian Church*
 - 3,500 Members
 - 20 Parishes
- *Baptists*
 - Baptist World Alliance—38 Congregations, 3,400 Members.
 - Baptist Union of Bulgaria
- *Pentecostals*
 - The largest protestant group in Bulgaria
 - 5-6,000 Bulgarian Pentecostals in 1991
 - New Covenant Church of God

<http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/country/scbg1.html>

<http://countrystudies.us/bulgaria/26.htm>

http://www.watchtower.org/statistics/worldwide_report.htm

People Groups

00000

Albanian—Gheg (2,900)

The Albanians are a Eurasian People primarily speaking Albanian Gheg. Alternate names for the Albanians are Gheg, Kosovar, Chamurian, Gheg Speaking, and Scutari.

The Albanian Gheg in Bulgaria are primarily Christians. 60% claim Christianity, mostly Orthodox, with about 0.40% Evangelical. About 30% are Muslim, and 10% non-religious.

Albanians are descendents of the original inhabitants of the Balkan Peninsula. Before WWII and the Communist regime of the 1940's, Albanians maintained tribal life. As communism took over, the Albanians were forced into cities and into apartment style housing units. They had to leave behind the tribes, religion, and dress of their native way of life. Albania experienced numerous changes at the fall of communism, and have struggled to re-establish their identity and pride. The Ottoman Turks brought Islam to the Albanians during the Ottoman Empire, but they practiced a folk Islam. Many Albanians claim Catholicism, but only in name. In 1967, Albania actually declared itself to be the first atheistic state and closed its borders to the outside world.

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Arab (5,000)

The Arabs are from the Arab World affinity block and the Arabian people cluster. Alternate people names include Anglolan Arabs, Bedouin Arabs, Coast, Hemat, Lebanese Arab, Nawar, Palestinian Arab, Syrian Arab, Baggara, Bosnian Muslims, Iraqi Arab, Levantine Arab, Saudi Arab, and Syro-Lebanese Arabs. They speak Arabic Standard which is a Semitic language of the Afro-Asiatic language family, and are 95% Sunni Muslims. The Arabs are among the least reached peoples.

Arabs number over 148 million and form the majority population in 15 countries. The Arabs are “the largest, most diverse and most politically influential Muslim ethnic group in the world.”

(From Richard V. Weekes, ed., *Muslim Peoples: A World Ethnographic Survey*, 2d ed., *Acehnese-Lur* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1984), 35).

727

Armenian (9,000)

The Armenians, alternately known as Armiane, Ermini, Western Armenian, Ermeni, and Hai, are a Eurasian People who speak Armenian. They are primarily Christian adherents (90%). 2% of the Armenian Christians are Evangelical, but the majority (84%) are Orthodox.

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Armini—Aromanian (16,000)

The Armini are a part of the Albanian people cluster. They are alternately referred to as Aromunen, Vlach, Aromanian, and Maceo-Rumanian. The Armini speak Romanian—Macedo. Their primary religion is Christianity, with almost 90% of the population being associated with the Orthodox Church. There is yet to be a complete Bible translated in their mother language.

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British (1,500)

The British are of the Anglo Celt people cluster of the Eurasian affinity bloc. They are alternately named Anglo-Pakistani, Euronesian, Scottish, White, and Anglophone. The British

speak English and are primarily Christians (72%). Of the British Christians in Bulgaria, 9% are Evangelicals. The majority, 59% are of the Anglican Church.

31299

Bulgarian (6.207.000)

The Bulgarian people are a Southern Slavic people. Alternate names include Balgarski, Bogomil, Palityan, Moldovian, and Pomaks. The Bulgarians speak the Bulgarian language. Pomaks are distinguished from the other Bulgarians in that they are devoted to Islam rather than Christianity. Bulgarians as a whole are 95.90% Christian, with 1.80% Evangelical.

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Circassian, Adyghe (500)

The Circassians are a tribal people, but have never had their own independent state. They are the oldest indigenous people of the Northwest Caucasus. The Circassian, who refer to themselves as Adyghe, are alternately known as Cherkess, Circassian West, Shapsug, and Kjax. They speak Adyghe, and are 95% Muslim. The Circassian Adyghe are among the least reached, as there are few, if any believers among the people. The entire Bible has yet to be completed in their language, they do have the New Testament however.

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Czech (1,100)

The Czechs, also known as Bohemian, are Western Slavs. They speak Czech and primarily adhere to Christianity (59%). A large number are non religious—40%. They are 4% Evangelical.

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Deaf

There is little documented information on the Deaf in Bulgaria. The deaf use the Bulgarian Sign Language as their primary language, and Russian Sign Language as a secondary language. The deaf are thought to be primarily Christian adherents.

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French (200)

The French in Bulgaria, referred to also as Franco-Mauritian Mulatto, and Metropolitan, speak primarily French. They are of the French people cluster. The French are mostly Christian (76%), being predominately Roman Catholics (88%).

736

Gagauz Turk (1,400)

The Gagauzi Turks are alternately known as Gagauzi Balkan Turks, Maritime Gaguz, and Turkish. They are a part of the Turkic Peoples and Turkish people cluster. The Gagauz

primarily speak a language of the same name—Gagauz. They are primarily Christian adherents, with Christianity claiming 90% of their population. Only 7% of those are Evangelical Christians. Most of the Gagauzi Christian adherents are associated with the Orthodox Church. They are rated as Level 1 according to the Global Evangelical Status, meaning that there are some evangelical resources, but no known active church planting has been engaged with the people in the past couple of years. They have yet to have the Bible completely translated into their Gagauz language.

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German (800)

The Germans are a Eurasian People. They are alternately referred to as German Standard, High German, Saxon, Volga German, and Transylvanian. The Germans in Bulgaria are predominately Christian, with 78% claiming affiliation with a Christian church. The other 22% are non-religious. Of the Christians, the group is split almost in half, of Protestants (45%) and Roman Catholics (48%), with a few Orthodox and other Christian denominations as well.

00000

Greek (7,200)

The Greeks, alternately known as Dimotiki, Hellenic, Romeos, Greek Cypriot, Romei, and Urum, are a Eurasian people who speak the Greek language. These Greeks living in Bulgaria are 95% Christian adherents, with about 95% of those adhering specifically to the Orthodox Church. The Greeks are less than 0.18% evangelical.

00000

Gypsy—Bulgarian (250,000)

The Bulgarian Gypsies are a Gypsy people cluster from the South Asian Peoples affinity bloc. The Bulgarian Gypsies speak Bulgarian. Many of the Bulgarian Gypsies are Christian adherents (51%), but a large percentage of them are also Muslim (45%). Of the Christian adherents, 92% are associated with the Orthodox Church.

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Gypsy—Bulgarian East (9,800)

The East Bulgarian Gypsies are also of the South Asian affinity bloc. They speak Bulgarian and are predominately Christian adherents (63%), with a notable population of Muslims as well (25%). Of the Christians, 92% are associated with the Orthodox Church.

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Italian (400)

The Italians in Bulgaria speak Italian and are mostly Christian adherents (83%). The Italians are about 1.2% evangelical. For the most part, the Italian Christians are associated with Roman Catholicism. (85%).

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Jew—Bulgarian (3,100)

The Jews in Bulgaria primarily speak Bulgarian. Only an estimated 0.1% are Evangelical Christians as 70% adhere to the ethnic Jewish faith. The Bulgarian Jews are among the most least reached.

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Karakachan (4,700)

The Karakachan are a Eurasian People of the Greek people cluster. They primarily speak Greek and 95% are Christians. Most of the Karakachan Christian adherents are associated with the Orthodox Church in Bulgaria. Only 1% are known to be evangelical.

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Kurd—Northern (200)

The Northern Kurds are a part of a great long lasting, Kurd population, divided among many clans and tribes. They are for the most part Shafite Sunni Muslims, who embraced Islam after the Arab conquests in the 7th Century. The Northern Kurds have been displaced and separated, particularly throughout the former USSR. Alternate people names include Kermanji, Turkish Kurd, and Yezidi (Yazidi). They are of the Iranian-Median affinity bloc and Kurdish people cluster. They primarily speak Northern Kurdish. The Northern Kurds in Bulgaria are primarily Sunni Muslims (97%). They are among the least reached people, with few if any known Christian believers among the group

738

Macedonian (204,000)

The Macedonians are a Eurasian People of the Southern Slavic people cluster. They speak Macedonian and are primarily Christian adherents (90%). The Macedonian Christians are primarily associated with the Orthodox Church and are less than 0.50% evangelical.

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Millet (97,000)

The Millet people are of the Turkish people cluster. The Millet in Bulgaria primarily live in the Kurdhali Province and along the Danube River in the neighboring areas of southern Bulgaria. The Millet speak the Danubian dialect of the Turkish language. The Millet are primarily Islamic, with 80% of the people being Muslim. Only 19% of the population is Christian, with only 3% being evangelical.

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Palityan—Bogomil (900)

Palityan or Bogomil people are of the Southern Slavic people cluster. They primarily speak Bulgarian with a Palityan dialect. This is intelligible with Standard Bulgarian. The Palityan are mostly associated with Christianity, which claims 75% of the population. Most of those then (89%) are affiliated with the Orthodox Church.

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Polish (1,100)

The Polish, also known as Poles or Silesians, are a Eurasian people of the Western Slavic people cluster. They primarily speak Polish. The Poles living in Bulgaria are 90% Christian. Most of the Christian Poles in Bulgaria (90%) are associated with the Roman Catholic Church.

732

Pomak (73,000)

The Pomaks are of the Southern Slavic people cluster. They speak Bulgarian with a Pomak dialect. They are generally considered to be a type of Bulgarian as share a form of the language, share features, and have a similar culture. One of the main differences is that while Bulgarians tend to be Christian, the Pomaks are Muslim. The Pomaks in Bulgaria are 98.8% Sunnī Muslims. The name “Pomak” itself means “people who have suffered.” They have traditionally been the outcasts of Bulgarian society. The Pomaks are among the most least reached peoples with a level 1 Global Evangelical Status.

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Portuguese (100)

The Portuguese in Bulgaria, also named Branco, Brazilian, and Portuguese Jew, are a European Portuguese people. They speak Portuguese and are primarily Christian adherents (97%). The Portuguese Christians are predominately Roman Catholic (88%).

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Romani—Balkan, Zargari (93,000)

The Balkan or Romani Gypsies are located throughout Eastern Europe, particularly in Bulgaria. They call themselves “Rom” which in Romani means “men,” and is derived from the Indian word “Dom” which refers to a low caste of men who earn a living through singing and dancing. They Gypsies are a South Asian people and speak Balkan Romani with a Zargari dialect. They are highly discriminated against. Gypsies place a high value on family loyalty and tend to live together with extended family. The Balkan Gypsies primarily adhere to Christianity (65%), but a significant percentage is also Muslim (25%). The Christian Balkan Gypsies are typically adherents to the Eastern Orthodox Church. They have the New Testament translated in their language, but have yet to have the entire Bible.

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Romani—Vlax (5,900)

Gypsies, often called Romani or Domari, are made up of two separate groups: the Ghorbati and the Nawari, originating from India. They speak the Vlax Romani. Alternate people names include Arhagar, Baltic Gypsy, Cingane, Gitano, Gypsy, Kalderash, Lovar, Lowara, Norwegian Gypsy, Cale, and Colombian Gypsy. These Romani in Bulgaria primarily adhere to Christianity (68%). The Romani are only 5% evangelical as 93% of the Christian adherents are associated with the Orthodox Church. 25% of the Romani population in Bulgaria are Muslims. They do not have the complete Bible translated into their language.

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Romanian (5,300)

The Romanians living in Bulgaria mostly live in the four provinces of Lovech, Ruse, Montana, and Varna. They are alternately called Istrio-Romanian and Oltenia. The Romanians are of the Romanian people cluster and speak the Romanian language. The Romanians living in Bulgaria are 84% Christian adherents, with 94% of those adhering to the Orthodox Church. Only about 5% of the Romanians in Bulgaria are evangelical Christians.

745

Russian (16,000)

The Russians of Bulgaria, also known as Eluosi, Olossu, and Russ, are a Eurasian people, of an Eastern Slavic people group. They speak Russian and are primarily Orthodox Christians. Approximately 60% of the population is Christian, and 90% of those are Orthodox. The other 40% of the overall Russian population in Bulgaria is reported to be non-religious. They are rated as a level 1 on the Global Evangelical Status, meaning there are some evangelical resources, but for the most part no active church planting has occurred with this group in the past two years.

00000

Serb (700)

The Serbs, also known as Bosnian, Muslimani, and Serbian, are a Southern Slavic people from the former Yugoslavia who speak the Serbian language. The Serbs in Bulgaria primarily live in the provinces of Montana and Sofiya. They are 85% Christian adherents (93% Orthodox). The Serbs are less than 1% evangelical.

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Spaniard (3,500)

The Spaniards of Bulgaria are alternately known as Argentinean White, Camba, Chilean, Colombian, Cuban, Dominican, Dominican Mulatto, Hispanics, Latin American, Latin American White, Latino, Mexican, Mestico, Peruvian, and Puerto Rican White. The Spaniards are a Spanish Eurasian people who speak the Spanish language. They are primarily Christian adherents (95%). Of the Spanish Christians in Bulgaria, 85% are Roman Catholic.

750

Tatar, Crimean (5,800)

The Crimean Tatars are descendants of the Mongols. Most of the Crimean Tatars live in Russia and Romania. They have endured a hard life and have for the most part been assimilated into Russian culture. Stalin worked to deport the population to Soviet Central Asia, where many of them died in the process. The Crimean Tatars place a high value on the family. Most of them even marry within their culture, not even crossing into other Tatars cultures. They are alternately known as Crimean Turks, Kazan Tatars, Nogai, Tartars, Crimean Turkish, Krymchak, Nogay Tatar, and simply Tatars. They are of the Turkic Peoples affinity bloc, and of the Ural Siberian people cluster. They speak Crimean Turkish and are adherents to Sunni Islam (99.5%). The Crimean Tatars are among the least reached peoples. They have yet to have an entire Bible translated into their native language; however they do have the full New Testament.

744

Turk (638,000)

Turks are originally from Turan, which lies between the Caspian Sea and the Mongolian Desert. The Turks in Bulgaria primarily live within the Kurdzhali Province and along the Danube. They are alternately known as Anatolian, Baharlu Turk, Meskhetian Turk, Ottoman Turk, Rumelian Turk, and Urum. The Turks speak Turkish and are predominately Sunni Muslims (96%). The Turks are only 0.1% Christian. The Turks are among the least reached peoples, and the Turks living in Bulgaria have not had any active church planting within the past couple of years.

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Ukrainian (1,800)

The Ukrainians in Bulgaria are an Eastern Slavic Eurasian people. They are actually the second largest ethnic group from the former Soviet Union. Their historic ties to Poland and Cossack tradition contribute to their colorful folk heritage. The Ukrainians in Bulgaria tend to live in the Varna Province. They primarily speak Ukrainian and are Orthodox Christians. 85% of the population is Christian, and 82% of those are associated with the Orthodox Church. 12% are Roman Catholic and 5% are Protestant.

00000

Vietnamese (1,800)

The Vietnamese in Bulgaria, also known as Annamese, Ching, Gin, Jing, King, Kinh, and Viet, are a Southeast Asian People. They speak Vietnamese and are primarily Mahayana Buddhists (60%). About 5% of the Vietnamese in Bulgaria are also Christian (85% Roman Catholic), while 35% are non-religious. The Vietnamese in Bulgaria are among the most least reached and no known work has been reported among them.

www.peoplegroups.com
www.joshuaproject.net

Missiological Implications

1. Evangelical Christians and churches should give a prominent place to Bulgaria in their thinking and prayer efforts. The plight of the multitude of members in the Orthodox churches attests to the need for evangelism that emphasizes conversion faith in Christ
2. Evangelical Christians and churches should target the large number of minorities who might demonstrate some openness to the Gospel. The Peoples Groups section of this profile outlines the many groups who are among the unreached.
3. Evangelical Christians and churches should create or refine methods of reaching members of Orthodox churches with the saving Message of Jesus. This would involved first developing the materials and then training a large number of people to utilize the methods.
4. Evangelical Christians and churches should seek out and train a resource of short-term workers who could go into Bulgaria and share the Good News in face-to-face methods. These would be intentional missionaries who would serve in short-term efforts. These missionaries should be well-trained to avoid the damaged that has been done by well-meaning but untrained workers.
5. Evangelical Christians and churches should share the methods of house churches and other small group means to promote an indigenous movement among the peoples of Bulgaria

The Bulgarians are a people open and interested in the arts, including religion. They have been influenced by various religions throughout their long history. The Bulgarians need to understand that while religion may function to establish a particular culture and way of life, there is a much deeper truth and purpose to be found in Christ in Christianity. They need learn that being a follower of Christ is more than being baptized into a church or being born in a certain country. They need to see that through faith and obedience in Jesus Christ they can discover the truth and experience hope and life.