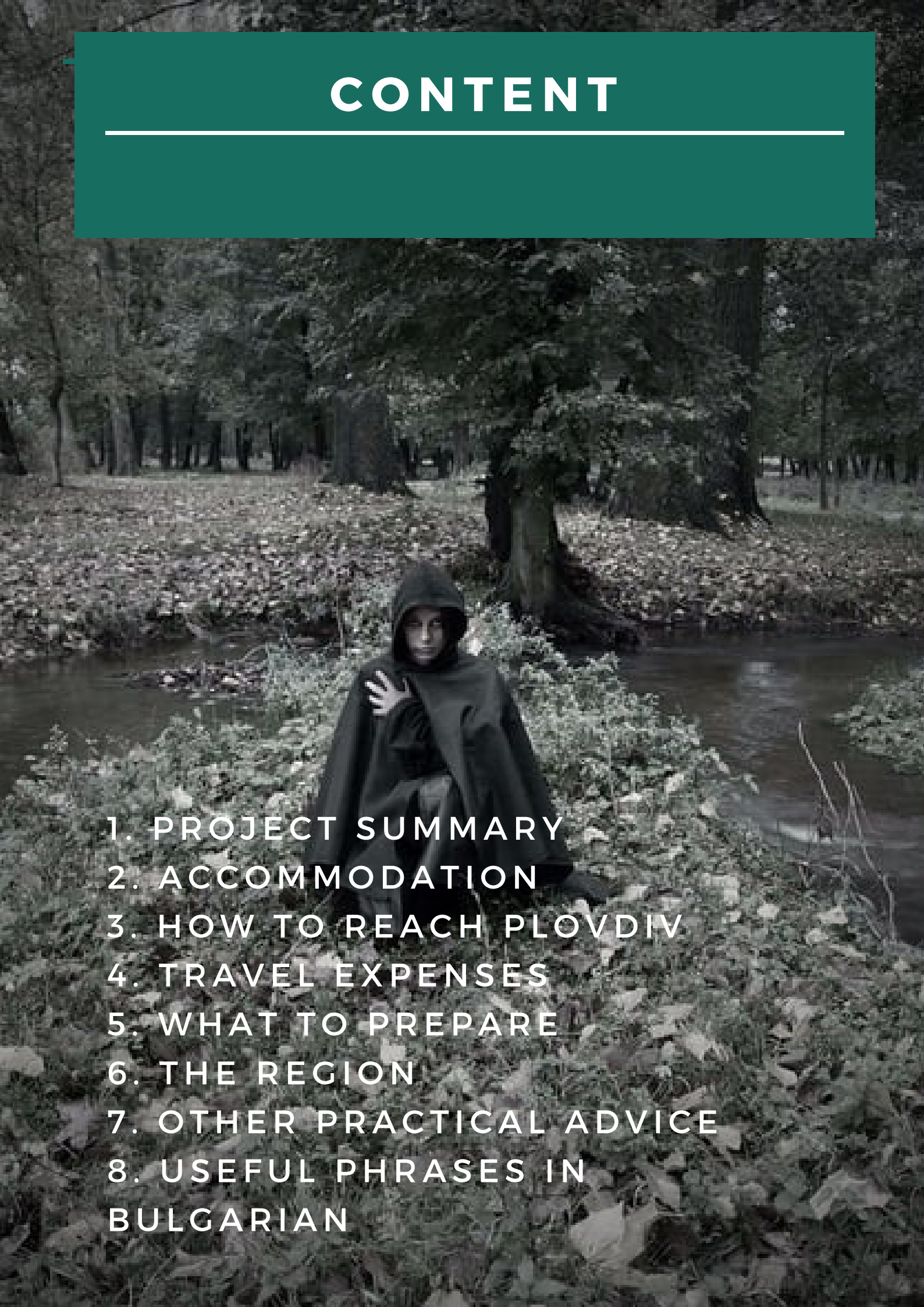

INFO PACK ESC
VOLUNTEERING TEAMS
PROJECT

**F O R E S T
T A L E**

*19th March
till 17th May 2021, 59 DAYS, 15 ESC
VOLUNTEERS
Park-hotel “Rodopi”,
Varhovich (Върхових),
Bulgaria*

CONTENT

- 
- A person wearing a dark, hooded cloak is sitting on the ground in a forest. They are positioned in front of a small stream that flows through the woods. The ground is covered with fallen leaves, and large trees with dense foliage are in the background. The overall atmosphere is quiet and somewhat mysterious.
1. PROJECT SUMMARY
 2. ACCOMMODATION
 3. HOW TO REACH PLOVDIV
 4. TRAVEL EXPENSES
 5. WHAT TO PREPARE
 6. THE REGION
 7. OTHER PRACTICAL ADVICE
 8. USEFUL PHRASES IN BULGARIAN

PROJECT SUMMARY

THE PROJECT "Forest Tale" WILL
TAKE PLACE AT "VARHOVRAH", BULGARIA (NEAR
PERUSHTITSA)

PARTICIPANTS

15 ESC VOLUNTEERS FROM
6 COUNTRIES
BULGARIA, ITALY, SPAIN, GREECE, EGYPT AND GEORGIA.

DATE
FROM 19th OF MARCH
TO 17th OF MAY 2021
(INCLUDING ONE DAY FOR
TRAVEL)



ABOUT THE PROJECT

The activities for which you are applying will be held for 59 days, from the 19th of March till the 17th of May 2021. There will be 15 volunteers from different countries involved in the activities, and we will be focused on 5 Bulgarian volunteers and 10 more volunteers, for which activities will be held in a country different from their state of residence, with part of the youngsters with fewer opportunities.

The activities the volunteers will be carrying out are as follows:

Work on site: Art installations and upcycling (in order to explain the meaning of this word we should consider it as a process with a huge creative charge, which converts unused old stuff into unique work of art and design. Hand-made bags from T-shirts, furniture from car tires and even earrings using old corks and caps). Volunteers will take part into making a rope park for the children in the local community and in this way, we will affect it directly.

Through this project we are looking to inspire mostly the children and their parents for clear solidarity and a volunteering spirit in favor of others and more specifically in favor of the local communities from smaller settlements. On one hand these activities will improve and enhance the town space for the locals and on the other hand the volunteers will acquire skills.

Filming, selection and compiling of pictures and footage for short term movies and publications. Writing of articles and blogs, working with online Facebook platform, radio E-volution and theyouth.info

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Creating decors and other necessary scenography (costumes, etc.) for eco short term movies. Rehearsals. Brainstorming and group idea-creative activities;

Preparation for workshops - for art, food, traditions, music, dancing. Including workshops specialized in traditional Bulgarian cuisine, we'll be presenting bread kneading;

Activities and visiting small villages like Churen and Skobeleva. Visiting a traditional Bulgarian church restored with the help of the locals and contributors. Bulgarian and foreigner volunteers will help with art process and documented.;

Precisely from this activity sprouted the foundations of this project in an effort to continue working solidary for the local community through volunteers of the ESC;

Activities and visiting Peshtera and Krichim. There will be presentation made and introduced into schools. Topics will be connected with the philosophy of volunteering, ESC and will show activities of the project and the program itself;

Field visits - bio farms for milk and honey, fruit plantations, other institutions and public figures. Here will be presented technologies for making lutenitsa, yoghurt, cheese, banitsa and others traditional dishes of the Rhodopa mountain like "vitki", "mutenitsa", „mlini“; In this way volunteers and representatives of the local community will exchange knowledge for different cultures and traditions;

Work meetings with local institutions and promoting the project and the activities through online group.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Generating ideas for filming documentary on the project. Making of storyboard. Realization through filming, compiling etc.

Presenting countries taking part in the project: dancing, music, traditional food, culture, history. Special evenings for the national cuisines and days on the traditions of every nation;

Specialized self-assessment sessions and approval of youth pass certificate;

Put in this way since big part of the activities are solidary and focused on the local communities, they will be able to:

Meet young representatives of different cultures than their own, to communicate freely learning more for the countries and the culture those come from;

Rise above the limited national thinking and realize the cultural richness and diversity of Europe;

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The project activities will be implemented on the principle of non-formal and informal learning. Aside from outdoor activities like art installation and making new useful things from unnecessary things or upcycling, the volunteers will be ambassadors of culture and art through culinary traditions. Again through art they will record all that and leave it for the future generations. It is important to explain why we are choosing bread kneading as the specialized workshop for the Bulgarian volunteers. In general, "Bulgarian cuisine" means- dishes and ingredients which take part in the way of life of the Bulgarian people. According to the number of the Bulgarian regions, that many memories we can gather for something "typically Bulgarian", something which is unknown for some, has left lasting memories in the hearts of others. It is curious what history "says" for the traditional Bulgarian cuisine.

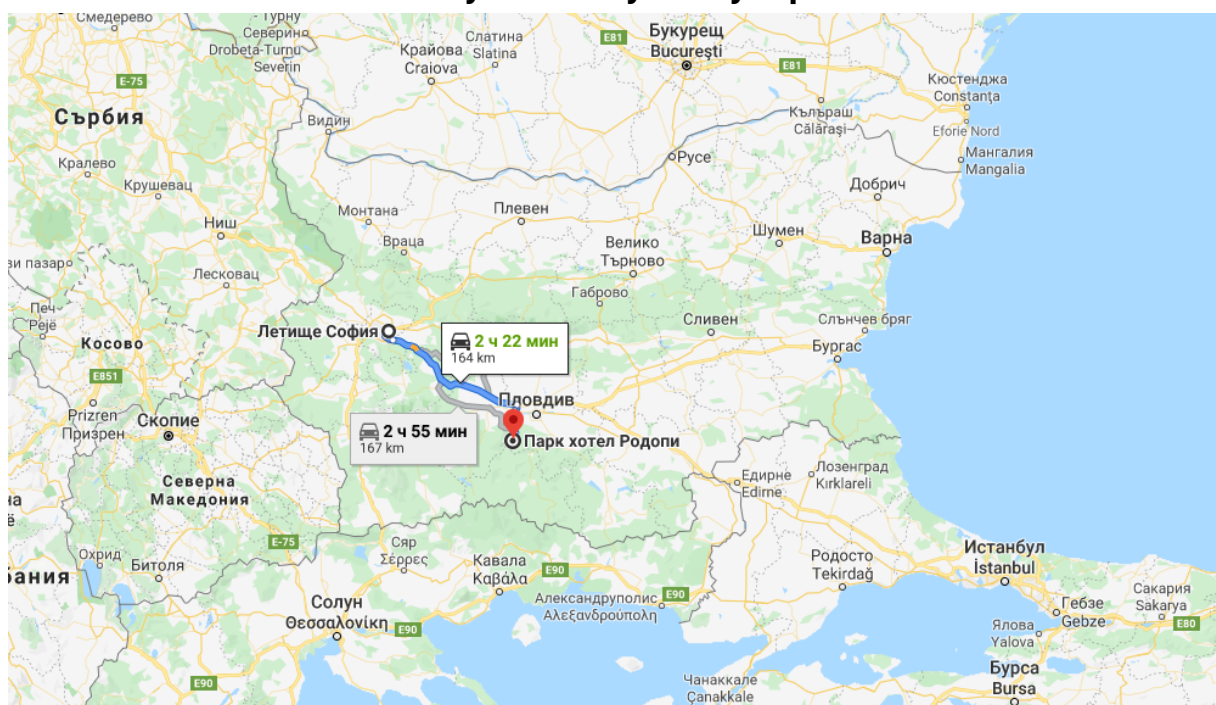
In parchment scrolls stamped with state seals, bread is called "the base of life for Bulgarians". Bread has been the most significant part of Bulgarians' menu, and in some poor areas of the country it was the only means of sustenance. That is why, the other side of the coin, in this activity we can see again the art, with kneaded ball of dough can be made beautiful braids, sun, etc. We can also knead the dough with more sault for details which make jewelry for the local children, thus also including them in the workshops.

ACCOMMODATION:

Where?

All the participants will be accommodated in a hotel in the Rhodope Mountain and the food will be provided by the hotel. You will have 120 EUR (pocket money) plus 4 EUR per day for food when you are not at the hotel. The place is isolated and surrounded by a forest, located 1550 m above the sea level. The biggest city nearby is Plovdiv, 40 km away from the venue and the nearest village is 2 km away.

**The hosting organization will provide the participants with food (3 meals per day).
Please inform us in advance if you have any dietary requirements!**



Here is the web site of the hotel: <http://hotelrhodopi.eu>

Here is the location on Google maps:

<https://www.google.de/maps/place/Park+Hotel+Rodopi/@41.9615032,24.4999509,13z/data=!4m7!1m4!3m3!1s0x14acead7487bffd3:0xb1935300a551686e!2sPark+Hotel+Rodopi!3b1!3m1!1s0x14acead7487bffd3:0xb1935300a551686e?hl/bg>

TRANSPORT:



We ask you to arrive in Plovdiv on March 19th by 15:30. However, in case this is not possible please inform us well in advance!

One of the possible ways to do this is to arrive in Sofia a day earlier, on the 24th of September. Then you will have time to do a sightseeing tour around the Bulgarian capital.

Plovdiv is also a town full of landmarks and we recommend you to make a tour around the center and the historical Old Town.

Another important note: you can arrive in Bulgaria at earliest 3 days before the start of the project . The same is valid of your departure: your return should be made at most 3 days after the project. You should decide either to arrive earlier or to depart later from Bulgaria. It is not possible to stay for more than 3 days outside of the project. Otherwise, the Bulgarian National agency may not reimburse your money for traveling (and they will be taken from the project budget). There were cases in the past when participants had their departure 6 days after the project and the National agency did not pay their reimbursement money.

TRANSPORT:

How to reach Plovdiv:

There is hourly traffic from Sofia and Plovdiv.

Trains travel every two hours, and buses travel every hour during the day (not so often in the evening).

1-Flight to Sofia

The best way to reach Plovdiv is from Sofia. From Sofia airport, you have to take the metro. The ticket costs 1.60 BGN per passenger (please take into consideration that passengers with big baggage pay additional ticket for 1.60 BGN. You have to change the metro at SERDIKA station in direction Central railway station. You have to get off at Central railway station (Централна гара, Centralna gara). The bus station is 100 m away.

It is possible to catch a taxi but it will **not be REIMBURSED**. If you are a group, this is the best option. The most reliable are "OK taxi". You can also order a taxi on a special desk at the arrivals hall.

2-Taking the train

Once arrived at the Central railway station, you should look for the ticket desks. Currently they are located underground (level -1). Please keep in mind that **you CANNOT pay with a debit/credit card and you CANNOT pay in foreign currency. There is NO cash machine (ATM) in the building.** However, there are 2 exchange offices located near the building (next to a small bus station opposite the building). However, the rates are not good. So, if you can find an ATM at the airport, we advise you to use it! If you exchange money, always ask for a receipt because usually they do not give receipts!

It is possible to buy train tickets online but the system has many bugs, especially if you use foreign debit cards, so we don't recommend this option.

For timetable: <http://www.bdz.bg/en/>

One ticket for the fast train (ББ) costs about 9 BGN. Group ticket (3-6 persons) costs 7.70 BGN for 1 person (you need to pay the whole ticket together). Avoid regional trains (ПБ in Bulgarian), they take more than 4 hours.

TRANSPORT:

3-Taking the bus

The bus station is located nearby.

Do not mix it up with the small station opposite the rail station! You need to cross a small street and you will see the modern terminal of the bus station. The prices to Plovdiv vary and should be around 12-15 BGN.

Here is the web site of the Central bus station (only in Bulgarian). You can check the timetable there:

<http://www.centralnaavtogara.bg/#b>

You can also check the timetable here, and even buy a ticket:

<https://www.busexpress.bg/bg/>

Keep in mind that the ladies at the desks probably do not speak English. You can tell them you are going to Plovdiv, they will issue a ticket for the next bus and will tell you which section (sector) you should go to. There are different companies travelling to Plovdiv.

The traveling time to Plovdiv is about 2.30 hours by train as well as by bus.



Accommodation in Sofia: there are about ten hostels in Sofia with prices around 10 euro in a dormitory room. A private single room should be between 15-20 Euro. You can search on Booking.com or AIRBNB.

TRAVEL EXPENSES

According to the conditions of the ESC programme, volunteers can have their travel expenses reimbursed within the amount given below. The reimbursement covers your departure from your home town (residence) to the place of activities (Varhovah). You must depart from the country you represent: for example, if you are a representative of Italy, you must depart from Italy.

The reimbursement covers only traveling by plane, train and bus. Money paid for taxi cannot be reimbursed! Please keep all receipts and invoices with you. **Print all your tickets and invoices if the tickets are bought online.**

IMPORTANT: You will get your reimbursement after **WE HAVE RECEIVED** all your travel documents. You will receive your reimbursement money through your bank account (so we need details). We are forced to do this because in the past a lot of participants had delay in sending their boarding passes to us and we were not able to submit our final report on time.

If you travel only by bus, we just need your tickets.

Country	Travel expenses covered by the project
Egypt	275 EUR
Georgia	275 EUR
Spain	360 EUR
Greece	180 EUR
Italy	275 EUR

WHAT TO PREPARE

There are food and drinks at the hotel but the prices are more expensive so if you want to drink or eat something just buy it in advance. The nearest shop from the hotel is 26 kilometers away. We will have trip there but it's better to take all your need things in advance (for example, before catching the bus from Plovdiv). There are towels in the hotel (140-70 centimeters) but if you think this size is too small, you can bring your own. Bring your own shower gels and shampoos (and other cosmetics).

The weather at the beginning of September should be warm, about 15-20 degrees. Take into account that the place is located in the mountain. It is possible to be raining, so take appropriate shoes and a jacket. Generally, in the previous years the weather was nice and warm but we cannot be certain. If needed, the rooms will be heated.

Medicine: take whatever you need, the nearest pharmacy is not very near. We will have some medicine with us, but it is good to be prepared.

THE REGION

The region is a mountain terrain with a lot of forests. There is a historical small town nearby- Perushtica. Important: a trip to Plovdiv is planned! However, if you want, you can walk around the Old Town to do sightseeing before or after our project!

OTHER PRACTICAL ADVICE:

Currency: The currency in Bulgaria is lev (BGN). Its rate to Euro is fixed (it cannot change), 1 Euro = 1.955 BGN.

Language: Bulgarian is a Slavic language. Young people speak English, but people such as drivers, ticket sellers, shop assistants usually do not speak English, so it is good to learn some useful phrases in Bulgarian (see below).

If you know a little Russian, you can try it with older people.

The alphabet used in Bulgaria is Cyrillic, hence it is recommended also to gain some knowledge about it.

USEFUL PHRASES IN BULGARIAN:

Да (da) - yes

Не (ne)- no

Добър ден (dobyr den) – Hello (official)

Добро утро (dobro utro)- Good morning

Лека нощ (leka nosht)- Good night

Здравей/здравейте (zdravey/zdraveyte) – Hello (to 1 person/to more persons)

Довиждане (dovijdane)- Goodbye

Чао (chao)- Bye (informal)

Извинете (izvinete)- excuse me

Благодаря (blagodarya)- thank you

Моля (molya)- please, you are welcome

Не разбирам (ne razbiram)- I don't understand

Говоря английски (govorya angliyski)- I speak English

Извинете, къде е автогарата/гарата/тоалетната? (izvinete, kyde e avtogarata/garata/toaletnata)- excuse me, where is the bus station/rail station/toilet?

Влак (vlak)- train

Гара (gara)- railway station

Автобус (avtobus)- bus

Автогара (avtogara)- bus station

Един билет/два билета/три билета/четири билета/пет

билета до Пловдив (edin bilet/dva bileta/tri bileta/chetiri bileta/pet bileta

do Plovdiv)- One/two/three/four/five tickets to Plovdiv

Един групов билет до Пловдив за три/четири/пет/шест души (edin grupov bilet do Plovdiv za tri/chetiri/pet/shest dushi- the stress is on the first syllable) One group ticket to Plovdiv for three/four/five/six persons.

Колко струва това? (Kolko struva tova)- How much is this?

Търся... (tyrsya)- I am looking for...