



National Palace of Culture in the heart of Sofia.

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HAVING

entered the E.U. in 2007, Bulgaria enjoyed average growth of more than 6% between 2004 and 2008, thanks to significant amounts of foreign direct investment. With a population of 7.1 million, the country has made a relatively slow transition from communism, but its straight-talking, center-right Prime Minister Boyko Borissov continues to push economic and fiscal reforms, as well as anticorruption measures.

Bulgaria's capital, Sofia, is a dynamic and modern European city, where 2 million Bulgarians live and work. Home to a number of service industries, the capital is also attracting investment. As Sofia's Mayor Yordanka Fandakova says: "The capital of Bulgaria is an "open for investment" city, which will continue to grow and develop even faster in the coming years.

"Its strategic location, developed infrastructure and highly qualified workforce are just some of the motivating factors for investing in our capital. There is wide variety of interesting investment opportunities for businesses to invest in with guaranteed returns."

With a number of parks, and historic and cultural sites, Sofia is a growing destination for international and domestic tourism. It is becoming a reference point for congresses. The Congress Center-Sofia or National Palace of Culture (NPC), is the largest multipurpose center in south-eastern Europe and is independ-



St. Sofia Church, after whose patron saint the city was named.

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ently funded. As well as hosting world-class conferences and exhibitions, the NPC also runs a publishing business, producing bespoke catalogs for its various events. Awarded 2nd place in the 2010 AIPC Apex Award for "World's Best Convention Center", the NPC is a member of the International Congress and Convention Association.

"Bulgaria has excellent prospects for developing cultural and business tourism," says NPC director general Christo Drumev. "We have incredible natural landscapes as well as winter and summer spa resorts. Our trade centers easily rival those in Paris, Berlin or London and there are perfect conditions for shopping, which is an important part of cultural and congress tourism. The country also has a number of luxury hotels and a brand new international airport."

Nurturing Bulgaria's Future

Top-quality higher education is also a draw. Accredited to the British Council, International University College is a modern professional business school in Sofia that teaches students how to be competitive and capable of managing business activities in accordance with European market requirements.

The University of Portsmouth BA programs, and the MBA of University of Wales, Cardiff, provide students with education in accordance with the world's highest academic standards, giving them an opportunity to make full use of their potential in a dynamic and competitive world.

Would-be and existing entrepreneurs will find a range of professional services on offer at the Bulgarian Small and Medium Enterprises Promotion Agency.

The dynamic government body will play a leading role in shaping Bulgaria's business leaders by providing information and consulting services and support to innovative projects and new technologies, thereby helping Bulgarian companies to grow and enter into the foreign markets. This will help the training of managers and the transfer of experience through developing international projects.



International University College building, opened in October 2010. www.iuc-edu.eu



**BULGARIAN SMALL AND
MEDIUM ENTERPRISES
PROMOTION AGENCY**

Main organiser of the
Bulgarian participation
at IFE 2011

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