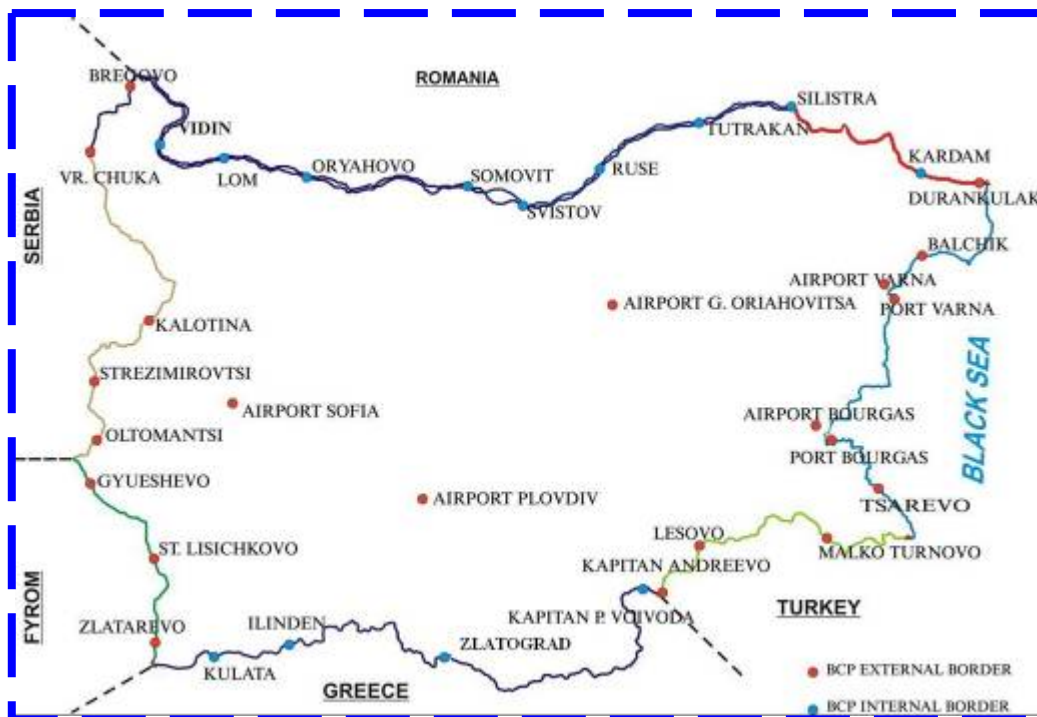


# Travelling through Bulgaria

*A must-know information guide*



## *Crossing the Borders*



### *Information on Border Control Procedures*

The control involves an identity check and a check of the traveling documents. EU citizens are subject to a minimum border control when crossing the borders of the Republic of Bulgaria. Third country citizens have to go through an additional check up for visas or residence permits. The

circumstances related to the purpose of the visit, the financial means for the duration of stay declared, a reference into the national database if a signal has been submitted prohibiting the entry into the country, etc., are also checked.

Motor vehicles are also subject to a border control. Registration and ownership documents are checked, as well as documents certifying the right to drive and the necessary car insurance.

No fees are paid while crossing the border or with reference to the border checks.

Health certificates or other documents related to the health condition of the persons crossing the border are not subject to border control.

## *Customs Control*

Persons crossing the border of the Republic of Bulgaria may **import and export** means of payment (in the form of money in cash and noncash payment instruments) under the following rules:

**While importing and exporting means of payment amounting to up to EUR 10 000, they are not liable to declaring** in writing before the customs officials so that passengers may go through the “**green corridor**” which means that the passenger has nothing to declare.

When the means of payment, imported or exported, amount to **EUR 10 000 or more**, the passenger declares in **writing** in a customs currency declaration the total value of the means of payment in Euros, their origin and destination, the transportation route, the means of transport, and the passenger is obliged to go through the “**red corridor**”.



When exporting means of payment amounting to **more than BGN 25 000 or their equivalent in foreign currency**, it is necessary to present a certificate from the National Revenue Agency that the passenger has no overdue payments and its number is registered in the customs currency declaration. *For foreign natural*

*persons, the certificate is issued by the Territorial Directorate of the National Revenue Agency depending on the person's latest address of stay in the country.*

Foreign natural persons may export means of payment exceeding **BGN 25 000 without a certificate from the National Revenue Agency after submitting a declaration to the customs officials that the amount of the exported means of payment does not exceed the value of the means of payment imported and declared during his/her latest entry into the country**, for which a previous customs currency declaration for import must be submitted.

For passengers **under the age of 16**, the declaration must be submitted by one of their accompanying adults.

Foreign natural persons may export and import for their personal and family use **precious metals, jewels and jewelry**, both processed and unprocessed, freely, without a written declaration, **within the following limitations:**

- gold and platinum, unprocessed and half-processed (in ingots) and coins amounting to a total of 37 grams, regardless of the content of the gold or platinum;
- jewelry and accessories made of alloys of gold and platinum amounting to a total of 60 grams, regardless of the content of the gold or platinum;

- silver, both processed and half-processed, and coins, as well as jewelry and accessories made of alloys of silver, amounting to a total of 300 grams, regardless of the content of the silver;
- precious stones implanted in the above goods.

Precious metals, precious stones and goods exceeding the above amounts, as well as goods made of precious metals or precious stones transported in the form of powder or otherwise, other than the abovementioned ones, are **declared in writing**.

**Undeclared BGN, currency, precious metals and precious stones are seized to the benefit of the state.**

**In addition, fines** are imposed in cases of more serious violations of the above rules.

When undeclared goods or currency in particularly big amounts are established, besides them, the motor vehicles with which they are transported are also seized to the benefit of the state.



## TRAVELLING ALONG BULGARIAN ROADS AND HIGHWAYS



All citizens crossing the territory of the country are obliged to observe the requirements of the Road Traffic Act. The control thereof is within the scope of responsibility of the Traffic Police.

Drivers should obey the signals given by police officers wearing reflective/high visibility jackets/vests with the sign “Police”, badges with photos, white cover on the peaked cap, reflective edgings and police cars – white Opel Astra with blue signs “Police” and identification numbers, with blue lights – wing type.

### *SANCTIONS FOR VIOLATIONS OF ROAD TRAFFIC ACT*

#### **For exceeding the speed limits in populated areas:**

- up to 10 km/h the fine is BGN 20;
- by 11-20 km/h the fine is BGN 50;
- by 21-30 km/h the fine is up to BGN 100;
- by 31-40 km/h the fine is up to BGN 200;
- by 41-50 km/h the fine is up to BGN 300;
- by 51 km/h or more the fine is up to BGN 350, as the fine increases with BGN 50 per each 5 km/h over 50 km/h, and the driving license is suspended for a period of 3 months.



**For exceeding the speed limits outside populated areas:**

- by 10 km/h the fine is BGN 20;
- by 11-20 km/h the fine is BGN 50;
- by 21-30 km/h the fine is BGN 100;
- by 31-40 km/h the fine is BGN 150;
- by 41-50 km/h the fine is BGN 200;
- by 51 km/h or more the fine is BGN 300, as the fine increases with BGN 50 per each 5 km/h over 50 km/h.

**Drivers of motor vehicles for public transport of passengers and dangerous cargos who exceed the speed limits are sanctioned as follows:**

- by 10 km/h the fine is BGN 20;
  - by 11-20 km/h the fine is BGN 50;
  - by 21-30 km/h the fine is BGN 150;
  - by 31-40 km/h the fine is BGN 250;
  - by 41-50 km/h the fine is BGN 400;
  - by more than 51 km/h the fine is BGN 500, as the fine increases with BGN 50 per each 5 km/h over 50 km/h and the driving license is suspended for a period of 3 months
- ✓ Drivers with more than 2 years of experience driving with blood alcohol content from 0.5 to 1.2 per mill pay a fine from BGN 200 to 500 and their driving license is suspended for a period from 1 month up to 1 year.
  - ✓ For a repeated violation, the fine is from BGN 1000 to 2000.
  - ✓ In case of refusal to be tested for alcohol or narcotics test, the fine is from BGN 500 to 1000 and the driving license is suspended for a period from 12 to 18 months.

- ✓ For driving when blood alcohol content (ascertained by a medical test) from 0.5 to 1.2 per mill, drivers with less than 2 years of experience have their driving license suspended for a period from 2 to 12 months and pay a fine between BGN 300 and 600.
- ✓ For a repeated violation, the fine is from BGN 1000 to 2000 and driving rights are suspended for a period from 1 to 3 years.
- ✓ For driving with alcohol blood content exceeding 1.2 per mill the law provides for up to 1 year of imprisonment.
- ✓ Not stopping at a red traffic light brings a fine of BGN 50.
- ✓ The same fine is imposed to drivers talking on their mobile phone without a hands free device while driving.
- ✓ BGN 50 is the fine for a driver who drives with worn-out tyres, and also for irregular change of lanes.
- ✓ The same amount of money is the sanction for irregular stopping or parking.
- ✓ BGN 50 is the sanction for a driver who drives without a seat belt or a motorcyclist without a helmet. Sanctions of BGN 50 are imposed to passengers in the car who have not fastened their seatbelts.
- ✓ Movement of automobiles in the BUS lanes marked in towns and cities is not allowed and the fine is BGN 50. Overtaking trams on their left side is not allowed.
- ✓ *Children under 12 years of age and less than 150 cm tall are not allowed to travel in the front seat. They can only travel in the back seats of the car with special safety precautions.*
- ✓ **Cars moving on the road must be equipped with a reflective (high-visibility) jacket/vest, a safety triangle, an automobile first aid kits and a fire extinguisher.**

### ***Important information for persons without a permanent address in the Republic of Bulgaria***

Pursuant to the Law for Administrative Offences and Sanctions referring to imposing sanctions for administrative offences, *in case the offender has no permanent address in the Republic of Bulgaria*, the protocol drawn up for the offence must be submitted immediately to the authority executing the punishment. Written explanations or objections of the driver of the motor vehicle must be attached to the protocol (Art. 44, Para 4);

The authority executing the punishment is obliged to make a statement on the file certifying the administrative offence and the sanction within a one-month deadline upon receiving the documents.

**In case a decree is issued for imposing a sanction to an offender without a permanent address in the Republic of Bulgaria, the offender pays the fine to a bank account quoted in the decree.**



***The fines imposed for violations of the Road Traffic Act are paid by means of bank transfers. The amount is transferred to a bank account as quoted in the decree for imposing the sanction.***

***Fines are paid in all branches of the banks in BGN after a decree for imposing the sanction has been issued to the offender.***

With the aim of prevention, police officers perform regular inspections into cafes and restaurants near the roads, petrol stations and car parks, regulate the traffic in order to avoid traffic jams, provide assistance in case of emergencies with motor vehicles and react in case of road accidents. To protect foreign passengers through the country, police authorities may perform thorough inspections of suspicious persons and cars.



***IMPORTANT!*****Do not drive if you haven't had enough sleep or if you feel exhausted!**

Foreign car drivers very often have accidents in Bulgaria because they fall asleep while driving, after having driven for hundreds of kilometers without a break.

So, as soon as you feel the first signs of weariness and drowsiness, you must stop in a suitable place to take a break, however short.

*Do not stop in isolated areas!* **To take a break, you should only stop in the daytime in busy places – near motels, petrol stations or in guarded parking lots!**

**In case you need to stay for the night,** you should stay in motels along your travel route, or in hotels in big cities, and leave your car in a guarded parking lot.

In case you need to stop during the night, do it only in well-lit inhabited places.

**You should exchange money only in exchange bureaus and banks.**

**When stopping in parking lots,** turn on the alarm and other anti-theft systems and close the windows tight.

**Do not leave in the compartment of a parked car bags containing personal ID, money and valuables.**

***In case of a problem on the road, call number 112!***



## Vignettes



### **Prices:**

The prices of vignettes for 8-seat passenger vehicles and cargo vehicles, including trailers, not exceeding 3.5 tones are as follows:

for one year – EUR 34

for one month – EUR 13

for one week – EUR 5

### ***Where to purchase vignettes:***

Vignettes can be purchased at border crossing points and at petrol stations located along the republican road network. In order to facilitate car drivers, it is possible to purchase vignette stickers from the petrol stations which are closest to the respective border crossing point.

Do not choose to take alternative routes off the main highways because not all of them have good asphalt covering!



**The sanctions for driving a vehicle without a purchased vignette are as follows:**

- BGN 300 for:
  - vehicles for carrying passengers in which the number of seats, including the driver's, is no more than 8;
  - vehicles for carrying loads and/or vehicles for carrying passengers and loads with technically admissible maximum weight of no more than 3.5 tons and vehicles from the same group with off-road capacity;
- BGN 600 for vehicles for carrying passengers in which the number of seats, excluding the driver's, is no more than 8;
- BGN 1500 for vehicles for carrying passengers in which the number of seats, excluding the driver's, is more than 8 or vehicles for carrying loads with 2 axles and vehicles with 2 axles or of trailer without separated purchased vignette and/or with technically admissible maximum weight not exceeding 12 tons;
- 3000 BGN for vehicles for carrying loads and vehicles with 2 and more axles, with technically admissible maximum weight exceeding 12 tons.

***Information on filing complaints and penalty procedures and sanctions:***

To report about incidents of any type, or crimes committed against foreign nationals on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria, please call **telephone 112**.

**This is 24-hour toll-free number that may be reached directly from any telephone.**

**112**

- ✓ ***From the same telephone number you can also receive information about the address of the respective local police unit of the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Bulgaria.***

**The procedure for filing a complaint is as follows:**

The claimant has to go to the nearest local police station where he/she describes his/her claim to a police officer. In case there is data on a crime committed or another offence of the law, a letter of complaint (claim) is drawn up and addressed to the chief of the respective local police station and the case is investigated.

Claims must contain detailed information on the time (date and approximate hour), the place where the incident occurred, personal data of the claimant (full name, date of birth, citizenship, number of passport, and vehicle registration number).

**Written suggestions, claims and complaints may also be submitted to:**

- the website of the Ministry of the Interior

**WWW.MVR.BG**

- the official mailbox of the Chief Directorate Border Police

**NSGP@MVR.BG**

- the mailboxes of all border crossing points
- in writing or orally through the head of shift or head of the respective border crossing point

- by fax:

**00359 2 988 58 76**

- by post to the following address:

**SOFIA 1202, 46, MARIA LOUISA BLVD.**

**With reference to protocols drawn up related to violations of the Road Traffic Act:  
*Punitive decrees imposing fines up to BGN 50 are not subject to appeal.***

**A foreign car driver** to whom a protocol has been drawn up for an administrative offence of the Road Traffic Act may file an objection on the spot where the protocol has been drawn up, which is registered in writing in the form of the protocol. According to the Law for the Administrative Offences and Sanctions, the offender has the right to file in writing additional objections to the chief of the police service, where the police officer, who has drawn up the protocol, works.

On the day the protocol is drawn up a punitive decree is issued, by which the respective punishment is imposed. A written appeal against it may be submitted to the District Court of the district where the offence has been perpetrated. The court may confirm, change or revoke the sanctions imposed by the punitive decree.

***Telephone hotlines for signaling offences***

**The telephone number to report on police officers' corrupt practices is**

**+ 359 2 982 22 22**

Any problems, such as accidents, car damage, need for road aid and medical assistance, etc.; incidents, gross violations of the public order or criminal abuse of foreign nationals are to be reported on **telephone 112. This is toll-free number that can be reached directly from any mobile or stationary telephone.**