COUNTRY INTRODUCTION

Bulgaria



Geographical Location

- Located in Southeastern Europe, Balkan Peninsula
- Borders: Romania (north), Serbia & North Macedonia (west), Greece & Turkey (south)
- Eastern border: Black Sea (378 km coastline)
- Important crossroads between Europe and Asia



Natural Conditions

- Relief: mountains, plains, valleys
- Major mountains: Rila (highest peak Musala – 2,925 m), Pirin, Balkan Mountains, The Rhodops
- Rivers: Danube, Maritsa, Iskar
- Climate: temperate continental; Mediterranean influence in the south
- Rich biodiversity: forests, national parks, mineral springs



Population

Population

6.5 million

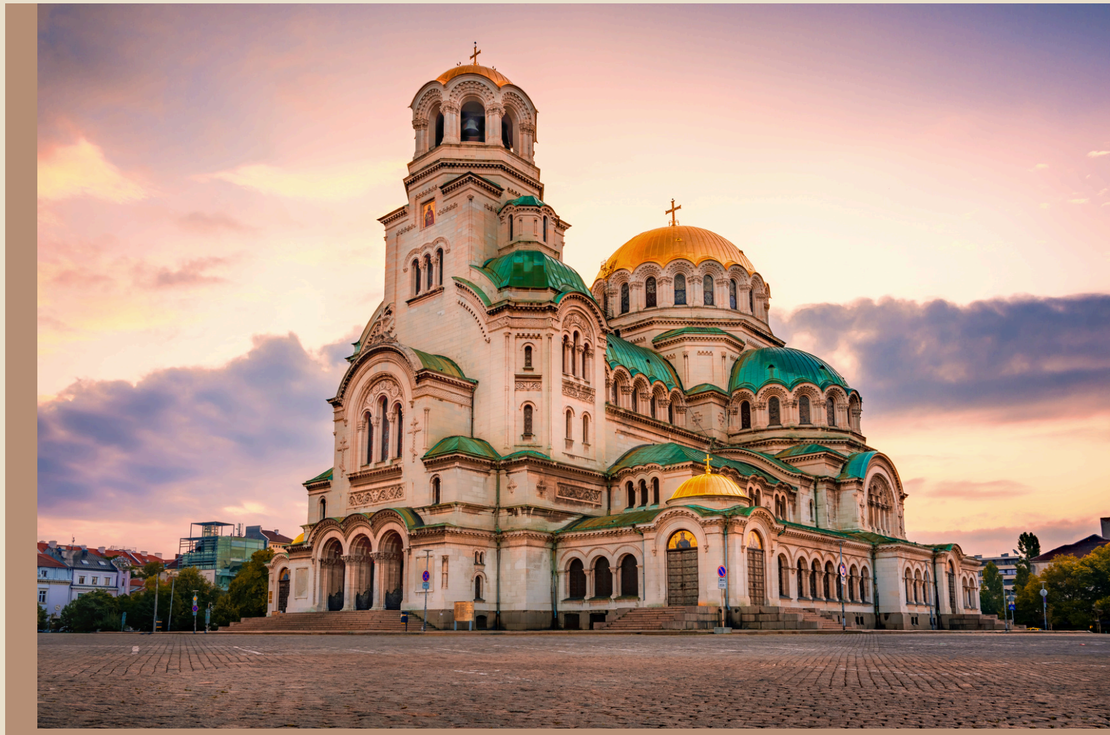
Capital

Sofia

Official Language

Bulgarian







Ethnic groups

Bulgarians (majority), Turks, Roma

Religion

Mainly Eastern Orthodox Christianity

Largest cities

Sofia, Plovdiv, Varna, Burgas









Economy

1. Mixed and developing economy
2. Key sectors:

- Industry (machinery, energy, chemicals)
- Agriculture (wheat, sunflower, vegetables)
- Tourism (Black Sea resorts, ski resorts)
- IT and outsourcing (fast-growing sector)
- Exports 4/5 from the world's rose oil quantity
- Currency: Euro
- Trade mainly with EU countries



History

- Founded in 681 CE
- Golden Age during the First Bulgarian Kingdom
- The Cyrillic alphabet was developed in the First Bulgarian Kingdom-921
- The Second Bulgarian Kingdom
- Ottoman rule (14th–19th century)
- Liberation in 1878
- Independence declared in 1908
- Socialist period (1946–1989)
- Democratic transition after 1989
- EU member since 2007



Culture and Traditions





- Rich folklore: music, dances (horo), traditional costumes
- Famous traditions: Nestinarstvo (fire dancing), Kukeri (masked ritual dances)
- Holidays: Christmas, Easter, Baba Marta (March 1)









- Traditional food: Banitsa, Shopska salad, Yogurt (famous worldwide), Tarator
- Strong cultural heritage: monasteries, old towns





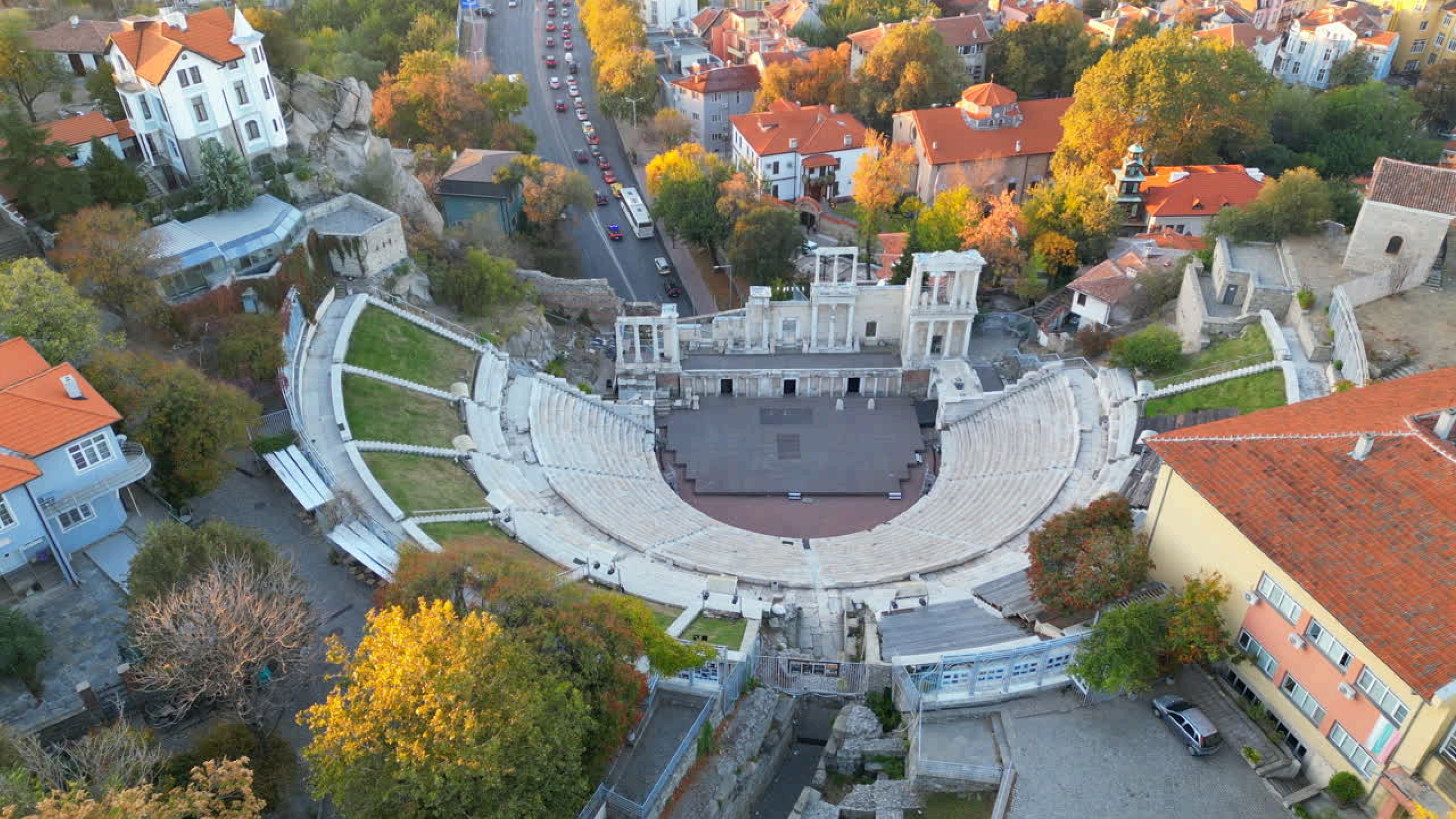





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Razlog & Bansko



Geographical Location

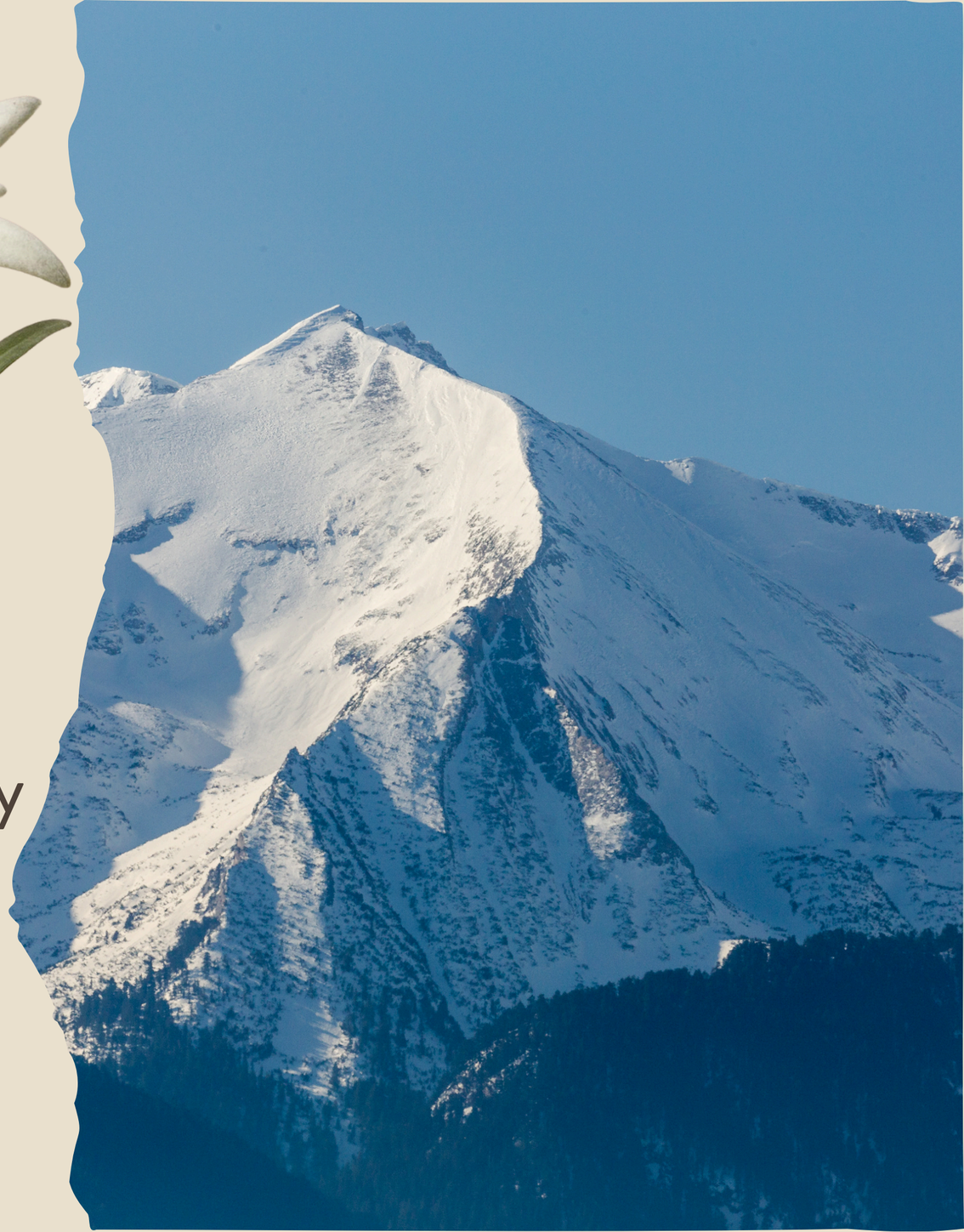
- Regional Context: Both are located in the Razlog Valley in southwestern Bulgaria (Blagoevgrad Province), approximately 150–160 km from the capital, Sofia.
- The "Three-Mountain" Valley: They are uniquely positioned at the meeting point of three major mountain ranges:Rila, Pirin and The Rhodopes



Natural Conditions



- Climate: A transition between Mediterranean and continental, characterized by long, snowy winters and cool, refreshing summers.
- Pirin National Park: Much of the territory surrounding Bansko is part of this UNESCO World Heritage site, home to the Baikushev Pine (Bulgaria's oldest tree-more than 1300y.) and the endangered Edelweiss flower.



Population

- Bansko: Approx. 10,000 residents.
- Razlog: Approx. 12,000–13,000 residents

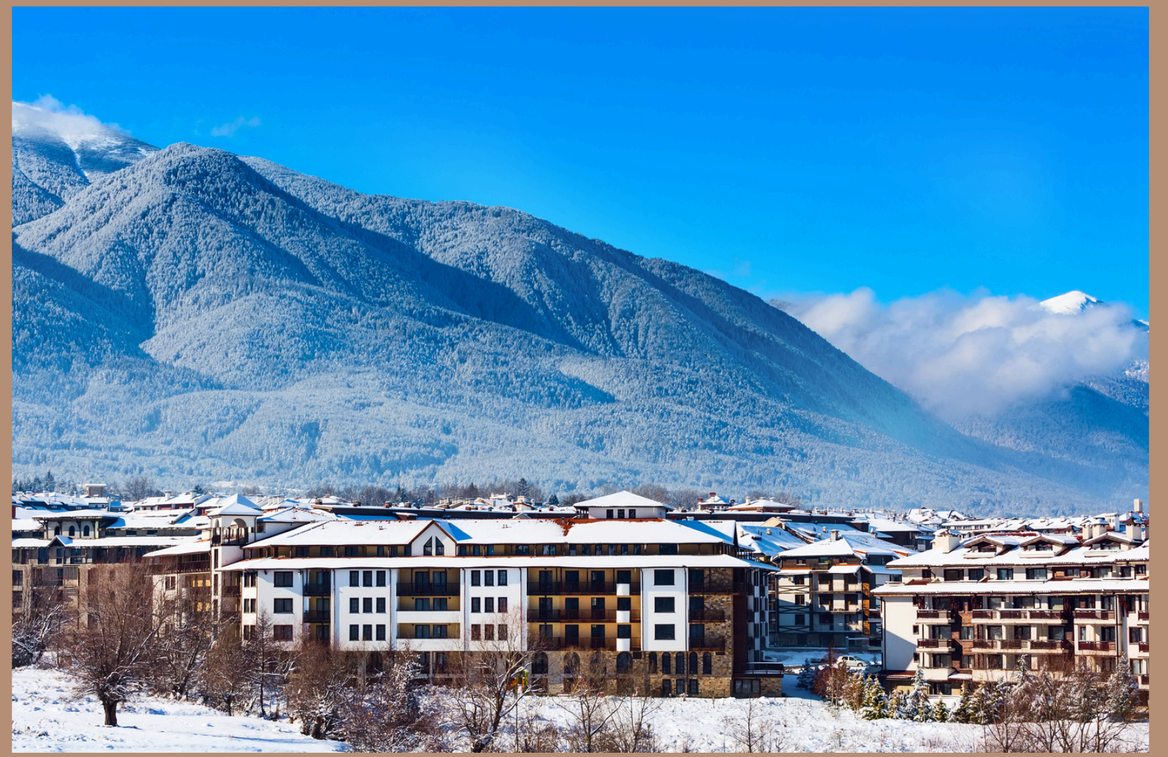




Economy

- Bansko: Primarily driven by international tourism. Known as the winter capital of the Balkans, it relies on its world-class ski area .
- Razlog: A more diversified economy. While tourism and golf resorts are growing, it maintains strong roots in agriculture, woodworking, and local industry.









Culture and Traditions

- Kukeri (Starchevata): Both towns are famous for their New Year's Eve masquerade games to scare away evil spirits.
- Cuisine: Local specialties include Kapama (slow-cooked meat and kraut) and Banski Starets (cured sausage).





Rila & Pirin Enhancement Initiative, NGO

Together for sustainable development, education, and cultural heritage.

Founded in 2020





About the Organisation

- Established through cooperation between Dr. Elena Sayanova and former students who are successful people in different spheres of life.
- Guided by the idea: “Be the change you wish to see in the world”












Mission

- Support socio-economic development
- Protect environment and biodiversity
- Preserve cultural and historical heritage Promote sustainable development
- Encourage tolerance, diversity and active civil society



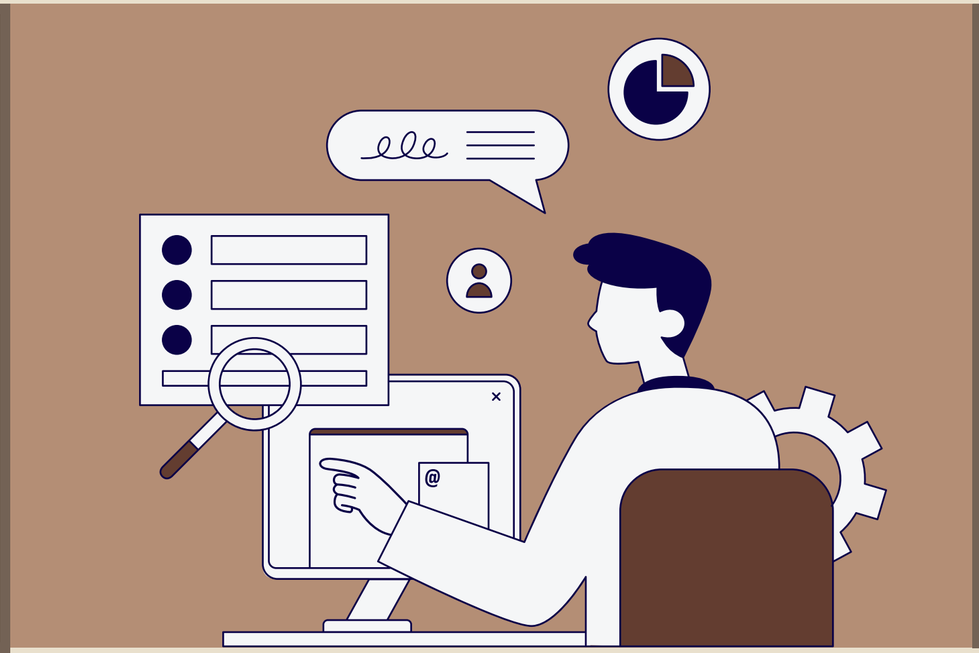




Main Areas of Work

- Education and intellectual development
- Media literacy and responsible citizenship
- Cultural heritage preservation
- Tourism development
- Cooperation with NGOs and institutions







Key Project Participation

- "CLICHÉ "(2020) – Intangible cultural heritage project with European partners
- "Fake News Among Teenagers" (2020) – promoting media literacy
- "Workshops on Media Literacy "(2021–2022)
- "Combatting Media&Information Illiteracy to Raise Good Citizens"(2022-2023)






- “Up-skilling in Remote Working through Exploring the Relatively New Phenomenon of Co-working” (2022)
- “Facing Challenges and Finding Solutions in 21st Century Music Education for Young Learners” (2022)









Events & Activities

- Teacher and student exchanges
- Training events in Bulgaria, Greece, Slovenia, Cyprus, Estonia, Lithuanialtaly, Croatia, Portugal, Turkey,
- Workshops and educational initiatives
- Participation in cultural education programmes







Impact & Contribution

- Fundraising and support for cultural initiatives
- Promotion of media literacy and digital citizenship
- Strengthening international cooperation
- Supporting active and responsible communities



Coworking
ERASMUS+



COUNTRY INTRODUCTION

Thank You

