

Welcome to
your EVS
experience in
Sofia,
Bulgaria!

Volunteer Power: Speak, Act, Change Project

Dear Volunteers,

Welcome to EVS and
welcome to Sofia,
Bulgaria!

We would like to give you
some more information
about the project

“Volunteer Power: Speak,
Act, Change” and about
us, the **International
Foundation for Y-PEER
Development**.

Who we are

The **International Foundation for Y-PEER Development (IFYD)** was registered in early 2017 to support the **Y-PEER International Youth Network**.

Y-PEER is a network of youth-led and youth-serving civil society organizations, governmental organizations, community based organizations, institutions, youth activists and advocates, young people, and trainers working together on youth related issues. It was established in 2002 in the region of Eastern Europe with the support of UNFPA and after 15 years has expanded its scope and areas of work to grassroots and advocacy

related to **Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)**, peacebuilding, youth leadership and HIV/AIDS interventions in over **50 countries on 3 continents**. Y-PEER aims to ensure that young people:

- Have access to **quality SRHR information and education** through non-formal and formal learning and training,
- Enjoy the highest attainable standard of **physical and mental health**,
- Have their **rights recognized and upheld**, enabling their engagement in all aspects of their development,
- Participate in a progressive, substantial and inclusive way in political and decision-making processes at all levels with regards to the achievement of the new development agenda and the **Sustainable Development Goals**.

The International Foundation for Y-PEER Development's main goal is to provide sustainability, technical and financial support for the activities of the informal International Y-PEER network and national Y-PEER networks in response to their needs. The Foundation is currently based at and supported by the **International Institute for Youth Development PETRI-Sofia**, which is one of the regional resource centers of Y-PEER and is a part of the structure of the National Center for Public Health and Analyses, Bulgaria.



PETRI-Sofia is a knowledge hub and regional resource center that supports youth empowerment in the areas of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), gender equality and peacebuilding in the region of Eastern Europe and Central Asia and beyond. You can find more information about PETRI [here](#).

As PETRI supports the International **Y-PEER Network**, we create a **newsletter** for the network which gives information about the activities done globally by our young people. You can check the latest issue [here](#).



The project



The European Voluntary Service project **“Volunteer Power: Speak, Act, Change”** is funded by the [Erasmus+ program](#) and is dedicated to young people and their competences in the field of sexual and reproductive health and rights, gender equality, youth leadership, violence prevention.



The main objective of the project is to raise awareness among adolescents and young people about issues related to **sexual and reproductive health and rights** (including HIV / AIDS, gender, family planning, sexually transmitted infections, etc.), and to **empower young people**, to encourage them to talk about their needs and to protect their rights, including the right to correct information and adequate services in this area.



Volunteers who will be involved in the project will be introduced to these topics and will acquire knowledge through the training materials developed by the International Foundation for Y-PEER Development and its partners. The volunteers will organize and participate in various activities: local, national and international training sessions, information campaigns and workshops for students aged 14-18, including those of Roma origin, in different schools and other organizations in the country.



We are currently looking for 2 volunteers from any EU country, North Macedonia, Iceland or Norway, for a period of 2 or 3 months each. The volunteers should choose their period of stay in Sofia between April and August 2019.

Criteria

- Young person between 18 and 30 years old
- From Greece, Romania, North Macedonia
- Good level of English
- Available for a period of 3 months, starting as soon as possible (June 2019)
- Willingness to work and share the living space with people from different backgrounds
- Experience in the NGO field, youth work, organization of activities for young people, non-formal education, Sexual and Reproductive Health topics, Human Rights, Gender, etc. will be an asset

As volunteers, with the help of our

Practical arrangements

team members, you will have the opportunity to organize a series of activities for adolescents (training sessions, information campaigns), in order to motivate them to make informed decisions about their

sexual and reproductive health and rights, to develop their **leadership skills**, to gain knowledge and skills related through non-formal educational methods. In order to organize an active and effective learning process, **creative, informal and interactive techniques** and approaches will be used actively. Social networks will also be utilized, as this is one of the main resources youngsters use to find and share information on the Internet, as well as the **online platform for advocacy SpeakActChange** <http://www.speakactchange.org>, which provides space for sharing information on different youth topics at a global level.

You will have the chance to increase your knowledge of the main topics of the project, to be in constant communication with representatives of the international Y-PEER network and to participate in the coordination of its activities and campaigns at the international level. Through these activities we will encourage you to develop your **"soft skills", personal and professional competences** your skills to work with online tools.

You will also have the opportunity to get to know Bulgarian culture and reality, as well as to work in a **multicultural environment** with young people from different countries who are part of the international internship program of the PETRI-Sofia, which supports the Foundation.

We also really welcome **your own ideas** and input on what the

activities could look like, we encourage you to share with us what you are passionate about and what your skills are, so that we can also adjust our program to you and so that you could make the most out of this **unique experience**. We also promote and support **intercultural learning**, so you will have the opportunity to share your traditions, culture, food and anything else you would like to share with the team and/or to organize an intercultural workshop for a broader audience.

For the duration of your EVS project you will be provided with **accommodation, as well as with money for your living expenses**.

The apartment where our fellows and volunteers live is located in [Pavlovo, on Kota 150 str., bl.137, floor 4, ap. 17](#). It is around 20 min. by tram from the office and around 30 min. from the center of Sofia. Two EVS volunteers will share the apartment, as well as two PETRI-Sofia international fellows. The apartment has 2 bedrooms and 1 living room, as well as a kitchen, bathroom and toilet.

The amount of the money for living expenses is approximately 411 BGN (leva) per month, which is equivalent to 210 EUR (1 EUR is around 1.95 BGN). Your transportation card for the whole transportation system in Sofia will also be covered by the project.

To get an idea about the **cost of living in Bulgaria**, you can check some information [here](#).

Our office is located in the building of the [National Center of](#)

[Public Health and Analyses](#), on 15 Akademik Ivan Evstatiev Geshov str., and during your EVS project your activities will take place here (when there is no specific workshop, training or event elsewhere).

We will **cover your travel expenses and will advise you for the most economic and convenient option for your trip**.

You will be provided with **health insurance** through the Cigna system that is working on the European level for all EVS volunteers. In case you have any

Learning process

medical conditions or special needs, please inform us before you come to Bulgaria!

Since most of our work in the office and the international network is in English, you will **practice your English** on a daily basis, and learn some basic Bulgarian, if you want ☺

During your project you will have the support of **our team**, as well as a **mentor**, a young person who will have regular meetings with you and will make sure that all your needs are discussed and hopefully met. Your mentor will assist you with any issues you might have.

In the end of your EVS project, you will be awarded with a **YOUTHPASS certificate** which is used in Erasmus+ projects and is an official recognition of the skills

Living in Sofia, exploring Bulgaria

and knowledge you acquired. You can find more information about it [here](#).

The weather in Bulgaria changes a lot throughout the 4 seasons, so be prepared, depending on the period of the year when you will be here. In summer the average temperature is high, around 25-30°C. In autumn the temperature is unstable, it might be rainy. When there is sun, the temperature can get up to 20 °C but when it is cloudy and windy it can be around 5-10 °C. In winter usually the temperatures are between 0 and 10 °C, but it can get warmer or colder, and there is usually snow during some weeks of the winter period. In spring the weather gets better and the temperatures rise, they are usually between 10 and 20 °C. Bring the most suitable clothes for the weather here, so that you are prepared 😊

The Bulgarian cuisine is a representative of the cuisine of Eastern Europe. It shares characteristics with other Balkan cuisines. Bulgarian cooking traditions are diverse because of geographical factors such as climatic conditions suitable for a variety of vegetables, herbs and fruit. Aside from the vast variety of local Bulgarian dishes, Bulgarian cuisine shares a number of dishes with Persian, Turkish, and Greek cuisine.

Bulgarian food often incorporates salads as appetizers and is also noted for the prominence of dairy products, wines and other alcoholic drinks such as *rakia*. The cuisine also features a variety

of soups, such as the cold soup *tarator*, and pastries, such as the filo dough based *banitsa*.

Similarly to other Balkan cultures the per capita consumption of yogurt in Bulgaria is traditionally higher than the rest of Europe. The country is notable as the historical namesake for *Lactobacillus bulgaricus*, a microorganism chiefly responsible for the local variety of the dairy product. White brine cheese called *sirene*, similar to feta, is also a popular ingredient used in salads and a variety of pastries.

Sofia is our capital, a city where around 1.3 million people currently live. It is a cultural and administrative center, with a rich history and many attractions. It has had many names throughout the centuries, and the current name is pronounced by Bulgarians with a stress on the 'o', in contrast with the tendency of foreigners to place the stress on 'i'. The female given name "Sofia" is pronounced by Bulgarians with a stress on the 'i'.

There are many things to do in Sofia, cultural events, museums, parks, interesting historical sights. In the city center everything is within walking distance, but we also have buses, trams, trolleybuses and metro.

We definitely recommend the free walking tours, organized by youth NGOs in the capital, such as the [Free Sofia Tour](#) and the [Balkan Bites free food tour](#). They are a good introduction for the history

of Bulgaria and Sofia, to our traditions and cuisine. And the best thing, of course, is to explore on your own (and/or with your friends and colleagues 😊).

During weekends, you can also visit other towns and cities in Bulgaria, which are not far away, and also offer beautiful sights and historic places, such as [Plovdiv](#) or [Veliko Tarnovo](#). You could go hiking in the Rila Mountain (see the [Rila Monastery](#) or the [Seven Rila Lakes](#)) or go to the seaside if it is summer (see [Nessebar](#) and [Sozopol](#)). The most important thing is to be open for this new experience and to enjoy it to the maximum!





The National Palace of Culture

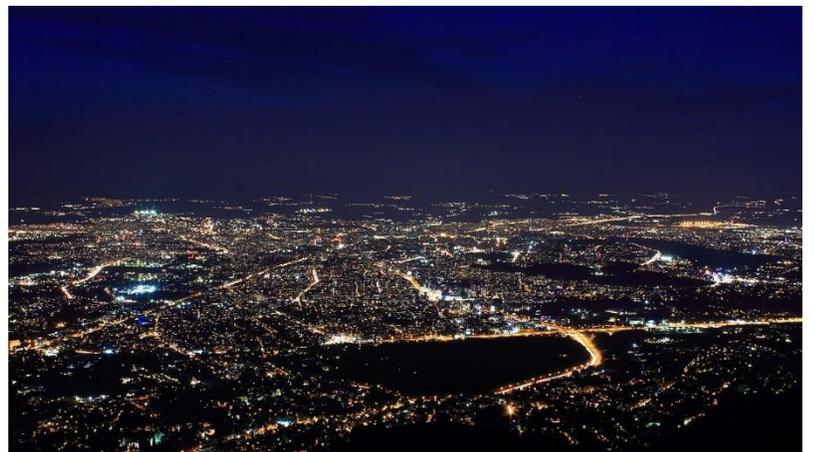
The National Theater with its garden, one of the best spots to hang out in the center of Sofia



A view of the emblematic Alexander Nevski Cathedral and the Parliament



A view of Sofia by night, from the nearby beautiful Vitosha Mountain



We are looking forward to meeting you
soon in Sofia!

In case you have any additional
questions, do not hesitate to contact our
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