



**R**epublic of Bulgaria is a country in Europe. It is located in the Eastern part of the Balkan Peninsula and occupies 22% of its territory. It has a total area of 110,843 km, of which 110,510 km are occupied by land, and 333 km are covered with water. The population is c. 7,640,000 people (2007). The capital city of Bulgaria is Sofia.

Bulgaria borders the Black Sea to the East, Greece and Turkey to the South, Republic of Macedonia and Serbia to the West, and Romania to the North. The total length of the state border is 2,245 km, of which 1,181 km land, 686 km - river (mainly downstream Danube) and 378 km - sea.

The Bulgarian state in South-Eastern Europe dates back to the 7th century, when the First Bulgarian State was founded (632/681-1018). It played a key role in the dissemination of Christianity, literature and culture among the peoples of Eastern Europe. Several centuries later, however, with the decline of the Second Bulgarian State (1185-1396/1422), the country was occupied by the Ottoman Empire and remained within

its borders for nearly five centuries. The Russian-Turkish war of 1877-1878 led to the foundation of the Third Bulgarian State. After the Second World War, the country became part of the Eastern Bloc and was ruled by a communist regime. In 1990, parliamentary democracy was re-established in Bulgaria and today the country is a member of the European Union and NATO.

On the island of Livingston in Antarktika, Bulgaria has established its own base called Sveti Kliment Ohridski and, being a consultative member of the Antarctic Treaty, is involved in the running of the territories south of 60° southern latitude.



One of the most loved holidays in Bulgaria is the 24 May - the Day of the Slavic Script and Culture.



Folk singer Valya Balkanska's voice is part of the Golden Fund of Bulgarian folk music. She is renowned for her performance of the song *Izlel je Delyo Haydutin*. In 1977, this song was included in the Golden Record phonograph record and was sent into space on board the two Voyager spacecraft. In 2004, they left the boundaries of the Solar System.

## Wonders of the World

The Belogradchik Rocks are on the list of natural landmarks nominated for the world's new Seven Wonders of the world. There is an unfolding media campaign in the country in support of the Bulgarian nominee. The unique range of rocks is located in the North-West of Bulgaria. It covers an area that is 30 km long and 15 km wide. This amazing natural phenomenon has been shaped by water and winds for 200 million years now. The shapeless huge boulders have become sculptures taking resemblance to mythical creatures, human silhouettes, animals, and birds. The 200m-high columns form a natural fortress whose defensive potential has been exploited since ancient times. The fortress fortifications were built and appended during three time periods: Roman (1-4 c. AD), Medieval (17-19 c. AD) and Ottoman (1805-1837).

The Belogradchik Rocks were proclaimed a landmark in 1949.

