

Informal Meetings of Foreign Ministers (IFM 2006) Sofia, Bulgaria 27- 28 April 2006

Media Advisory

1. Information

Foreign Ministers of NATO will hold informal meetings in Sofia, Bulgaria, on 27 and 28 April 2006, under the chairmanship of the NATO Secretary General, Mr. Jaap de Hoop Scheffer. The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria, His Excellency Mr. Ivaylo Kalfin, will host the meetings. The National Palace of Culture is the venue for the ministerial sessions. The Media Centre will be located in the same building.

2. Accreditation and Security Checks

The Media Accreditation Office will be located in the Glass building at the parking entrance of the National Palace of Culture (opposite the Continental Plaza restaurant), bul. Bulgaria 1, 1414 Sofia.

Opening hours of the Media Accreditation Office:

Tuesday, 25 April	10:00 18:00 hours
Wednesday, 26 April	09:00 21:00 hours
Thursday, 27 April	09:00 19:00 hours
Friday, 28 April	07:00 - 12:00 hours

Applications for accreditation can only be made electronically on-line, by clicking on the following link : <https://my.hq.nato.int/jas>

In order to complete your accreditation request, you will need to provide a digital picture. Only a 3,5 x 4,5 cm passport-size photograph in JPEG format will be accepted. Every applicant has to create a user name and password.

Applications for accreditation should be submitted to NATO before Friday, 21 April 2006.

Applications received after that date may not be processed.

Press passes will be available for collection at the Media Accreditation Office from 10:00 hours on Tuesday, 25 April 2006.

Press passes to be worn visibly will not be mailed to applicants. They may be collected personally at the Media Accreditation Office on presentation of an I.D. card or passport and a valid press card (or letter of accreditation from a recognized media organisation) which should be presented at any time upon request of security personnel.

All media representatives are informed that security personnel will examine and may test equipment and personal effects carried onto the site and are advised to arrive with sufficient time to clear the security checks. Television and radio broadcasters, wire services and photo agencies with bulky equipment are particularly urged to move most of it into the Media Centre before 12:00 hours on Wednesday, 26 April 2005.

3. Media Centre

The Media Centre will be operational on the following hours:

Wednesday, 26 April	12:00 22:00 hours
Thursday, 27 April	08:00 end of operations
Friday, 28 April	08:00 end of operations

4. Broadcasting

Television and radio interview rooms and facilities are located at the Media Centre.

Satellite uplink trucks and O.B. vans will be parked along the Media Centre at the Media entrance A6 of the NPC. Electricity in Bulgaria is 220V and plugs have two round pins.

- Television

The Host Television Broadcaster, Bulgarian National Television will provide coverage of arrivals of delegations, the opening sessions, the official group photographs, as well as main international news conferences.

For enquiries, please contact:

Rumen Stratiev, Television Co-ordinator,
Bulgarian National Television

Telephone: +359 2943 63 85

Mobile phone: +359887414439

Fax: +3592 943 60 48

E-mail: stratiev@bnt.bg

Coverage material will be provided by the TV production studio TV1.

For enquiries, please contact:

Rumen Kovachev TV1 coordinator

Telephone: +359 2952 31 67

Mobile phone: +359 88 8627313

Fax: +359 2916 60 85

E-mail: rkovatchevtv1@intech.bg

- Radio

The Host Radio Broadcaster, Bulgarian National Radio will provide the signal and technical assistance.

For enquiries, please contact:

Mrs Albena Milanova Kamburova
Radio Co-ordinator
Bulgarian National Radio

Telephone: +359 2 989 80 84; +359 29 33 65 54

Mobile phone: +35988943 46 13

Fax: +359 2 963 44 64

E-mail: milanova@bnr.bg

5. Communications

Laptop computers will need to be equipped with RJ 45 plugs in order to be able to connect to the high-speed communication network.

ISDN lines will be available for radio transmissions. Please check if you need to use an adapter in "Euro ISDN" standard.

6. Programme and pools

The final programme of the meetings will be available upon accreditation.

Media events will begin on Thursday, 27 April with the inauguration of an exhibition at the NPC.

Pool cards will be distributed at the Media Centre at 12:00 on Wednesday, 27 April.

As a follow-up to the NATO ministerial meetings and as part of its series of annual security related events, the Centre for the Study of Democracy (CSD) is holding an international conference on "NATO transformation Facing new security frontiers on 28-29 April 2006 in Boyana Residence. Press accreditation badges for the NATO ministerial meetings will remain valid for this CSD conference and shuttle buses between the NPC and the Boyana residence will be provided for media representatives.

7. Visas, Accommodation, Transport and Parking - Visas

Please check with the nearest Bulgarian Embassy or Consulate General regarding visa requirements. Please mention that you will cover the NATO foreign ministers meeting when applying for a visa. Visas for accredited journalists are free of charge.

- Accommodation

Media representatives are encouraged to stay in Sofia and are advised to book their hotel rooms as soon as possible.

The recommended hotels are:
Festa Barcelo Premium Sofia Hotel
83, Bulgaria Blvd., Sofia

Tel. +359 2 818 96 18

Fax: +359 2 818 96 28

Central Park Hotel - 4*
106, Vitosha Blvd., Sofia
Mrs. Valentina Georgieva

Tel. +35 9 2 8110770

Fax: +35 9 2 8110725

E-mail: valentina.georgieva@grandhotelsofia.bg

For further information please call:

Mr/Mrs Mrs. Maya Stefanova; Mrs. Dessislava Hristova; Mr. Vladimir Pantelev

Telephone: +359 2971 70 74

Fax: +359 2971 29 86

E-mail: office@bgviptravel.com

- Transport

Media representatives will use the existing Public Transport to and from the airport. A bus service will operate on 27 and 28 April between Festa Barcello Hotel and the Media Centre (the Central Park Hotel is within walking distance from Media Centre).

- Parking

Media representatives may only park their vehicles in the small parking area in front of the Continental Plaza Restaurant while collecting their press accreditation badges. The designated parking area for media representatives is on Fridtjof Nansen street between Vassil Levski boulevard and Patriarh Evtimii boulevard (see map).

The parking area for SNG vans is located at the Media Entrance (A6) of the NPC.

8. Payment

All major credit cards and bank transfers will be accepted for payments.

Currency exchange is available at Banks and currency exchange offices in Sofia.

9. Enquiries

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Information and Public Relations Directorate
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Sofia

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