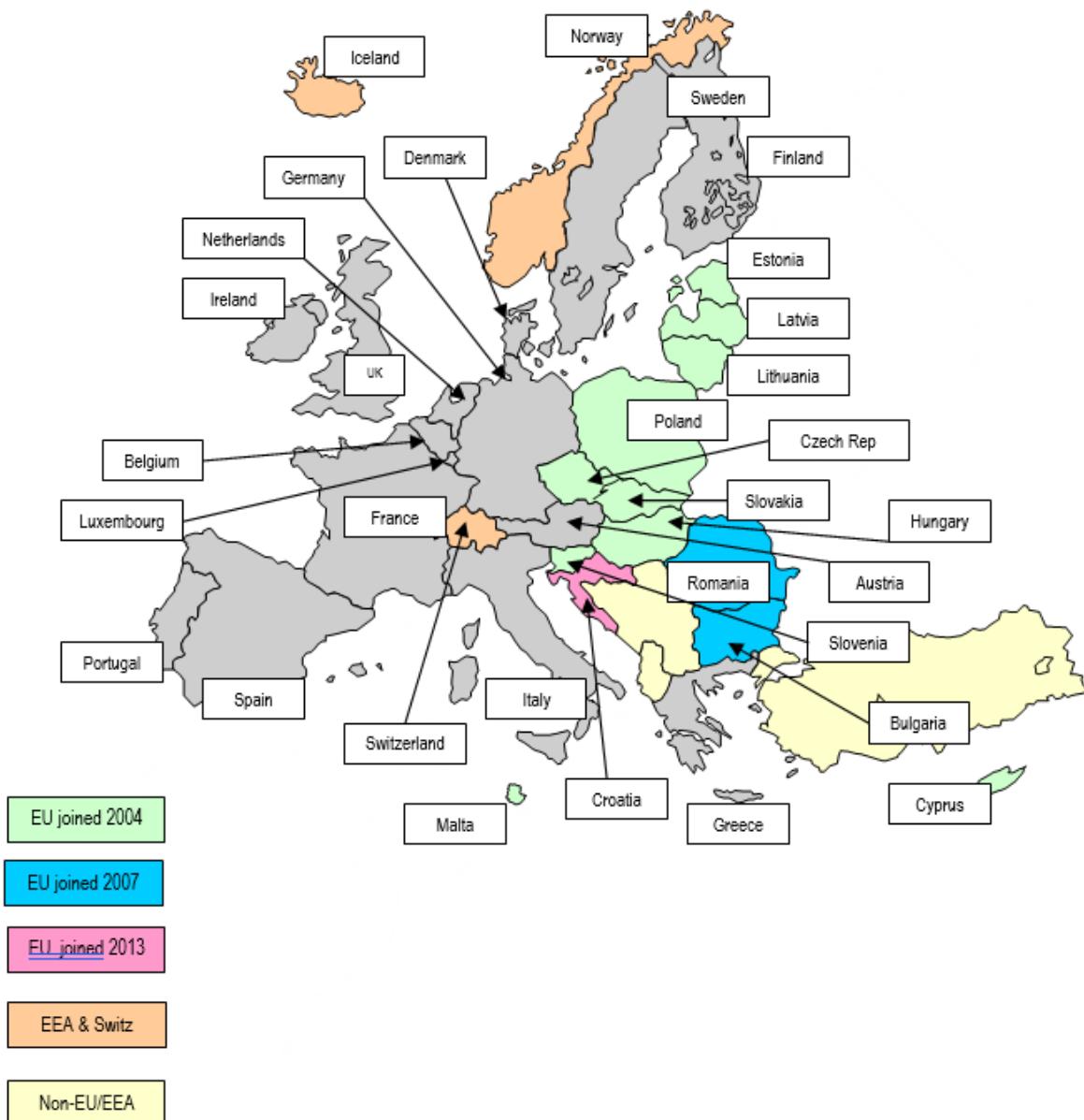


Council of European Dentists

MANUAL OF DENTAL PRACTICE 2026

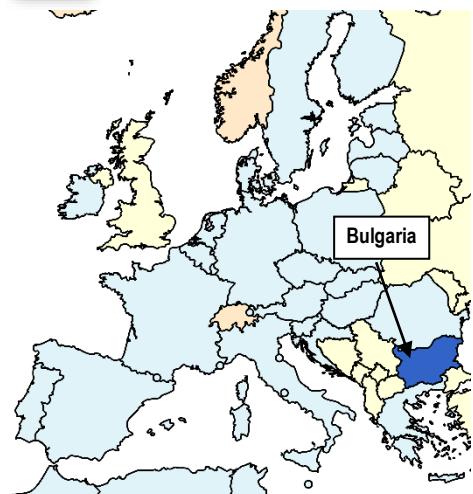
Bulgaria

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2026





Bulgaria



In the EU/EEA since	2007
Population (2024)	6 445 481
GDP PPP per capita (2024)	€26 265
Currency (since 1 st January 2026)	Euro € (EUR)

Official language(s)	Bulgarian
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General health care is mainly funded by deductions from salaries. It is a highly centralised system based on a compulsory social health insurance system (SHI), with only a marginal role held by voluntary health insurance (VHI). It operates through the National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF), acting as a state monopoly. In terms of oral health care, Bulgaria has progressively decreased its unmet dental care needs to below EU average (3.4%)¹.

Number of dentists (active)	9 110 (2024)
Active dentist to population ratio (per 100 000 inhabitants)	141
Members of Dental Association	9 110
Cost of registration	100 euros annually

The use of a variety of specialists is widespread, but the existence of dental auxiliaries is limited to dental technicians and a marginal number of dental assistants. Continuing education for dentists remains mandatory.

Date of last revision: 19 December 2025

Government and healthcare in Bulgaria

Bulgaria is in South-Eastern Europe, bordering the Black Sea to the East, Romania to the North, Serbia and Macedonia to the West, and Turkey and Greece to the South. The size is 110,996 km². The capital is Sofia. The country is divided into 28 districts.

In an EU census conducted in 2021, 77% of the Population declared Bulgarian as their mother tongue, 8% Turkish and 3,5% Roma. The religion is predominantly Eastern Orthodox (76%) and Muslim 8%.

Bulgaria is a parliamentary republic with a single house legislature. The head of state is the President for a four-year term and the head of government the Prime Minister. The Council of Ministers is nominated by the prime minister and elected by the National Assembly.

There is a unicameral National Assembly or NarodnoSvobranie (240 seats; elected by popular vote to serve four-year terms).

Healthcare in Bulgaria is based on mandatory health insurance (65% of all healthcare spendings in 2021), governed by the Health Insurance Act (1998, State Gazette #70), also encompassing voluntary health insurance (1% of all healthcare spendings in 2021). It creates legislative framework for the organisation of the mandatory health insurance.

The mandatory health insurance system is designed as a state monopoly. It has the exclusive right to grant mandatory health insurance and to guarantee the observance of the insurance rights. A National Framework Contract is signed every year between the National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF) and the Bulgarian Medical and Dental Associations. The Contract comes

into force upon approval by the Minister of Health. The contracted annual package of activities in dental care varies according to the age.

	Year	Source
% GDP spent on all healthcare	8.0	2022 OECD
% of this spent by government	64.7	2022 OECD

Mandatory health insurance automatically covers all Bulgarian citizens, permanent residents, and individuals with humanitarian status. Dental care services remain partly covered and integrate user fees within the NHIF basic benefits package (with an average of 20% of co-payments at the expense of adults for basic dental services).

Adult dental care accounted for 5% of all out-of-pocket payments for health care in Bulgaria in 2024. It is delivered through outpatient facilities, including private practices, medico-dental centres (minimum of a combined 3 physicians and dentists or dental specialists) and dental centres (minimum of 3 dentists), and finally dental diagnostic and orthodontic laboratories.

Children under 18 years of age, people with mental disorders and prisoners are entitled to state coverage for oral health care insurance. Only a determined number of procedures per year are however covered under the NHIF.

The budget for health insurance payments under the mandatory health insurance system, adopted by Parliament, amounted to € 3,9 billion, of which € 84,0 million allocated to dental services, accounting for 4.7% of total health budget in 2024.

¹ Bulgaria: Country Health Profile 2023 | European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies (who.int)

Education, Training and Registration

Undergraduate Education and Training

To enter a university faculty of dental medicine, a student has to have completed secondary school (usually at the age of 18). There is an entrance examination, which is similar to that of medical students.

Year of data	2024
Number of schools	3
Student intake (Bulgarian programme)*	305
Student intake (English programme)*	320
Number of graduates a year (Bulgarian programme)	260
Number of graduates a year (English programme)	156
Gender balance (% of female students)	60 %
Duration of studies	5 years and 6 months
	*Bulgarian citizens
	**Foreign citizens

All schools are public, with no existing private schools. These are located in the cities of Sofia, Plovdiv and Varna.

Students, studying in the faculties of dental medicine, who have entered schools according to all the Law rules, do not pay any fees.

The number of fee-paying foreign students varies annually.

The definition of programs of study as well as quality assurance for the dental schools is provided by the Ministry of Education and Science.

Qualification and Vocational Training

Primary dental qualification

The primary degree in Bulgaria is *Physician of Dental Medicine with a master's degree* (Лекар по дентална амедицина с образователна степен Магистър).

The Bulgarian basic dental diploma is divided in three stages: a first stage comprising of 2 years of medical and biological training, a second stage from the 2nd to the 10th semester of a combination of specialised training in both general medical clinical and dental disciplines, a third and final stage dedicated to internship clinical training for a duration of 9 months.

This 9-month mandatory pre-graduate practical training includes clinical practice within university hospital departments (prosthetic dentistry, OMFS, conservative dentistry, paediatric dentistry, periodontology, orthodontics, imaging and oral diagnostics).

The qualification of Masters and the title of "Doctor of Dental Medicine" is delivered upon successful completion of State examinations.

Universities also provided dental courses taught in English, with mandatory modules of the Bulgarian language.

Registration

The prerequisite for registration is a primary degree in dental

medicine (master's degree). The registration of a *Physician of Dental Medicine* is issued through both the Bulgarian Dental Association (BgDA) by means of its Regional Colleges, and by the Ministry of Health.

Cost of registration	€ 100 (annual membership fee)
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Language requirements

Non-EU foreign citizens are required to have a command of Bulgarian language and professional terminology.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Continuing Professional Development is mandatory. A credit system has been introduced and administered by the BgDA. A minimum of 75 credits is to be covered in no more than 3 years. The CPD is delivered by the BgDA and its different Regional Bodies. CPD is also delivered by the Medical Universities, Military Medical Institute, and the Red Cross.

Accredited CPD may be carried out by participating in case professional presentations, clinical hands-on courses, conferences, symposia, lectures or seminars, international or regional live events, the completion of e-learning resources, or through research projects.

Dental practitioners can acquire additional or updated skills and competences relating to clinical or scientific activities, practice management, environmental, legal or ethical obligations, as well as concepts such as integrated care between oral and general health, the OneHealth principle, etc.

Specialist Training Requirements

Bulgaria recognised 11 dental specialities. Specialists train in the faculties of dental medicine, and in accredited medical institutions. Specialisation is administered by the Ministry of Health and is accredited by the BgDA.

The types of specialists and the years of training are:

- Orthodontics (3 years)
- Oral Surgery (3 years)
- Paediatric dental medicine (3 years)
- Operative dentistry and endodontics (3 years)
- Periodontology and oral mucosa diseases (3 years)
- Prosthetic dental medicine (3 years)
- Dental imaging (3 years)
- Dental implantology (3 years)
- Social medicine and public dental health (3 years)
- Dental clinical allergology, i.e. prevention and treatment of pathologies in the mouth caused by allergenic reactions towards drugs and dental materials (3 years)
- Oral maxillo-facial surgery (OMFS) (for graduated generalist doctors, 5 years)

The titles obtained by specialists in orthodontics and oral surgery, the two specialities recognised by the EU, are:

- Специалист по ортодонтия (Specialist in Orthodontics)
- Специалист по орална хирургия (Specialist in Oral surgery)

Workforce

Dentists

Most dentists practice in general practice – although some also work in hospitals and dental faculties.

Year of data	2024
Total Registered (and practising)	9 110
In active practice	9 110
Active dentist to population ratio (per 100 000 inhabitants)	141
Percentage female	66%
Qualified overseas	NA
Yearly in-and-out movement of dentists	100

Acknowledging the mandatory nature of registration through both the Bulgarian Dental Association and the Ministry of Health, the number of active and registered practitioners closely coincides. Dentists ceasing to pay their fees are removed from the register.

The Bulgarian Dental Association notes an overproduction of dental practitioners by the three state faculties of dental medicine.

There are significant demographic disparities between urban areas (with an excess of dental practitioners), and rural areas (where a strong deficit of dental practitioners). A significant ethnic workforce imbalance between dentists from non-Roma and Roma communities also remains², impacting therefore dental healthcare coverage in Roma communities.

Therefore, under pressure from the BgDA, the National Framework Contract with NHIF now stipulates special incentives for contractors practising in remote and deprived areas.

Movement of dentists across borders

There is no distinct movement into Bulgaria by overseas dentists except incoming displaced practitioners from Ukraine. Since the beginning of 2007, over 2 068 Certificates of Good Standing have been issued to dentists by the BgDA (these are for registration with other EU and Non-EU regulatory bodies).

Specialists

Patients have free access to specialists.

Year of data	2022
Orthodontics	NA
Oral Surgery	
Endodontics & Restorative	
Pedodontics	
Periodontics	
Prosthodontics	

Dental implantology

Oral Radiology
OMFS
Dental Public Health
Dental Clinical Allergology

Auxiliaries

There is no official system of dental auxiliaries in Bulgaria other than dental technicians, with additionally only a marginal number of practising dental chairside assistants.

Year of data	2019
Dental technicians	1 624
Dental Chairside assistants	NA

Dental technicians

Dental technicians graduate from a 3 years' special education programme with the degree of *Professional Bachelor*. The training is 3,240 hours, including 1,275 hours of theoretical training, 1,365 hours practical training and 600 hours pre-graduate practice.

The dental laboratories are 100% private and must register with Ministry of Health. The scope of their activities comprises the planning, development and construction of dental and orthodontic appliances, including tooth prosthetic constructions, face and jaw prosthetics, orthodontic apparatuses. Dental technicians are not entitled to undertake any form of clinical work.

Dental Chairside Assistants

After 1989, no specific training has been available for dental assistants (dental nurses). On official records, the number of practising dental chairside assistants remains sparse.

According to national labour law, registered dental practitioners are granted the right to employ and train on-the-job dental chairside assistants without any previous medical training or experience.

In 2013, general care nurses were being registered by the respective professional association, and an unknown number of them are working in the field of dental medicine.

To bridge the current dental healthcare gap between rural and urban areas, discussions are currently ongoing on the need to expand the role and duties performed by dental chairside assistants without supervision, as well as establish mandatory accredited training and studies for dental assistants³.

² Ivanoff CS, Andonov B, Hottel TL. Expanding the functions of dental assistants in Bulgaria and perceptions about their role in the Bulgarian healthcare workforce. Folia Med (Plovdiv) 2023;65(2): [FM_article_78138_en_1_\(1\).pdf](#).

³ Ibid 4

Other Useful Information

Main national associations

Dental Associations	
Bulgarian Dental Association (BgDA)	Bulgarian Scientific Dental Association
12, Vitosha Blvd 1000 Sofia, Bulgaria Tel.: +3524514312 +35988136900 Fax: +3524514313 Email: office@bzs.bg Website: www.bzs.bg	1, St. Georgi Sofiiski Blvd. 1431 Sofia, Bulgaria Mobile: +359888319813 Email: eliradeva@abv.bg

Publications

Newspaper "Dentamedica"	Magazine of the Bulgarian Dental Association
Monthly publication. Available online: https://bzs.bg/newspaper/	Regular publication. Available online: https://bzs.bg/jurnal/archive/

Competent authorities

National Health Insurance Fund	Ministry of Health
1, Krichim Str. 1407 Sofia, Bulgaria Tel: +352965 9387 Tel./Fax: +35929659124 Questions for citizens: +35 (0)800 14 800 EU integration: +359 2 965 9116 Email (for public information): press_nzok@nhif.bg Email for proposals, complaints: nzok@nhif.bg Website: www.nhif.bg	5, Sveta Nedelya Square 1000 Sofia, Bulgaria Tel.: +35 929301152 Tel (Hotline): +35 29301 152 E-mail: delovodstvo@mh.govtment.bg press@mh.govtment.bg Website: www.mh.govtment.bg

Dental Schools:

<p>Sofia</p> <p>Medical University Faculty of Dental Medicine 1, Sveti G. Sofiiski Blvd. 1431 Sofia, Bulgaria</p> <p>Tel: Dean's secretary : +359 2 952 05 53 Student's office: +359 2 954 29 09 Student's office – English Language Education: +359 2 954 27 30</p> <p>E-mail : info@fdm.mu-sofia.bg E-mail : bstudents.office@fdm.mu-sofia.bg</p> <p>Numbers of annual intake: 130 for Bulgarian programme* 144 for English programme**</p> <p>Dentists graduating: 100 for Bulgarian programme* 77 for English programme**</p>	<p>Plovdiv</p> <p>Medical University Faculty of Dentistry 15-A Vassil Aprilov Blvd. 4000 Plovdiv, Bulgaria</p> <p>Tel: +359 32 443 839 Fax: +359 32 442 194; +359 32 772 251</p> <p>E-mail: dean@fdm.mu-plovdiv.bg E-mail: rector@meduniversity-plovdiv.bg</p> <p>Numbers of annual intake: 100 for Bulgarian programme* 130 for English language**</p> <p>Dentists graduating: 90 for Bulgarian programme* 44 for English programme**</p>
<p>Varna (established in 2006)</p> <p>Medical University Faculty of Dental Medicine 84, Tsar Osvoboditel, Blvd. 9000 Varna, Bulgaria</p> <p>Tel: +359 52 677 200</p> <p>E-mail: stefan.peev@mail.bg</p> <p>Website/General emails: https://www.mu-varna.bg/BG/AboutUs/Dentistry/contacts-dm</p> <p>Numbers of annual intake: 75 for Bulgarian programme* 45 for English programme**</p> <p>Dentists graduating: 70 for Bulgarian programme* 35 for English programme**</p>	

*Bulgarian citizens

**Foreign citizens