Report

Flags of Bulgarian municipalities

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The Republic of Bulgaria is one of a number of post-communist countries in central and eastern Europe. It has been a member of the EU since 2007.

It includes 27 provinces, subdivided into 264 municipalities (община, obshtina), and a metropolitan capital province (Sofia-Grad). All areas take their names from their respective administrative centre. Municipalities are run by mayors, who are elected on four-year terms, and by directly elected municipal councils. Bulgaria is a highly centralised state, where the national Council of Ministers directly appoints regional governors and provides most of the funding for all provinces and municipalities.

Local authorities adopt flags under a variety of legislation. This includes the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria (1991); the Law for Local Self-government and Local Administration (1991), whose Article 16 specifies that municipalities shall define their symbols and honorary titles in accordance with the law; the Law for the State Seal and the National Flag of the Republic of Bulgaria (1998); and of course the ordinances, statutes, rules and decisions of the municipal councils themselves.

Information has been collected about municipal flags and collated within a database. The accompanying map shows that 249 (or 94 per cent) of Bulgaria’s 265 municipalities have adopted a flag, 3 municipalities (or 1 per cent) have not; and we have no available data for the remaining 13 (or 5 per cent). We have details of 246 (or 93 per cent) of the 249 flags adopted, leaving 3 yet to be described.

The second map shows the municipalities with published flag regulations (dark blue), draft regulations (medium blue), or no regulations as yet (pale blue).
While most municipalities have flag regulations, published or unpublished, noticeable differences between regulation and practice can nonetheless arise, with vertically oriented designs and unofficial variants.

The municipality of Panagyurishte provides an example of such variants. The regulations call for a 'unique flag' with monocolour versions of the local arms on one side and the national arms on the reverse. A second flag, the 'insignia during representative occasions' displays the arms in the upper hoist corner. Yet in use, the arms are shown partly coloured.
Turning to Bozhuriste, Article 10 of the Ordinance on the Symbols of the Municipality of Bozhuriste (2007) states: 'The flag of the Municipality of Bozhurishte is made as a unique silk cloth of dimensions 90cm × 170 cm. The coat of arms is placed in the centre and is in silk thread'. Yet two versions of the flag exist – one with a green panel next to the hoist, and one with a red.

The municipalities of Maritsa and Krushari have chosen an identical design for the reverse of their flag. Both are green with a circle of yellow stars, both apparently 'symbolising the nineteen settlements' within each municipality.
The vast majority of flags are monocoloured with a charge. Of the 246 known flags, all but one bear a charge of some kind. Of these 245, 162 are monocoloured, while 83 are multicoloured. The different arrangements of the multicoloured flags are summarised below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>One field (14)</th>
<th>with ornaments (3)</th>
<th>with border (11)</th>
<th>a border of three (6)</th>
<th>a plain border (4)</th>
<th>an inner border of three (1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bicolour (14)</td>
<td>horizontal (11)</td>
<td>simple (9)</td>
<td>in base (3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vertical (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>diagonal (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triband (15)</td>
<td>horizontal (7)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vertical (8)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tricolour (6)</td>
<td>horizontal (4)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vertical (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (34)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most popular colours and colour combinations are shown in the accompanying diagrams.

**Monocolours, most popular colours**

**Bicolours, most popular colour combinations**

**Ratios**

The most popular ratio, used in 61 municipalities, is that of the Bulgarian national flag, 3:5. In 22 municipalities, the ratio is 19:17; in 6 cases, 5:8; in three cases, 50:83; and in two cases, 3:4. In addition there are single examples of 2:3, 12:33, 18:31, 47:71, 14:27, 24:43 and 13:20. In most cases, the ratios are fixed in centimetres rather than as a ratio per se.

The proportions of other elements in the design, for example the charge, are not defined.
Colours
The colours used in each flag are rarely described in terms of conventional colour palettes: e.g. 'sunflower yellow', 'terracotta brown' (burnt sienna), 'old gold', 'purple-violet', and 'silver-grey' all appear. The Pantone Matching System is used in only five cases; the CMYK system in another five (in a further example, the CMYK system is used to define the colours but is not specifically named in the regulations). Only once are the colours defined by both Pantone and CMYK. Orafol, 'a global leader in the manufacture of innovative self-adhesive graphic films, reflective materials and adhesive tape systems', is used in one case. And in two cases, the colours are not even mentioned.

Regulations
Legislative texts consider the municipal flag as a unique item, kept in the mayor's office. The texts generally include: colour, dimensions, flag protocol, rules for reproducing the flag, and restrictions on its use. Such restrictions typically forbid the use of the flag in connection with activities that are 'political, religious and nationalistic' (55 cases), 'political, religious, ethnic and chauvinistic' (10 cases), or 'political, religious and anti-Bulgarian' (12 cases).

Conclusions
We may discern a number of trends in the design and use of Bulgarian municipal flags:
- almost all use the municipal emblem;
- two-thirds use a plain monocoloured field;
- the most popular colours are white (c.49 per cent), followed by green (c.23 per cent) and light blue (c.11 per cent);
- the most popular colour combination is a white-green bicolour (c.54 per cent), followed by white-blue (25 per cent);
- the most common ratio is 3:5 (c.60 per cent), followed by 19:17 (c.22 per cent);
- flag regulations are rarely vexillologically based (the construction, colours and ratio are often not specified);
- the flag is defined as a unique item, more like military colour than a municipal flag;
- the flags are frequently displayed vertically;
- there is often a difference between the official description and the real object; and
- despite the official regulations, unofficial flags continue to be flown.

The following pages display the flags of Bulgaria's municipalities, grouped by province:

*Blagoevgrad* (Belitsa and Hadzhidimovo not shown; no data for Gotse Delchev)
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**Burgas (Karnobat, Ruen and Sungurlare not shown)**

- Aytos
- Malko Tarnovo
- Pomorie
- Burgas
- Kameno
- Primorsko
- Sazopol
- Sredets
- Nesebar
- Tsarevo
Dobrich

Balchik
General Toshevo

Dobrich
Dobrichka

Kavarna
Krushari (obverse)

Krushari (reverse)
Tervel

Shabla
Gabrovo

Dryanovo

Sevlievno

Tryavna

Haskovo (Svilengrad and Simeonovgrad not shown; no data for Topolovgrad)

Ivaylovgrad

Lyubimets

Madzharov

Minerali Bani
Kyustendil (Bobov Dol, Boboshevo, Nevestino, Rila not shown; Treklyano no flag)

Lovech (no data for Apriltsi)

Lukovit (obverse, drawn by Ivan Sarajčić)
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Tetevan

Troyan

Ugarchin

Yablanitsa

Montana (Varshets and Yakimovo not shown; Georgi Damyanovo and Medkovets no data)

Berkovitsa

Boychinovtsi

Brusartsi

Valchedram

Lom

Montana
Pazardzhik (no data for Sarnitsa)
Rakitovo

Septemvri

Strelcha

Pernik (no data for Zemen; Kovachevtsi has no flag)

Brznik

Pernik

Radomir

Tran

Pleven (Gulyantsi not shown)

Belene

Dolna Mitropoliya
Dolni Dabnik

Iskar

Knezha

Levski

Nikopol

Pleven

Pardim

Cherven Bryag

Plovdiv (Perushtita not shown)

Asenovgrad

Brezovo
Kaloyanovo
Karlovo
Krichim
Kuklen
Laki
Maritsa
Plovdiv
Parvomay
Rakovski
Rodopi
Sadovo

Sopot (drawn by Jens Pattke)

Stamboliyski

Saedinenie

Hisarya

**Razgrad** (Zavet and Tsar Kaloyan not shown)

Isperih

Kubrat

Loznitsa

Razgrad
Samuil

Ruse

Borovo

Dve Mogili

Byala

Vetovo

Ivanovo

Ruse

Slivo Pole
**Shumen** (Veliki Preslav, Varbitsa, Kaolinovo, Novi Pazar, Hitrino not shown)

- **Tsenov**
- **Venets**
- **Kaspichan**
- **Nikola Kozievo**
- **Smyadovo**
- **Shumen**

**Silistra** (Dulovo not shown)

- **Alfatar**
- **Glavnitsa**
Kaynardzha  

Silistra  

Sitovo  

**Sliven**  

Kotsa  

Nva Zagora  

Sliven  

Tvarditsa  

**Smolyan** *(Devin not shown)*  

Banite  

Borino
Dospat  
Zlatograd

Madan  
Nedelino

Rudozem  
Smolyan

Chepelare

Sofia (Zlatitsa, Pirdop and Svoge not shown; no data for Anton; Kostenets has no flag)

Bozhurishte  
Botevgrad
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Pravets

Samokov

Slivnitsa

Chavdar

Chelopech

City of Sofia

Sofia

Stara Zagora (Galabovo, Maglizh and Chirpan not shown)

Bratya Daskalovi

Gurkovo
Opaka  

Popovo

Targovishte

Varna (Aksakovo, Devnya, Doolni Chiflik and Dalgopol not shown)

Avren

Beloslav

Byala

Varna

Vetrino

Valchi Dol
Provadiya

Suvorovo

Veliko Tarnovo

Veliko Tarnovo

Gorna Oryahovitsa

Elena

Zlatanitsa

Lyaskovets

Pavlikeni

Polski Trambesh

Svishtov
**Vidin** (Kula and Chuprene not shown; no data for Boynitsa, Bregovo, Makresh, Novo Selo and Ruzhintsi)
Straldzha

Tundzha

Yambol