



INNOVATIVE DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT
& INCLUSION STRATEGIES
IN EUROPEAN TOWNS



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International Network Debate European Towns Facing the Challenges to Participatory Democracy & Intercultural Dialogue

October 9-11, 2023
Plovdiv, BG

European Network of Towns
Together for Peace & Prosperity



Co-funded by the
Europe for Citizens Programme
of the European Union



The INDIMAE Project in a Nutshell

The project **“INNOVATIVE DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT AND INCLUSION STRATEGIES FOR EUROPEAN TOWNS” – INDIMAE** is funded by the Europe for Citizens Program of the European Commission, strand 2.2. "European Networks of Towns"

The INDIMAE project is coordinated by the Municipality of Simitli, Bulgaria in cooperation with 13 partners from 12 other countries - 11 EU members and 3 EU neighboring countries. The project activities take place between 2020 and 2023 (with a delay because of the COVID19 Pandemic) and include a wide range of local and international events – both virtual/hybrid and residential ones.

The project is a participative and innovative one, anchored in the social, economic and political reality of the EU, seeking to establish a pan-European network of towns, working together on improving diversity management and minority rights protection in European towns, addressing the challenges of all European communities and most-specifically – the ones vulnerable to exclusion and marginalisation in the local societies across Europe.

Involving a wide range of citizens from different social and professional backgrounds, underrepresented minority and migrant communities, the INDIMAE Network facilitates a dialogue between public bodies, twinning committees and civil society organisations, acting to develop sustainable public-private partnerships to counter discrimination and promote cultural diversity.

Fostering participatory democracy and human rights, the INDIMAE project involves a series of joint towns-citizens' actions.

Within the INDIMAE Network European citizens are working together with towns, civic society organisations, academia and local institutions on inclusive strategies to for further development and implementation of local policies for innovative diversity management and inclusive strategies in European towns.

Web: <http://www.inclusivecities.eu/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Inclusive-EU-Cities>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/IUcities>



About the project

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Dates and Venues

<i>Dates</i>	<i>Meetings</i>	
Sunday, October 8 th Arrival Day	Arrival of participants. First meeting starts at 19.00 in the hotel. Dinner at 19.30 Cultural exposure	
Monday, October 9 th 2023	Introductions to the topics; Public event; Partner meetings Cultural Exposure in Historical Center of Plovdiv	
Tuesday, October 10 th 2023	Expert inputs Partner meeting - evaluation and feedback. Moderated debates. Cultural exposure. Visiting the Foundation "Plovdiv ECC 2019"	
Wednesday October 11 th Departure Day	9.30 Brekfast Departure	
Locations and meeting venues:	Clepsydra Residence Hotel**** TrakART Cultural Center House of Culture "Boris Hristov"	9 Bozhidar Zdravkov Street, 4000 Plovdiv Address: 25 "Knyaz Alexander I Batenberg" STR 4000 Tsentar, Plovdiv, Bulgaria Address: 15 Gladstone Str, 4000 Plovdiv, Bulgaria

Appendixes:

1. Map of "The Old Plovdiv" Cultural Complex
2. Map of Plovdiv Center



Agenda

Day 1: Sunday October 8th 2023 - Venue: Hotel “Clepsydra Residence”** Plovdiv**

Arriva of participants

18:30-19:00 Registration of participants

19:30 Welcome Group Dinner

Day 2, Monday October 9th 2023 - Venue: House of Culture “Boris Hristov”, Plovdiv

9:00 – 09:45 Press conference

Welcome notes by official speakers: Vice-Mayor of Culture; Director of Foundation ECC Plovdiv 2019; Project Coordinator

9.45 – 11.00 - Introduction to the topics of the event from project coordinator. Expert inputs. Moderated Discussion.

11.00 – 11.10 Official picture of the group

11:10 – 11:30 Coffee Break

11.30 – 13.00 Moderated discussion with general public.

13:00-14:00 Lunch

14.00-17.30 Plovdiv – European Capital of Culture – Guided Visit

19.30 Group Dinner



Day 3, Tuesday October 10th 2023 - Venue: House of Culture “Boris Hristov”, Plovdiv

9:00 – 09:45 Program of the day. Debriefing of Day 1.

Introduction to participant`s insides on the topics: presentations

10:00-11:30 Karen Pong – Expert on migration and interculturalism. Moderated discussion.

11:30 – 12:00 Coffee Break

12.00 – 13.30 Moderated discussion on project`s activities and further planning.

13:00-14:00 Lunch

14.00-17.30 Cultural exposure. Visit at the premises of the Foundation “ECC Plovdiv 2019”

19:30 – Intercultural Dinner

Day 4, Wednesday October 11th 2023

09:00 – 09:15 Check out form the hotel

Departure of participants

Getting to the Plovdiv City Center

By plane

International Plovdiv Airport is located next to the village of Krumovo, 15 km away from the city center (about 20 min by car). The airport is served by the low-cost flight company Ryanair.

Plovdiv International Airport is easily accessible by the following means of transport:

- By car – The trip is about 20-minutes-long. At the airport there is a paid parking area.
- By taxi – The price of going to the airport by taxi will be around 25– 27 BGN (12.50 – 13.50 EU)
- By public shared shuttle – Plovdiv Airport is served by shuttle line №2.
- By private car transfer – a lot of rent-a-car companies in Plovdiv provide transfers to the airport, as well. The usual price of such service is about 28 BGN (14 EU).

Sofia airport can be reached from Plovdiv via regular Plovdiv-Sofia bus departing from the Jug bus station (see below) and requesting a stop at IEC - Tsarigradsko Shose metro/subway station. From there, take metro four stops to the airport. Note that buses going from Sofia to Plovdiv do not stop at the metro station so it's only a viable option for returning from Plovdiv.

By train

There are many national and international trains from and to Plovdiv.

There are many daily trains to and from Sofia. Duration is from about two and a half hours for the express ones to four hours for the slow ones. There is also one daily train to/from Istanbul in Turkey which takes about 11 hours. You can check the timetable on bdz.bg

The railway station is located near the city center, it takes around 10-15 min walk to the center.

Rail travel and ticketing in Bulgaria is unique. After buying a return trip ticket, before boarding the train on the return you have to obtain a stamp on your ticket at the cashier. Otherwise, you will have to pay a fine to the conductor or be kicked off the train to get the stamp.

By car

The A1 expressway/motorway connects Plovdiv westward to Sofia and eastward to Stara Zagora and Yambol. It also connects Plovdiv to Burgas and the Black Sea Coast. Other destinations require two-lane roads, such as the most direct route to Pleven, which is the somewhat adventurous Troyan pass road.

By bus

Plovdiv has 3 bus stations - "Jug"/("Yoog" ie South), "Sever", and "Rhodopi". There are many buses for cities all around Bulgaria and to some that are outside the country.

Jug station has an ATM located just outside so you can easily get local currency there if you're arriving by bus from abroad.

Buses run approximately hourly between Sofia and Jug station, and are slightly faster than the trains. Some may have free Wi-Fi. Prices are between 14.00 and 17.00 BGN. The final stop for this bus is the Yug (south) station. Departure from Jug station to Sofia is exactly on the hour. Use the 'See' section for a map of the town.

Get around

Taxis and buses are prevalent. Downtown has a large pedestrian zone.

Taxis (2023) prices are about 1.10 BGN/km. An average ride within the city costs about 6-9 BGN. The taxi arrives in about 3-5 min. Remember to order the Taxi from the companies that offer the best deals and wait for it. The starting price of a taxi in Bulgaria is 2.1 BGN. if you need the driver to wait for you this will cost 15 BGN per hour. Generally taking the taxi that is already waiting will cost you more, avoid them or ask for flat price that fits you! Learn who offers best prices from the locals who often use taxis. Most of the taxi companies has 4-digit numbers on them, remember some and use it if you need a car, for example: 6665, 6155, 6142, 9199 and so on.

Public bus tickets cost 1.20 BGN. Buses don't run very late, most of the lines close between 21.00-22.00 hr.

Maps of Plovdiv are attached to this document as appendixes.



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General Information about Plovdiv

Plovdiv, Bulgaria's fascinating second-largest city, offers you more than enough reasons to visit and then keep going back for more. In fact, what better reason than that 'love' is almost part of the city's name, pLOVEdiv?

In a lively city of some 340,000 comfortably situated in the lowlands of Thrace, just north of the first foothills of the Rhodope Mountains, Plovdiv's ancient history flirts with modern artistic trends. Plovdiv was a European Capital of Culture for 2019.

What's more, Lonely Planet included Plovdiv in its list of top 10 cities in the world to visit in 2018!

- **Area:** Plovdiv is located on the banks of the Maritsa River, southeast of the Bulgarian capital Sofia. Modern Plovdiv covers an area of 101 km². It is the most densely populated city in Bulgaria, with 3,769 inhabitants per km².
- **Weather:** Plovdiv has a humid subtropical climate with considerable humid continental influences. There are four distinct seasons with large temperature jumps between seasons. Summer (mid May to late September) is hot, moderately dry and sunny, with July and August having an average high of 33 °C (91 °F). Plovdiv sometimes experiences very hot days which are typical in the interior of the country. Summer nights are mild.
- **Population:** 341,000 as of 2015 and 675,000 in the greater metropolitan area.





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10 Facts about Plovdiv

Here are some interesting facts that you should know about Plovdiv.

1. Plovdiv is among the oldest Cities in the world



Founded according to various estimates between 8000 and 6000 years ago, Plovdiv ranks right there among not only the oldest cities in Europe, but in the entire world. And this millennial history isn't only on paper either – traces of Plovdiv's ancient existence are to be found all over the place, from Ancient Roman theatres to Ottoman mosques. Established by the local Thracians, Plovdiv was conquered by Alexander the Great's father, who selfishly named it Philippopolis after himself. For the Romans who came after, Plovdiv was among their most important Balkan possessions. In the Middle Ages, the Bulgarian and Byzantine empires fought over it for centuries... only for the Ottomans to arrive and rule it for more than 500 years until Bulgaria's independence.

2. Plovdiv is called the city of the Seven Hills

Plovdiv is built on 7 hills around the Maritsa River. For this reason, it has been historically referred to as the City of the Seven Hills. One of the hills was demolished over a hundred years ago, and there are only 6 hills now, however, the





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name has stuck. Exactly like the much more famous Italian capital Rome, Plovdiv lies on seven hills. Each of these rises a few hundred meters above the city and boasts incredible panoramic views of its surroundings. Still known under their traditional Turkish names, Plovdiv's seven hills with their greenery are particularly attractive in the hot summer nights. Each hill is quite distinct too. Dzhendem Tepe, the highest of the seven, may have once been topped by a huge bronze statue of Apollo... though to compensate the second highest, Bunardzhik, has a gigantic monument of a Soviet soldier still standing!

3. There are signs of the glorious times of the Roman Empire everywhere in Plovdiv

There is a great number of Roman cultural monuments in Plovdiv. You can see them everywhere - public buildings, baths, theatres and shrines. There's a Roman Amphitheatre in Plovdiv that has survived into this day. There are Roman stadiums and aqueducts as well that can be found. If you are a student of history, you will be fascinated by the remains of the Roman Empire in Plovdiv.



4. Plovdiv is an Affordable Tourist Destination – Not only is Plovdiv a popular tourist destination, it is also a very affordable one. If you are backpacking through Europe, you must certainly spend at least some time in Plovdiv. Plovdiv's hotels and restaurants are quite cheap, as are the holiday packages.

5. The City of Museums



There are many popular museums in Plovdiv which showcase so much of Bulgaria’s culture and history. Most of the museums here, such as the Archaeological Museum, charge only a nominal fee to tourists for entrance, not more than 1 or 2 Euros. The Historical Museum is popular as well and captures the city’s history from the 16th century. The Ethnographic Museum is a must visit, as are the aviation museum and the Museum of Natural Science, which has the largest aquarium in Bulgaria.

6. The Old Town of Plovdiv is Quite Something!

Situated atop three of Plovdiv’s seven hills, in some way above the “regular” (but not quite) streets of the city, Plovdiv’s Old Town is perhaps the perfect place to slow down and unwind. Have a relaxing walk among the neighborhood’s colorful architectural masterpieces from the 18th and 19th century or enjoy a fresh local meal in one of the classy restaurants. The Old Town’s cobblestone streets, fortress gates, bourgeois mansions and historic churches give it an atmosphere that cannot be replicated by any other city in Bulgaria or indeed further away. You will enjoy walking on the medieval streets and get a sense of how life was like in Bulgaria 500 to 600 years ago.

7. Plovdiv is a fascinating mix of cultures and influences.

Plovdiv’s position on the main road from the West to Istanbul, on a literal crossroads of Europe and Asia, has given it a particular multicultural character that few other places in Bulgaria boast. As a result, nowadays one can find Ottoman mosques, an Armenian church, a Baroque Catholic cathedral and a Gothic Protestant place of worship dotting the city’s skyline. Shared for centuries by Bulgarians, Turks, Greeks, Roma, Armenians, Jews and so many other nationalities, Plovdiv retains its charm of antique cosmopolitanism to this day.



8. Plovdiv is Bulgaria’s hippest cultural destination.

A lot of talk about Plovdiv may be about its past, but there’s so much to look forward to in the present and future too. In recent years, Plovdiv has turned into a major rival of Sofia for the title of Bulgaria’s cultural capital. Indeed, some of the nation’s prime cultural events, like the design, architecture and dance weeks have tended to prefer Plovdiv



rather than Sofia. These days, thanks to the efforts of its artistically-minded residents, Plovdiv’s bohemian neighborhood Kapana is reimagining itself as a hipster mecca. Furthermore, once abandoned locations like the communist era Cosmos Cinema, a tobacco warehouse and a former Turkish bath have turned into fashionable exhibition spaces.

9. Plovdiv is bustling with entertainment, by day and by night.

If all the talk of history and cultural has got you tired and you feel like getting a beer (or something stronger) already, then you’d be happy to learn that Plovdiv is a great place to enjoy yourself in more casual ways too... whether by day or by night! Cult bars, pubs and clubs like the rough and bohemian Nylon, the classier Rorschach’s Blot and the refreshing summer stage The Tsar’s Stables have turned into local institutions where residents of Plovdiv mingle late into the night. And if you’re into football, don’t miss the excitement of perhaps Bulgaria’s wildest city rivalry, the heated derby between Botev and Lokomotiv.



10. Experience Bulgarian Culture at Its Finest

Plovdiv has 30 art galleries, which showcase artworks from top Bulgarian artists. Plovdiv has the second largest library in Bulgaria, with over 1.5 million books, many of which hundreds of years old.



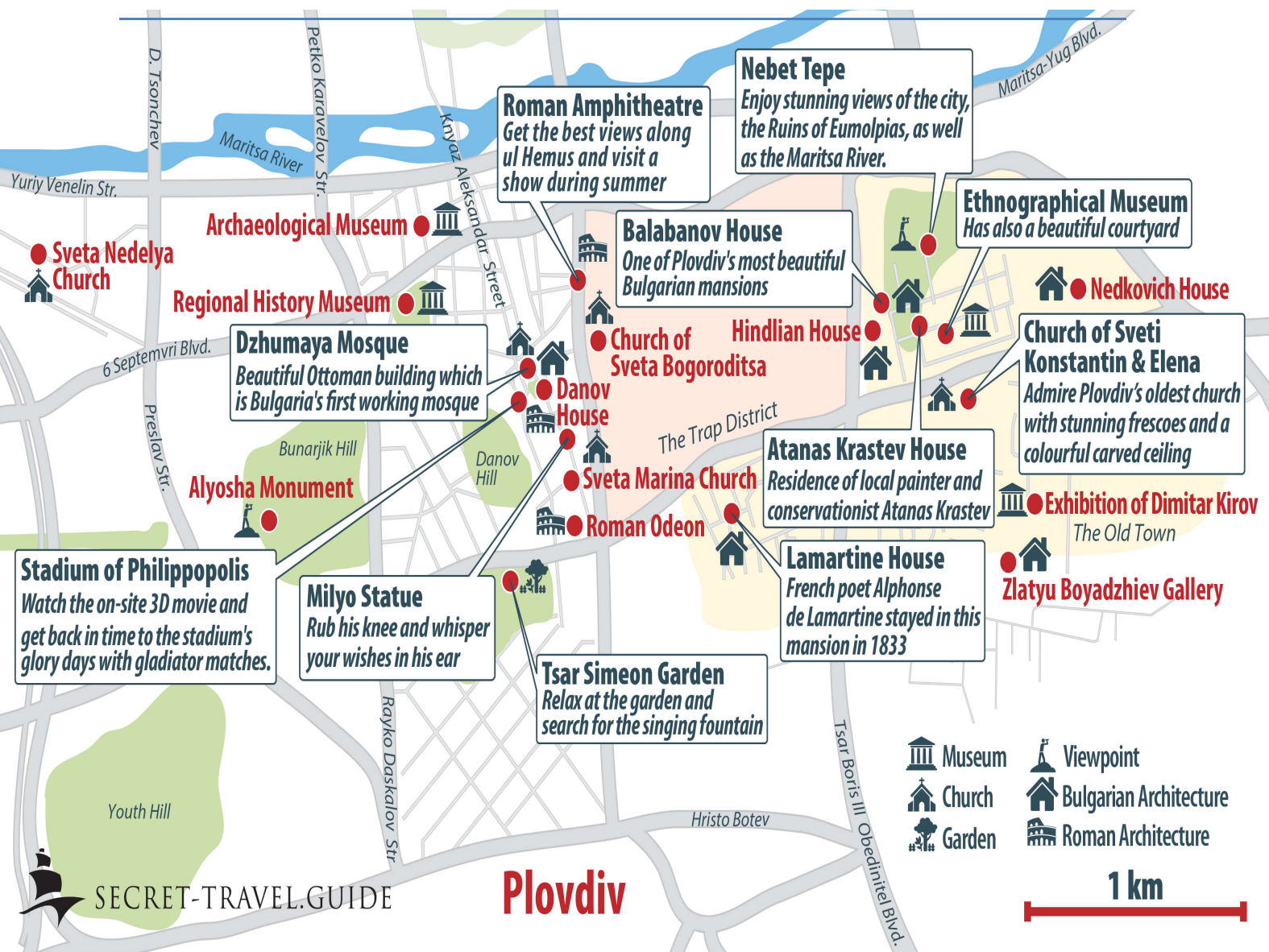


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APPENDIXES

1. Map of OLD PLOVDIV Cultural Complex





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2. Map of Plovdiv City Center with the Hills





Contacts

- Bo Maria +359 896499698
- Valeri +359 894408537

We look forward to meeting you soon! ☺

The RCCD Team

