

Expression of interest to host the 2025 Spring FC

by

JEF Bulgaria

Dear Judit,

Dear Christelle,

Dear JEF Europe Secretariat,

With great excitement, JEF Bulgaria announces its interest and motivation to host JEF Europe's 2025 Spring FC. For this reason, we are hereby presenting you with our motivation, vision and financial offer.

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1. Motivation

JEF Bulgaria was established more than 25 years ago and became an official section of JEF Europe since the Congress of Vienna in 2001. Since then, JEF Bulgaria has been the main upholder of federalist policy in the youth sector and continues to leave a mark on young people interested in politics and activism in Bulgaria. JEF Bulgaria had the pleasure to organize many local and international events, successfully recovered from Covid-19 and is in full force for the last 3 years. What keeps the section in this momentum is the motivation of its members to act, as the need for a democratic and united Europe has become apparent among many young people in the country.

With the crisis of democracy, the ongoing war, the upcoming European elections, the future enlargement and the possible European Convention JEF Bulgaria believes it would be very beneficial for Bulgarian youth and civil society for the pan-European discussion to be brought here via the Federal Committee. This will bring more attention and create interest towards these challenges. JEF Bulgaria will use this in its advantage attracting more young people to its cause and raise its status on a local level in order to push the European agenda in times that are very hard for Europe.

JEF Bulgaria is experienced in organizing international events and has a very positive track record of it. It is enough to ask a participant from one of JEF Bulgaria's international seminars, about their experience in order to best get the idea about the quality of the hospitality and professionalism the section has developed throughout the years. JEF Bulgaria believes that a federal committee in Sofia would be a great experience for all participants and its members.

Bulgaria is the second oldest country in Europe after San Marino, it is situated on the crossroads between the East and the West and has a very rich history. Bulgaria has been always fighting for its freedom and even today it is a country with a great eagerness to become developed, despite the issues it goes through. It is surrounded by countries eager to join the EU, North Macedonia, Albania, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Turkey and across the Black Sea Ukraine, Georgia and now Armenia. As a country that has joined the EU 17 years ago, as the Lisbon Treaty was agreed upon, the section believes that after the next European elections Bulgaria will be at the epicenter of the new discussions for reform, enlargement and most importantly, peace in the continent. Additionally, the possibility of Bulgaria joining land Schengen at the start of 2025 is there. In terms of time and location JEF Bulgaria believes there couldn't be a better place for the 2025 Spring FC other than Sofia.

Finally, this will be a great opportunity for the network to learn more about the region, network with local CSO's and discover the Bulgarian culture. The geographical position of the country is very advantageous for sections from the EU candidate countries that wish to attend and at the same it is well connected to the sections from Western and Northern Europe.

2. JEF Bulgaria's team

The people responsible for the organization of the Sofia FC will be the members of JEF Bulgaria's national board as follows:

Mustafa Hadzhisuleiman – President

Dimitar Uzunov – International Officer

Strahil Dimitrov – Secretary General

Dimana Parvanova – Treasurer

Stylian Rinkov – Public Relations Officer

The Board of JEF Bulgaria is experienced in organizing international events and is determined to help the JEF Europe Secretariat in the organization of the FC. The board knows the city very well and could solve any problem on the spot. Mustafa will be responsible for oversight and making sure everything is running smoothly. Dimitar will be responsible for communicating with the JEF Europe Secretariat on any question regarding organization and coordination during the FC. Strahil will be responsible for all technical aspects and communication with the members. Dimana will be responsible for all financial matters. Stylian will be responsible for marketing the event in JEF Bulgaria's channels and finding potential partners.

JEF Bulgaria's members

The board has consulted with JEF Bulgaria's members on regarding the FC and found they are very motivated to help in its organization. Some expressed ideas for venues and accommodation which were used during the section's preparation process. They are to be counted upon during the FC itself by assisting JEF Europe in the coordination.

3. Accommodation, venues and meals

3.1 Accommodation

JEF Bulgaria presents three options regarding accommodation, as per JEF Europe's conditions, but has a clear recommendation.

1. Hotel Hemus

This is JEF Bulgaria's recommendation. The **Hemus** hotel has a good reputation and guarantees quality. It is a 3-star hotel in the city center. It offers over 200 rooms and suits to meet the needs of individual and business travelers as well as organized groups. It is very far from a hostel experience. Additionally, JEF Bulgaria received a low offer **per person (not per room) for the two nights: 33,5-35 euros** (this is a rough estimate) It has the capacity to accommodate well over a 100 people. Some of the rooms have two single beds and some have one double sized bed.

The hotel is situated right behind the National Palace of Culture, one of the most important buildings in Sofia and in front of the hotel there is a shopping mall, where participants can drink a coffee in the morning or buy essentials, they missed to bring. The hotel is few minutes away from the main tourist street of Sofia and within a walking distance from the main sights.

Participants can get to it via the Metro directly from the Airport Terminal 2. To reach it they should get on station “Sofia Airport” switch lines on station “Serdika” and get off on station “European Union”. It will cost them 80 eurocents. In order to reach the potential venue, they can either take the metro and travel around 10 minutes or take the direct bus “94” and travel around 13 minutes. Sofia has night transport and the hotel is connected to it in case people need to get back without using a taxi.

JEF Bulgaria doesn’t advise the use of taxis whatsoever. Sofia is a very well-connected city with a modern underground system and very reliable bus, trolley and tram systems, even during night time. It is reckless spending of money, creates pollution and foreigners may get ripped off if the taxi is not ordered via the respective taxi app. JEF Bulgaria will give information about the best taxi apps when an Infokit starts getting prepared.



2. Hotel Alabin Central and Hostel Mostel

Alabin Central is a hotel JEF Bulgaria has used during some of its international seminars. It is also in the city center, arguably a little closer to the venue by walking distance. The double rooms there are 36 euros and the single ones are 30 euros. The problem is it can accommodate maximum 80 people and that the difference of quality is much different than the one of “Hotel Hemus”, since it is a 1-star vs 3-star hotel. If this option is picked right next to “Hotel Alabin Central” there is a hostel called “**Hostel Mostel**” that can accommodate 40 people where the price will be 28 euros per person for the two nights. The two accommodations combined make 120 people. (here it is around 24 euros per person for the two nights).

Participants can get to the places via the underground from station “Sofia Airport” and get off at station “Serdika”. From there they can walk for 400-500 m until they reach the hotels. The hotels are a 22-minute walk away from the potential venue. Participants can also take the tram and then walk for 13

minutes to reach the venue. If this option is chosen it will be cheaper, but JEF Bulgaria can't promise quality of stay as it's a 1-star hotel and a hostel which it hasn't worked with before.



3. Rila Hotel Sofia

Rila Hotel is in the true heart of Sofia, it is also 3 stars, like Hemus, but offers much higher prices - 65 euros per person for the two nights. It is here for a comparison to the others. It is again easily reachable, via underground from the airport and then via tram.



3.2 Venue

1. Sofia University

JEF Bulgaria has decided to partner with Sofia University, the oldest university in Bulgaria in order to receive their grand hall for free. Sofia University is in the city centre and has fitting facilities to host this event. There are many other halls in the university which could be used and the specific ones will be decided later on, after JEF Europe has expressed what facilities, it would need for the functioning of the FC. JEF Bulgaria has also taken into account to ask for at least 2 extra smaller rooms, so people can be separated into working groups, if need be.

Sofia University building.



The recently renovated Hall 272 JEF Bulgaria can ask for.



The Grand Hall where the FC can have its opening ceremony.



2. National Student House

As an alternative for venue JEF Bulgaria can offer the National Student House. This is where the dinners (and maybe lunches) will be conducted, so it will be logistically easier for participants if everything is in one building. In one of the halls in the NSH JEF Bulgaria conducted it's MEET debate which had around 80 participants (pic related). The National Student House gave JEF Bulgaria a 50% off offer for 4 halls for 3 days. It will cost 650 euros for everything. This price is not included in the provisional budget on the conditionality we do everything in Sofia University.



3. University of National and World Economy

JEF has the possibility to borrow halls from the UNWE in Sofia. The University has spaces which are large and renovated, but the location is far from the center. Travelling there is only possible via two bus lines, but it remains an option to be considered. The halls will be provided for free.

3.3 Meals

All dinners will be in the National Student House. It has a hall capable of holding more than a 100 people and the building is open 24/7, thus after dinner participants can party for as long as they like in the building. The hall will be equipped with a stereo and projector for karaoke. The hall for eating will be reserved for two lunches and two dinners for 160 euros.

The NSC is a 4 minute walk away from the university. Lunches will be held either at the National Student House or Sofia University. It remains to be decided from a logistical point of view. Coffee breaks on Saturday will be held at the university. Members of JEF Bulgaria will help with arranging and preparing the catering for the lunches and dinners.

JEF Bulgaria's aim is to give participants the opportunity to experience authentic Bulgarian cuisine. JEF Bulgaria's events are known to have excellent quality foods and it remains dedicated to uphold its standard. A catering company JEF Bulgaria has worked with called Pro Catering gave an offer of 62,5 euros per person for two lunches, two dinners and the coffee breaks. There are additional offers from two other catering companies Sofia

Classic Catering for 75 euros and Ariana Menu for 103 euros. The difference is contrasting, because the other two have not worked with JEF Bulgaria.



4. Transport to Sofia

Sofia is connected with plane to every European capital and major European city. There are also possibilities for people from Central and South Eastern Europe to arrive by bus. The Sofia FC is a great opportunity for all the Balkan, Eastern and Central European sections to finally gather without much logistical hurdles.

Bulgaria's railway system is not properly connected to the other parts of Europe, thus any trip via train will take a lot of time and will require more than 1 transfer, JEF Bulgaria discourages this form of travel, unless participants are feeling adventurous.

Bulgaria joins Air Schengen on 31st of March 2024, from then on, all who arrive by plane will not have to go through passport check, like it was expected before.

When participants arrive in Sofia it is very easy to get to the accommodation. They can get the underground from the airport Terminal 2 station called Sofia Airport and get off on whichever station is nearer to the chosen accommodation in the City Centre. They can also get the "84" bus

that goes through both Terminal 1 and 2 and its final stop is in the City Centre. The price for a single ticket is 80 eurocents and a full day card for all public transport is 2 euros. Participants don't need to buy themselves plastic cards, but can use their debit cards to pay in public transport instead. Getting a taxi from the airport is highly discouraged as that is where most scammers are located and the chances to be overtaxed are not small. Considering the fast, frequent and cheap public transport in Sofia, there is no need for a taxi, it is also contributing to bad air quality in the city. All participants who wish to call a taxi regardless, will receive apps for the Bulgarian taxi companies, that won't scam them.

5. Events outside the FC agenda

JEF Bulgaria considers organizing an additional tour like Spain's trip to Toledo to a place outside of Sofia, where participants can see more of the Bulgarian culture. JEF Bulgaria considers giving the FC members in Tartu a choice of what they want to see most of Bulgaria. Currently there are the choices of hiking Vitosha mountain, next to Sofia, go on an organized trip to the Rila Monastery or visit the city of Plovdiv, the second largest city after Sofia and very rich in culture.

Considering JEF will have the Sofia University as a partner for the event, JEF Bulgaria believes it will be a good idea to start the first day with a panel consisting of university professors in European Studies that will share their insights on European federalism, EU enlargement and the possible new Convention. This will also give participants more insight into the Bulgarian membership in the EU and Bulgarian politics.

On Saturday night there will be an organized group for the disco Bar Friday, which is in the center of the city. The fee per participant will be 10 euros and paying it will give participants free entrance and drink in the establishment. Since the disco has second floor JEF Bulgaria will request from the owner to reserve it for JEF's group.

On Sunday afternoon all the participants that are interested will receive a free tour of Sofia from members of JEF Bulgaria.

6. Estimated budget

All prices have VAT included.

In-situ -Bulgaria	around 100 participants	Two days		
		All numbers are in Euros.		
Sofia	Per participant	Total	Hotel Hemus	
Accommodation	34 euros x 100 participants	3 400,00		
Venue & Equipment	0 euros	0,00		
4 Meals	56 euros x 100 participants	5 600,00		
2 Coffee breaks	6,50 euros x 100 participants	650,00		
ent in NSH for lunch and	160 euros	160,00		
Total	96, 50 euros x 100 participants +	9 810,00		
Sofia	Per participant	Total	abin Central	and Hostel
Accommodation	24 euros x 100 participants	2 400,00		
Venue & Equipment	0 euros	0,00		
4 Meals	56 euros x 100 participants	5 600,00		
2 Coffee breaks	6,50 euros x 100 participants	650,00		
ent in NSH for lunch and	160 euros	160,00		
Total	96, 50 euros x 100 participants +	8 810,00		

7. Partners

JEF Bulgaria hasn't searched yet for partners due to the complex political situation in the country and the fact the bid hasn't been yet approved. When so, JEF Bulgaria will contact the foundations and political organizations (other than parties) to find interested stakeholders. JEF Bulgaria doesn't expect a direct financial support, but a relief of a certain expense, like lunch, equipment and so on.