



## **C1 Position Overview**

**May 2026**

### **Position Overview**

Sofia Control (CTR) is responsible for managing all IFR traffic within the Sofia FIR, ensuring safe and efficient enroute separation. The controller provides clearances and instructions to aircraft overflying the FIR, as well as those climbing out of or descending into the TMAs within Bulgarian airspace.

Aircraft departing from a TMA are typically transferred to Control as they approach the vertical or lateral limits of the TMA. Aircraft inbound to a TMA are transferred to Approach with sufficient time to allow for descent planning and sequencing.

Control provides top-down service for all underlying positions when they are offline, including Approach and Tower, in accordance with BGvACC procedures.

The primary objective of the CTR controller is to maintain safe enroute separation while ensuring an efficient and continuous flow of traffic across the FIR, as well as obedience to the agreed-upon Letters of Agreement.

### **Separation**

Separation within Sofia FIR must be ensured at all times and must be applied in a way that guarantees both immediate and continuous safety.

Within RVSM airspace (FL290 to FL410), vertical separation of 1000 ft shall be applied. Above FL410, vertical separation increases to 2000 ft. Aircraft must also follow the standard semicircular rule based on track. Above FL410, this continues with 2000 ft spacing.

Horizontal separation should be no less than 10 NM. This may be reduced to 7 NM when one or both aircraft are in climb or descent, provided that the situation remains stable and predictable. Minimum separation within CTR airspace is 5 NM.

Separation may be achieved through vertical separation (levels), speed control (Mach), radar vectors, direct routings or a combination of these. Speed control above FL250 shall be issued using Mach numbers, where 0.01 difference is equivalent to 6kt. The only way to acquire an aircraft's Mach number is through a pilot report:

**ATC:** LZB451, report mach number

**LZB451:** Mach .77 (decimal 77), LZB451

**ATC:** LZB451, roger, maintain Mach .76 or below

A controller cannot give a change of Mach speed with difference from the current speed greater than +/- 0.02 units.

Many aircraft that are in Sofia airspace may have destinations that are in Bulgaria or in surrounding countries and would hence have to start their descent whilst in the CTR airspace. The agreed levels are discussed below, however, if an aircraft is cruising and has to start descending whilst in Bulgarian airspace, the term: "When ready, descend..." may be applied. This means that the aircraft may commence descent when the aircraft reaches the top-of-descent point.

**ATC:** LZB972, when ready, descend FL180, level by GOL

**LZB972:** When ready, descend FL180, level by GOL, LZB972

## Sofia Control

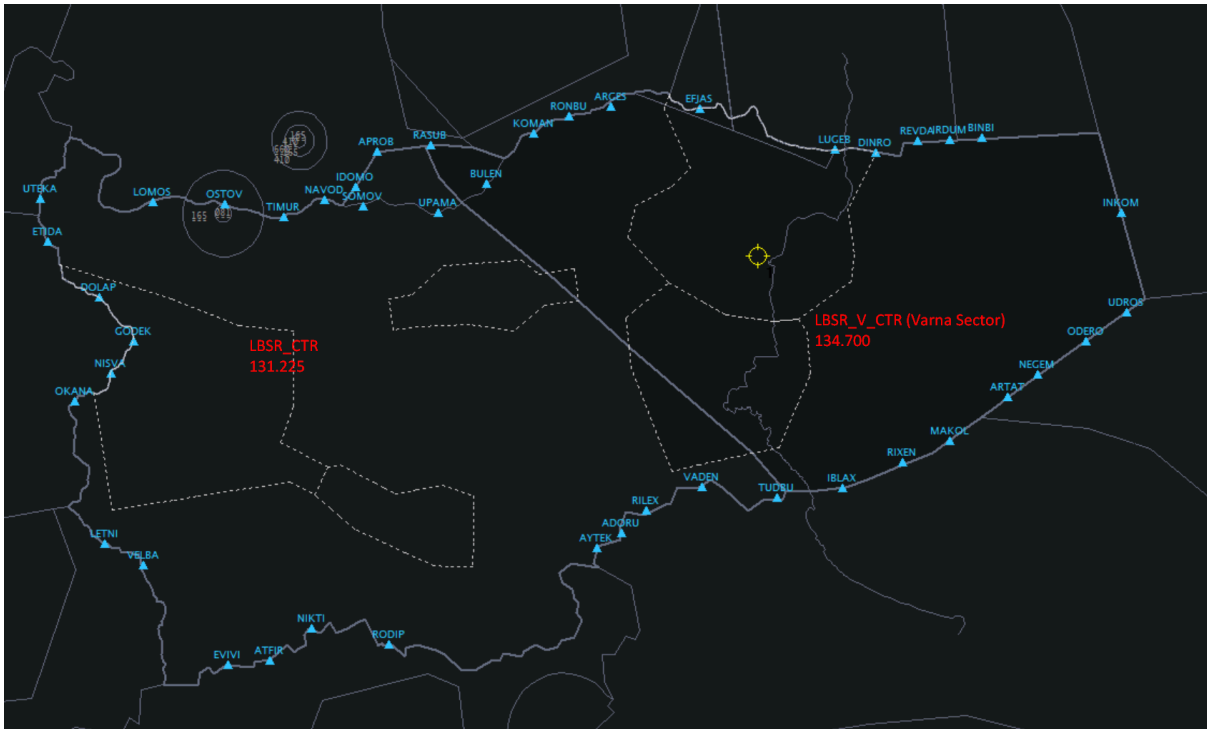
Sofia Control is responsible for all aircraft movements within the Sofia FIR, starting from 10500 ft and ending at FL660. As mentioned previously, CTR also covers all TMAs and some aerodromes on a top-down basis. Sofia Control covers the three main TMA airspaces - LBSF, LBWN and LBBG top-down if local ATC is offline, the respectable TWR positions too, as well as LBPD and LBGO TWR, which are both procedural airports. Any other smaller VFR airfields are typically not covered by CTR. However, in addition to handling any IFR traffic above 10500 ft, CTR can also provide VFR flight following and traffic information if the VFR pilot below 10500 ft requests so. It is then the controller's discretion whether or not they would like to offer flight following services to the pilot. This is encouraged, unless the

CTR airspace is already busy and overloaded and the CTR controller is unable to provide the pilot with VFR flight following.

Sofia Control is split up into 2 main sectors (this may be subject to change). These are:

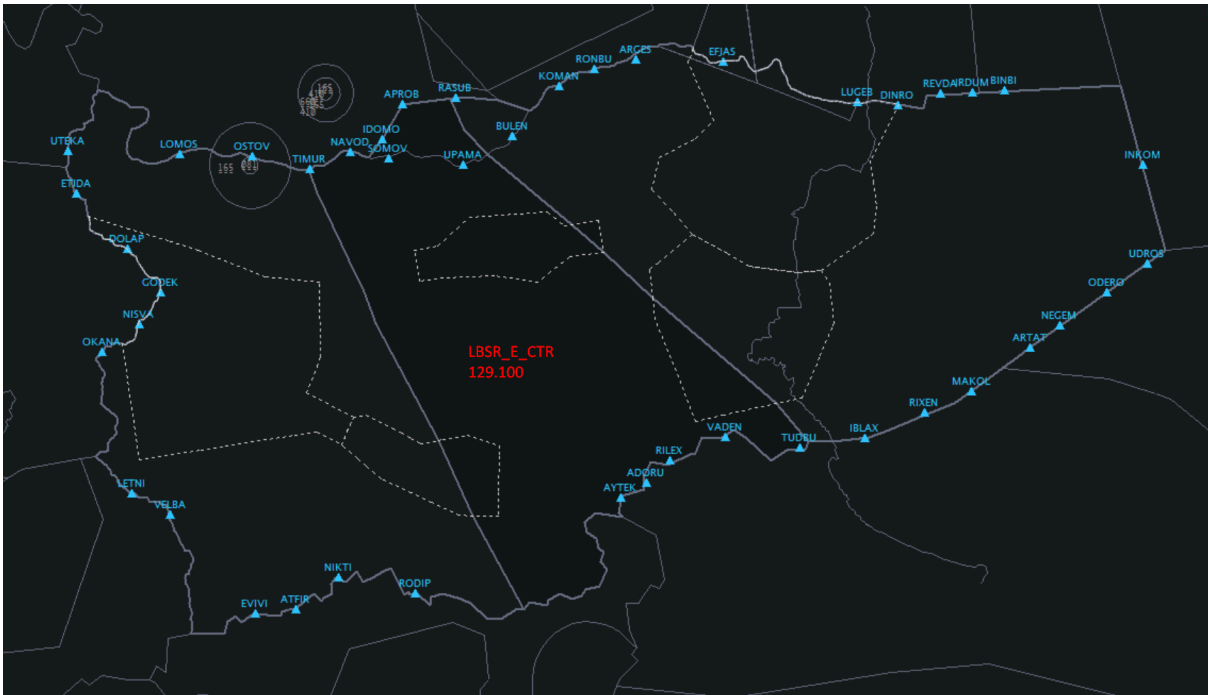
**LBSR\_CTR** (Sofia Bandbox - 131.225MHz) - Main Sofia Bandbox Sector, upon split positions, covers the Western part of the FIR

**LBSR\_V\_CTR** (Varna Sector - 134.700MHz) - Covers the Eastern part of the FIR

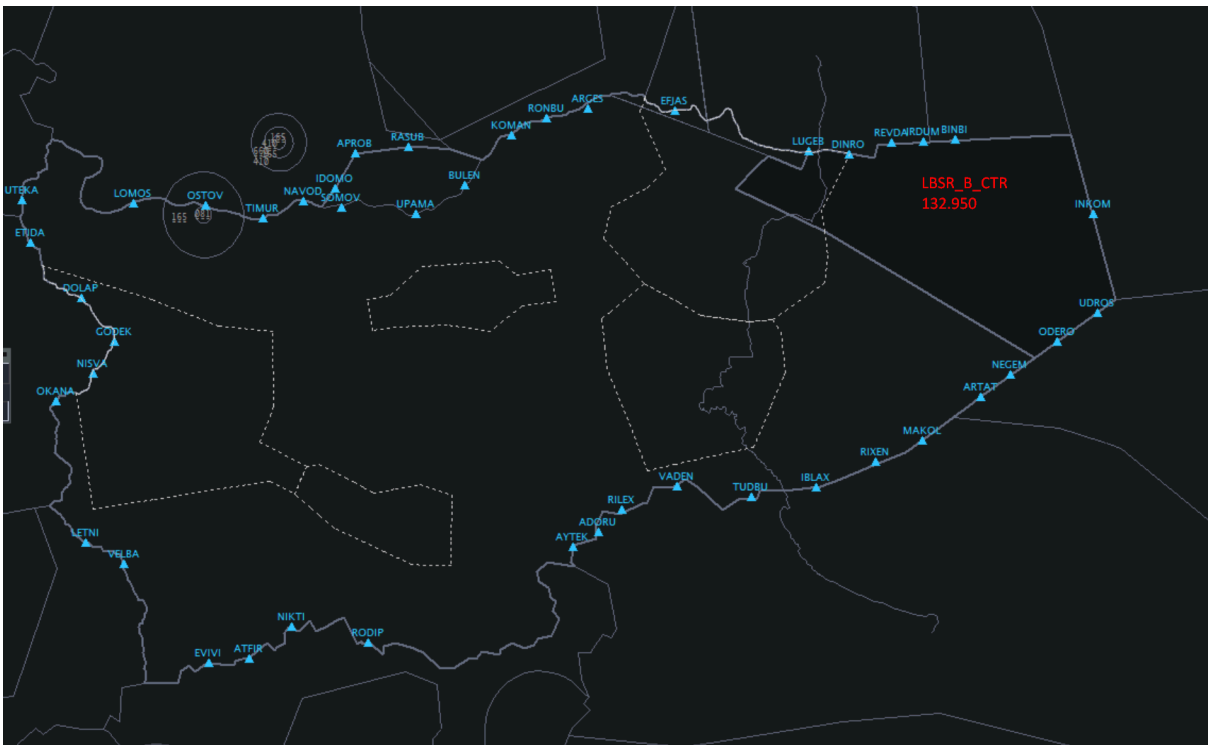


Additionally, these two sectors could be split once again into two if traffic demands it, forming four total sectors. These are:

**LBSR\_E\_CTR** (Sofia East bandbox - 129.100) - Covers Central Bulgaria, the eastern part of the LBSR\_CTR sector up until the boundary with the LBSR\_V\_CTR sector. It is a secondary, split-sector of LBSR\_CTR



**LBSR\_B\_CTR** (Black Sea sector - 132.950) - Cover the north-eastern airspace over the Black Sea. It is a secondary, split-sector of LBSR\_V\_CTR

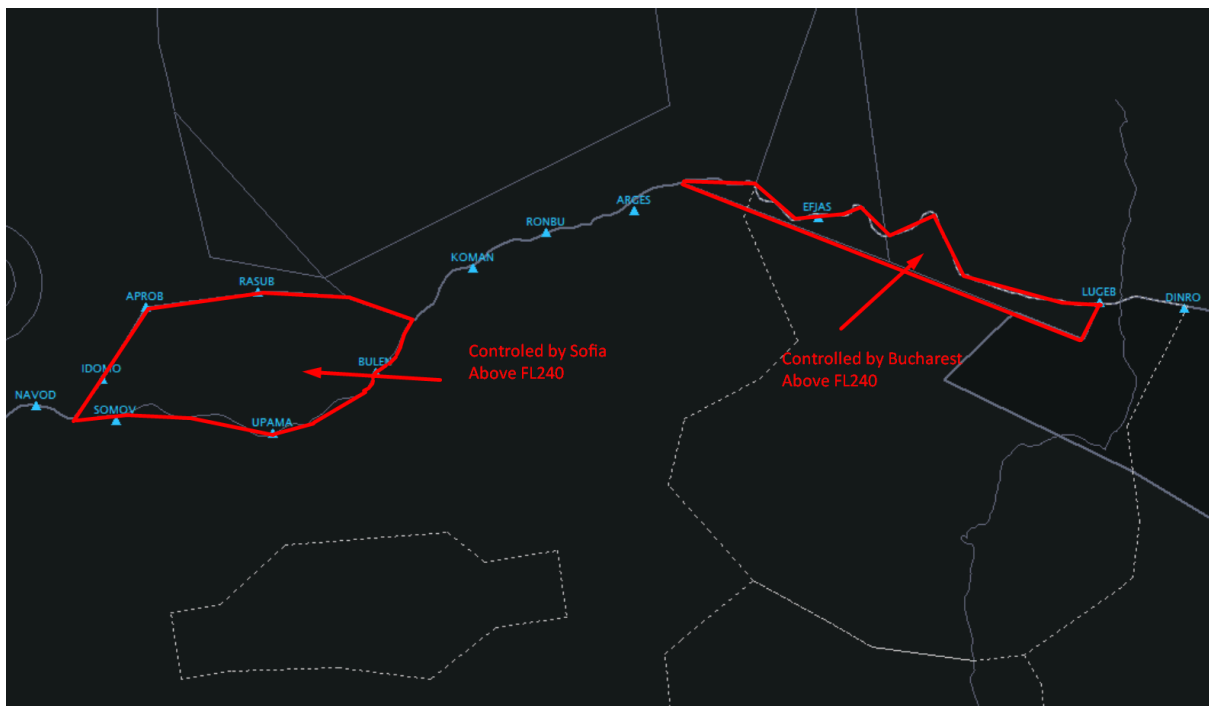


The Sofia FIR borders with 6 FIRs - Bucharest (**LRBB**), Belgrade (**LYBE**), Skopje (**LWSS**), Makedonia/Athens FIR (**LGMD/LGGG**), Ankara FIR (**LTAA/LTBB**) and Simferopol FIR (**UKFV**).

- The Bucharest FIR is mostly staffed by **LRBB\_CTRL**
- The Belgrade FIR is mostly staffed either by **LYBE\_CTRL** or **ADR\_E\_CTRL**
- The Skopje FIR is mostly staffed by either **LWSS\_CTRL** or **ADR\_E\_CTRL**
- The Makedonia/Athens FIR is mostly staffed by either **LGMD\_CTRL** or **LGGG\_CTRL**
  - The Ankara FIR has a subsector (LTBB) that borders LTAA on the LBSR border, which means handoffs can happen into both FIRs. The full Ankara FIR Sector is mostly staffed by **ANK\_CTRL**, which also covers LTBB, whilst LTBB can also be covered by **ANK\_W\_CTRL**
- The Simferopol FIR is not currently staffed

## Sofia Delegated Airspace

Bucharest and Sofia FIRs share two bits of airspace on the border of the two FIRs. These two sections of the airspaces are shown in red in the image below:



The western airspace, between NAVOD and KOMAN, is in Romania, however, is covered by LBSR\_CTR above FL245. This means that any flights entering this airspace below FL245 must still contact Bucharest before entering this area. Similarly, the eastern airspace, between ARGES and LUGEB, is covered by Bucharest (LRBB\_CTR) above FL245 and is covered by LBSR below FL245.

## **Free-route Airspace**

The Danube FAB (Functional Airspace Block, consisting of Bucharest and Sofia FIR) has an agreed procedure set in place for giving route-directs, known as Free-Route Airspace (FRA). FRA is a procedure which allows both Sofia to give aircraft route-directs into Bucharest airspace (including any Bucharest border that the aircraft will overfly) and also allows Bucharest to give route-directs into Sofia airspace. This practice is commonly used in real-life and can also be applied on VATSIM. Generally, when both Bucharest and Sofia are online, they will coordinate with each other about activating FRA, so as a controller on Sofia Control, one must always remember to coordinate appropriately with Bucharest before applying FRA.

## **Hand-offs**

A handoff to the next enroute station of an aircraft shall be initiated no less than 20nm prior to the FIR boundary. A good measurement is somewhere between 2-3 minutes prior to an aircraft crossing the border. In case an aircraft has to be handed off to an Approach station, it is advised that the aircraft is handed over a bit earlier than this, in order to allow ATC and the pilot of the aircraft to plan for the arrival.

## **LTFM/LTFJ Arrivals**

A lot of traffic arriving into the two Istanbul airports passes through the waypoints AYTEK, RILEX, and RIXEN, which are both border waypoints between Sofia and Ankara, and also STAR fixes. This means that aircraft inbound to these waypoints will often descend within Sofia airspace.

All aircraft inbound LTFM will be descended and may be cleared for the appropriate STAR. As both descents and STARs are runway dependent, an active runway for LTFM must always be set in Euroscope. When no ATC is online to set the active runway, you must set one yourself using the current winds or real-world traffic. When ATC is online, they will determine the active runway.

Clearance for STARs must be given ONLY when STARs/runways in use are confirmed by an active APP/CTR controller. You must coordinate this when a controller is online and you have inbound arrivals. If no LFTM controller is online, the STAR clearance is skipped.

## **Other Arrival Airports**

Any other descents into airports outside of Bulgaria are mentioned in the respective LoA and/or can be coordinated with the next sector controller or alternatively, controller discretion can be used.