

**GREETINGS  
and NON-VERBAL CUSTOMS  
in OUR COUNTRIES**



# in REUNION ISLAND

People in Reunion Island won't hesitate to greet people they know by giving each other a kiss on each cheek. They say hello when they cross people in the street. They usually gesticulate while talking.

The distance they will keep depends on familiarity and level of comfort.

The first time you meet a Reunionese woman you can give her kisses on cheeks, if you meet a man you must shake his hand.

Among teenagers, there are different ways to say hello: if there are two girls, they give hugs and kisses on cheeks. It's the same between girls and boys. But if there are two boys, they fist-bump each other. In the street, two girls who are close friends can hold their hands but it's totally forbidden between two boys.

Hugging, kissing and touching is usually reserved for family members and very close friends. In a family living in the same house, a brother and a sister don't usually kiss each other unless they are far-away for a long time.

When adults meet teenagers or kids, they always give kisses. Between an elderly person and young people, handshaking is a sign of respect.

Of course, at work or when you meet a person who has a certain authority, you must handshake.

# in Romania

In Romania handshaking is the most popular form of greeting, not only when you meet them for the first time. Although they are friends, Romanians shake their hands between men, women and teenagers. When a Romanian man introduces himself to a woman, he will probably kiss her hand.

Sometimes men and women, or just women, can kiss each other on cheeks but they have to be close friends or join the same family.

Romanians smile every time they meet their friends on the street. They enjoy when the person looks at them into their eyes during a conversation but they must keep a certain distance: about 2 meters.

During conversations, Romanian people use a lot of gestures and facial expressions; they touch themselves on the arms, shoulders, hands. But pointing at someone is considered rude.

# NVC when initiating contact in Romania

## **FORMAL**

People shake their hands, greet each other respectfully, the proximity is 1.5-2 metres.

### **Men-women**

They shake hands saying, "Nice to meet you!"

It is always nice to smile and start with a compliment.

## **INFORMAL**

### **Men-men**

They shake hands tightly while standing straight, so that they can have eye contact, and say, "Hi!".  
Men/boys tend to increase the distance between them.

### **Women-Women**

They shake hands, maybe kiss on their cheeks, smile and say "Hello!"

The eye contact is about 3 seconds. The proximity is smaller than in men's case.

### **Peers**

At first they greet each other and shake hands.

People appreciate it if you look at them into their eyes.

The proximity is personal, about 40-75 cm.

They dress according to group values and personal taste.

# IN CROATIA

Croatian people tend to be formal and reserved when greeting for the first time. Close friends and family may greet each other with a kiss on each cheek.

Croatians use gestures a lot in communication.

It is customary to shake hands with both men and women, not only when you meet a person for the first time, but every time you meet. It's the same for friends, between men, women and teenagers. In some cases, if they are close friends or members of the same family, men and women will give each other a kiss on each cheek, which is a sign of a good friendship.

In a job interview or when greeting, people always shake their hands and have direct eye contact.

To maintain eye contact is very important when you are talking to a Croatian. Direct eye contact is usually expected and appreciated. In fact, regular eye contact should be maintained, and a refusal to make eye contact would be regarded as a sign that you do not care for that person.

Professionally, eye contact is particularly important.

There are some gestures that are considered rude: for example, pointing at someone.

# Saying hello and goodbye in Croatia

- Handshake
  - used for:
    - introductions
    - friends who haven't seen each other for a while
    - formal occasions  
(business meetings, weddings, saying congratulations)



- Male friends saying hello



# More about greetings in croatia

- **Kiss**

used by female friends to say hello  
combined with handshake to say  
congratulations



## ***Hug***

*used by close friends or family  
to say hello or goodbye*



- Nod
- used for saying hello to teachers outside the classroom



**Wave**  
used to say hello or goodbye from a distance





# in Poland

## Saying hello and goodbye with gestures in Poland



### Handshake:

Friends can shake hands to say hello. People also use it when they introduce themselves and at the end of a meeting.



### Head bow:

used in formal situations along with words (for example, "Good morning!")

# More about greetings in poland



Hug:

Close friends and relatives hug when they want to say hello or goodbye



Kiss in both cheeks:

Only people who are very close use this gesture



**Fist bump and high five**  
These are gestures friends use to say hello



# More greetings in Poland



Kissing somebody's hand:  
A very old-fashioned gesture,  
occasionally used in very formal situations



Hand wave:  
used both for hello and goodbye

# in Turkey



Turkish people shake their hands when they meet for the first time or when they greet in formal contexts.

Kissing on both cheeks is used to show love and affection and people usually kiss each other as a form of greeting.

# Nvc in turkey



Turkish people hug when they have been away for some time. Hugging is also an affectionate form of greeting when friends meet or leave.



This gesture stands for appreciation in Turkish culture.



Turkish people kiss their elders' hands.  
They also do it as a form of respect on special occasions.



Bending is another way of showing  
respect for Turkish people.

# in BULGARIA

## COMMUNICATION STYLE in Bulgaria

Bulgarians are direct but use non verbal communication extensively. They are champions at indirect communication. One needs to observe the manner and tone of the speaker to understand fully.



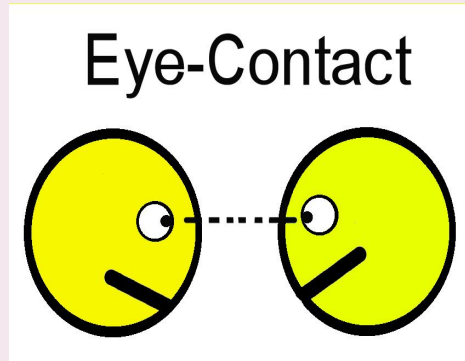
# Greetings in bulgaria

**Man greeting Man** - Men shake hands when greeting one another and maintain direct eye contact. A relatively firm handshake is the way to go. Light hugs are common between good friends and family.

**Woman greeting Woman** - A kiss on each cheek is common if two women know each other. A light handshake is the norm if they are meeting for the first time.

**Man greeting Woman** - At a first meeting a handshake will do.

# Eye-Contact and personal space



Direct eye contact is fine in most situations. Looking in a person's eyes while conversing shows honesty.

In communication between men and women, holding the gaze a bit longer is usually viewed as a sign of interest (goes both ways). Between men this is usually viewed as a threat or competition.

## PERSONAL SPACE AND TOUCHING

Depending on the relationship, personal space when speaking may vary. Between family and friends there is little personal space.

With members of the opposite sex and business colleagues, it is appropriate to keep an arm's length of personal space when conversing.

# more about nvc in bulgaria

## GESTURES

Unlike most of the world, Bulgaria has different head gestures to signify “no” and “yes.” Shaking your head from side to side indicates “yes” and an up and down movement means “no.” This is an extremely hard habit to break and very confusing for Bulgarians to understand when speaking to a foreigner. The best thing to do is keep your head still and just say “yes/da” or “no/ne.”

## MEETING PROTOCOL

Bulgaria is a moderately formal society, which means that initial greetings are always formal. When meeting people shake their hands firmly, maintain eye contact and use a suitable greeting for the time of day. It is better to refer to people by their titles (if you are familiar with them) or using Mr ‘Gospodin’ / Mrs ‘Gospozha’ with the surname. Only friends and family members will address each other by their first names and give each other a hug or kiss in public.

## PERSONAL TITLES

Mr. and Mrs. are the titles used during formal occasions and when meeting someone for the first time, but it is not uncommon to be called by your first name and formality lessens as time goes on. It is normal to exchange business cards at the beginning of a business meeting. The use of formal titles is mainly limited to the workplace and even in situations where the person is highly-regarded, they might prefer to be addressed by their given name. Terms of address between spouses are also very informal and women are no longer solely identified as ‘the wife of’ and addressed by their husband’s name.

## VIEWS OF TIME

- For business, punctuality is expected for meetings, arriving to the workplace and deadlines. However for social situations and engagements time is much more fluid and negotiable.
- Dinners usually take at least a couple of hours, and if it is for a special occasion expect at least 4 hours of eating and drinking.
- When socializing Bulgarians take their time and enjoy the others’ company.
- Sometimes it is helpful to ask the same question numerous times to see if the response changes. For example, when inviting someone out the initial answer might be “no” but if asked again the response sometimes changes with a little encouragement by asking again. Bulgarians are not afraid to raise their voices. Even if they sound upset and it appears they are quarreling, usually they are not and the conversation will end in a friendly manner. The closer people are the more they may actually argue and fight but it’s never taken personally.

# Conversations in bulgaria

Bulgarian culture is very vocal; people are generally quite talkative and enjoy conversations. They feel uneasy about sudden breaks in conversation and although interruptions are not well accepted, they can demonstrate that someone is interested and paying attention to the subject matter. In most cases, it is considered very rude to interrupt. At first, it may be difficult to start a conversation but with a little perseverance, Bulgarians will normally open up and may start talking a lot, at times with several people speaking at once.

## MAKING A GOOD FIRST IMPRESSION

- The way you introduce and present yourself provides people with a first impression of you. Most people begin forming an opinion of you within 3 seconds and these judgements can be difficult to modify.
- When we introduce ourselves to someone, we're saying we're interested in establishing some sort of ongoing rapport for mutual benefit. There are 3 parts to our introductions:
  - the handshake (often, but not always)
  - introducing yourself
  - moving into conversation.
- Good topics: family, and home life
- Bad topics: politics and social conditions in Bulgaria

# in Italy

Italians, and Sicilians in particular, tend to stand very close to each other, gesticulate a lot and talk very loud - features that can be regarded as impolite or even aggressive, whereas people only want to show their empathy with the other person.

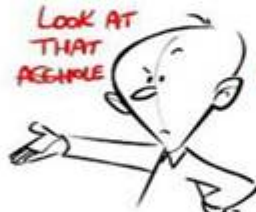
When young people meet, they usually behave like most teenagers: girls hug and kiss each other, boys fist-bump. Women don't hug but kiss each other too, on both cheeks, while male friends slap on each other's shoulders. On formal occasions, people shake their hands, and physical contact is not seen as negatively as in other cultures.

Eyes are considered very important: looking at a person in the eyes while talking is considered a sign of politeness and interest, but prolonged eye-contact can be interpreted either as a way of flirting or - between two men - as a challenge, so it should be avoided.

You cannot say you understand Italian if you don't know something about our gestures and facial expressions: Italians are said to 'talk with their hands' and it's true that words are often underlined, explained, commented, replaced or even contradicted by gestures. Here is a small picture-dictionary of the most common ones.

# Italians 'talking with their hands'

## - ITALIAN POPULAR GESTURES - (JUST A FEW.)



Antonio Gascino

## - ITALIAN POPULAR GESTURES - CHAPTER II

I'LL MAKE  
YOUR ASS  
THIS BIG!\*



WHAT  
A SMELL!



UHHA  
UHHA  
(UNDER  
THE  
TABLE)



MAZZATE!  
(YOU WANT  
TO BE  
BEATEN!)



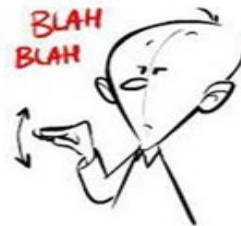
DEAD



GAY



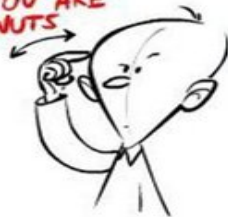
BLAH  
BLAH



FUNNY...  
(IRONIC)



YOU ARE  
NUTS



BASTA!  
(ENOUGH!)



LOONG TIME  
AGO



LET'S  
FUCK!



Alfredo Casano

\* THE HANDS DISPLAY THE SIZE OF THE ANUS.

- ITALIAN POPULAR GESTURES -  
CHAPTER III

HUNGRY



AH, WHAT  
WOULD I  
DO TO YOU!



IF I CATCH  
YOU...



ANGRY



YOU DIDN'T  
FOOL ME  
- OR -  
I FOOLED  
YOU



ARE YOU  
NUTS?  
- OR -  
MY ASS!



COOL



THIS LONG  
- OR -  
TAKING IT  
IN THE  
ASS



TIE!  
(TAKE)  
THIS!



Andrea Casano