



Fulbright Bulgaria

**Emergency
Action Plan**

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the **Emergency Action Plan** is to:

- ensure adequate preparation of grantees and staff for emergency and crisis situations
- prevent or mitigate loss due to natural or manmade disasters;
- effectively manage the initial crises of the disaster; and,
- recover from the effects of the disaster as quickly as possible to preserve program viability.

Our objectives for developing and implementing an Emergency Action Plan are to:

- Provide for the safety of all members of the Fulbright Bulgaria family before, during and after an emergency/crisis situation
- Minimize or eliminate the loss of people due to a disaster

All members of the Fulbright Bulgaria family - staff, grantees, and Board members are covered by this plan.

Emergency and crisis situations include natural disasters, civil unrest, incidents of violence, epidemics or other broad health-related crises, or other emergency circumstances that may affect Fulbright grantees.

The US Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Office of Academic Exchange Programs (ECA/A/E) has overall responsibility for the Fulbright Program worldwide under the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, as amended (Fulbright-Hays).

In crisis situations it is critical that Fulbright Bulgaria consult closely with the relevant ECA/A/E regional Fulbright Branch regarding any decisions concerning the safety of Fulbright participants in Bulgaria. Fulbright Bulgaria will need to decide what level of consultation with Bulgarian government representatives of the commission board is appropriate and feasible based on local circumstances. In consultation with the State Department's European regional bureau, ECA/A/E will make the final determination on any case of Program suspension or reinstatement.

STATUS OF FULBRIGHTERS

While in Bulgaria, US Fulbright grantees are in a distinct category. While as private US citizens they do not fall under Chief of Mission (Embassy) authority, they are under US government sponsorship during their Fulbright award and the State Department has a responsibility to provide guidance for their welfare and security. US grantees are supervised by the Bulgarian-American Fulbright Commission and must abide by the Commission's regulations, the terms and conditions of their grants, and the policies of the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board.

2. EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

1. Fulbrighters should be enrolled in the US Government's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) at <https://travelregistration.state.gov>. By enrolling in STEP, grantees can receive by email messages on safety and security from the US Embassy.

2. US grantees must provide up-to-date contact details to the Bulgarian-American Fulbright Commission for the entire duration of their Fulbright award in Bulgaria. Fulbright Bulgaria maintains detailed contact information for all current US Fulbright grantees whilst on award. This information includes telephone numbers (home, office, and cell phone), physical addresses (home and office) and email, as available.
3. In an emergency situation, the Bulgarian Fulbright Commission will provide grantees' contact information to ECA/A/E, which is required to report on the status and safety of grantees within the State Department, and is also often contacted by family members regarding the safety of individual US Fulbright grantees in country. ECA/A/E needs to be able to reach participants quickly and directly via email or phone from Washington to confirm their safety and whereabouts.
4. Grantees are advised that the standard means of communication may be cut off in an emergency and they should have a back-up plan. Fulbright Bulgaria also advises grantees that they may need to depart the country if a serious situation or crisis occurs, and will receive assistance to do so if necessary.
5. Every US grantee must have travel insurance for the duration of their award. The Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE) is a health care benefit plan designed to pay covered medical expenses for USDoS-supported exchange programs. Since covered medical expenses are subject to limitations, and pre-existing conditions are not covered, grantees are encouraged to retain or obtain their own health insurance to cover ongoing or potential medical requirements relating to pre-existing conditions.
6. If US grantees are leaving their home base and/or will be out of cell phone range for three or more days (on trips outside the country or to other locations within the country), they must provide their respective program officer at the Bulgarian Fulbright Commission with the details of that travel and provide alternative contact details.
7. In an emergency response, the Bulgarian Fulbright Commission will provide this information to ECA/A/E, which is required to report on the status and safety of grantees within the State Department, and is also often contacted by family members regarding the safety of individual US Fulbright grantees in country. ECA/A/E needs to be able to reach participants quickly and directly via email or phone from Washington to confirm their safety and whereabouts.
8. US grantees are asked to keep their family/friends back home informed (using social networking, email or telephone) whilst they are travelling/away from their home base in Bulgaria.
9. US grantees are asked to like the Facebook page of the Bulgarian-American Fulbright Commission and follow Fulbright Bulgaria's Twitter account, if they use Twitter. In an emergency, the Bulgarian Fulbright Commission will use telephone, email, Facebook and Twitter to communicate with grantees, families/friends of US grantees and key stakeholders to keep them informed of the emergency situation.

***All grantees are advised to prepare a survival kit upon arriving at their place of residence. Keep a survival kit in two different locations in your apartment in case you cannot reach one due to damages. Make a list of emergency items you might need, and ensure their availability. Check and renew your survival kit every six months. The kit may include such items as drinking water, non-

perishable food (dried fruit, nuts, MRE, etc.), medications, basic first aid kit, toiletries, map, compass/GPS, extra cell phone and/or battery, flashlight with batteries, Candles and matches, contact list, copies of ID(s), cash (\$/BGN/Euro), rain jacket, sweater, and extra socks.

3. PROCEDURES FOR US FULBRIGHT GRANTEES IN CRISIS SITUATIONS

If a crisis situation begins to develop, the Bulgarian Fulbright Commission will regularly communicate with and disseminate information to US grantees. If there is a threat potential to a grantee and his/her dependents, the Commission in consultation with ECA/A/E may decide to offer grantees a temporary relocation to a local/country safe location.

If the situation is serious and poses a threat to a grantee and his/her dependents' lives, especially when a natural disaster or violence is anticipated or already occurring, ECA/A/E, in consultation with Fulbright Bulgaria, may temporarily suspend the US Fulbright Program for the specific region. The Bulgarian Fulbright Commission, in consultation with ECA/A/E, will facilitate relocation of the grantees together with dependents to an in-country safe location, a second country location, or the United States.

AUTHORIZED/ORDERED DEPARTURE

1. Authorized Departure - US Department of State instructions authorizing the voluntary departure of US grantees and dependents do not automatically require the departure of U.S. Fulbright participants who have begun their grants in country. The Bulgarian Fulbright Commission will stay in contact with the grantees and work with ECA/A/E to find the best solution for each participant on a case-by-case basis. Security conditions within the country may differ, depending on where Fulbright participants are located. Participants must not be dissuaded from leaving a situation that they feel is unsafe; nor, however, should they feel that they must leave due to an advisory authorizing voluntary departure of dependents.

The Bulgarian Fulbright Commission will facilitate the departure of any Fulbright participants and/or dependents who wish to leave the country and notify ECA/A/E of the status of participants. ECA/A/E will assist with arrangements for temporary relocation to another country and other administrative and financial issues related to the grant. If the situation remains unsafe after approximately one month in a temporary location, ECA/A/E, in consultation with the Bulgarian Fulbright Commission, will determine the most appropriate solution for each participant on a case-by-case basis. If a U.S. Fulbrighter has a primary assignment in Bulgaria, and is on a conference/seminar in a country that goes to authorized or ordered departure status, the Fulbrighter should return to Bulgaria.

2. Ordered Departure - The ordered departure of US grantees' dependents requires an evaluation of the Fulbright Program's current viability in country. ECA/A/E, in consultation with the relevant regional bureau, and the Bulgarian Fulbright Commission, determines whether the Fulbright Program can sustain operations under these circumstances. If the program cannot continue to operate, ECA/A/E, in consultation with the relevant regional bureau, may suspend the program and advise U.S. participants who have begun their grants in country to depart. If an ordered departure is in effect, U.S. Fulbright participants should depart the host country if so advised by the Bulgarian Fulbright Commission and ECA/A/E. Participants have the option not to depart, but they must resign their grant award and they will no longer have Fulbright status. In losing this status, participants

forfeit the additional benefits provided to Fulbrighters and have the same status as all other Americans in-country. Any participants who have resigned their grants will need to meet any host country visa rules applicable to their change of status.

PROGRAM SUSPENSION

When warranted by circumstances in country, ECA/A/E reviews the advisability of suspending the U.S. component of the Fulbright Program in consultation with Fulbright Bulgaria, the relevant regional bureau, and the Bureau of Diplomatic Security. ECA/A/E may authorize the suspension of the U.S. Fulbright Program. A suspension under this paragraph would only affect the U.S. component(s) of the Fulbright Program and would require U.S. participants who have begun their grants in country to depart or resign their grants. A suspension also directly affects U.S. participants who have not yet begun their grants. ECA/A/E will assist in arranging reassignment for these participants, if feasible and appropriate. Participants should be aware that a reassignment is not always possible. ECA/A/E will provide the Bulgarian Fulbright Commission with any necessary documentation.

PROCEDURES FOR CURTAILMENT OF GRANT

As noted above, Fulbrighters who choose not to depart when the Program has been suspended must resign their grants. In that case, they may remain in country no longer under Fulbright auspices, may return to the United States, or may go to another location. Any participants who have resigned their grants will need to meet any host country visa rules applicable to their change of status. Participants may also resign their grants if they intend to leave the country and do not plan to resume their Fulbright award during the designated grant period.

If a participant elects to resign his/her grant and returns to the United States, the exact timing of departure should be coordinated with the Bulgarian Fulbright Commission. The grant will be amended to reflect the length of time in Bulgaria. The participant's Bureau-provided health benefits coverage will be adjusted to reflect the amended grant end date. If participants have received payment of benefits beyond the amount authorized in the amended grant, they will be required to return any overpayment to the Bulgarian Fulbright Commission. All Fulbright grants include an allowance for return travel to the United States. In the case of a participant resignation, ECA/A/E will authorize a payment (stipend and/or maintenance allowance) for a thirty-day period following the date of departure to assist with resettlement in the United States. Resigning participants must provide a written statement of release acknowledging that they are no longer current Fulbright participants and will not continue to represent themselves as such. The participant may use the return travel benefit, but must cover any increase in travel costs using personal funds. The participant's health benefits coverage ends on the date of resignation.

DEPARTURE FROM THE COUNTRY WITHOUT CURTAILMENT

In some cases, ECA/A/E, in consultation with the Bulgarian Fulbright Commission, may determine that it is in the best interest of the program that participants depart the country without having had their Fulbright grants officially curtailed. Such a determination may be made when it is anticipated that security threats will be resolved in the near future. When ECA/A/E determines that departure without curtailment of grant is advisable, ECA/A/E authorizes payment of up to 30 days' stipend for a participant who is out of country, with the expectation that circumstances may permit participants

to return. But if security concerns make a return not feasible, ECA/A/E may authorize an additional 30 days' stipend to assist with resettlement in the United States.

Participants may request reassignment in another country; however, ECA/A/E does not guarantee that a reassignment will be made. Factors affecting a reassignment decision include the length of time remaining in the grant, the student or scholar's field of study, the need for expertise in another country (as determined by the Department), and ability to obtain timely approvals (for the visa, research clearance, etc.) and capacity to administer the participant's program on the part of the post/commission and potential new host institution. Reassignments are usually made within the same geographic region.

PROGRAM REINSTATEMENT

If conditions in country improve sufficiently, ECA/A/E will review the viability of reinstating the U.S. component of Fulbright academic exchange programs in consultation with the Bulgarian Fulbright Commission, relevant regional bureau, and the Bureau of Diplomatic Security. ECA/A/E will make the final determination authorizing the reinstatement of the program.

4. OVERVIEW OF THE DISASTER MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE IN BULGARIA

The Civil Protection Directorate-General (DG Fire Safety and Civil Protection) is a national specialized structure of the Ministry of the Interior (Moi) responsible for performing tasks related to prevention and preparedness, management, reaction and recovery in case of natural and man-made disasters. At regional level, 28 administrations of the the DG Fire Safety and Civil Protection are established and functioning in each geographic region (district) of the country. Bulgaria consists of 28 districts (oblasti, singular - oblast); Blagoevgrad, Burgas, Dobrich, Gabrovo, Haskovo, Kurdzhali, Kyustendil, Lovech, Montana, Pazardzhik, Pernik, Pleven, Plovdiv, Razgrad, Ruse, Shumen, Silistra, Sliven, Smolyan, Sofia, Sofiya-Grad, Stara Zagora, Turgovishte, Varna, Veliko Turnovo, Vidin, Vratsa and Yambol. There are defined Civil Protection - Interagency Levels of Command, Control and Coordination in case of emergencies and disasters at regional and national levels. Regional governors and mayors are responsible for the coordination and management of the rescue efforts on the territory of the region and in the municipalities.

The civil protection activities are implemented by units, services and other operative structures of ministries and administrations and municipalities, as well as trade companies and sole entrepreneurs, emergency centers, other medical and health institutes, non-profit legal persons and the armed forces.

In case of disasters in the territory of the district, the governor may put in use the district plan for civil protection and officially announce the state of disaster in the territory of the district or a part of it. Furthermore, the governor organizes, coordinates and controls the process of relief and restoration and the rescue and emergency recovery activities.

When a disaster occurs in the territory of the municipality, the mayor then coordinates the rescue and emergency recovery activities and creates the headquarters for coordination. The mayor may announce a state of disaster in the territory of the municipality and he may carry out an exchange

of information with the operational communication and informational center of the MoI in the district. The mayor can also request coordination assistance from the district governor.

5. EMERGENCY AND STAFF NUMBERS

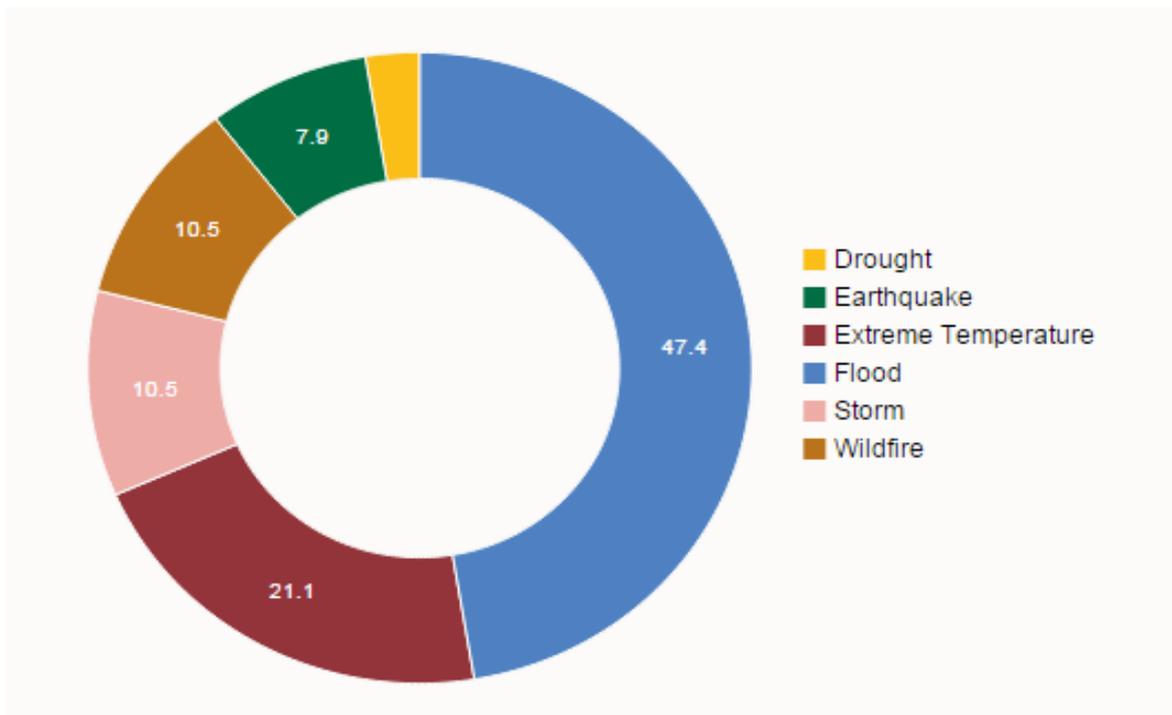
For an emergency in Bulgaria dial **112**. You will be re-directed to an English-speaking operator if you require Fire, Ambulance or Police Assistance.

Contact People at the Bulgarian Fulbright Commission		
Ms. Angela Rodel Executive Director	arodel@fulbright.bg	+359 2 981 1724
Contact People at the Bulgarian Fulbright Commission		
Ms. Iliana Dimitrova Program Officer, ETA Program	idimitrova@fulbright.bg	+359 879 341576
Ms. Rada Kaneva Program Officer, US Grantees	rkaneva@fulbright.bg	+359 879 918212

U.S. Embassy Sofia
Main phone number: +359-2-937-5100
Emergency/Hotline: +359-2-937-5101

1. Please contact your host school/university/organization representative to check if Disaster and Emergency Management Procedures specifically designed for your area are available. If there are no written instructions on these procedures, ask for detailed information or a briefing.
2. Make sure to read this guideline thoroughly and discuss possible emergency plans with your host institution so you know what to do in case of an emergency.
3. Keep important documents (or copies) in your survival kit and another safe, accessible place. Important documents include:
 - Passport
 - Copy of your Bulgarian visa
 - Emergency contact numbers
 - Copy of ASPE insurance card
 - Birth and marriage certificates
 - Drivers' licenses
4. Keep your cell phones charged and carry your battery charger with you at all times.
5. Do not hesitate to ask for help when and where needed.

6. NATURAL DISASTERS



Frequency of natural disasters in Bulgaria, source: The OFDA/CRED - International Disaster Database /www.emdat.be/

1. Earthquake

Strong earthquakes are not very common in Bulgaria. Yet, it is essential to be prepared in case such occur.

BEFORE AN EARTHQUAKE:

- Check that all heavy furniture is secure and will not fall in the event of a strong earthquake.
- Ensure that all heavy items are near floor level (as low to the floor as possible).
- Store all hazardous or flammable materials low and in covered containers.
- Keep emergency supplies in two different locations in your home.
- Know where all water, gas, and power on/off switches are located.

WHEN THE SHAKING BEGINS:

- **Remain calm.**
- Take cover and hold on tightly. Move only a short distance to a nearby safe place. This might be under a table or doorway. Stay indoors until the shaking stops and you are sure it is safe to go outside. Stay away from windows, chimneys and shelves containing heavy objects.
- If you are in bed, get under the bed quickly or hold on and protect your head and body with a pillow and blankets.
- If you are outdoors, find a clear spot away from buildings, trees and power lines. Try to get under cover (i.e. a bench, picnic table, etc).

- If you are in a car, slow down and drive to a clear place (as above). Stay in the car until the shaking stops.
- If you cannot find a safe place, get on your knees and cover your head with your arms.

WHEN THE SHAKING STOPS:

- After a strong earthquake, expect aftershocks. Each time you feel one, take cover and hold on.
- Check those around you and offer help if necessary.
- Beware of potential dangers after an earthquake such as escaping gas, fire, electrical hazards, and unstable building structures. Do not touch downed power lines - treat all power lines as live.
- After an earthquake telephone landlines might be down and you may not be able to make phone calls for a while. Do not panic!
- Move to a safe place and help people around you find a safe place.
- Call your Program officer and inform the Commission about your current position and situation as soon as possible.

2. Severe Weather

Many parts of Bulgaria are subject to flooding following heavy rains. Flooding is usually localized but can occasionally be widespread and has resulted in fatalities. The weather forecast on the National Institute of Meteorology and Hydrology website (<http://www.meteo.bg/en>) provides detailed information and severe weather warnings for Bulgaria. In winter, heavy snowfall may result in bringing down trees and rocks, as well as rising river levels in parts of the country, leading to numerous closures of roads and power outages. In the summer, Bulgaria is on a regular alert for wildfires. Follow media reports and the advice of the local authorities if wildfires occur in your area.

a) Flood

If you are indoors during a flood:

- Do not panic and remember where you placed your survival kit.
- Be ready to evacuate as directed by emergency services personnel (police, fire-fighters, etc).
- Follow the recommended evacuation routes.

If you are outdoors during a flood:

- If you are in a car (or in a public transportation vehicle) and it stalls, do not try to start the engine. Immediately leave the car (or the public transportation vehicle) and move to higher ground.
- If you are on foot, avoid walking through flood waters; move immediately to higher ground.

After a flood:

- Before you leave the building, switch gas and power off in case of fire outbreak.
- Turn of all electrical appliances before leaving your area.
- Remain outside until emergency services tell you it is safe to re-enter.
- Call your university contact person/mentor teacher to keep him/her informed.
- Call your program officer and inform the Commission about your current position and situation as soon as possible.

b) Fire or Explosion

After arriving in Bulgaria and moving into your residence, locate and identify fire escape routes. Talk to your landlord about which steps to follow in case of a fire or explosion. In your host institution, ask about where the closest fire escapes are and where is the meeting point in case of a fire or explosion.

Preparing for a fire or an explosion:

- Keep an extinguisher in a handy place in your residence.
- Know where all gas and power switches are located.
- Make sure you know where all fire alarms, emergency exits, and fire-escapes are located.
- *During a fire or an explosion:*
- Remain calm.
- Call 112 and notify the people who live near you.
- Disconnect the gas and power unless doing so jeopardizes your safety.
- If the fire is small and contained, extinguish it if possible.
- Leave your residence using the designated exit routes.
- Call your university contact person/mentor teacher to keep him/her informed.
- Call your program officer and inform the Commission about your current position and situation as soon as possible.
- Remain outside the building until the fire fighters tell you it is safe to re-enter.

3. Emergency Hospitalization

	EMERGENCY MEDICAL IDENTIFICATION
John D Doe DOB: 05/29/1949 115 Main St. Any City, Louisiana 71000 jdoe@hotmail.com 318- 555-0000 318-555-5214 Blood Type:O-	
Emergency Contacts: Mary Doe-Wife 318-555-1212 318-355-0011 Cell Jane Biggs-Daughter 318-555-3333 318-555-0081 Cell	
Physicians: Frank Smith, M.D. 318-555-5555 Jane Kelly, M.D. 318-555-6666 St.Lukes Hospital- Any City, LA	
Medical Conditions: - Type 1 Diabetic High Blood Pressure Back Pain DVT Right Leg Kidney Stones Medtronic Pacemaker Wear Contact Lens	
Medications: Altace 5 - MG 1xDay Coumadin 5MG- 1xDay Amaryl 1 Tab Loritab 25 MG 1-3xday Lopressor 50MG- 1Xday Altace 2.5MG- 1xday	
Allergies: /Other Info. Sulfa Drugs, Blood Type O+ Living Will Organ Donor	

Sample Emergency Reference Card

4. In case of a chronic health problem (diabetes, allergy, asthma, high blood pressure, etc.) inform your program officer and colleagues. If you are on regular medication, do not forget to include this information on an Emergency Reference Card.

- If you have a persistent illness, do not wait to seek medical attention, as it may worsen your condition and make treatment more difficult.
- Call your host institution representative(s) in case of an emergency and ask for help. Make sure that your program officer is informed about your health condition.
- Depending on a grantee's health condition, transfer to a hospital outside the host city might be required. In such circumstances, after obtaining professional feedback and advice from the medical authorities, the Commission in coordination with the U.S. Embassy Health Unit will authorize the transfer.
- Fulbright grantees are covered by ASPE health benefit plan. Please keep your insurance card with you at all times. Private hospitals and doctors in Bulgaria usually do not have agreements with ASPE/Seven Corners, so you will be asked to pay your expenses first and then fill out a claim form for reimbursement. Make sure to collect all the receipts, test results, and reports for reimbursement.
- If a grantee is unable to talk due to injury or lack of consciousness, their Emergency Reference Card will provide information to those attempting to offer aid or medical attention. Keep your contact information updated on your Emergency Reference Card so they can reach the Commission and your emergency contacts as soon as possible.

4. Hazardous Material Exposure

A hazardous material incident (Radioactive, Chemical or Biological) can occur anywhere and may present serious danger. Depending on the size of the incident, evacuation or in-place sheltering may be required. Some hazardous materials cannot be detected immediately because they are colorless or odorless. When facing a hazardous material emergency:

- Call 112 and ask for help; provide as much as information you can.
- Evacuate the area and stay in a safe place.
- Follow instructions from fire fighters and the police.
- Do not return to the affected area until you receive official permission from the authorities.

6. Protests and Civil Unrest

Be aware that it is not uncommon for Bulgarian citizens to publicly protest about political or social issues. These protests occur in large cities as well as smaller towns. The Commission advises grantees to avoid these protests. Do not become involved for any reason. If you encounter a protest, remain calm and move away from the protestors. Try not to provoke them in any way by taking photos, making gestures or comments. If you feel trapped, call your program officer to inform them about your current situation as soon as possible.

7. Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is any unwelcome sexual advance, request for a sexual favor, or other verbal, non-verbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature. It may include behaviors such as: unwanted deliberate touching or pinching; unwanted sexual looks and gestures; unwanted pressure for dates; unwanted sexual teasing or jokes, inappropriate questions of a sexual nature; inappropriate

discussions of a sexual nature at work; pornography in your school or office; being followed or stalked.

Please be aware that behaviors that might be construed as sexual harassment in the U.S. are not necessarily considered as such in Bulgaria. This may be due in part to cultural differences, unfamiliarity with or confusion over cultural signs and cues, or lack of fluency in the language of communication. If someone is being persistent, be assertive and insist on being treated with respect. *Do not* sacrifice your personal safety, security or comfort zone. Set limits for what is acceptable to you and try to be consistent.

If you are exposed to sexual harassment:

Your complaint will be taken seriously; you will not be blamed or labelled as a trouble-maker.

- Your safety is the most important issue for the Commission. Inform your program officer as soon as possible and provide as much information as you can.

Response to sexual harassment allegation:

- If a grantee reports a sexual harassment incident, the Commission will investigate the situation and contact the host institution. Legal procedures will be investigated and pursued if necessary.
- If the grantee is in immediate danger and needs to be taken to a safe place, the host institution can facilitate this.
- The situation will be discussed with the grantee, and if the grantee decides to file a police report, the Commission will take the necessary steps to assist in this.
- If the grantee wants to suspend their program, the circumstances will be discussed with the U.S. Department of State, Bureau Educational and Cultural Affairs.
- If the grantee wants to remain in the country, the Commission will do its best to make sure the grantee is safe and secure as possible.
- The Commission, in corporation with ECA and the U.S. Embassy Health Unit, will provide a professional counsellor or other advisor to assist the grantee.

8. Physical or Sexual Assault

A violent attack by (an) assailant(s) such as muggings, shootings, burglaries, rape attempts or acts of terrorism, can occur without warning. The unpredictable nature of physical attacks makes precise safety planning difficult. There are, however, procedures you can follow to protect yourself.

- If you are indoors when (an) assailant(s) threatens, close lock and/or block all doors, using heavy furniture if necessary. Stay away from the door(s) and hide in a safe place.
- If the assailant(s) enters your room and then leaves, do not make your presence known, but be sure to lock or barricade the door after they exit.
- If you are outdoors, remain aware of your surroundings. If you sense danger, move to a place of safety as soon as you can.
- If you know where the assailant is and there appears to be an escape route available to you, attempt to escape only if you can do so without putting yourself in danger.
- It is important to report as much as possible about the assailant. You should also provide information about your location, the number of assailants, nature of the attack, if any weapons were used, and if there are any injuries to yourself or others.
- Wait for the police to arrive and stay in a secure area.
- Remain in your location until the police advise that the incident has been resolved to the point that you can leave the area (this might take a long time, so be patient and remain calm).
- If the police request that you evacuate the building, follow their instructions and do not make sudden or threatening movements while evacuating.

- Inform your host institution and program officer representative about the attack and your current condition immediately.

In the case of physical or sexual assault, grantees are required to follow the action plan below for crisis response:

1. Make sure you have reached a safe place and you are out of danger. Call a friend to take you home or go to their place. If still in danger, call the European emergency phone number, 112, which has English-speaking operators. In Bulgaria it puts you in touch with a national network of six regional centers, who can send an emergency team to the location of an incident immediately. Quote your name and precise location, if possible. Other emergency numbers you may need, as well as helpful phrases in Bulgarian, are listed on your wallet-sized Fulbright emergency card.
2. Call the emergency 24-hour hotline for U.S. Citizens at the U.S. Embassy, (359) 2 937 5101, where embassy officers will help you get in touch with the local police and get medical attention.
3. Go to an emergency room or arrange to see a doctor as soon as possible, but at least within 24 hours of the assault. You may have hidden injuries and may want to explore options for preventing pregnancy or sexually transmitted diseases. The embassy, Fulbright and your mentor teacher will help determine the best option for getting medical attention at your location. Even if you choose not to report the case, you should still go to the nearest hospital or clinic. Make sure you provide the hospital with your ASPE information and contact Seven Corners directly by email (usdosinfo@sevencorners.com) or phone (1 800 461 0430, toll free), as soon as possible.
4. Contact your mentor teacher and Fulbright program officer as soon as possible – their experience and local contacts will further help you get the most timely and adequate response.
5. Try to resist showering, bathing or washing your clothes – the police may be able to obtain evidence which can help identifying the attacker later. If you must change your clothes before seeking help, place them (including undergarments) in a paper bag, to preserve evidence.
6. Once at the police station, try to remember and share as many details about the assault as possible. The police should provide a translator in the event that you do not have the necessary language skills and have not brought a friend/acquaintance with you. Ask to be provided with a copy of the police report and make sure you have the name and contacts of your case officer. You have the right to decide to report the case but to refuse to give evidence or press charges. In this case you will be required to sign a form confirming your decision, at the police station.
7. A physical or sexual assault can be an extremely traumatic experience which can result in emotional, psychological, physical and financial after-effects. In order to prevent developing Post-traumatic Stress Disorder, also known as PTSD, we strongly recommend that you contact Fulbright ASSIST (24/7 Hotline: +1-813-666-0012) and/ or a local therapist. The U.S. Embassy and the Fulbright Commission will direct you to further resources to help you address all of your concerns and recover as soon as possible from this experience.

Note on Rape Trauma Syndrome: Mental health experts note that sexual assault victims often do not react as others “expect them to” – while some are visibly distraught, other victims may be in shock and denial and might ignore or downplay the seriousness of the incident, declining to seek legal, medical or psychological help. If you or another grantee seem to be exhibiting such

symptoms, please contact (or urge him/her to contact) local authorities and the Bulgarian Fulbright Commission immediately to get the help they may require – even if you later decide the incident was not serious and prefer not to pursue treatment or legal action, **it is always better to be safe than sorry** and to consult with medical, psychological and legal experts as soon as possible after a troubling incident has occurred. For more information:

<http://www.kcsarc.org/sites/default/files/Resources%20-%20Rape%20Trauma%20Syndrome.pdf>

8. Car Accidents

Make sure to carry an Emergency Reference Card with you at all times. In case of a car accident, the authorities will communicate with the program officer and the host institution using the data on your Emergency Reference Card.

If you want to rent a car during your grant period, your existing driver's license will be accepted by the rental car companies. If you want to rent a car, be sure to:

- Find out if the car is covered by insurance.
- Have all necessary documents including a comprehensive motor insurance policy and the license of the car with you.
- Make sure to ask what to do in case of an accident and collect all the contact numbers of the car rental company.

9. Loss or Theft of Important Documents

Grantees are advised to keep scanned copies of their passports in their e-mail accounts.

If a theft occurs in the country:

- Inform your program officer about the loss or theft.
- Make sure to go to the nearest police station to report the loss or theft of your important documents. Upon submitting the necessary declaration, you need to make sure you are given a receipt with a number, which will be required later for the re-issuing of your Bulgarian visa
- Call the U.S. Embassy American Citizens Service to renew your passport.
- Check with the Bulgarian Fulbright Commission how to re-issue your Bulgarian visa.

If you are out of the country:

- Inform your program officer about the loss or theft.
- Visit the U.S. Embassy / Consulate to report the loss or theft of your documents.
- Renew your passport.
- Visit or call the Bulgarian Embassy / Consulate to report the loss or theft of your passport containing a Bulgarian long-stay visa.

7. FULBRIGHT ASSIST SERVICE FOR US STUDENT GRANTEES

Recently, the Office of Academic Exchange Programs (ECA/A/E) launched the Fulbright Assist 24/7 counseling and support service designed to support US student grantees, especially those who experience problems with depression, sexual assault or harassment, or adjusting to the host country culture. Fulbright ASSIST staff provides counseling and support to grantees involved in a range of situations, particularly those involving sexual assault or harassment. Fulbright ASSIST staff are also available to provide personal safety guidance. Fulbright ASSIST services will augment the health benefits that are concurrently provided through the Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges

(ASPE) plan administered by Seven Corners. Grantees needing assistance with routine health and/or emergency medical and dental services should continue to contact Seven Corners 24/7.

The new Fulbright ASSIST 24/7 counseling and support service hotline is being administered by The ANVIL Group. All telephone calls will be answered by medical personnel, who are trained to handle emergency and non-emergency situations. Fulbright ASSIST staff will be able to provide support and counseling to grantees involved in a range of situations requiring mental health and other support, including depression, sexual assault or harassment, or adjusting to the host country culture. Fulbright ASSIST staff are also available to provide personal safety guidance.

For your convenience, contact information for both Fulbright ASSIST and Seven Corners is provided below:

Fulbright ASSIST 24/7 Hotline Contact Information:

24/7 Telephone Hotline: +1-813-666-0012

Email: FulbrightASSIST@anvilgroup.com

Seven Corners 24/7 Contact Information:

Collect Outside of the US: +1-317-818-2867

Email: usdosinfo@sevencorners.com