



# Newsletter

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## BULGARIA AND THE NEW CHALLENGES OF THE 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY

Fulbright-Hays Summer Seminar, July 11 – August 9, 2004

On July 11 – August 9 the Bulgarian Fulbright Commission conducted its fourth Fulbright-Hays Summer Seminar entitled “Bulgaria and the New Challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”. It was sponsored and administered by the U.S. Department of Education. The participants were 14 U.S. university and college professors and high school teachers from 11 U.S. states. The rich program involved four intensive weeks of lectures, discussions, workshops, meetings, cultural events and a tour of Bulgaria. During the last week the group participated in the 6<sup>th</sup> Fulbright conference and the Fulbright International Summer Institute in the mountain resort of Pamporovo.



Dr. Julia Stefanova, Executive Director of the Bulgarian-American Fulbright Commission, presenting at the session on Bulgarian education



Participants in the Fulbright-Hays Summer Seminar



A class in Bulgarian folk dancing

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A visit to the ancient Bulgarian capital of Turnovo

# STRENGTHENING TRANSATLANTIC COOPERATION AND EUROPEAN INTEGRATION THROUGH CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGE

**Sixth International Fulbright Conference  
Pamporovo, July 31 – August 1, 2004**



Official opening: Dora Yankova, Mayor of Smolyan addressing the participants

The 6<sup>th</sup> International Fulbright Conference on “Strengthening Transatlantic Cooperation and European Integration through Cultural and Educational Exchange” took place on July 31 – August 1 in Pamporovo. There were 54 participants from Bulgaria, the U.S., UK and Romania. Most of them were Fulbright grantees and alumni.

## Opening Speech by Executive Director Dr. Julia Stefanova

Madam Mayor of Smolyan,  
Dear participants and guests,

It is my special pleasure to address you today in this wonderful spot located in the very heart of the magic Rhodope Mountains. I feel very elevated and I'll tell you why: we are 1650 m (over 5,400 feet) above sea level and are about to start the 6<sup>th</sup> international Fulbright conference. We have never had a Fulbright conference at such an altitude. This makes it almost a summit conference. Looking back and looking down at the road we have traveled since 1993, when the Commission embarked on its lofty mission, I find something symbolic in the fact that we are so high up in the mountain, in a place of such pure, unadulterated and sublime beauty. We are also at the height of summer. On August 1, which is tomorrow, back in 1946 President Harry Truman signed the law creating the Fulbright program, almost exactly a year after Senator James W. Fulbright introduced a bill on establishing an international academic exchange to be funded through disposal of U.S. wartime property.

### *BULGARIAN FULBRIGHT ALUMNI ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP FORM*

Full name .....

Home address .....

Field, Academic Rank and Degree .....

Present Place and Address of Employment .....

Phone, Fax .....

Type, Year and Duration of Grant .....

Place and Name of Host Institution .....

*Please complete and return to the Fulbright commission office address.*

Thus where we are in space and time is a metaphor of the achievements of the Fulbright program worldwide. This includes Bulgaria as well. As you know, 2004 is a leap year. It is loaded with lots of energy and good luck. Its symbol is the four-leafed clover. So far 2004 has been good and lucky for the Bulgarian Fulbright Commission and program. It's been a peak year. At the end of 2003 the Commission passed the ten-year test stipulated by the first bilateral agreement and is now on the free way to unlimited growth and success guaranteed by the new bilateral agreement between the governments of the U.S. and the Republic of Bulgaria establishing the Commission in perpetuity. The agreement was recently ratified by Parliament and came into force on July 1<sup>st</sup> this year.

The Bulgarian-American Fulbright community has now almost 700 members – about 400 Bulgarians and nearly 300 Americans. This is a significant figure, although, to paraphrase Senator Fulbright, it is still modest for the immodesty of the Fulbright goals.

The Fulbright office has always been busy but the staff has never been so busy in the last ten years: doing a Fulbright-Hays seminar, a Fulbright conference and a Fulbright Summer Institute practically at the same time. I have a simple explanation for this fact: our growing belief in and dedication to the Fulbright program has increased our capacity, physical and professional, to cope with ever-greater responsibilities and challenges.

As I mentioned earlier in a discussion with the participants in the Fulbright-Hays Seminar, a striking characteristic of the Fulbright idea which makes it endlessly resourceful is that with its breadth and depth it can easily adjust to the major needs and priorities of any time in history and provide valuable help in tackling issues of global significance and impact. I can demonstrate this by simply looking at the titles of the five previous conferences the Fulbright Commission held between 1994 and 2002:

1994 – Breaking Barriers through International Education. Key words and phrases: barrier, break, international education

1996 – Understanding Differences and Building Bridges. Key words: understand, difference, build, bridge

1998 – Education and Civil Society in the Post-Totalitarian World. Key words and phrases: civil society, education, post-totalitarian

2000 – Globalization and Cultural Differences. Key words and phrases: globalization, cultural differences.

2002 – Knowledge, Power and Freedom in a Changing World. Key words: knowledge, power, freedom, change

2004 – Strengthening Transatlantic Cooperation and European Integration through Educational and Cultural Exchange. Key phrases: transatlantic cooperation, European integration, educational and cultural exchange.

The above titles reflect the main historical and political agendas in the last ten years, the shifting priorities and the growing interdependence of the world. Bulgaria is no exception to the general rule. Since the last conference in 2002, major things have happened. We are now members of the Euro-Atlantic community and our national and cultural identity is faced with unprecedented challenges. Becoming part of the present world has its good sides and its sad sides (I would not say bad sides). I have no intention to go any further into this statement because this is what we are going to discuss in the next couple of days and after.

Last, I would like to say a few words about the participants in the 6<sup>th</sup> Fulbright conference. They are 58 in number and come from the U.S., UK, Romania and Bulgaria. The American group has 14 participants in the Fulbright-Hays summer seminar. They come from 10 U.S. states: Michigan, Ohio, NY, SC, TX, Alabama, Florida, California, Washington and Hawaii. This is yet another special feature of this year's conference and summer institute. The other participants from the U.S. are Fulbright grantees that have been here since last year or have just arrived to work in AY 04-05. It is my pleasure to also cordially welcome my colleague from Romania, the Executive Director of the Romanian Fulbright Commission Barbara Nelson and her husband. Another special guest is Dr. Thomas Stapleton from UK who is here to represent the British Fulbright Community. Among us is also a distinguished member of the Bulgarian Fulbright Community, Dr. Tatiana Kalkanova, Member of Parliament and Deputy Chairperson of the Parliamentary group of NDSV as well as Dr. David Hampson, member of the Fulbright Commission Board. The other participants are also illustrious representatives of their academic and research fields and most of them are Fulbright alumni.

I declare the 6<sup>th</sup> Fulbright conference open and wish everyone a wonderful and productive time in Pamporovo.

## CONFERENCE PROGRAM

### July 30, Friday

2:00 pm – 7:00 pm Registration at Murgavets Hotel  
 Conference site: Murgavets Hotel, Pamporovo  
 tel.:(+ 359 3021) 8310

### July 31, Saturday

8:30 am – 9:30 am Registration

9:30 am – 10:15 am **Official opening:** Executive Director Julia Stefanova  
**Greeting addresses:**  
**Dora Yankova**, Mayor of Smolyan  
**Dimitar Palagachev**, Governor of Smolyan District

10:15 am – 10:30 am Coffee break

10:30 am – 11:30 am **Keynote speeches**  
**Chair: Julia Stefanova**  
**Speakers:**  
**Ognyan Minchev** – *New Europe within a Divided West*  
**Mark Kramer** – *The United States NATO and the Role of Alliances in International Politics: Theoretical Expectations and the Empirical Record*

noon – 1:30 pm Lunch

2:00 pm – 3:45 pm **Session 1. Panel:**  
**Education and Knowledge in a Globalizing World (I)**  
**Chair: Gary Ubben**  
**Speakers:**  
**Nursen Zanca** – *Globalization and Higher Education: Documenting “Internationalization” Successes at the University of the Incarnate Word, San Antonio, TX, USA*  
**Anna-Maria Totomanova** – *The Bologna Process*  
**Elka Todorova** – *The Bulgarian Educational System and the Development of New Stereotypes and Group Representations*  
**Kristina Petkova** – *Towards a New Understanding of Education in a Globalizing World: Continuing Education*  
**Tom Manzo** – *Engaging the Learner, In-Class and on Line*

3:45 pm – 4:15 pm Coffee break

4:15 pm – 6:15 pm **Session 2. Panel:**  
**Education and Knowledge in a Globalizing World (II)**  
**Chair: Elka Todorova**  
**Speakers:**  
**Tatyana Kalkanova** – *The Role of Education in the Market Economy*  
**Linda Fujikawa** – *Pathways of Harmony: Integration of International Education and Volunteerism*  
**Jan Luytjes and Jordan Koev** – *US – Bulgarian Joint Summer School of Entrepreneurship: An Assessment of Five Years of Experience*  
**Radha Blackman** – *Civic and English Literacy for Dual Bulgarian-Global Citizenship*  
**Thomas Stapleton** – *Value of Inter-Disciplinary Contact*

7:30 pm – 10:00 pm Dinner

**August 1, Sunday**

9:00 am: 10:30 am **Session 3. Workshop:**  
*My Place, Your Place, Our Place – A Virtual Academic Exchange Program*  
Presenters: *Deborah Smith, Gary Ubben, Glenda Ross, Diana Popova*

10:30 am – 11:00 am Coffee break

11:00 am – 12:45 pm **Session 4. Panel:**  
***Social and Political Studies***  
Chair: **Madeleine Danova**  
Speakers:  
**Kostadin Grozev** – *Setting Up the Research and Teaching Agenda of Transatlantic Security Studies*  
**Georgui Dimitrov** – *The Short Happy Life of the American Sociological Tradition*  
**Benedict DeDominicis** – *International Law and Self-Determination*  
**Jo Carby-Hall** – *Educating the Social Partners*  
**Diane Ryland** – *The Evolution of Environmental Human Rights in Europe*

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm Lunch

2:15 pm – 3:45 pm **Session 5. Panel:**  
***Social Studies***  
Chair: **Kostadin Grozev**  
Speakers:  
**Rosarie Tucci** – *Strengthening a Shared Value System: The Contribution of Human Rights Education in Enhancing Transatlantic Cooperation and European Integration*  
**Chenchuramaiah Bathala** – *Migration and National Identity of Asian Indians: The Case of USA*  
**Raelene Shippee-Rice** – *Aging of the World Populations and the Ethics of Public Policy*  
**Chtiliana Rousseva** – *Media Image and Shifting Identities*

3:45 pm – 4:15 pm Coffee break

4:15 pm – 6:00 pm **Session 6. Panel:**  
***Cultural Studies***  
Chair: **Jo Carby-Hall**  
Speakers:  
**Madeleine Danova** – *Hybrid Identities: Transformations of Social Roles in Education and Politics*  
**Milena Katsarska** – *Reading Textbooks Interculturally*  
**Albena Bakracheva** – *The (Dis)Advantages of “Our Western Emigrant”: Thoreau and Carlyle*  
**Alexandra Glavanakova-Yaneva** – *Reading America Hypertextually*  
**Kathleen Dixon** – *American Cultural Studies in Bulgaria: How to Understand Slavi’s Show*

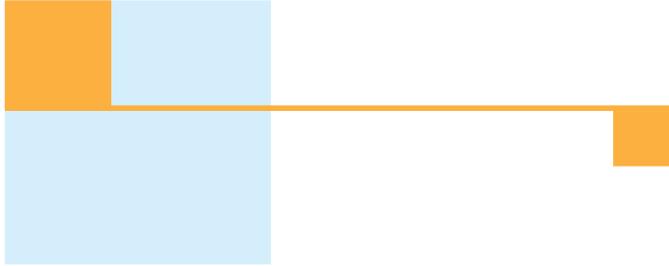
6:00 pm – 6:30 pm **Concluding session**

7:30 pm Dinner

The 6<sup>th</sup> Fulbright Conference is organized by the Bulgarian-American Fulbright Commission, 17 Alexander Stamboliiski Blvd., Sofia 1000

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## FULBRIGHT INTERNATIONAL SUMMER INSTITUTE

Pamorovo, August 1–14, 2004



Dr. Cynthia Norris teaching a class in “The Synergy of Community: The Power of Working Together in Groups” at FISI

The third Fulbright International Summer Institute (FISI) followed immediately after the 6<sup>th</sup> International Fulbright Conference. It lasted three weeks and offered ten courses in a wide variety of areas, e.g. globalization, U.S. foreign policy, transatlantic relations, EU enlargement, negotiation and conflict resolution, Bulgarian

culture, Bulgarian language etc. There were 50 participants from the U.S., Bulgaria, Poland, Romania, Russia, Georgia and Uzbekistan. Most of the students received merit-based scholarships. Among the participants were also the AY 2004–2005 U.S. Fulbrighters and the Fulbright-Hays Summer Seminar participants. FISI 2004 was a big success.



Professor George Seidel teaching a class in “Negotiation and Conflict Resolution” at FISI

## *FISI Impressions*

**Rosarie Tucci**

*Fulbright Student in AY 2003–2004*



Rosarie Tucci and Stanislav Kim, preparing for a FISI presentation

Upon my arrival in Bulgaria in September 2003 as a Fulbright Fellow, I heard numerous words of praise about FISI from incoming Fulbrighters and other participants. Some simply described it as “magical,” while others could only respond, “you just need to experience it.” I was unable to attend FISI that summer, but after hearing these comments I could not pass up the opportunity to attend the program the following summer. After attending FISI, I can only confirm these remarks of admiration and add my own expressions of praise. From the onset, I observed the thoroughness of the program including the unique composition of participants, the excellent academic and extracurricular

activities, and the serene location amidst the Rhodopian Mountain Range. It lived up to all my expectations and I pass this article along with highest recommendation for others to partake in the experience.

All of the participants possessed enthusiastic and lively personalities, as if it were a mandatory part of the FISI application requirements. The energetic character of the participants was evident on numerous occasions. Most obvious of occasions was at the welcome dinner where the dance floor spilled over its borders. As participants circled the floor to Bulgarian Folk music, their smiles extended, even despite the continuous trampling on their feet. Another notable occasion was during the daily meals, where constant chatter caused perpetual lateness to class. It was also vividly present in the classroom where participant’s questions could have easily consumed the entire seventy-five minute class. The participants shared this unique explosion of passionate character, and it truly brought the group together. Moreover, the diversity of the group provided the real opportunity for cultural exchange. Upon asking my friend, Stanislav, at least 30 questions regarding his life in Uzbekistan, I remarked that this encounter was more influential and useful than any 300 page book I could have

read about his country. This experience was not abnormal. In fact, this aspect of learning through interaction and exchange of experience became the quintessential value of this program. I learned about the nuclear situation in Bulgaria as I inquired more about Julie's upcoming Fulbright project. And who knew I would discover more about my own country, as my fellow participant Gloria described to me the racial struggles within Northern America.

The stimulating classes were another indication of the success of the program. Class time began after breakfast at approximately nine and for me, continued throughout the day until seven in the evening. Although one could choose anywhere from one to three classes, I decided on all three. Enrolling in three courses per day, equating to 9 hours of class time, was a heavy load, but my decision to do so exemplified my excitement for the classes. Because the structure of the FISI program allows for flexibility in choosing classes, I was able to choose the ones I most enjoyed. However, after attending three, they were all equally challenging and it became too difficult to choose. From class to class, the time flew by as my notebook rapidly filled up with sentence after sentence of insights and analysis. These classes, *Globalization, the New International Order and Transatlantic Security*, *Dilemmas and Conflicts within the New World Order*, *Legal Aspects of an Enlarged European Union*, and *International Relations and U.S. Foreign Policy in the Age of Globalization*, included a healthy mixture of lecture, discussion, Q & A, and practical and theoretical analysis on topics including politics, law, international relations and a variety of other fields. The lecturers came from various backgrounds such as Bulgarian, American, and British and each brought their own style and intrigue to the classroom. Dr. Minchev brought an invaluable Bulgarian perspective, as did Dr. Mincheva during her thorough analysis of the Balkan ethnic conflicts. Dr. Ryland and Professor Carby-Hall portrayed a certain dynamism as they presented differing views

on the Enlarged European Union. Professor Kramer conveyed various rationales for past American foreign policy while invoking possible influences on future policy making. The other classes provided an introduction to Bulgarian Society to foreigners and incoming Fulbrighters including such topics as Bulgarian customs, language, and history. This was an exceptional opportunity for incoming Fulbrighters to spend a few weeks discovering some of the traditions that have come to define the Bulgarian culture.

Lastly, the destination spot, Pamporovo, provided the perfect ambience for a relaxing stay. Located in the Pamporovo Resort, I witnessed numerous individuals taking a quick dip in the pool between classes, or scheduling in an afternoon massage. For many women, receiving an algae wrap was the highlight of the day. As for myself, I indulged in a day of relaxation, taking advantage of the hot tub and sauna room, followed by a two hour pool rest. As if the resort was not enough, the signature trademark of the program became its location amidst the tranquility and beauty of the Rhodopian Mountains. Despite my full class schedule, I still managed to go on 5 jogs in 7 days simply because it was too tempting not to discover and experience the nature and beautiful view. I was certainly never alone as the pathway was filled with other spectators enjoying the splendor of the mountain range. This impression of spectacular beauty was confirmed by others as I listened to them tell me of their 3 hour hikes to the tower, or their 5 am morning walks.

The combination of these three elements, the enthusiastic and diverse composition of the participants, the challenging classes and stimulating professors, and the serene and majestic location of the program, truly created this "magical" experience as once described to me. In the end, to understand FISI's magic, I did "just need to experience it."

## Stanislav A. Kim

### *Westminster International University in Tashkent, Uzbekistan*



At this moment, upon completion of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Fulbright International Summer Institute (FISI) I can surely state that FISI is a unique academic and cultural program, as it includes intensive studies on politics, international relations and culture taught by distinguished American, European and Bulgarian professors and rich cultural program, which includes trips to natural and historical sites, concerts and ethnic evenings and very importantly a great opportunity for social interaction with people from all over the world.

First of all, I would mention that my Bulgarian experience started not with FISI, although it certainly was main reason of my arrival in Bulgaria, but with the 6<sup>th</sup> Fulbright Conference (Strengthening Transatlantic Cooperation and European Integration through Educational and Cultural Exchange), which was held in Pamporovo from July 31 to August 1, 2004. The Bulgarian-American Fulbright Commission kindly agreed to let me attend the Conference, as I arrived in Bulgaria 4 days before the Fulbright International Summer Institute due to the only weekly flight to Bulgaria from Tashkent. Within the framework of the Conference around 50 distinguished scholars and educators discussed the role of education and

academic exchanges, patterns of transatlantic interactions in the context of EU enlargement, challenges of intercultural communication, international cooperation in the Black sea region, national identity and migration, the role of the humanities and the media in the formation of cultural identities as well as many other issues related to the main theme. Apart from highly interesting and useful discussions, it was remarkable to get acquainted with scholars themselves and talk about the variety of topics. The fact that the professors demonstrated profound interest in Uzbekistan and recent developments in basically all spheres of social life was quite surprising to me, but I believe that I managed to satisfy the interest and expand their knowledge about my home country.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Fulbright International Summer Institute, which followed the 6<sup>th</sup> Fulbright Conference was also held in the renowned mountain resort of Pamporovo, which is located in the heart of the legendary Rhodope Mountains, about a hundred miles southeast of Bulgaria's capital city of Sofia. The FISI 2004 took place from August 2 till August 14 and offered courses in international relations, law, social and cultural studies. The Fulbright grantees, university faculty, undergraduate and graduate students from 7 countries of the world (Bulgaria, USA, Poland, Russia, Georgia, UK and Uzbekistan) participated in the Institute and composed a unique combination of cultures, where every participant had a lot to share, learn and discover. It is important to note the admirable quality of FISI lectures: I attended 5 courses over two weeks, as they were extremely interesting and valuable, although initially I had signed up for 3. During the first week I attended the following courses:

- International relations and U.S. foreign policy in the age of globalization

The course was delivered by Professor Mark Kramer from Harvard University, USA and provided an overview of American foreign policy and the international system in the post-Cold War era. We studied theoretical implications of international relations, cases of military intervention as well as non-intervention, the role of United Nations, North-Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), European Union and other organizations in the international system. The limitations on US foreign policy were covered and the role of the United States on international arena was assessed. Students were given a final examination at the end of the course and we together with Rosarie Ticci (Fulbright alumna, USA) produced a presentation on the major domestic and international constraints on US foreign policy over the past 15 years. It should be noted that Professor Kramer was always willing to answer any questions outside the classroom and many of his students, including me, gathered in the restaurant during the dinner and discussed the topic for a couple of hours. This really helped to analyze the material and expand the knowledge in the field of international relations.

- Legal aspects of an enlarged European Union

Professor Jo Carby-Hall from University of Hull, UK and Dr. Diane Ryland from University of Lincoln, UK had excellently taught a very informative course on legal aspects of European Union. The lectures significantly expanded my knowledge about the European Union and particularly covered the European Union EU structure. The course was very interactive and revealed how legal studies can be informative and at the same time entertaining.

- Globalization, the new international order and transatlantic security

Dr. Ognyan Minchev, from Sofia University, Bulgaria led the course, which covered world politics, the stages of globalization, and the impact of globalization on

the new international order. In addition, the role of international institutions in the world order was emphasized. It was a very interesting course, which provided a lot of information for further analysis on international relations.

- Theories of ethnic conflict

The course, delivered by Dr. Lyubov Mincheva from Sofia University, Bulgaria was focused on major theories and ethnic conflicts as well as peaceful settlements in the Balkans and Central Africa. It incorporated ethnopolitical conflict, trends in conflict development in the post-Cold War era, nature and potential of conflict, international approaches to conflict management and techniques for conflict transformation.

The Fulbright staff had organized a trip to Trigrad and the Yagodina Cave that weekend and I was fascinated by the magnificence of Rhodope Mountains and fabulous Caves. I also would like mention that it was incredible to learn Bulgarian dances and listen to unique folk music during the warm dinners. During the second FISU week I participated in the following courses:

- Negotiation and conflict resolution

The negotiation and conflict resolution course with Prof. George Siedel from University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, USA was very interactive, as we learnt through role plays. The topics covered negotiation strategies, a legal and ethical framework for negotiation, traps that may arise during negotiation and cross-cultural negotiation. The exercises taught us to identify common interests, build reliable relations and manage the negotiation to the benefit of both parties. I am disposed to think that this course will be of great value in my future career as a lawyer.

- Intercultural and international communication: Challenges for global Interaction in the 21st century

The course was delivered by Dr. Noemi Marin from Florida Atlantic University, USA and covered the

most important concepts, challenges, and strategies related to intercultural and international communication in the new contexts of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Dr. Marin thoroughly analyzed the differences and similarities between cultures and at the same time the students with distinct cultural backgrounds contributed to the course by sharing their thoughts on the topic.

An open and friendly atmosphere of attendees and lecturers resulted in pleasant and informative conversations after the lectures in the hotel's restaurant, lobby as well as swimming pool. It was

really enjoyable to observe people with diverse educational, social and cultural backgrounds making friends and I am convinced many of us had created long-lasting friendly ties.

The FISU 2004 has been a very rewarding experience and I would like to express my sincerest appreciation to the Bulgarian-American Fulbright Commission, the Public Affairs Section of the United States Embassy in Tashkent and the Bulgarian Embassy in Uzbekistan for rendering great assistance on my way to the Fulbright International Summer Institute.

### Mariya Nikolova *Vassar College, NY, USA*



Mariya Nikolova (in the middle) with Dr. Diane Ryland and Prof. Jo Carby-Hall from Great Britain

I have started to write this article way too many times to make it catchy and interesting. However, not my writing skills but the article topic is of actual importance here.

FISU 2004 is one of those summer experiences, which combines intellectual challenge with international awareness and culture appreciation. As such, it has been the highlight of my summer and has brought a lot of perspectives into my own studies and activities.

The two main aspects of FISU 2004, which made it unique for a summer seminar in Bulgaria, were the diversity of courses in the social sciences and the remarkable competency of the professors. While in Pamporovo, I was able to take seminars on foreign policy, conflict resolution, European Law, globalization, and ethnic conflict. This is a wide range of political and economic topics, many of which are not readily available in some university/liberal arts educational systems. In addition to those courses, seminars in multicultural communication and teaching strategies were taught and that provided a completely different sphere of interests for the FISU participants. The topics of the seminars allowed for a wonderful blend of perspectives on certain issues. It was fascinating to have the ethnic conflict background as a preparation for a simulation on the Cyprus conflict or discuss the prisoner's dilemma in conflict negotiation strategies. Finally, the seminars were well balanced with the rest of the daily activities, so one could always extend class discussions in the nearby café or over a walk around the beautiful mountains.

The flexibility, professionalism, and dedication of the professors made the FISU 2004 classes more than just an academic experience. I was impressed at the number of renowned scholars who taught us

over those two weeks! It was one of my reasons to choose to do FIS I 2004 and it was the best aspect of the program. I had the chance to be in the classes of and talk to Prof. Jo-Carby Hall and Prof. Diane Ryland from University of Hull in London, Dr. Dinko Dinkov from the University of National and World Economy in Sofia, and Prof. George Siedel from University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. They were all extremely approachable people and were always ready to elaborate on the issues we discussed. During my free time at Pamporovo I often had the chance to talk to them informally and that made my academic experience all the more worthwhile, since I learned a lot about out-of-class topics from our conversations.

While the courses were crucial to the success of FIS I 2004, the people were the ones who really turned it into a memorable experience. In the bus on the way to Pamporovo, I had already met most people, but later, during the welcoming dinner, the outdoor activities, and the casual talks, I got to know them much better and truly enjoyed my time with them. The most amazing thing was the fact that people of all ages and backgrounds came together and appreciated their interaction with each other. My roommate, for example, was about twenty years older than me and we had almost nothing in

common but we learned a lot about each other and enjoyed every minute of our time together! I also learned a lot about myself through her. My closest people on the program were all from different countries: Bulgaria, USA, India...and we spent hours talking about our own stories and expectations. FIS I brought all of us together and gave us a chance to see ourselves through the others.

Of course, I couldn't talk about FIS I without pointing out the amazing conditions and free-time activities it offered. I am thinking of hikes, exploring caves, playing basketball, and swimming. I am thinking of the beautiful and comfortable rooms in hotel "Murgavets" and hotel "Prespa" and the Sky Bar. I am thinking of the delicious buffet meals. And, of course, I am thinking of the "Chewermeto" goodbye-dinner, which I could not attend but heard was the culmination of the program. I can't really imagine FIS I without those "extras." The FIS I staff is to be blamed for this success! I doubt there was a better way of putting things together for this summer seminar and I greatly appreciated the opportunity to be part of it. I am sure I will keep in touch with the people from FIS I 2004 and maybe even see them again next year! Because I am definitely coming back!!

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Wednesdays 9.00 am – 1.30 pm  
Every 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Friday 9.00 am – 1.30 pm  
Every 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday 1.30 pm – 6.00 pm  
Every 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday 9.00 am – 1.30 pm

**INFORMATION**

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## Fulbright Office News

### CULTURAL ORIENTATION FOR AMERICAN FULBRIGHT GRANTEES



U.S. Ambassador James Pardew opening the Orientation Program

The cultural orientation for the AY 2005–06 American Fulbright grantees was held at the Fulbright Commission office on September 28–30, 2004. It was officially opened by James Pardew, Ambassador of the United States of America to the Republic of Bulgaria.

The orientation was a three-day program including lectures, discussions and a one-day trip to the historic Rila Monastery. Most of the presenters were Bulgarian Fulbright alumni.



The orientation program focused on the following topics:

1. Regional characteristics of Bulgarian culture: Slavic, Balkan and European components.
2. Bulgaria today: political and economic issues in the context of EU integration and NATO membership.
3. The Bulgarian educational system: traditions, reforms and global trends.
4. U.S. involvement in Bulgarian economic and political development today.

### PRE-DEPARTURE ORIENTATION FOR BULGARIAN STUDENTS



Senior high school students from Plovdiv, the second largest city in Bulgaria

This year the advising center of the Fulbright Commission in Plovdiv again tried to help its advisees better prepare for their trip to the U.S. Educational adviser Cheresha Chelebieva organized a one-day pre-departure orientation during which she talked to students admitted to Williams College, MA, Dickinson College, PA, Hamilton College, NY, Bard College, NY etc. The many topics that she focused on were American culture and college life, American values, egalitarianism and individualism, political correctness, prejudices, stereotypes, personal space and privacy, American holidays, visa applications etc. She emphasized that college life may be challenging and demanding but it should also be richly rewarding and, ultimately, fun.

## 2005–2006 FULBRIGHT GRANTS COMPETITION

The Bulgarian-American Commission for Educational Exchange is pleased to announce the 2005–2006 competition for:

Fulbright senior scholar grants	– five months for research and lecturing
Fulbright graduate study grants	– ten months for Master's, Ph.D. and non-degree programs
Fulbright – University of Oklahoma grant	– two year MBA program
Hubert H. Humphrey fellowships	– one year mid-career professional development

**University professors, researchers, university graduates and mid-career professionals are invited to compete for the respective program.**

### ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- Bulgarian citizenship.
- Applicants for graduate study grants must hold at least a Bachelor's degree.
- Applicants for senior scholar grants must hold a Doctoral (Ph.D.) degree.
- Valid scores on TOEFL, GRE, GMAT, where applicable.
- Applicants for graduate study grants should be under 40 years of age.
- Applicants already studying in the U.S. are ineligible to apply for grants.

**Candidates will be considered without regard to race, color, religion, or sex.**

**More details and application forms can be obtained** at the Bulgarian-American Commission for Educational Exchange "Fulbright" starting August 2, 2004 or from the INTERNET site sub-links:

- **Fulbright Grants for Bulgarian Citizens (Graduate Students and Senior Scholars)**
- **Hubert H. Humphrey Program**

**Head office address:** Sofia, 17, Alexander Stamboliiski Blvd., 1<sup>st</sup> floor, Rooms # 9, # 15.

**Visiting hours:** Monday–Friday, 2:00p.m. – 4:00p.m., tel. (02) 980 8212 or (02) 981 6830

### Regional offices:

Plovdiv 4000,	42 Knyaz Alexander I <sup>st</sup> ,	tel. (032) 272 866
Bourgas 8000,	21-a Makedonia St.,	tel. (056) 801 490
Rousse 7017,	University of Rousse, 38 Riga St.,	tel. (082) 846 106
Varna 9007,	Varna University of Economics – 2 <sup>nd</sup> Building, 24 Evlogi Georgiev St., Office 105A,	tel. (052) 660 132
Stara Zagora 6010,	Trakiiski University, 9 Armeiska St., DIPKU, Office 121,	tel. (042) 601 563
Veliko Turnovo	5000, University of Veliko Turnovo, Main Campus, Office 524,	tel. (062) 639 929
Sliven 8800,	Technical University – Sliven, 59 Bourgasko shosse Blvd.,	tel. (044) 667 545
Smolyan 4700,	85 Bulgaria Blvd., Office 101,	tel. (0301) 63 680

**Deadline for submitting applications: October 1, 2004**

**Application sets in three copies should be mailed to:**

Bulgarian-American Commission for Educational Exchange "Fulbright",  
P. O. Box 288, Sofia 1000, Bulgaria

Учебен център при Комисия "Фулбрайт" – ул. "Панаѝот Волов" № 1, ет. 2, ап. 6,  
София 1504, тел. 944 0441  
Подготовка за: TOEFL, SAT, GRE, GMAT; английски език – всички нива

**ПРОГРАМА ЗА ОБМЕН НА УЧИТЕЛИ ПРЕЗ УЧЕБНАТА 2005-2006 ГОДИНА**

Българо-американската комисия за образователен обмен "Фулбрайт" обявява конкурс за едногодишен обмен на учители от езикови гимназии, преподаващи следните дисциплини на английски език: английски език и литература, история/обществознание, биология, химия и физика.

**Условия на конкурса:**

- българско гражданство на кандидатите
- отлично владение на английски език
- минимум три години преподавателски стаж по съответната дисциплина
- разрешение за неплатен отпуск от работодателя
- приемане на американския учител в същото училище по време на пребиваването на българския кандидат в САЩ срещу заплащане по български стандарти

**Справки и формуляри:**

Българо-американска комисия за образователен обмен "ФУЛБРАЙТ"

**Централен офис:**

София, бул. Ал. Стамболийски № 17, ет. I, стаи 9 и 15 тел: (02) 980 8212 и (02) 981 6830

Приемно време: 14 – 16 ч. всеки работен ден.

**Информационни центрове в страната:**

Пловдив 4000,	ул. "Княз Александър I" № 42,	тел. (032) 652 866
Бургас 8000,	ул. "Сливница" № 58, ет. 4,	тел. (056) 842 453
Русе 7017,	Русенския университет "Ангел Кънчев", ул. "Рица" № 38,	тел. (082) 846 106
Варна 9007,	Икономически университет, II корпус, ул. "Евлоги Георгиев" № 24, каб. 105А,	тел: 0899 126 798
Стара Загора 6010,	Тракийски университет, ул. "Армейска" №9, ДИПКУ, офис 121,	тел. (042) 601 563
Велико Търново 5000,	Великотърновски университет, Ректорат, каб. 524,	тел. (062) 639 929
Сливен 8800,	Технически университет, бул. "Бургаско шосе" № 59,	тел. (044) 667 545
Смолян 4700,	бул. "България" № 85, каб. 101,	тел. (0301) 63 680

Документите за конкурса трябва да бъдат изпратени по пощата с пощенско клеймо не по-късно от 3 декември 2004 г. на адрес:

Българо-американска комисия за образователен обмен, София 1000,  
П. К. 288

Всички документи трябва да бъдат в 3 екземпляра, попълнени/преведени на английски език.

## ПРОГРАМА ЗА ОБМЕН НА ДИРЕКТОРИ / ЗАМ. ДИРЕКТОРИ НА ГИМНАЗИИ ПРЕЗ УЧЕБНАТА 2005-06 ГОДИНА

Комисия "Фулбрайт" обявява конкурс за обмен (6 седмици) на директори/зам. директори на гимназии от България и САЩ през учебната 2005–06 г.

### Условия на конкурса:

- кандидатите да са директори/зам.директори на езикови гимназии по време на кандидатстването
- да имат минимум една година стаж като директори/зам. директори
- отлично да владеят английски език
- да притежават компютърна грамотност
- да притежават бакалавърска степен от акредитиран университет
- да имат българско гражданство
- да са на възраст до 50 години

### Документи за конкурса:

1. Три копия на попълнената апликационна форма.
2. Копие от преведена и легализирана университетска диплома и трудов договор.
3. Автобиография с акцент върху управленския опит.
4. Три препоръки (една от които от съответния инспекторат на МОН)
5. Есе.

**Всички посочени по-горе документи трябва да бъдат на английски език**

**Документите за конкурса трябва да бъдат изпратени по пощата с пощенско клеймо не по-късно от 3 декември 2004 г. на адрес: Българо-американска комисия за образователен обмен "Фулбрайт", София 1000, П. К. 288**

### Справки и формуляри:

**Българо-американска комисия за образователен обмен "ФУЛБРАЙТ"**

**Централен офис:** София, бул. Ал. Стамболийски № 17, ет. I, стая № 15, тел: (02) 981 6830

**Приемно време:** понеделник – четвъртък, 14–16 ч.

**E-mail:** STeneva@fulbrsof.bol.bg

## To Chicago and Back

*Ivanka Koleva is a professor of physics at Sofia University. As a Fulbright scholar in AY 2003–2004 Dr. Koleva had the unique opportunity of doing research and lecturing in plasma physics at the University of Houston.*



Looking back at the time I spent in the USA I realize that there was one unique thing I experienced there that I had never seen in Bulgaria. This is the enormous number of volunteer activities that everybody can participate in. You become aware of the real rhythm of the cultural and social life in the big city through the numerous activities in the community. If it were not for these, you can feel lost in a big city like Houston. The people in Houston are involved in their community through volunteer organizations, which touch every aspect of life. Every newcomer to the city can find a useful and satisfying way to spend his free time and everybody benefits – the volunteer, who is given a chance to meet people and participate in activities that he enjoys, as well as the organization, which is helped by the volunteer, working for its cause. It is a win-win situation since both involved parties benefit. Depending on their interests and availability of free time volunteers can choose from a wide range of activities.

Finding out about volunteer programs is made very easy for every newcomer. You can learn what is going on at the University campus from the bulletin boards at the University. The city newspaper has a listing every week; the neighborhood paper offers advertisements of all local possibilities. Museums and cultural institutions have their separate systems of recruiting people all the time. Here are just a few examples:

– “Neighborhood clean up weekend” organized by the city council. The announcement comes in the mail with details about meeting location and time, duration and type of work required. The volunteers get there, receive instructions and start working in groups. At the end there is always a party with refreshments at which the results are discussed and everybody receives a small gift e.g. a T-shirt with the suburb logo.

– In the Christmas season there is a program called “Adopt a family”, which aims to collect and deliver money and gifts for families in need.

Besides my research work in the university, during my stay in Houston I became involved in many interesting activities organized by the community. Once I was on a committee for a competition for the best decorated house for Christmas. Since the neighborhood community was always organizing some kind of pleasant holiday activity, I quickly became friends with many people. I had a friend who was a volunteer with the Houston Grand Opera (HGO) Guild. As such she had to serve host for singers performing in the HGO, meet with young upcoming opera singers from the HGO Studio program and help fundraising events supporting the opera. Being an opera lover she found this a unique and exciting opportunity. At the same time the singers were happy to receive her help in anything they needed, enjoyed Texas

hospitality and would advertise Houston to others as a city with friendly environment. I also started doing volunteer work for the HGO. As a result from my work I was given the chance to see unforgettable performances and artists, like Tosca, with the famous Russian singer Maria Guleghina, the young star David Doniels in his HGO debut in Julius Caesar, the Magic Flute – Mozart’s favorite opera – with Alexandra Coku and Janacek’s dramatic opera Jenufa. I also got the chance of meeting some of the stars and visiting backstage.

The university bulletin gave me the chance to learn about Moore’s Opera House, which is the university opera. The organization and performances are student achievements. The big museums such as Houston Museum of Modern Art and the lectures related to their exhibitions also involve many volunteers. Rice University has

a tradition in organizing various programs, covering courses of lectures on modern architecture or contemporary cinema etc. and the associated groups share their views and opinions under the motto “study and learn”.

Being a part of the community made my stay in Houston extremely enjoyable. I also felt proud to feel a part of the Fulbright community and lucky to work in an international team of research workers in my field.

Now I think that the uniqueness of the Fulbright experience as well as the main purpose of the program is not only to benefit professionally and pursue your professional goals, but to provide the extraordinary chance for people, no matter from where they are, to feel a part of the multicultural American society.

## УЧЕБЕН ЦЕНТЪР КЪМ КОМИСИЯ „ФУЛБРАЙТ“

София 1504, ул. „Панайот Волов“ № 1  
етаж II, ап. 6, тел. 944 0441, E-mail: fulbrcen@mail.bol.bg

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- БИЗНЕС АНГЛИЙСКИ
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- УНИВЕРСИТЕТСКИ ПРЕПОДАВАТЕЛИ
- БИБЛИОТЕКА

### КУРСОВЕ ЗА ЕЗИКОВО ОБУЧЕНИЕ

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**Приемно време:** понеделник, вторник, сряда, четвъртък и петък: 9:00–12:00 ч., 14:00–17:00 ч.

## Out of America

### WHY TO WHEN

#### Reflections of the Fulbright-Hays Summer Seminar in Bulgaria

Linda Fujikawa, Assistant Professor of Japanese,  
Kapiolani Community College, University of Hawaii  
August 3, 2004, Pamporovo, Bulgaria



Linda Fujikawa (to the left) dancing a Bulgarian horo

The journey of our Fulbright-Hays Summer Seminar in Bulgaria continues as I gaze into the undulating waves of the Rhodope Mountains. The soul of Bulgaria flows into the distant haze of blue green morning mist.

The path to Bulgaria began in Hawaii in October 2003, through an e-mail from our Senior Academic Dean, Dr. Leon Richards, "Interested?" The e-mail also contained information about several Fulbright-Hays Summer Seminar opportunities in various countries. Bulgaria was my first choice.

October merged into March 2004. Suddenly, Bulgaria became a reality with the arrival of the letter of acceptance into the coveted Fulbright-Hays Program. Congratulations turned into "Why?"

Today, after a four and a half hour walk with Julia Stefanova, Director of Fulbright-Hays Bulgaria and colleagues and students from Bulgaria and USA, the Rhodope Mountains revealed the answer to the "Why?" I am here today to transform the "Why" to "When!"

"When we go to Bulgaria..."

"When we went to Bulgaria..."

"When we return to Bulgaria..."

"When our friends visit us from Bulgaria..."

"When we live in Bulgaria..."

"When Bulgaria sparkles in the world."

Candles lit at the Rila Monastery, St. Clement's Church, Adjala cave, and other sacred places of worship, will illuminate this pathway to guide the change from "Why?" to "When."

Carl Sagan chose the songs of Bulgaria's Rhodope Mountains to represent our humanity and civilization in outer space. He too knew that "Why?" will be "When."

## MY BULGARIA

**Laurene McClain, Instructor,  
City College of San Francisco, CA**



I selected Bulgaria as my top choice for a Fulbright Summer Seminar partly because City College of San Francisco where I teach history, was enrolling an increasing number of students from the former Soviet Union and Central and Eastern Europe, including Bulgaria, and I frankly did not know much about that region of the world. When I received word that I was awarded the Fulbright, I was elated. My enthusiasm for this trip only increased over time. The more reading I did, the more I wanted to see the country and to meet its people. The thoughtfully compiled FedEx package sent by the Fulbright Office in Bulgaria, complete with a CD of Bulgarian music, a book on Bulgarian history, a computer disk full of photographs, brochures containing an assortment of travel information, an introductory language phrase book, an Almanac with concise summaries regarding the country's political, social, economic, and religious background, and even a book of recipes for Bulgarian food, was only a preview of the excellent organization from which I would benefit once in that country.

After a helpful orientation at the University of Texas in Austin, my Fulbright group of ten women and four men took off for Bulgaria. We landed in Sofia on July 12, 2004. From that very first day, we were put in touch with some of the finest scholars and teachers in Bulgaria, as well as the Fulbright staff, at a reception held in our honor. I remember having fascinating discussions with many of them which only whetted my appetite for more. This was an exciting time to be in Bulgaria. The country had a very long history with successive cycles of conquests and freedom. One cannot help but admire Bulgaria's persistence in maintaining its unique culture in the face of one invasion after another. Yet, in 2004, it was making a transition from a socialist to a market economy, from a dictatorship to a democracy, from solely public schools to introducing private educational institutions, from repression in thought to open discussions and dissent, and from a system where a social safety net was available to a system where the individual was more dependent on her/his own resources. In addition, Bulgaria had only recently joined NATO and was looking forward to admission to the European Union in 2007. In its foreign policy, Bulgaria, once a loyal member of the Warsaw Pact, was now allying itself with the United States. All of these changes were taking place in the context of being one of the Balkan states.

Every one of the speakers – Dr. Ognyan Minchev, Dr. Todor Tagarev, Dr. Lyubov Mincheva, Dr. Kostadin Grozev, Dr. Plamen Tzvetkov, Dr. Tatyana Kalkanova, Dr. Anna-Maria Totomanova, Dr. Mira Tzvetkova, Professor Boyan Dobrev, and Dr. Vladimir Trendafilov and his panel of writers – shed light on these topics.

We were often given the opportunity to speak with these scholars informally as several of them joined us for meals after their talks. While these speakers fulfilled my interest in acquiring knowledge and a desire to analyze topics logically, we also had the opportunity to satisfy the emotional through song and dance led by Professor Daniela Ivanova. She showed us pictures taken in the rural areas of Bulgaria, had us feel the wool from which Bulgarian women made cloth, and taught us some basic dance steps. As it turned out, I used those dance steps on many an occasion in Bulgaria.

We had the opportunity to meet teachers based in Sofia and close by, at a Teacher Training Workshop which, along with other sessions with teachers in cities that we visited, was a highlight of the program. Teachers, I believe, always have a spontaneous sense of rapport with each other, but even more so when we have had the opportunity to discuss curriculum and teaching strategies. I admire the Bulgarian teachers whom we met because despite their very low salaries, they were a very determined group who wanted to do best for their students. Since schools were in summer break, we did not have the opportunity to meet very many students in Sofia, but somehow, in Bourgas, we had a chance to meet with many high school and college students at an afternoon session. That meeting was absolutely wonderful with students asking questions and staying after to ask more.

After approximately 11 days in Sofia, with one day devoted to the spectacular Rila Monastery and another for a side trip to see the heritage town of Koprivshitsa, we hit the road to tour the sights – historic towns and cities, churches, the Madara horseman, museums, more monasteries, and Thracian and Roman ruins – that would make those historical facts learned

in Sofia all the more meaningful. Throughout, we listened to Bulgarian music, and we had a chance to dance. I love the dances because they bring all generations – the young, middle-age, and older people – together in a circle for a joyous celebration of life. And yet, there are mournful tunes that, in my opinion, reflect a poignancy to Bulgaria's history – that ever-present quest for freedom and autonomy in the face of foreign domination.

After traveling for about a week, we reached the resort town of Pomporovo in the beautiful Rhodope mountains for the 6<sup>th</sup> Fulbright Conference and the Fulbright International Summer Institute. The organized sessions throughout were informative, and we had the chance to meet with scholars and students from many areas of the world. Some of us took advantage of the cultural offerings of this area by seeing the excellent Smolyan history museum, meeting with performance artists who happened to be rehearsing close by, and attending an outdoor bagpipers' competition. To my amazement, at the bagpipers' competition, two Bulgarian television networks spotted me, a Chinese American woman dancing with a baseball cap on, and asked to interview me for their respective news programs. I felt honored.

I thank Julia Stefanova, who herself gave us a marvelous lecture in Austin and moderated many a panel for us, and her staff at the Fulbright Office for their outstanding planning, and for giving me this opportunity to learn first-hand about Bulgaria. I take back with me very positive memories, a profound respect for the warm and generous people that I met, and a wealth of information – all of which I will share over and over, with my colleagues and students.



## RECALLING BULGARIA

**Ariel C. Gil, Assessment Coordinator,  
St. Thomas University, Florida**



Ariel Gil (first from left to right) leading a Bulgarian horo in front of the ancient Roman Forum in Plovdiv

During my recent sojourn in the affable Balkan nation of Bulgaria as part of my Fulbright-Hays scholarship, I learned a great deal about world history and civilization. Aptly known as the crossroads of the ancient world, Bulgaria is indeed a living museum replete with remnants of mixed cultures predating the conquests of Alexander the Great. The following recollections, not necessarily described in chronological order, are but a humble attempt at illustrating what is truly indescribable: the vast richness of a culture that remains surprisingly unknown to most Westerners.

Perhaps my most memorable moment occurred on a rainy day during the penultimate week of our trip. I remember it vividly. A friendly, unassuming street vendor reminded me to place twenty “stutinkies” in the coin slot next to the eyepiece before I tried to make eye contact with one of the oldest vestiges of world civilization – The Madara Horseman. There, amidst millenary mountains, as if it had been carved by a masterful sculptor, the four-piece relief composition (the horse rider, the horse, the lion, and the dog) was

magnified through the dusty lenses before my eyes, and I stood mesmerized looking at the awesome medallion-like masterpiece dating back, presumably, to 8<sup>th</sup> century A.D. I wondered why this awesome historical site, albeit its UNESCO patronage, still remains ostensibly unprotected and unknown to the rest of humanity.

Yet the Madara Horseman was only one example among many other wonders seen throughout the trip. Deeply moved and impressed by the unpretentious nature of the Bulgarian people, I could not help but notice that even the famous Thracian tombs found at various locations, such as the replica neatly preserved in the town of Kasanlak, are almost taken for granted by locals. The friendly town, also famous for the production of rose oil and its by-products, has a down-to-earth feeling that would make the savviest of visitors want to stay there forever. Similarly, our visit to the historical town of Koprivshtitsa was one of the highlights of the trip. Every corner of this picturesque town has contributed a glorious page to the contemporary history and literature of Bulgaria. Koprivshtitsa, in many ways, is the cradle of the Bulgarian revolutionary movement, which evolved during the Eighteenth century. Renowned Bulgarian writers, such as Lyuben Karavelov and Dimcho Debelyanov were born in this town, which is also famous for its brightly colored facades. I still remember the famous statue erected in honor of Dimcho Debelyanov’s mother, who patiently awaits her son’s safe return from the war front.

Although they are purposely organized as structured indoor exhibits, I was also very impressed with my visits to the Archaeological

Museum and the National History Museum in Sofia. Both sites embody the very nature of Bulgarian ancient and contemporary cultures. At the former museum, for instance, there lie hundreds of objects such as jewelry, weapons, vessels, pottery, and a number of other artifacts, which are kept in alarm-free glass receptacles. Such artifacts have been unearthed across the country through the years. Relics from Greek, Thracian, and Slavic art demonstrate the rich roots of the Bulgarian culture. At the National History Museum, there is an equal share of relics, old and contemporary, throughout the building that served as the Presidential Headquarters during the Soviet era. Of special interest to me, for instance, was to see Russian MIGs and other war airplanes flanking the entrance to the museum. Although it was not part of our planned itinerary, I truly believe this museum is very special, and its guided tours are of superb quality.

During our stay, we visited numerous cities, small towns, and villages. For instance, we visited the port cities of Varna and Bourgas, both bathed by the Black Sea and each with its distinct idiosyncrasy. In Varna, we met with faculty from the Higher Institute of Economics while in Bourgas, we met with an exceptional cadre of colleagues from Bourgas Free University, a maverick institution serving as a vivid example of the positive, structural changes taking place in the educational system of Bulgaria at the present time. In addition, we visited the city of Veliko Turnovo where we met a small group of faculty from the English department. This is, indeed, a glorious city. Yet, I personally loved the city of Plovdiv whose narrow streets, unique revival architecture, and friendly residents left a lasting impression in me. I especially liked the old Rome amphitheater located in the heart of Plovdiv where some of my colleagues and I engaged in our own rendering of a Bulgarian traditional dance for which we even received an applause from the limited audience, which was mostly composed of our own fellow Fulbrighters.

Finally, there were two very special places I would like to include in this synopsis. The first one is the Pomporovo resort built at the foot of the awesome Rodopi Mountains. While attending the FISU Conference, we stayed at a five star hotel within the beautiful resort. By way of a ski lift, we even climbed the highest point of the Rodopi range before reaching the "Snejenka" (Snow White) tower standing tall on the very top of the elevation. From the top of the tower, I saw one of the most beautiful panoramic views in the world, which included glorious mountains, tall evergreen trees, lakes, and even small villages. One of those villages, for instance, is the town of Smolyan that can also be reached by ski lift. The other special place I will always remember was my visit to the famous Devil's Throat cave near the town of Trigorod. Not only is this cave intimidating due to its depth and darkness, but also it is also famous for the legend built around it. It is believed Orpheus rescued his beloved girlfriend from this cave while avoiding eye contact with her in order to prevent her from turning into stone. Yet the cave itself, is rather inconspicuous, compared to the grandeur of the millenary gorges carving the tall mountains in the area.

All in all, it would not be fair to conclude this piece without mentioning the awesome hospitality we found throughout beautiful Bulgaria. Such hospitality was manifest in the friendly faces and welcoming smiles of Bulgarians, and in the way they parted bread with us. Their numerous monasteries, such as the world-famous Rila Monastery, are reminders of the solid religious foundation of the country. Their contagious music and folk dances reveal the struggles and victories of a proud nation. And, like in the artist's palate, their tasty dishes and elaborate costumes are reminders of a mixed culture that continues to evolve without surrendering its historical pride and *raison d'être*.



## FULBRIGHT INFORMATION CENTERS IN BULGARIA

**PLOVDIV** 4000, 42 Knyaz Alexander I Str.  
Tel. +359 (32) 652 866  
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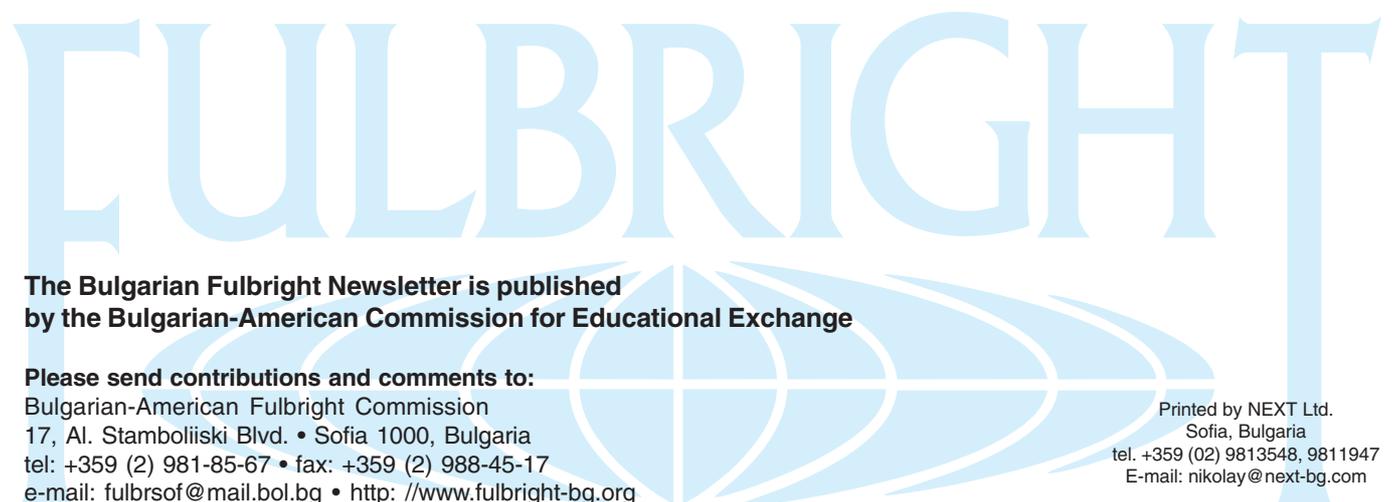
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