



# Newsletter

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## INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION WEEK (IEW) IN BULGARIA November 13-17, 2006

International Education Week is an opportunity for Bulgaria to celebrate the contribution that international education makes in preparing Bulgarians for the global world. Each year the IEW in Bulgaria attracts an impressive group of students, professors and teachers from a great number of Bulgarian schools, colleges and universities all over the country.

A highlight of this year's IEW was the official launch of the United States Student Achievers Program (USAP) in Bulgaria. It is administered by the Bulgarian-American Fulbright Commission and supplements its U.S. educational advising activities. The Program is supported by the U.S. Embassy in Bulgaria and the American University in Bulgaria (AUBG).



*Presentation at the Foreign Language High School in Madan*



*Presentation at the High School of Mathematics in Vidin*



*Presentation at Tsar Simeon The Great Foreign Language High School in Vidin*

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*Wellesley College Presentation at the First English Language High School in Sofia*



*Presentation at Shumen University*



*AUBG Presentation at the Fulbright Advising Center*



*Presentation at Christo Botev Foreign Language High School in Kardzhali*



*Presentation at Zahari Stoyanov High School in Sliven*

With the objective of developing a broad, successful program for students across Bulgaria, Educational Adviser Snezhana Teneva visited economically challenged communities in the cities of Sofia, Varna, Stara Zagora, Sliven and Smolyan where most of the candidates to American colleges and universities come from as well as the underserved regions of Shumen, Vidin, Kardzhali and Madan where most of the minority population of Bulgaria lives. She met with hundreds of students, teachers, parents and media representatives and made presentations on the Fulbright Program in Bulgaria, the American Educational System and the

United States Student Achievers Program (USAP) in Bulgaria.

In addition, the Fulbright Advising Center was visited by representatives of seven U.S. institutions of higher education who presented their institutions and the American educational system to interested students, parents, school principals and teachers.

Over 1400 students, teachers, parents, lecturers and researchers joined in this year's IEW events and got exposed to study opportunities in the United States.

**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.*

## Fulbright Office News

### 26th CONFERENCE OF FULBRIGHT EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS FROM EUROPE



On October 21-26 the Franco-American Fulbright Commission hosted the 26th conference of Fulbright Executive Directors from Europe on "Fulbright for the Future: New Directions, New Responses". Paris welcomed 26 executive directors from commission and non-commission countries and top-level representatives of the US Department of State, the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board, the Institute of International Education, the Council of International Exchange of Scholars, public affairs officers and cultural affairs officers from US Embassies in a number of European countries. Representatives of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs were also involved. A highlight of the conference was the participation

of Assistant Secretary of State Dina Powell, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Tom Farrell, Director of Office of Academic Programs Rozalind Swenson, FSB Chairman Yousif Ghafari and three FSB members. Another special feature of the event was the Fulbright New Century Symposium on Global Higher Education at UNESCO. The participants in the 26th ED conference covered a wide spectrum of issues pertaining to the operation of the Fulbright program worldwide, especially in the context of the global changes taking place in higher education and the Bologna process in Europe. Dr. Julia Stefanova, Executive Director of the Bulgarian-American Fulbright conference, also participated. The conference was a great success.



### INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE (Inter)cultural Communication

On November 3-5, 2006, an international conference on "(Inter)cultural Communication" was held at Plovdiv University. The conference was co-organized and co-sponsored by the Bulgarian US Studies Association, the Bulgarian Fulbright commission, the Society for British

Studies and the Department of English and American Studies at Plovdiv University. Participating in the conference were scholars from Bulgaria, UK, USA, Greece, Turkey, Portugal etc. All US Fulbrighters in AY 2006-07 attended and four of them had presentations.

## FULBRIGHT SCHOLAR WINS NOBEL PEACE PRIZE

The Nobel committee named Bangladeshi economist Muhammad Yunus and the Grameen Bank co-winners of the Nobel Peace Prize. Yunus and the bank he founded have aided millions of poor Bangladeshis, many of them women, through microcredit loans to start small businesses and "have shown that even the poorest of the poor can work to bring about their own development," the committee said.

His work with Gram Sarker (village government), a form of local government which emphasizes the participation of rural peoples, proved so successful it was adopted by the Bangladeshi government in 1980. He established the Grameen Bank in 1983 to help millions of Bangladeshis escape from poverty. The bank now has branches in more than 36 thousand Bangladeshi villages and in other countries.

He serves on several committees and commissions dealing with education, population, health, disaster prevention, banking, and development. Since 2002, he has served as Ambassador for the Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). He received the World Food Prize in 1994 and the Bangladeshi

President's award in 1978.

Yunus earned a Ph.D. in Economics from Vanderbilt University in 1969 while on a Fulbright in the United States. Later that year, he became an assistant professor of Economics at Middle Tennessee State University, before returning to Bangladesh where he joined the Economics Department at Chittagong University.



Dr. Yunus joins a long list of Fulbright Scholars who have been recognized by the Nobel Committees for their contributions. The Bulgarian-American Fulbright Commission joins in with thousands of Fulbright scholars from around the world in congratulating him.

## AFTER THREE MONTHS IN BULGARIA

### Meeting of the U.S. Fulbright Grantees with Fulbright Commission Staff



On December 15 the Fulbright Commission staff hosted a meeting with U.S. grantees to discuss the development of their projects in Bulgaria. Each of the Fulbrighters reported on what they had done during the first three months of their stay in Bulgaria. Some of them had prepared very informative PPT presentations. The topics ranged from a population decline in Bulgaria and the closure of the nuclear powerplant in Kozloduy to new dance performances, fine arts exhibitions and impressions from Bulgarian high school students. The program continued with a visit to the Boyana Church and ended with the pre-Christmas party for U.S. grantees, their contact persons and Bulgarian Fulbright alumni.



*Trip to the Boyana Church*

## PROMETRIC PRIDE AWARD

On November 16, 2006 Dr. Julia Stefanova and the Bulgarian Fulbright Commission staff received the Prometric Pride Award for outstanding performance for the European Personnel Selection Office (EPSO) testing and contributing to the overall success of Prometric.



## A BULGARIAN SCHOLAR WINS A NEW CENTURY SCHOLARS AWARD



The New Century Scholars Program (NCS) launched in March 2001 plays a vital role in forging new links among scholars and professionals from around the world who seek solutions to issues and concerns that affect humankind. Every year it provides a platform for about 30 scholars from the US and around the world to develop new global models for understanding the social context within which nations and communities shape their responses to the many challenges of the 21st century. This particular aspect of the New Century Scholars program is a unique feature that distinguishes it from the core Fulbright Scholar Program.

At the end of the program year, NCS Scholars share the results of their collaborative interaction and engagement in a public forum at which they present their conclusions and recommendations for initiatives that will translate the results of their collaborative thinking into tangible impact on the local, regional or global level. The NCS theme for 2007-08 is „Higher Education in the 21st Century: Access and Equity“

Professor Pepka Boyadjieva from the Institute of Sociology at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences is the first Bulgarian scientist approved to take part in the NCS program. We hope that she will represent our country in the best way and we wish her success throughout the whole period of her work in the U.S.

## BULGARIAN ELECTRONIC JOURNAL OF AMERICAN AND TRANSATLANTIC STUDIES

[www.jatsbulgaria.org](http://www.jatsbulgaria.org)

The electronic Bulgarian Journal of American and Transatlantic Studies was officially launched on November 8. It is the result of the concerted efforts of a team of dedicated US Studies scholars from the University of Sofia, Fulbright alumni and members of the Fulbright Commission in Bulgaria.

The project came to fruition through the decisive support of the US Embassy.

The electronic journal of American and Transatlantic Studies was created to serve the following goals:

- To promote US Studies in Bulgaria and internationally;
- To help further develop Transatlantic Studies in Bulgaria and internationally;
- To energize the community of Bulgarian and international US Studies scholars and teachers;
- To make known the activities of the Bulgarian US Studies Association;
- To assist the Master's program on American Studies and Transatlantic Relations at Sofia University;
- To provide regular and up-to-date information about the development of US and Transatlantic Studies worldwide;
- To create a stimulating medium for active, creative and productive communication between students of American and Transatlantic Studies.

Contributions through papers, comments, ideas and suggestions to the electronic journal are welcome.



## GRADUATE STUDY GRANT „FULBRIGHT – THANKS TO SCANDINAVIA“

The Bulgarian-American Commission for Educational Exchange and the Institute „Thanks to Scandinavia“ at the American Jewish Committee recently established a joint Master’s program grant at a prestigious university in the United States. The grant is addressed to Bulgarian students and expresses the

gratitude of the Jewish community to Bulgaria for saving the Bulgarian Jews during World War II. The competition is open to candidates in all fields except clinical medicine and dentistry. For more information, visit the Bulgarian Fulbright Commission website at [www.fulbright.bg](http://www.fulbright.bg).

### BEYOND THE LIMITS

I have a challenging dream! To cycle on the top of the world! One of these challenges is the area of Ladakh, also popular as Little Tibet, located in the state of Jammu and Kashmir, Northern India.

So, in September our small „expedition“ (we were just two) did the first Bulgarian bicycle crossing of one of the highest motorway roads of the World, passing the „knot“ between Himalayan range and Karakorum mountains. Just for 8 days,

without any support, carrying 35kg personal equipment, we cycled more than 500 km on the strategic road Manali – Leh, built by the Indian army. We climbed five passes in different atmospheric conditions - from 3975 to 5360 meters above sea level. On the way from the town of Manali to the town of Leh, we also visited the ancient Gelupta monasteries Stakna and Thikse, built high above the valley of Indus River.

Higher than a base camp at the foot of Mount Everest – the

second challenge was to climb by bicycles one of the highest motorway passes in the World – Kardung la, 5606m in height. After 7 hours hard and exhausting cycling, 2100 meters elevation, we reached the top of the pass! And we survived!

That was it!  
We’ll be back!

*Ivan Penchev  
Bulgarian-American  
Fulbright Commission*



Thikse monastery



Statue of Budhha, Thikse monastery



Tanglangla pass (5360 m)



Road sign

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## 2007 FULBRIGHT AMERICAN STUDIES INSTITUTES

The Bulgarian-American Fulbright Commission is pleased to invite applications for the 2007 Fulbright American Studies Institutes. The US Studies Institutes are intensive and rigorous six-week academic seminars whose purpose is to provide multinational participants with a deeper understanding of American life and institutions in order to strengthen curricula and improve the quality of teaching about the U.S. in college, university and secondary school classrooms abroad. Applicants should be highly motivated and experienced university faculty or high school teachers, department chairs, curriculum developers, teacher trainers and textbook writers. Participants will need very strong English language ability.

### US STUDIES INSTITUTES:

- "AMERICAN CIVILIZATION"
- "AMERICAN POLITICS AND POLITICAL THOUGHT"
- "CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN LITERATURE"
- "U.S. FOREIGN POLICY"
- "JOURNALISM AND MEDIA"
- "RELIGIOUS PLURALISM"
- "FOREIGN SECONDARY EDUCATORS"

### *Head office address:*

Sofia, 17, Stamboliiski Blvd., 1st floor, Rooms # 9, # 12

### *Visiting hours:*

Monday-Friday, 2:00p.m.- 4:00p.m., Tel. 980 8212 or 981 85 67

Applications should be both mailed and e-mailed to the Bulgarian-American Commission for Educational Exchange 'Fulbright' no later than **February 1, 2007**

### *Mailing address:*

Bulgarian-American Commission for Educational Exchange  
17 Alexander Stamboliiski Blvd., 1000 Sofia

*E-mail:* [fulbright@fulbright.bg](mailto:fulbright@fulbright.bg)

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**Language Training Center:** Sofia 1504, 1 Panayot Volov str., tel. (359 2) 944 0441

**Info-Centers:** Plovdiv 4000, 42 Knyaz Alexander Istr., tel. (359 32) 652 866; Rousse 7017, University of Rousse, 8 Studentska str., tel. (359 82) 846 106; Bourgas 8000, 58 Slivnitsa str., tel. (359 56) 842 453; Stara Zagora 6010, 9 Armeiska str., tel. (359 42) 601 563; Veliko Turnovo 5000, University of Veliko Turnovo, tel. (359 62) 639 929; Varna 9000, University of Economics, 24 Evlogi Georgiev str., tel. (359 52) 303 265 (132); Sliven 8800, Technical University, 59 Bourgasko shosse blvd., tel. (359 44) 667 545; Smolyan 4700, 85 Bulgaria blvd., room 101, tel. (359 301) 63 680; Vidin 3700, Tsar Simeon Veliki High School, 6 Targovska str., tel. (359 94) 606 734; Shumen 9712, University of Shumen, 115 Universitetska Str., tel. (359) 899 907 902

**БЪЛГАРО-АМЕРИКАНСКА КОМИСИЯ ЗА  
ОБРАЗОВАТЕЛЕН ОБМЕН****ПРОГРАМА ЗА ОБМЕН НА УЧИТЕЛИ ПРЕЗ УЧЕБНАТА 2007-2008 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

**ПРОГРАМА ЗА ОБМЕН НА ДИРЕКТОРИ/ЗАМ. ДИРЕКТОРИ НА ГИМНАЗИИ  
ПРЕЗ УЧЕБНАТА 2007-2008 ГОДИНА**

Българо-американската комисия за образователен обмен „Фулбрайт“ обявява конкурс за шестседмичен обмен на директори/зам. директори на гимназии от България и САЩ.

**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
- българско гражданство на кандидатите
- да са на възраст до 50 години

**Документи за конкурса:** [www.fulbright.bg](http://www.fulbright.bg)

**Справки:**

**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.

Документите за конкурса трябва да бъдат изпратени по пощата с пощенско клеймо не по-късно от **5 януари 2007 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.



**BULGARIAN-AMERICAN COMMISSION FOR EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGE**

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**UNITED STATES STUDENT ACHIEVERS PROGRAM (USAP)  
USAP Application For Undergraduate Admission 2008 - 2009**

The United States Student Achievers Program, USAP, was established in 1999 with the strong belief that all talented international students, regardless of economic background, should have equal access to the admissions process to colleges and universities which offer need and merit-based international student financial aid. USAP assists highly talented, economically disadvantaged students to negotiate and finance the application and financial aid process for admission to highly selective colleges and universities in the United States. USAP students are academically talented and highly motivated youth who require full or nearly full financial assistance in order to attend any institution of higher learning in the U.S.

USAP works closely with high school students through regularly scheduled meetings and seminars to assist them throughout the application process to secure admission and scholarships for colleges and universities in the United States. The academic and social needs of USAP students are strongly considered in matching individuals with US colleges and universities which offer the best programs and opportunities to meet their future goals.

USAP expects a commitment of students to give back of their energy and time to the program and to their communities.

**USAP IN BULGARIA**

USAP in Bulgaria is administered by the Bulgarian-American Fulbright Commission and supplements its U.S. educational advising activities. The program's objectives are twofold: to make educational opportunities in the U.S. more widely known and to give economically disadvantaged Bulgarian students with demonstrated academic achievements and leadership potential the opportunity to study in the U.S.

**THE FULBRIGHT ASSISTANCE**

The Bulgarian Fulbright Advising Center works closely with successful candidates and their schools in their junior and senior year of school education to assist them with every step of the university selection, application and orientation process. In addition to providing these students with access to extensive information and advising, the Bulgarian Fulbright Commission finances and provides tutoring for any necessary entrance exams required for admission.

**TARGET GROUP**

We will be looking for talented but underprivileged students as well as for students from diverse backgrounds who demonstrate the greatest potential of significantly contributing to society if given the educational opportunity to further develop their knowledge and talents.

With the objective of developing a broad, successful program for students across Bulgaria, this year's pilot program will be test-run with a particular focus upon economically challenged communities in Sofia, Stara Zagora, Sliven, Vidin and Smolyan where most of the candidates to American colleges and universities come from as well as in the underserved regions of Kurdzhaly, Haskovo, Momchilgrad, Madan and Rudozem where most of the minority population of Bulgaria lives.

USAP candidates will reflect the best of Bulgaria's youth, both academically and in terms of involvement in leadership roles, community service and extracurricular activities. We will be looking for students who aspire to broaden their horizons and share ideas with a diversity of people, returning to Bulgaria to apply their education and experiences to their lives and careers.

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**USAP 2006**

For the 2006 USAP in Bulgaria ten successful applicants will be selected to participate. The program is open to applications from Bulgarian high school students in the 11th grade who intend to enter their undergraduate studies in the United States the autumn of 2008. In addition to possessing an excellent academic record, applicants will have participated in extra-curricular activities and will possess a demonstrated financial need.

Although we do not limit the program geographically, students **MUST** be able to reach the Bulgarian Fulbright Advising Center on a regular basis during the school year, throughout school holidays, and after finishing high school, for full participation. Junior high school students will work with our educational advising staff over this year and the next year to try to secure places and financial assistance to begin study in the US in August 2008. **ENTRANCE INTO THIS PROGRAM IS NO GUARANTEE OF A SCHOLARSHIP OR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO STUDY IN THE UNITED STATES.\***

**ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

To apply to USAP, you must currently be a highly-determined and hardworking **JUNIOR** student who is going to graduate from high school in May 2008. To be eligible for consideration, you must have a **VERY** strong academic record, be active in co-curricular and community activities as well as show well demonstrated financial need.

**HOW TO APPLY**

Please complete this application form and return it together by post or in person with the required documents listed at the end, no later than **January 31, 2007** by post to:

***Mailing Address:***

**USAP**  
U.S. Educational Advising Center  
Bulgarian-American Fulbright Commission  
P.O. Box 288  
1000 Sofia, Bulgaria

***Physical Address:***

**USAP**  
Snejana Teneva, EducationUSA Adviser  
Bulgarian-American Fulbright Commission  
17 Alexander Stamboliiski Blvd., 1000 Sofia, Bulgaria  
Tel: 359 2 981 6830  
Fax: 359 2 988 4517  
E-mail: [steneva@fulbright.bg](mailto:steneva@fulbright.bg)  
Web: [www.fulbright.bg](http://www.fulbright.bg)

Photocopies of this form are acceptable. We will reply to successful students through their schools in February 2007 and may invite finalists for interviews. Successful applicants will begin the USAP in the beginning of March 2007.

Application forms can be downloaded at: [www.fulbright.bg](http://www.fulbright.bg), Educational Advising, U.S. Education, Undergraduate Study section, or received via e-mail to: [steneva@fulbright.bg](mailto:steneva@fulbright.bg). Forms can also be obtained at the Bulgarian Fulbright Advising Center, 17 Al. Stamboliiski Blvd, 1st Floor, Office #15, 1000 Sofia.

\*Note: As the criteria that will be utilised in assessing candidates' suitability to the USAP programme will be fashioned on that utilised by universities' admissions offices and funding bodies, successful USAP candidates can be confident of their marketability as highly desirable students to US universities. However, it is important to note that though every effort will be made by the Bulgarian Fulbright Advising Center to assist in securing a place at a US university, the Bulgarian Fulbright Advising Center has no privileged relationship with universities' admissions offices or funding bodies and, therefore, cannot guarantee that USAP participants' applications will be successful. This is not meant to discourage students from applying, rather it is meant to give a practical understanding of the competitive nature of the application process.

**American University in Bulgaria**

Blagoevgrad 2700  
Tel.: (359 73) 888235, 888232-34, 888226, 888219  
Fax: (359 73) 880174  
E-mail: [admissions@aubg.bg](mailto:admissions@aubg.bg)  
Web site: [www.aubg.bg](http://www.aubg.bg)

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## **AUBG PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLARSHIP FOR THE UNITED STATES STUDENT ACHIEVERS PROGRAM (USAP) 2008-2009**

The American University in Bulgaria announces one Presidential Scholarship to be provided in the framework of the United States Student Achievers Program 2008-2009. The Program is administered and partially financed by the Bulgarian-American Fulbright Commission.

The AUBG Presidential Scholarship will cover the full tuition cost for four years of study at AUBG for a Bachelor's degree beginning in the Fall semester of 2008. The scholarship is available to eligible participants in the USAP, who show particularly strong promise in one academic area and who also demonstrate leadership abilities. The USAP applicants for the AUBG Presidential Scholarship must meet the requirements for admission to AUBG. The Presidential Scholarship does not cover room, student fees and textbooks that are estimated to a total of 1,500 USD.

### **THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN BULGARIA**

AUBG is a private American-style liberal arts university located in Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria. The University has assumed a unique and critical educational role in the dynamic region of Southeastern Europe through its emphasis on preparing students for leadership, community involvement, careers, and advanced study. The liberal arts education encourages students to develop critical thinking and creative problem solving. AUBG is accredited both in the US and in Bulgaria, and academic credits are fully transferable in Europe and in the United States.

AUBG students are energetic, enthusiastic, and highly intelligent. The multicultural student body includes more than 25 nationalities. Diversity is honoured, tolerance is demanded, and academic excellence is always the intellectual goal. Courses are taught by a high-quality, international faculty experienced in teaching in a multicultural, learner-centered environment. The interactive teaching found at AUBG fosters the development of intellectual reflection, effective communication, personal initiative, individual self-expression, and civic responsibility.

Many AUBG graduates continue their education at prestigious universities in the United States and Europe. Others have already made an important mark in the private and public sectors in the region. Educated in the spirit of the liberal arts tradition, AUBG graduates become competent professionals with a broad and integrated vision of contemporary society that enhances their capacity as citizens and future leaders of the region.

Currently, AUBG offers nine majors: Business Administration, Computer Science, Economics, European Studies, History, Journalism and Mass Communications, Mathematics, Political Science and International Relations, and Southeast European Studies.

## To Chicago and Back

### MY FULBRIGHT EXPERIENCE

*Tamara Todorova is a full-time assistant professor at the American University in Bulgaria. She holds an MBA degree from Columbus State University, Georgia and a Ph.D. in economics from Varna University. At the American University in Bulgaria she teaches Microeconomics, Mathematical Economics, Economics of Reform and Transition, etc. to students from East European countries and the former Soviet Republics. In the fall of 2006 she was a Fulbright visiting scholar to the University of California, Berkeley.*

The University of California, Berkeley struck me with two distinct features. On the one hand, it looks very much like a hippie university where people freely express their ideas and are unbothered to think independently. Perhaps this is a mere illustration of the free spirit of the university which at the time of the Vietnam war organized open protests against it and the draft of students. It also reflects the way Californians think – their views about politics seem to diverge from those of the common American and do not follow the pattern of agreement with the government on all issues. I was able to see that at a discussion with famous philanthropist George Soros and a number of prominent journalists and lawyers at UC, Berkeley. I also experienced it in a talk given by the famous cognitive linguist George Lakoff on political campaigns and the language of politics. Californians seem to think independently and critically about the US government.

This free spirit demonstrated by people's mentality, behavior and even way of dressing strangely combined with another impressive feature of the university – the high academic standards. UC, Berkeley struck me from the very beginning with the high level of its professors and researchers. During my one-semester visit I attended more than 20 seminars in economics – in industrial economics, international trade, macroeconomics, institutional economics. I would never forget the seminars with guests such as worldly known Andrei Shleifer, Carl Shapiro, Daron Acemoglu, Michael Riordan, etc. Being at Berkeley I could get close to high sciences and could



listen to some of the most prominent figures in the field of economics. George Akerlof, a Nobel Prize winner for his famous paper „The Markets for ‚Lemons‘: Quality Uncertainty and the Market Mechanism,“ was introducing the guest speakers with a mild, friendly tone. They all came from reputable places such as Harvard, Stanford, Carnegie Melon, Columbia or UC, Berkeley.

What impressed me the most were the seminars organized by my host department „Business and Public Policy“ at the Haas School of Business. My faculty sponsor Oliver Williamson who is a Professor of the Graduate School and Edgar F. Kaiser Professor Emeritus of Business, Economics and Law is affiliated with the department as well as with the Economics Department. I have been fascinated with his work long time ago. My interest in the new institutional economics dated back to the late 1990s when I chose transaction cost theory as the topic of my dissertation at Varna University of Economics. I did not know at the time that I would have a chance to meet Professor Williamson in person. The field originates from Ronald Coase's seminal article „The Nature of the Firm“ published in 1937 in *Economica*. The article delineating the theoretical boundaries of the firm and explaining why in certain cases contracting takes place on the market and in other through the firm remained unnoticed until Oliver Williamson operationalized it some 40 years later. Williamson gave structure to the theory thus establishing the field of new institutional economics and giving

a name to it. He revitalized the theory with his concept of asset specificity which beautifully explains the hold up problem between two contracting firms. In addition to asset specificity Williamson introduces concepts such as opportunism, information impactedness, uncertainty and frequency. Using transaction cost economics he succeeds in explaining the mechanism by which hierarchies are formed and the difference between them, markets and hybrids. His is the transaction cost explanation behind the multidivisional form corporation where in the unitary form the transaction costs are relatively lower but with greater costs and information burden the operational, day-to-day decisions of the company had to be separated from the strategic, long-term decisions in what is now known as the multidivisional structure. Williamson is also credited with the study of the contractual man and behavioural barriers to the process of contracting where humans are „opportunistic with guile.“ He studies contracts and contractual relations trying to understand the nature, determinacy and difficulties of contracting. I had been fascinated with his writings many of which overlapped with my research interests in the theory of the firm, the transaction costs under comparative economic systems and in particular the higher costs of using the market mechanism in East European countries, the institutional obstacle to economic development, etc. While at Berkeley I am able to discuss various issues of interest with Professor Williamson. I consult with him on three of the four papers I wrote during my visit to the university. One discusses the interpretations of the Coase theorem concerning the externality problem in economic literature and its special relevance to transitional economies where the state as an alternative institutional arrangement may have advantages over the market. The second paper covers the adverse effects of the sizable transaction costs in the Bulgarian economy where the net aggregate production function lies much below the gross production function, the difference attributed to transaction costs. The topic of my third research paper is vertical integration in the newly emerging Bulgarian pharmaceutical sector. I am trying to explain vertical mergers between manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers in the sector with the help of asset specificity and transaction costs and not with traditional explanations such as monopoly and economies of scale.

Professor Williamson graciously invited me to the annual conference of the International Society for New Institutional Economics (ISNIE) that I became a member of. I am hoping to be able to present a paper at its next meeting in July, 2007 in Reykjavik, Iceland. The annual conference for 2006 was held in Boulder, Colorado and was hosted by the University of Colorado. The President-elect Lee Alston chaired the program committee. Except Professor Williamson the conference was notable for the presence of Douglass North, a Nobel Prize winner for his study of economic institutions and the theory of path dependence. In his

keynote address North discussed two clearly distinct groups of countries – the rich, open-access countries (with per capita income of USD 20,000) and the ‚natural‘ states (with less than USD10,000). He described the natural state as one that recreates itself and is dominated by various elites obtaining different rents. Economic elites in such societies support political elites and vice versa. At the other extreme is the open-access society, one which is known for competition, hope, complex interplay between political and economic institutions, impersonal exchange, rules of the game, effective political structure, judicial system that fosters economic development and economic institutions that evolve gradually. Professor North noted that politicians in less advanced, natural states do not have the time horizon to change institutions. The complex change in the political and economic foundation of society required the unanimous efforts of sociology, political science, economics and cognitive science. He then defined the conditions for impersonal exchange to take place, namely that elites in economic markets must find it in their interest to expand some aspects of impersonal markets to outer groups, that the time dimension is infinite, that the change of the political state does not depend so much on personal exchange and that the military should be controlled by civilian life. He noted that before advising international consultants should study very carefully the characteristics of culture and the way conditions evolved in the particular society or entity. The lessons of economic development require politicians to observe rules and to be provided with incentives to observe those rules.

Other prominent participants in the conference included Trainn Eggertsson, Rudolf Richter, Scott Masten, Gary Libecap, Roberta Romano and many others. I would never forget approaching Professor Richter with comments about his book coauthored with Eirik Furubotn, a book that I use as a basic title for the course in New Institutional Economics I teach at the American University in Bulgaria. After hearing my remarks Professor Richter took out the latest edition of the book and gave it to me with an autograph.

As I teach the course both as a lower- and an upper-level elective, I turned to my faculty sponsor Professor Williamson with a request to review my course syllabus. With his valuable comments I am hoping to substantially improve the quality of the course and my teaching. Being able to obtain first-hand support and academic guidance from such a prominent scholar makes me infinitely happy and confident both in my research and my teaching. Professor Williamson writes down his comments and remarks on my papers and hands them back to me. We have weekly meetings at which we discuss my papers and issues of academic interest. He urged me to send two of the papers to various forums – one is the ISNIE conference to take place next year and one is the workshop that precedes it organized by the Ronald Coase Institute. The workshop

especially welcomes scholars from developing and transitional economies facing various institutional obstacles and trying to build up their market institutions from scratch. I have received a great deal of encouragement and support from Professor Williamson, which has stimulated much of my work and will continue to guide me in the future.

The International House of UC, Berkeley where I live is a place where people meet friends from all over the world. Strangely enough I ended up being friends with three visiting scholars from Brazil, Norway and South Africa. We became so close we went out for a drink on Fridays or had coffee in the cafeteria of the International House. Except our little but very close group I enjoyed talking to people from China, Burma, Italy, France and many other countries. My Brazilian friend Margarida and I visited the Museum of Modern Art in San Francisco where we saw the paintings of famous artists like Mattice, Picasso, Frida Kahlo, etc. As part of the Fulbright activities I participated in receptions, a trolley tour of San Francisco and a visit to the California Academy of Sciences where we saw the exhibition of dinosaurs and the aquarium.

In November I participated in the Fulbright Asilomar Conference „Addressing Environmental Challenges, Globally and Locally,“ Asilomar, California, November 17-19, 2006. I was a panellist in the Visiting Scholar Panel. I discussed some of the pressing environmental problems faced by my country Bulgaria. In particular, I elaborated on the problem with sewage in the country and in Sofia, the closing of the four reactors of the nuclear power plant in Kozlodui, the pollution of the Black Sea and the heavy construction along the Black Sea coast as well as the problem of logging and exports of timber leading to deforestation in the mountains. The presentation was received

with great interest from the participants, most of whom Fulbright Scholars, alumni and activists. I was happy to be able to present some of Bulgaria's outstanding problems to scholars from various countries and backgrounds. My hosts from the local Fulbright organization are very hospitable and the local Fulbright coordinator Marilyn Herand is a person full of energy and enthusiasm.

I had a wonderful Thanksgiving with Professor Williamson's personal assistant Robert and his wife Georgia. I enjoyed their company and meal on this most celebrated holiday in the US. The highlight of the evening was when each of us, Robert, Georgia, their several friends and I had to share what we were thankful for in the past year. I thanked for their generous invitation and thoughtfulness and for my being healthy throughout the year. People thanked for the friends they met, the exams they passed, the wonderful experiences they had with friends in the past, etc. On this day Americans traditionally eat turkey and we had a smoked one prepared by one of Robert's friends, a master of the art of cooking and an experienced chef from France.

My Fulbright experience allowed me to build up my strength, both physically and academically. Physically it allowed me to rest from a busy teaching schedule at the American University. Filled with energy, I am able to go back to my students whom I miss a lot and teach with a greater rigor. I have new ideas for teaching New Institutional Economics that I hope my students would receive with excitement. Academically the Fulbright one-semester grant empowered me to develop and utilize new scientific instruments, research methods and approaches that will allow me to produce much higher quality research papers in the future.

## БЪЛГАРО-АМЕРИКАНСКА КОМИСИЯ ЗА ОБРАЗОВАТЕЛЕН ОБМЕН

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## Out of America

*Heather Renwick graduated from Wake Forest University in May 2005. She studied history and politics at Wake Forest, with a regional focus on Eastern Europe. Before coming to Bulgaria as a Fulbright student in AY 2005/2006, Heather spent three months in Romania and a semester at Charles University in the Czech Republic.*

According to the United Nations: „Trafficking in persons“ shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.

For the past nine months, I have been studying various counter-trafficking initiatives and projects in Bulgaria—their effectiveness, the extent of cooperation between the Bulgarian government, NGOs, and the international community in their implementation, etc. I do not consider myself an expert in the field of human trafficking, nor do I believe that my research is anywhere near conclusive. However I do claim nine months working in the unique position of both an insider and an outsider in the anti-trafficking community in Sofia.

As a Fulbright Fellow, a researcher, an outsider, I have interacted with the counter-trafficking community on a formal, detached level. I have conducted interviews with governmental and non-governmental organizations and



attended counter-trafficking meetings and conferences. As a researcher, and a foreign researcher in particular, I have been informed of the official policies and positions of Bulgarian NGOs—their views on prostitution, methods of prevention of trafficking, and the reintegration of survivors back into society.

What has made these interviews easiest as an outsider is the role of the United States in counter-trafficking. The United States Embassy, Peace Corps, and USAID play a surprisingly substantial role in coordinating and implementing anti-trafficking initiatives in Bulgaria. As an American researcher, therefore, I have had access to these organizations and the individuals who influence the direction of counter-trafficking policy implementation and project coordination.

Perhaps the most valuable facet of my research, that which has made me an insider, has been my internship with Animus Association Foundation. Animus is a Bulgarian non-governmental organization (NGO) whose mission is to provide psychological counseling for women victims of violence and trafficking and to advocate for the recognition of these issues in both Bulgarian society and the Bulgarian government. Animus is also a partner organization of La Strada International—an Eastern European anti-trafficking network. (Incidentally, it was my interaction with La Strada/Czech Republic while studying in Prague that first sparked my

interest in the subject.) By interning at Animus, I have gained a unique insight into the inner-workings of one of Bulgaria's most experienced anti-trafficking NGOs.

Trafficking in Bulgaria is a very real problem. Southeast Europe has seen an explosion in the number of cases of trafficking in women for prostitution since 1989. Many different topics can be discussed under the broad heading of „Trafficking in Bulgaria“: socio-economic factors that lead to trafficking, organized crime, prosecution of traffickers, prevention, reintegration of survivors, etc. My research has focused on the coordination of counter-trafficking projects in Bulgaria, and how effectively anti-trafficking law is implemented in order to prevent further trafficking of women in Bulgaria. There have been a considerable number of successes in counter-trafficking in Bulgaria over the past five years, but there is also a substantial amount of work left to be done. Therefore the remainder of this article will discuss two stumbling blocks hindering effective Bulgarian counter-trafficking.

In 2003 the Bulgarian government took an important step in addressing the issue of trafficking by passing the Law Combating Trafficking in Human Beings. The law itself is comprehensive in addressing trafficking on both a local and national level, and is actually based on a pre-existing model for juvenile delinquency. For the Law Combating Trafficking in Human Beings to be fully implemented, a Secretary of the National Commission on Human Trafficking first needs to be appointed. The lack of a Secretary is the first and most obvious problem in the current state of Bulgarian counter-trafficking. A Secretary was appointed in the spring of 2006—but resigned two months later for health reasons. Many NGO counter-trafficking projects are contingent upon a functioning National Commission—therefore until a new Secretary is appointed, much of the anti-trafficking sector will be stalled in its activities. The first search for a Secretary took

two years, and there is an overt sense of pessimism that this search will be no easier.

The second major problem in current Bulgarian counter-trafficking activities is the lack of coordination within the NGO sector, and between NGOs and governmental institutions. Because NGOs are dependent on foreign governments and institutions as their primary source of funding, they are forced to compete against one another for a limited pool of money. In time, once the financial situation of Bulgarian NGOs has normalized, competition will likely prove a positive thing by encouraging more effective and professional counter-trafficking activities. Until then, however, competition will continue to breed a lack of cooperation—which means that some needs fall through the cracks while other projects and initiatives are unnecessarily duplicated.

The United States Embassy has taken an important step in encouraging greater cooperation in the anti-trafficking community by instating quarterly Donors' Meetings. At the meetings, the major players in countering-trafficking get together and discuss their current projects. Although there have yet to be many tangible products of these meetings, I believe they are an important first step towards greater communication and cooperation. Additionally, once a Secretary of the National Commission is appointed, he or she will play a vital role in coordinating counter-trafficking projects in Bulgaria.

My research in Bulgaria proved timelier than I had originally realized, given all of the activity surrounding the National Commission against Trafficking and the appointment of a Secretary. Although there is still considerable work left to be done until the Law Combating Human Trafficking is fully implemented, I have been encouraged by the vision and passion of many individuals working in counter-trafficking in Bulgaria.

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