

E-NEWSLETTER ISSUE 9 • SEPTEMBER 2025

FROM THE SCIENCE OF KFC TO THE MAGIC OF FIRE-WALKING

Official Newsletter of the Bulgarian Fulbright Commission

Food, family trees, and fire walking – this fall's edition of the Fulbright Bulgaria newsletter explores all these traditions from new perspectives. Bulgarian Scholar Nikolay Kolev from the University of Food Sciences in Plovdiv reveals the secrets to delicious meat (hint: you are what you eat) – and reports on his “scientific tests” of KFC at its source during his stay in Kentucky. ETA Hayden Hill shares delightful stories about and photos of her Bulgarian great-great-grandparents, as well as her plans for discovering more about her family roots and the Bulgarian educational system during her year here. Of course, we kicked off the new academic year with our Orientation for new US Fulbrighters, complete with a busy week of training, cultural activities, and Bulgarian language lessons, the highpoint being an evening spent enjoying the magical tradition of fire walking! After such a strong start, we wish the Fulbright Bulgaria 2025–2026 cohort on both sides of the ocean a wonderful academic year!



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BULGARIAN GRANTEES

You Are What You Eat – Even If You're a Lamb

Meet Nikolay Kolev, a 2024–25 Fulbright Scholar from the University of Food Technologies in Plovdiv. His home institution is a particularly exciting partner for us, as its strong focus on food science and meat technology is not the most common area among our Bulgarian grantees (although we have had quite a few American food anthropologists come to study Bulgaria's delicious traditions!). During his five-month fellowship at the University of Kentucky, Nikolay worked at the intersection of animal nutrition and food quality – a lesser known but important field that connects science directly to the food on our tables.

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“In Kentucky, I had access to state-of-the-art labs and expertise in meat science.”

DR. NIKOLAY KOLEV
FULBRIGHT VISITING
SCHOLAR AT THE UNIVERSITY
OF KENTUCKY
AY 2024-25



ETAS TO BULGARIA

“Everything She Made Put a Smile on Your Face at First Bite”: An American Educator Explores Her Bulgarian Ancestry

Although she set foot for the first time in Bulgaria just a month ago, California native Hayden Hill has been hearing about the country since she was a child, thanks to her Bulgarian-American grandmother.

This family connection inspired the history major from Oberlin College to spend a year as a Fulbright | America for Bulgaria English Teaching Assistant at the St. Kliment Ohridski High School of Arts in Dobrich. As a former art teacher, Hayden hopes to share with her students her passion for knitting, embroidery and quilting – and hopefully learn some Bulgarian crafting techniques from her local community. In the coming year, Hayden also hopes to find some long-lost cousins before she heads back to the US to pursue her career in education law with Bulgarian classroom experience under her belt!

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U.S. GRANTEES

Fire Walk with Me: the 2025 Fulbright Bulgaria ETA Orientation

Facing a classroom full of teenagers can be daunting, almost as scary as walking across hot coals for the uninitiated. Luckily for the new cohort of Fulbright English Teaching Assistants (ETAs), the Commission staff planned a week of fun and instructive activities to help them get their feet wet and minimize any “adjustment burns.”

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