



Dear Colleagues and friends,

Some of you may know that this year is special for the Bulgarian Fulbright Commission because it marks its 20th anniversary. In 1992 a bilateral agreement was signed between the Governments of Bulgaria and the United States on establishing a Commission for Educational Exchange. The Commission started operating early in 1993 at a crucial moment in the history of Bulgaria and Eastern Europe: the collapse of totalitarian socialism and the beginning of a long and dramatic transition to democracy and market economy. It was not at all easy to build a completely new type of institution under conditions of almost permanent turbulence and uncertainty. Ironically speaking, today, two decades later, we are still shaking but the bumpy road travelled by the Commission so far has undeviatingly led upward. The Bulgarian Fulbright Commission took firm root on the Bulgarian soil, grew and became strong thanks to the steady support of the governments of Bulgaria and the US, the competence, professionalism and dedication of the Commission members and administrative staff as well as the help we received from you, the Fulbright alumni. The extraordinary harmony and synergy among individuals and institutions has been fostered by the great power, significance and intransience of the Fulbright cause of promoting understanding among human communities through exchange of knowledge, education and cultural and moral values.

In 2013 the total number of the members of the Bulgarian-American Fulbright community has reached 1081: 533 Bulgarians and 548 Americans. Of them 899 (431 Bulgarians and 478 Americans) became grantees and alumni after the establishment of the Commission. The reasons for the dramatic increase of Fulbright grantees after 1993 are manifold: radical socio-political changes, the new constructive spirit of Bulgarian-American relations, democratization and professionalization of selection criteria as well as the wide range of activities the Commission developed to make information about the Fulbright competition and educational opportunities in the US widely accessible. The menu of Fulbright scholarships has been enriched to include more categories of grants for graduate study, research, lecturing and professional training.

In sum, so far the balance is more than good, deficits and liabilities are negligible and we can proudly face the anniversary of our mature youth or young maturity.

The Fulbright Commission is preparing an official event for the occasion on November 4 this year. We will invite a lot of Fulbright alumni because we will be delighted to see them, talk to them and share ideas and dreams about the future of Fulbright, education and science. It will be great if some of you can attend too.

To make the celebration even more memorable, we have decided to establish a Fulbright alumni scholarship to support young researchers and graduate students.

If you are willing to help the realization of this wonderful idea, please send your contributions to the Bulgarian Fulbright Commission by wire transfer or check.

Wire transfer information:

Bulgarian-American Commission for Educational Exchange
Bank: Raiffeisen Bank Bulgaria

5, Saborna Str., 1000 Sofia, Bulgaria

Bank Code BIC: RZBBBGSF

Bank account in USD- IBAN: BG15RZBB91551161044018

Check made payable to:

Bulgarian-American Commission for Educational Exchange

17 Alexander Stamboliiski Blvd.

Sofia 1000, Bulgaria

I would like to most cordially congratulate you, the American Fulbright alumni, on the 20th anniversary of the Bulgarian Fulbright Commission and sincerely thank you for your great help, commitment and good will.

Julia Stefanova
Executive Director