



FULBRIGHT
Bulgaria

BULGARIAN-AMERICAN COMMISSION
FOR EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGE



Academic Year

2021-2022

ANNUAL PROGRAM REPORT

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History & Mission



US Congress established the Fulbright Program in 1946 with an ambitious goal — to increase mutual understanding and support friendly and peaceful relations between the people of the United States and the people of other countries. Over the past 75 years, the Fulbright Program has enabled more than 360,000 scholars, students, educators, artists, professionals and civil society representatives to participate in international exchanges.

The Fulbright Program awards approximately 8,000 grants annually, seeking out individuals with potential who represent the full diversity of their respective societies and selecting nominees through open, merit-based competitions.

“International educational exchange is the most significant current project designed to continue the process of humanizing mankind to the point, we would hope, that men can learn to live in peace – eventually even to cooperate in constructive activities rather than compete in a mindless contest of mutual destruction.... We must try to expand the boundaries of human wisdom, empathy and perception, and there is no way of doing that except through education.”

– **Senator J. W. Fulbright,**
from remarks on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the Fulbright Program, 1976

Educational exchange between the United States and the Republic of Bulgaria under the Fulbright program started as early as 1967. In 1993 the Bulgarian-American Commission for Educational Exchange was officially inaugurated under a ten-year bilateral agreement between the governments of the United States and the Republic of Bulgaria. In 2003 a new bilateral agreement was signed, establishing the Fulbright Commission in perpetuity. Between 1967 and 2022, nearly 1,500 American and Bulgarian citizens have taken part in Fulbright exchanges between the two countries.

The mission of the Bulgarian-American Commission for Educational Exchange is to increase intercultural communication and understanding through academic and cultural exchange, to build long-term relationships between American and Bulgarian citizens and institutions, to raise the visibility of the Fulbright program in Bulgaria and worldwide through initiatives and partnerships with a broad variety of public and private institutions in the sphere of education, civil society, business, culture, science, technology and government. Our ultimate goal is to change lives!

The Fulbright Commission Board

The Bulgarian-American Fulbright Commission board consists of ten members, five American citizens and five Bulgarian citizens. They represent the major areas of state and public activity: government, education, the arts, and business. The Ambassador of the United States to the Republic of Bulgaria and the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Bulgaria serve as honorary chairpersons of the Commission and appoint the regular board members. The board members during Fiscal Year 2022 included:

Honorary Chairs

Professor Nikolai Denkov

Bulgarian Minister of Education and Science

Herro Mustafa

Ambassador of the United States to Bulgaria

Chair

Radostina Chaprazova

Country Director, Arete Youth Foundation

Treasurer

Brent LaRosa

Cultural and Educational Affairs Officer,
US Embassy in Bulgaria

US Members of the Board

Richard T. Ewing, Jr.

President, American College of Sofia

Sarah Perrine*

Executive Director, Trust for Social Achievement

Eric Halsey*

Managing Director, Halsey Company

Jeff Weinshenker

Public Affairs Officer, US Embassy in Bulgaria

Bulgarian Members of the Board

Karina Angelieva

Deputy Minister of Education and Science

Professor Svetla Danova*

Stephan Angeloff Institute of Microbiology, BAS

Professor Guenka Petrova

Deputy Minister of Education and Science

Tzvetomir Todorov*

Managing Director, Bulgarian American
Management Company

**Fulbright alumni*

Front cover photo:

US scholars and students
visit Rozhen Monastery

Letter from the 2022 Board Chair



Radostina Chaprazova,
Country Director, Arete Youth Foundation

2022. The year of positive predictions and hopes for fresh air. After facing the challenges of isolation for the past two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we had all thought we would finally be coming back to our "new normality." Yet suddenly, while cautiously transitioning our digital lives to in-person, we were exposed to another global hardship: the war in Ukraine. Our universal rights and values were put to a stark test: the battle of the individual versus the collective good. At this critical moment, we should all rethink how fragile freedom is and how to use our individual intuition and responsibility to safeguard peace, mutual understanding, and respect for others. This is the legacy of Senator Fulbright, and advancing that legacy has been the shared mission of Fulbright Programs worldwide for decades.

It is my second term as member of the Bulgarian Fulbright Commission, and my first time appointed as a board chair. In these past few years I have been part of the incredible work of the Commission and the astounding achievements of the Bulgarian and US grantees. Academic and professional excellence, leadership, mobility, knowledge and experience sharing, innovation, citizenship, multiculturalism, democracy and recognition. All of these shared efforts have resonated with the accomplishments of Fulbright Bulgaria since its inception 29 years ago.

I can say with confidence that 2022 was a successful year for the Commission. A new cohort of outstanding US and Bulgarian students, professionals, academics in various fields, and Bulgarian civil society representatives completed their degrees, taught, conducted research and collaborated on meaningful and impactful projects. 32 English Teaching Assistants provided English language instruction and served as cultural ambassadors for the U.S to thousands of Bulgarian high school students and the local communities across Bulgaria. We also organized Media Literacy grants and seminars, the Fulbright International Seminar on Strategies for Strengthening Democracy and the Rule of Law, and the Summer Media Boot Camp for Young Journalists. These are only a few of the Bulgarian Fulbright Commission's 2022 highlights that carry on and offer new insights into the legacy of the Fulbright program. For this reason, I'd like to start by praising the extraordinary work and express my gratitude to the entire Fulbright Commission team and the executive director, Angela Rodel, who maintain high standards of professionalism, commitment and enthusiasm in everything they do. On behalf of the Fulbright Board, I would like to thank most sincerely the supporting governments of Bulgaria and the United States, the America for Bulgaria Foundation, and all our sponsors and partners for their unwavering support and trust over the years.

Finally, I would like to thank my fellow board members for their ongoing leadership and commitment to the values and mission of the Bulgarian Fulbright Commission. The past few years have been challenging, but you can't have a rainbow without rain. I hope 2023 will be a much better year for all of us, a year of peace through understanding and striving for unity.

Fulbright Bulgaria's YEAR AT-A-GLANCE:

74

FULBRIGHT
BULGARIA
GRANTEES

53 US/21 BG

GRANTEES BY CATEGORY

U.S.: 53

9 Scholars

9 Students

32 ETAs

3 Specialists

BG: 21

6 Visiting Scholars

1 Civil Society Scholar

5 Graduate Students

4 Visiting Researchers

1 Humphrey Fellow

4 FTEAs

98

OUTREACH VISITS
TO 50+ CITIES:

- 26 for Fulbright Competition Campaign
- 32 for ETA School Visits
- 40 for EducationUSA

9,300

BULGARIAN
STUDENTS

taught by

32 ETAs

at partner schools
in 24 cities

17,000

ETA
Classroom
Contact
Hours

PMP STATS

Volunteering

- PMI Bulgaria Chapter
- Pet Sisters Animal Shelter
- Corplus Fundraising
- AUBG Innovation Starter

Program Highlights

- 6 Training Sessions
- 57 Participants
- 100% Exam Success Rate

NEW WEBSITE LAUNCH

66,430 visits

Average session duration rose by
31.61%
as compared to 2021

Visted pages / sessions grew by
60.45%

Bounce rate fell by incredible
54.14%

Social Media Impact

LinkedIn growth from 152 to
2277 followers

Facebook page reach rose by
56.8%

Instagram page reach rose by
35.6%

New FB page followers
1,400 (+203.7%)

NEW Email marketing
3,705 subscribers

EducationUSA Undergrad Scholarships

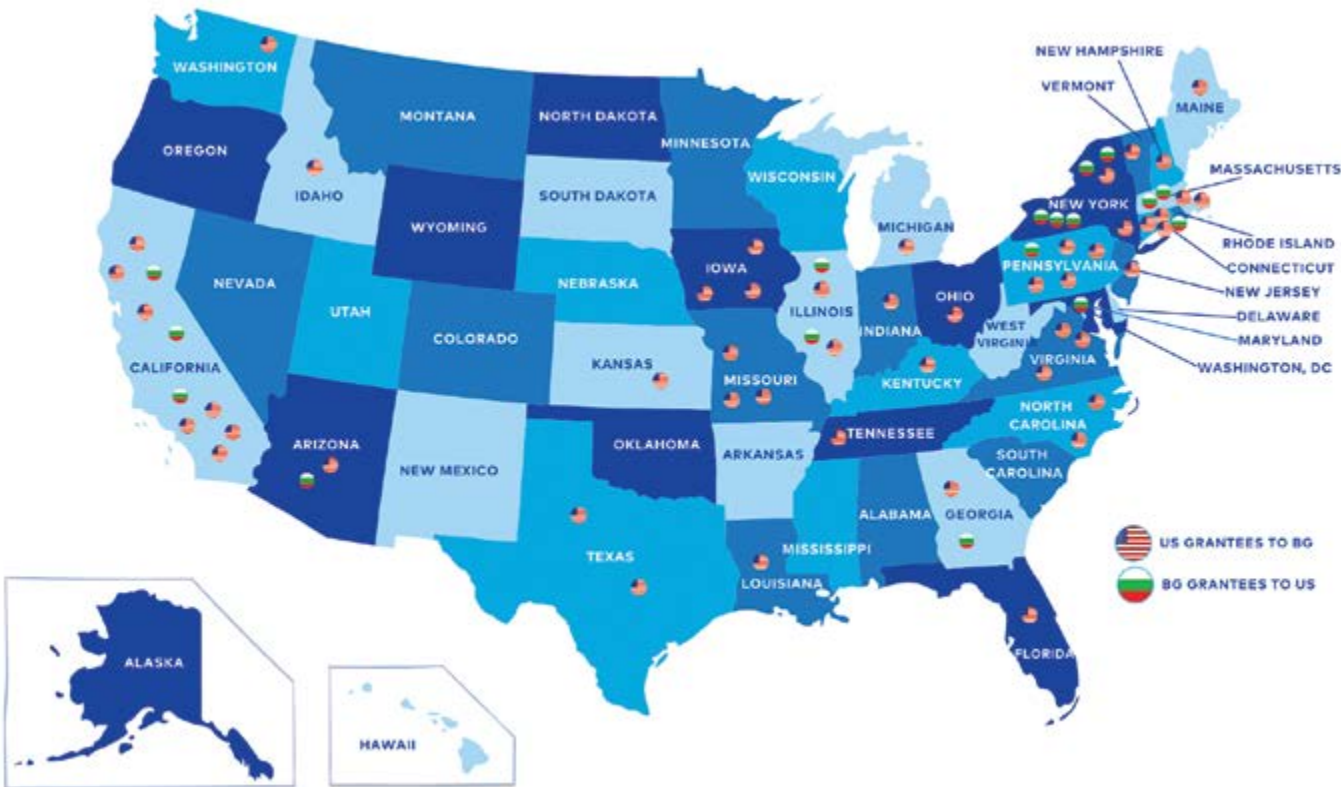
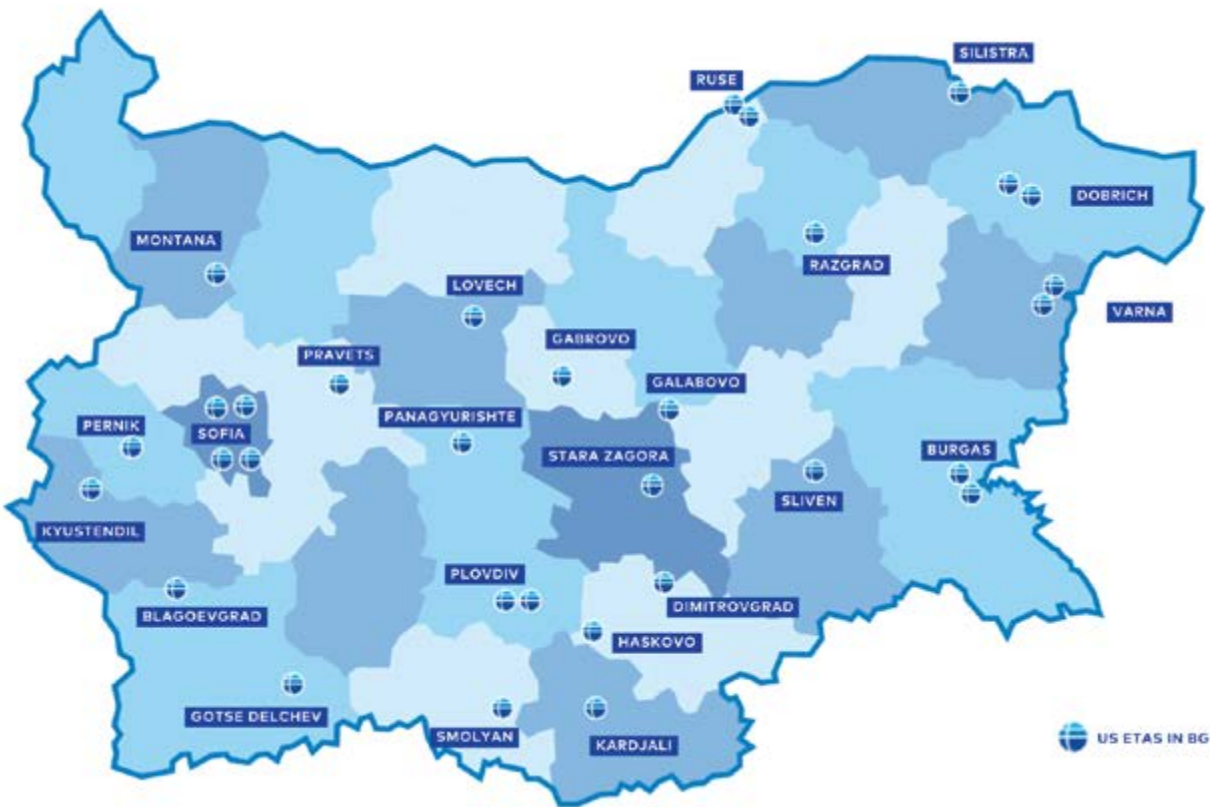
\$4,046,292

in scholarships for 13 students
in the Virtual Advising and
Opportunity Funds-Bulgaria

4 full-ride

scholarships to MIT, Franklin
and Marshall College, NYU in
Abu Dhabi, and AUBG

Maps of BG and U.S. Grantees' Host/Home Institutions



U.S. Fulbright Grantees

Academic Year 2021-2022

SCHOLARS

Matthew Brunwasser

Field of Specialization: Journalism
Home Institution: Freelance
Journalist, San Francisco, CA
Host Institution in Bulgaria:
Association of European Journalists-
Bulgaria, Sofia

Ryan Crehan

Field of Specialization: Environmental
Sciences
Home Institution: U.S. Fish and
Wildlife Service, Essex Junction, VT
Host Institution in Bulgaria: World
Wildlife Fund - Bulgaria, Sofia

Dr. Aaron Kleist

Field of Specialization: Education
Home Institution: Biola University, La
Mirada, CA
Host Institution in Bulgaria: Plovdiv
University Paisii Hilendarski, Plovdiv

Dr. Ian MacMillen

Field of Specialization: Anthropology
of Music
Home Institution: Yale University,
New Haven, CT
Host Institution in Bulgaria: New
Bulgarian University, Sofia

Dr. Mariofanna Milanova

Field of Specialization: Information
Sciences
Home Institution: University of
Arkansas, Little Rock, AR
Host Institution in Bulgaria: Technical
University, Sofia

Dr. Cristofer Scarboro

Field of Specialization: History
Home Institution: King's College,
Wilkes-Barre, PA
Host Institution in Bulgaria:
American University in Bulgaria,
Blagoevgrad

Dr. Rebecca Singer

Field of Specialization: Public
Health
Home Institution: University of
Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, IL
Host Institution in Bulgaria:
Organization of Jews in Bulgaria
Shalom, Sofia

Alexandra White

Field of Specialization: Business
and Management
Home Institution: Luther College,
Decorah, IA
Host Institution in Bulgaria: Sofia
University, Sofia

Dr. Yanjun Yan

Field of Specialization:
Engineering
Home Institution: Western Carolina
University, Cullowhee, NC
Host Institution in Bulgaria:
Technical University of Sofia,
Sofia

GRADUATE STUDENTS

Lucas Fagre

Field of Specialization: Anthropology,
Global Health
Project Title: Analysis of Barriers to
Measles Vaccine Access among Roma
in Bulgaria and Romania
Host Institution in Bulgaria: Trust for
Social Achievement, Sofia

Christopher Harper

Field of Specialization: Public Health
Project Title: An Empirical and Policy
Approach to Hope and a Just Future
for Bulgarian Orphans
Host Institution in Bulgaria: Trust for
Social Achievement, Sofia

Danielle Jacques

Field of Specialization: Anthropology
Project Title: Representation and
Authenticity in Bulgarian National
Cuisine: A Study of Culinary Tourism
Host Institution in Bulgaria: Plovdiv
University, Plovdiv

Anastasia Koumtcheva

Field of Specialization: Architecture
Project Title: Looking Towards
National Revival Vernacular to Inform
Sustainable Housing Design
Host Institution in Bulgaria: New
Bulgarian University, Sofia

Jose Fernando Rios

Field of Specialization: Political Science
Project Title: The Role of the
Bulgarian Orthodox Church in the
Bulgarian Political Process
Host Institution in Bulgaria: Sofia
University, Sofia

U.S. Fulbright Grantees

Academic Year 2021-2022

Katherine Ruprecht

Field of Specialization: Library Science

Project Title: Improving School Libraries in Rural Bulgaria and Romania

Host Institution in Bulgaria: Sofia University, Sofia

Mary Rzepczynski

Field of Specialization: Archaeology

Project Title: Cross-Cultural Influences on the Decorative Stone Elements of Nessebar's Medieval Churches

Host Institution in Bulgaria: Balkan Heritage Foundation, Nessebar

Gabriel Soileau

Field of Specialization: Music

Project Title: Studying Bulgarian Kaval and Accordion

Host Institution in Bulgaria: Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts, Plovdiv

Eliot Usherenko

Field of Specialization: International Relations

Project Title: The Black Sea Front: An Analysis of U.S. Relations with NATO Allies in the Eastern Balkans

Host Institution in Bulgaria: Sofia University, Sofia

ENGLISH TEACHING ASSISTANTS

Amanda Adinolfi

Host: Professional High School of Energy and Electrical Engineering, Galabovo

William Andriola

Host: Ekzarh Yossif Foreign Language High School, Lovech

Madelyn Bjork

Host: Yoan Ekzarh Foreign Language School, Varna

Emily Bom

Host: 33 St. Sofia Foreign Language School, Sofia

Sophia Brewer Thompson

Host: Aprilov National High School, Gabrovo

Malique Brunner

Host: Dr. Ivan Bogorov Language High School,

Amanda Burau

Host: Petar Bogdan Foreign Language High School, Montana

Bjorn Carlson

Host: Ivan Vazov Foreign Language School, Smolyan

Gabrielle Cascio

Host: Zaharii Stoyanov Foreign Language School, Sliven

Adalyne Cummins

Hosts: SS Cyril and Methodius Secondary School and Vocational School for Computer Programming and Innovation, Burgas

Benjamin Custer

Host: Plovdiv University Paisii Hilendarski, Plovdiv

Jason Entingh

Host: Geo Milev English Language School, Ruse

Chase Forster

Host: Professional School of Industrial Technologies, Management and Tourism, Panagyurishte

Bailey Galicia

Host: Dr. Petar Beron Mathematical School, Varna

Giovanni Gamalong

Host: Tsar Simeon Veliki Private Secondary School, Sofia

Mahika Gopalka

Host: Baba Tonka Mathematical School, Ruse

Samuel Henthorn

Host: Peyo Yavorov Foreign Language High School, Silistra

Savannah Jelks

Host: Thomas Jefferson Second English Language School, Sofia

Kadia King

Host: Geo Milev English Language School, Burgas

Brenna Lewis-Slammon

Host: Ekzarh Yossif Foreign Language School, Razgrad

Julia Lynch

Host: Geo Milev Foreign Language High School, Dobrich

U.S. Grantees 2021-2022

Bulgarian Fulbright Grantees 2021-2022

Courtney Meissner

Host: Simeon Radev Foreign Language School, Pernik

Savannah Modesitt

Host: Romain Rolland Foreign Language High School, Stara Zagora

Pearl Morttey

Host: Elisaveta Bagryana 51 Secondary School, Sofia

Christopher Nash

Host: St. Kliment Ohridski Secondary School, Dobrich

Audrey Novak

Host: "Aleko Konstantinov" Foreign Language School, Pravets

Jacob Pinter

Host: Acad. Kiril Popov High School of Mathematics, Plovdiv

Morgan Rowe

Host: Acad. Lyudmil Stoyanov Foreign Language School, Blagoevgrad

Katerina Sankow

Host: Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov Foreign Language High School, Haskovo

Nathan Shearn

Host: Hristo Botev Foreign Language School, Kardzhali

Megan Siedman

Host: Yane Sandanski Secondary School of Mathematics and Science, Gotse Delchev

Michael Smith

Host: Dr. Petar Beron Foreign Language School, Kyustendil

SCHOLARS

Yulia Radanova

Field of Specialization: Law
Project Title: Mediating Family Conflicts Across Cultures
Home Institution: University of National and World Economy
Host Institution: Loyola University, Chicago School of Law

Elitsa Pavlova

Field of Specialization: Biology
Project Title: Role of Oxidative Stress, Antioxidant Capacity, and Inflammatory Cytokines on Resistin-induced Epithelial to Mesenchymal Transition in Breast Cancer Cells
Home Institution: Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski
Host Institution: Lenox Hill Hospital, NY

Iva Boneva

Field of Specialization: Education
Project Title: Factors Influencing Formation of Positive Teachers' Attitudes Towards Equity - Lessons to be Learned from American Teachers
Home Institution: Association for Shared Learning
Host Institution: Arizona State University, Tempe

Alexandra Glavanakova

Field of Specialization: English Literature
Project Title: Modes of Reading Fiction Online on Social Platforms
Home Institution: Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski
Host Institution: University of California, Santa Barbara

Eliza Ivanova

Field of Specialization: Psychology
Project Title: Towards an In-Depth Understanding of Health Anxiety and Death Anxiety: Constructions of Death and Health Risks.
Home Institution: Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski
Host Institution: Cornell University, Medical College

Milena Kuleva

Field of Specialization: Sports Education
Project Title: Dual Career of Athletes
Home Institution: National Sports Academy Vassil Levski
Host Institution: SUNY, Empire College

SCHOLARSHIP FOR THE STUDY OF CIVIL SOCIETY

Mira Todorova

Field of Specialization: Dance
Home Institution: DNK Space for Contemporary Dance and Performance
Host Institution: The Chocolate Factory Theatre, NY

HUBERT HUMPHREY FELLOWSHIP

Elisaveta Geretto

Field of Specialization: Public Health
Home Institution: Medical University, Sofia
Host Institution: Emory University

Bulgarian Fulbright Grantees

Academic Year 2021-2022

GRADUATE STUDENTS

Iglika Atanassova

Field of Specialization: Education
Host Institution: Harvard University
Degree: EdM in Education Leadership, Organizations, and Entrepreneurship

Martina Novakova

Field of Specialization: Theater
Host Institution: New York University
Degree: MA in Educational Theatre in Colleges and Communities

Dimitar Kirilov

Field of Specialization: Computer Science
Host Institution: University of Southern California
Degree: MS in Computer Science

Lyubomir Avdzhyski

Field of Specialization: Law
Host Institution: Pennsylvania State University
Degree: LLM in Law

Tsvetelina Bayraktarova

Field of Specialization: Law
Host Institution: Harvard University
Degree: LLM in Law

VISITING RESEARCHERS

Javor Gardev

Field of Specialization: Performance Arts
Project Title: Symbolic Manipulation and Its Opponents: Archetypal Plots and Performative Tactics
Home Institution: New Bulgarian University
Host Institution: Northwestern University

Velislava Todorova

Field of Specialization: Philosophy
Project Title: Formal Approaches to the Coding of Information Source in Natural Languages
Home Institution: Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski
Host Institution: University of Connecticut

Bilyana Manova

Field of Specialization: Law
Project Title: Public International Law Aspects of the Freedom of Information
Home Institution: Southwestern University, Blagoevgrad
Host Institution: University of California, LA

Polly Petkova

Field of Specialization: Cognitive Linguistics
Project Title: The Cognitive Category HEDGE in Bulgarian and English
Home Institution: Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski"
Host Institution: Georgetown University

FULBRIGHT TEACHING EXCELLENCE AWARD

Vladimira Teneva

Field of Specialization: Media Literacy
Home Institution: Dr. Ivan Seliminski Middle School, Sliven
Host Institution: Kent State University, Ohio

Irina Grudeva

Field of Specialization: Media Literacy
Home Institution: Vocational School of Electrical Engineering and Electronics Konstantin Fotinov, Burgas
Host Institution: Kent State University, Ohio

Daniel Simeonov

Field of Specialization: Media Literacy
Home Institution: Neofit Rilski School, Aglen, Lovech
Host Institution: Kent State University, Ohio

Sava Tashev

Field of Specialization: Media Literacy
Home Institution: 97th Bratya Miladinovi School, Sofia
Host Institution: University of Wisconsin, Madison

Bulgarian Scholar Program



Professor Alexandra Glavanakova (front row, left) at a Fulbright Enrichment Seminar.

AY 2021-22 was dynamic and successful for the Bulgarian scholar program, comprised of an illustrious and diverse group of academics: a mediation lawyer (**Yulia Radanova**), a biologist working on breast cancer prevention (**Elitsa Pavlova**), an educational specialist with a focus on equity (**Iva Boneva**), a professor of English literature (**Alexandra Glavanakova**), a sports educator (**Milena Kuleva**), and a psychologist working on death anxiety (**Eliza Ivanova**). Our 2021-22 scholars worked at a wide array of host institutions, including Loyola University, Lenox Hill Hospital, Arizona State University, the University of California, Santa Barbara, Cornell University, and the State University of New York. Professor Glavanakova also participated in the Fulbright Enrichment seminar at Colorado State University.

“ I was a Visiting Scholar at the Endocrine Research Laboratory of Gerald J. Friedman Diabetes Institute, Lenox Hill Hospital – New York City. It was a time full of surprises and a great inspiration for my professional and academic development. It was such a fantastic opportunity – to work and live in the US for an extensive period of time, enough to finish and elaborate on a serious scientific project and enough to know the country’s culture and visit so many exciting spots as a tourist.”

- Assoc. Prof. Elitsa Pavlova, AY 2021-22

Civil Society Program

Our 2021-22 NGO representative in the field of dance and choreography, **Mira Todorova**, visited the New York-based NGO arts organization Chocolate Factory and returned with very positive impressions and new artistic ideas.

I would like to express my enormous gratitude to the Fulbright Program for the unique experience this incredible scholarship gave me! I spent five months in New York doing theoretical research on the topic of socio-political potential of contemporary dance. I made contacts with many professionals from the theatre and dance scene, as well as with people from the academia: artists, dancers, choreographers, managers, theoreticians, university professors, curators, festival directors from the US and abroad."

- **Mira Todorova**, Civil Society scholar, AY 2021-22



Mira Todorova



Dr. Pavlova with other BG grantees

Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship

The 2021-22 Humphrey fellow from Bulgaria, **Elizaveta Geretto-Petrova**, completed her program in Public Health at Emory University successfully. Upon return, Elizaveta immediately became involved with the Fulbright community and took part in the Humphrey selection process for AY 2023-24.



BAS Mathematical Institute Presentation

Pre-Departure Orientation

The annual orientation was held on June 24, 2022, in a hybrid format (in person with online access) for the departing Bulgarian students and scholars, followed by an outdoor reception for Bulgarian Fulbright alumni to meet the new cohort and reconnect with colleagues. We were also proud to have the whole event translated into sign language and thus accessible to our deaf Bulgarian grantees in the AY2022-23 cohort.



Pre-Departure Orientation for BG Grantees

Bulgarian Student Program



Iglia Atanasova at Harvard Graduate School of Education



Dimitar Kirilov (right) with fellow students at USC



Tsvetelina Bairaktarova at Harvard Law School

The AY 2021-22 Bulgarian degree-seeking students' program featured five truly outstanding graduate students in the fields of education, theatre, computer science, national defense, and law. One of them was **Tsvetelina Bairaktarova**, who completed her second semester at Harvard Law School with distinction and in-person, after a break caused by COVID. Another illustrious Harvard graduate is **Iglia Atanasova**, a young physics teacher who studied global educational leadership. A young star in the field of theatre, **Martina Novakova**, received a warm welcome at NYU; in addition to her excellent academic achievements, she managed to stage events and art installations in Bulgaria, as well. **Lyubomir Avdjiiski**, a successful Bulgarian lawyer working for years on judicial reform, showed his exceptional intellect and civic awareness during his studies at Pennsylvania State University. **Dimitar Kirilov** thrives in his chosen field of applied computer science at the University of Southern California.

The 2021-22 Visiting Researcher program was truly unprecedented, as it included not only this year's nominees but also those from 2020-21. Thus, four Bulgarian visiting researchers took part in this cycle. **Bilyana Manova** and **Polly Petkova** successfully completed their research studies in law and linguistics at UCLA and at Georgetown, respectively. The renowned Bulgarian theater director **Javor Gardev** carried out his research into archetypal plots and performative tactics at Northwestern University. Our visiting researcher in philosophy, **Velislava Todorova**, worked at the University of Connecticut.

“The Fulbright program not only provides but also demands an opportunity to socialize in your own field of interest and expertise. Fulbright is essential as a culture-integrational program, as you can do your research, as well as find out more about what might be of interest to the community you are integrating in.”

- Javor Gardev, Fulbright Visiting Researcher

FTEA in Media Literacy

For a fifth year, the Bulgarian-American Fulbright Commission participated in the selection and administration of the Fulbright Teaching Excellence Awards in Media Literacy. The 2021-22 cycle yielded the highest number of finalists so far—four Bulgarian high school teachers from different parts of the country won the awards. Three of them—**Irina Grudeva** (Burgas), **Daniel Simeonov** (Lovech), and **Vladimira Teneva** (Sliven)—departed for Kent State University in Spring 2022, while their colleague **Sava Tashev** (Sofia) joined the Fall 2022 cohort at Montana State University.



FTEA BG teachers

Cybersecurity Program

Cybersecurity experts from eight central and southeast European countries visited the US East coast in March/April as part of a regional initiative co-organized by the Fulbright Commissions in Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovakia. Participants had an opportunity to take a closer look at the organization of teaching cybersecurity at universities in the U.S., as well as to discuss current challenges, including cybersecurity workforce development, with American experts. Five Bulgarian scholars represented the Naval Academy in Varna, the Rakovski Defence Academy in Sofia, the American University in Bulgaria, the Technical University in Sofia, and the University of National and World Economy.

“It was a great opportunity to participate in the “Cybersecurity in Universities” Fulbright program to gain more experience and a better understanding of cybersecurity education. Getting together with other university colleagues and sharing ideas is the way to benefit all of us to build a better future.”

- **Professor Vesselina Gagamova**,
Rakovski Defense Academy



Bulgarian FTEA teachers on their US campus

U.S. Scholar Program



Dr. Yanjun Yan at the Technical University of Sofia

“During my stay in Sofia and Bulgaria, I was impressed by Bulgaria’s rich history, wondrous mountains, lakes, and Black Sea, tasty food, unique and uplifting music and dance, very kind hospitality of the people, and the resilience, intelligence, motivation and expertise of faculty and students alike.”

- Yanjun Yan



US scholars and students visit Koprivshitsa

In AY2021-2022, a record number of nine US Scholars arrived in Bulgaria to teach and undertake research in their respective fields, which ranged from business to biology to journalism.

Alexandra White (Luther College) delivered guest lectures on a variety of business and management related topics at her host institution, Sofia University, but also volunteered as Faculty Advisor for a Social Innovation Competition at the American University in Bulgaria. She judged at high school speech and debate events, and taught English to Ukrainian refugees.

Historian **Dr. Cristofer Scarboro** (King’s College, PA) taught a class on the global cold war at the American University in Bulgaria. His research investigated the role of western institutions in shaping conversations about the good society in Bulgaria during the time of transition. He also developed a survey of alumni measuring how their time at AUBG impacted their understanding of ideological constructs during the time of transition (such as communism, capitalism, liberalism, and democracy).

Dr. Yanjun Yan (Western Carolina University) led a project-based learning (PBL) course for a dozen students at the Technical University of Sofia. After learning Arduino board programming and 3D modeling, the students created a project entitled “Super Duper Souvenir” to integrate the Bulgarian and American cultural elements, using the skills learned in this course.

Dr. Aaron Kleist (Biola University) conducted nine seminars on Advanced Pedagogy for administrators, full-time instructors, and part-time instructional staff, at the Faculty of Philology of the University of Plovdiv. He taught an undergraduate course: “Dystopian Literature and Film,” for Applied Linguistics students, wrote a book chapter, “Improving Pedagogy in Covid’s Aftermath,” and delivered a guest lecture “Gained in Translation: Authorial Revision and the Transmission of Ideas in Early England.”

Dr. Ian MacMillan (Yale University) conducted fieldwork at many institutions of faith in and outside of Sofia, focusing on the relationship between sacred sound and silence. He made field recordings of sacred sounds in the public sphere and filmed the interactions of the public with these sounds as well as various musical rituals. He taught a course entitled “Music and Ritual” at New Bulgarian University and led his class in developing a website (tolerancesquare.org) based on his and his students’ research, sound recordings and essays.

Journalist **Matthew Brunwasser** worked with Factcheck.bg, Bulgaria’s first and only factchecking organization, to build their capacity and identify partnership opportunities. He gave three talks about disinformation for high school students at American corners in Burgas, Varna and Sofia, as well as sessions on story-pitching and factchecking at the Media Boot Camp in Plovdiv. He also traveled with the Bulgarian Coalition for Media Literacy to trainings in Silistra, Dobrich and Balchik.

Dr. Rebecca Singer (University of Illinois-Chicago) conducted a lecture series on global health and workshops on topics such as self-care, student engagement and effective patient communications at the Medical University in Sofia. Rebecca was also integrated into the leadership team of the strategic planning for social welfare department of the Shalom Organization of Jews in Bulgaria.

Biologist **Ryan Crehan** (US Fish and Wildlife Service) assisted the Bulgarian branch of the World Wildlife Fund in identifying, designing, and monitoring wetland restoration along the lower Danube River. Ryan conducted numerous site visits, and prepared notes and recommendations for WWF to use in their work to restore crucial ecosystems to the landscape.

Computer scientist **Dr. Mariofanna Milanova** (University of Arkansas at Little Rock) worked with colleagues from the Technical University in Sofia to develop methods for measuring gait noninvasively in a public setting. Mariofanna participated in two workshops and one conference, and submitted articles for publication in a specialized journal together with her Bulgarian colleagues.



Ryan Crehan, Alexandra White, Rebecca Singer and Aaron Kleist in Sofia



Ryan Crehan (left) visiting the Danubian Plain with a colleague from WWF Bulgaria

“Fulbright provided me with a great opportunity to work with other professionals and experience a different culture that has given me new perspectives. It also broadened my understanding of the world and expanded the horizons of my wife and daughter. It increased my flexibility, patience, and understanding to work in a different country with a different culture and language.”

- Ryan Crehan

U.S. Student Program



Ana Koumtcheva, Danielle Jacques and Gabriel Soileau in Sofia

I have always believed that international connections like Fulbright allow both parties to see their own home in a new way, through new eyes. I hope that my interactions with my interview participants and friends here in Bulgaria helped them to see Bulgaria a little bit differently.

- Danielle Jacques



Gabriel Soileau performing at the Music Academy in Plovdiv

Academic year 2021-2022 saw a record number of nine US Fulbright students in Bulgaria, as grantees delayed by the pandemic took up their grants in a diverse array of academic fields, ranging from the arts to public health.

Anastassia Koumtcheva's project focused on historical Bulgarian home construction practices. She researched 18th and 19th century home construction and current restoration practices, attended classes in architecture at New Bulgarian University, and traveled throughout the country to document homes and interview current owners.

Food anthropologist **Danielle Jacques** conducted research and interviews in Plovdiv and the region for her Master's thesis, entitled "Rural Voices at the Margins: Place and Power in the Emerging Heritage Narratives of Bulgaria's Food Tourism." Danielle also volunteered to teach English to Roma secondary school students and worked with a local tour guide to create a food tour in Plovdiv.

With the help of his host institution, the Trust for Social Achievement, **Christopher Harper** studied HIV/AIDS prevalence among young Romani men, an area where there is virtually no public health work done. He succeeded in engaging a variety of organizations focused on HIV or who have access to at-risk communities, with the goal to curb HIV incidence, increase testing, and identify patients who are resistant to ART. He also volunteered to teach English to Roma children.

Jose Maria Fernando Rios explored the intersection of foreign policy and the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, particularly in regard to their response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, with the support of his advisors at Sofia University. He also took active part in community language exchange groups, especially using his Spanish skills.

The musician in the group, **Gabriel Soileau**, studied kaval, folk singing and accordion at the Academy of Music, Theater and Fine Arts in Plovdiv. He also recorded and interviewed musicians in villages; material from his field work will be compiled into a podcast. Gabriel was invited by his host institution to perform a recital in April showcasing the music that he learned in Bulgaria.

Mary Rzepczynski was the recipient of our special award in Archaeology/History, administered together with the Balkan Heritage Foundation, an NGO whose mission is to support the study, preservation, management, and promotion of cultural and historical heritage of South-eastern Europe. Mary joined one of the foundation's field schools and conducted research in Nessebar, Varna, and Sofia.

This past year we hosted three Bulgaria-Romania joint grantees, testifying to the strong interest in regional projects. Through his host, the Trust for Social Achievement, **Lucas Fagre** worked with a Roma health mediator to interview parents in order to gather qualitative data on their beliefs regarding childhood vaccination, specifically against measles.

Eliot Usherenko's research analyzed the development of U.S. relations with Bulgaria and Romania since the countries joined NATO. He worked with the Department of Political Science of Sofia University, who not only supported his research but also published his findings in a joint article.

The third BG-RO grantee, **Katherine Ruprecht**, together with her colleagues from the Department of Library Science at Sofia University, organized a focus group with local educators to answer structured questions about teaching information literacy in Bulgaria. The findings were published in an article in an academic journal. Kate also led workshops on information literacy for elementary and high school teachers and volunteered teaching English to Roma students.



US scholars and students visit Rozhen Monastery



Trip to Melnik for US scholars and students

“The response I have had in Bulgaria has been very positive, because I believe Bulgarian teachers and students appreciate concrete efforts to share a common interest in teaching, learning and the English language. The Fulbright Program provides an invaluable way in which to accomplish these tasks and without it most Americans would not be able to have these experiences and exchanges in Bulgaria.”

- Katherine Ruprecht

ETA Program



Wrap-Up Seminar for U.S. Grantees, Burgas

Fulbright and the America for Bulgaria Foundation funded 29 English Teaching Assistantship awards in AY 2021-2022, while 3 ETAs were corporate sponsored. Our successful partnerships with ContourGlobal Maritsa East 3 TPP (Galabovo), Asarel-Medet JSC, Opticoelectron Group JSCo and the Lachezar Tsotsorkov Foundation (Panagyurishte) continued. Our new partner, the Bulgarian Memory Foundation, began its full sponsorship of an ETA position near Sofia. Thus, we were able to host 32 ETAs in 24 Bulgarian cities and towns.

Teaching for up to 20 hours weekly, our ETAs focus mainly on developing students' communicative skills. They have around 300 students each, on average, and most teach independently. ETAs incorporate American culture into their regular classes or make specially themed presentations on some aspects – from holidays such as Halloween and Thanksgiving to typical American foods, sports and music, American regional dialects and urban slang, the political system, election processes and pop culture. They also include a lot of interactive games and quizzes and creative projects to encourage competition and learning. Many ETAs also have regular meetings

with students interested in studying abroad, as well as leading them through the college application process and assisting with essay writing. ETAs continued to support students applying for the YES, ASSIST and Benjamin Franklin exchange programs and to work with our EducationUSA advisor to assist students interested in continuing their education in American universities.

In their free time, they are encouraged to develop their own side projects and activities, which are supported by the Commission through mini-grant competitions at the beginning of every school term.



ETAs trek the Seven Rila Lakes



EU-US Young Leaders Seminar, Brussels



Corplus Foundation Volunteer Certificates

In AY 2021-2022, eleven ETAs received funding to develop extracurricular activities such as: Model UN club, pen pal exchange, creative writing workshop, weekend writer's retreat, henna design and Indian culture night, sports clubs (American football, tennis, volleyball, basketball, soccer, badminton), reading club, school newsletter club, art club and a Spanish club, which quickly evolved into a cooking club! These extracurricular activities allow students to communicate with their teacher in English in a more informal setting, while developing additional skills or following their passion. Many ETAs were also providing tutoring online and in person in their free time to Ukrainian refugees, Roma students or even monks, in the case as Jacob Pintar in Plovdiv, who traveled to Belozem every week to teach at the Order of the Capuchin Brothers Minor.

Despite the pandemic situation and teaching online for most of the first school term, ETAs did their best to promote a healthy lifestyle, support good initiatives and engage with their local communities. In October, six ETAs ran the Plovdiv Marathon, and Sam Henthorn won 10th place!

"I am humbled to share that a number of friends and acquaintances from Bulgaria and other Balkan countries disclosed to me that I shattered, in the most positive of ways, stereotypes they had long held about Americans."

- Ben Custer

"Being an ETA has made a tremendous impact on my competency as an intercultural communicator instructor, and person as a whole. I have learned to cope with difficult situations (particularly in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic), adapt to uncertainty and chaos in unfamiliar places, and serve others wholly while maintaining my own mental health."

- Kadia King

“ My year as a Fulbrighter has left me more confident and adaptable, while also giving me the chance to consider my own values and where I want to go in life. I have become a more skilled teacher and public speaker, and no longer feel as nervous going in front of large groups (for instance, at the Fulbright Bulgaria closing presentations)... Finally, experiencing so much of Bulgaria and Bulgarian culture has given me a deep appreciation for many elements of life here, from the communal nature of so many celebrations and events (horo in the town square!) to the walkability of neighborhoods and slightly slower pace of life.”

- William Andriola

ETA Statistics

- **Over 9,300** students
- **14-20** classes per week
- **16,800** classroom contact hours
- **29** ABF ETAs and **3** corporate-sponsored
- **24** cities
- **20** foreign language high schools
- **5** K-12 schools
- **4** math/ math and sciences schools
- **3** professional schools
- **1** university



ETA Morgan Rowe, EU-US Young Leaders Seminar



Visit to the National History Museum



ETA Savannah Jelks as Spelling Bee announcer in Sofia



First day of school at SELS Thomas Jefferson

Specialist Program



Mira Niagolova at the Pravets Film Festival

We were truly happy to reopen the Fulbright Specialist Program in AY2021-22, when three experts were able to visit the country and work on joint projects with their hosts: Michele Upvall, hosted by Southwest University (March-April, 2022); Mira Niagolova, hosted by the Center for Legal Aid (March-May, 2022); and Sonia Hirt, hosted by Varna Free University (May-June, 2022).

Dr. Michele Upvall (Barry University), specialist in nursing and global health, conducted lectures and workshops on topics including cultural humility, nursing education in the US, evidence-based practice, and global health. In a separate part of the project, she conducted an evaluation of the baccalaureate nursing program addressing accreditation standards.

Documentary filmmaker **Mira Niagolova** (Champlain College) conducted three workshops at the Journalism Department of the University of National and World Economy to provide both theoretical knowledge and practical skills on smartphone filmmaking as a form of activism and advocacy. She

assisted her hosts in developing strategies to help prevent the alarming increase of illegal pushbacks of asylum seekers at the Bulgarian/Turkish border.

Sonia Hirt (Professor of Landscape Architecture and Planning and Dean in the College of Environment + Design at the University of Georgia) discussed opportunities for collaborations, including faculty exchanges, joint degrees, and study-abroad programs, with Varna Free University; the American University in Bulgaria; the University of Architecture, Civil Engineering, and Geodesy; and the University of Forestry. She presented her work at the Urban Inequalities Forum in Sofia and established contacts with several local non-profits.



High school students in Haskovo participated in a Model UN club

Community Engagement

Fulbrighters bring their passion for community service along with them on their grants. This often means that the larger impact made by each of us cannot be accurately measured through numbers alone. Each personal interaction or public event has the potential to influence our perceptions of our two countries in a more humanizing, individual way.



ETA Jason Entingh volunteering for the Red Cross in Ruse

Several long-running partnerships with local organizations link generations of US volunteers. ETAs, US Scholars and alumni served as judges for BEST speech and debate tournaments this year, where many teams' coaches were also ETAs. More than 400 students participated in online and in-person events. Several ETAs and US Students also volunteered to teach English through a Trust for Social Achievement program, reaching over 100 young Roma in Kyustendil, Lom, Lovech, Peshtera and Sliven. The Creative Writing and Spelling Bee competitions, run by CORPluS, have also drawn volunteers from Fulbright for many years. More than a dozen ETAs participated either as virtual writing judges or live Spelling Bee announcers this year in regional competitions.

Our scholars and students often engage in projects connected with their academic work that can extend beyond the limited time of their grant periods. Others find more spontaneous ways to build local connections that might spark lifelong friendships, such as attending local culinary and folklore festivals or participating in language exchange groups. The Commission is proud to provide more than 3500 BGN for

additional “mini-grant” funds where needed in order to facilitate grantees’ social and academic projects, including media literacy awareness, sports, reading/creative writing clubs, arts, Spanish language and cuisine, Model UN and many more projects

With the outbreak of war in Ukraine, the Commission coordinated with a local NGO to pilot a project teaching refugees arriving in Bulgaria. More than half of the project’s 28 active teachers were Fulbrighters. They taught Bulgarian and English classes to both children and adults, reaching about 75 students in total. Additionally, two ETAs personally fundraised and distributed over \$2,600 to Ukrainian families in need, while ETAs in Varna, Ruse, Plovdiv and Razgrad volunteered with their local Red Cross or other charity organizations.

Volunteer work by grantees with direct community engagement:

- **75** Ukrainian refugees were taught English and Bulgarian by a mix of US and BG Fulbrighters in spring 2022
- **100** Roma students taught English by **8** ETAs by ETAs and US Students (TSA project)
- **30+** ETAs coached/judged debate (BEST), over **400** students participated in tournaments
- **2** ETAs raised **\$2600** in direct aid to refugee families
- In regional Spelling Bees, **8** ETAs announced spelling words in front of over **800** audience members
- **30 BG** and **25 US** Fulbright Alumni volunteering time and expertise to evaluating applications
- **10 BG** and **10 US** Fulbright Alumni participating in interviewing committees



Indian culture night with Mahie Gopalka, Ruse



First printed newsletter, Burgas



American football at Plovdiv University

Fulbright International Seminar

“Strategies for Strengthening Democracy: The Crisis of Representation”



HE Herro Mustafa, US Ambassador to Bulgaria, Deputy Prime Minister and Fulbright alumnus Atanas Pektanov, and Fulbright ED Angela Rodel opening the Fulbright International Seminar

On September 24-26, 2021, the second Fulbright International Seminar on Democracy was held in Sofia. While the 2019 edition focused on the anniversary of the Fall of the Berlin Wall, in 2021 the spotlight was on the effects of challenges such as the COVID pandemic, the digital revolution and the transfer of power from local to global players on the very core of democracy: citizens' participation and the crisis of representation.

In the three-day hybrid discussion (online and in-person), leading Bulgarian, US and international experts in political science, law, media, national security and public policy presented the complex landscape of contemporary democracies in sessions entitled "The Territory of Democracy: The Blurred Locus of Power," "The Body of Democracy: The Excluded Citizen" and "Opaque Institutions: The Erosion of Legitimacy and The Excluded Opinion."

The official opening featured HE Herro Mustafa, US Ambassador to Bulgaria, Fulbright ED Angela Rodel and Deputy Prime Minister and Fulbright alumnus Atanas Pektanov, who stressed the importance of partnership, cooperation and positive freedoms as incentives to personal improvement and civic confidence.

The seminar attracted over 40 live participants and several dozen more online. The event, held with the kind support of the US Department of State, offered a wonderful chance for current US Fulbright scholars, students and ETAs to take active part in the discussions and get to know Bulgarian alumni and NGO representatives, as well as for Bulgarian young scholars and professionals to develop interest in the Fulbright program and its opportunities. We are convinced that this three-day meeting is only the beginning of future cooperation, collaborations and the fruitful, open exchange of ideas.



Fulbright ED Angela Rodel with Fulbright alumni in Washington, DC

Fulbright at 75 + DC Alumni Happy Hour

On November 30, 2021, the US Department of State hosted a gala event and reception in honor of the Fulbright program's 75th anniversary at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC. Newly confirmed Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs Lee Satterfield joined the event in person, sharing her enthusiastic commitment to academic and cultural exchange programs. The program showcased five key areas where the Fulbright program has had global impact: the environment; science, technology and public health; education; public service; and the arts.

Fulbright Bulgaria wanted to share the 75th anniversary excitement with our small but dedicated alumni community in the DC area, thus we hosted a small cocktail evening on Friday, December 3. More than a dozen alumni joined, primarily former ETAs and student researchers, as well as one current Bulgarian grantee. We were honored to also be joined by two former US Ambassadors to Bulgaria, Eric Rubin and Marcie Ries and their spouses, as well as ABF President Nancy Schiller and her husband Vic. The event was made complete by the participation of ECA Country Officer for Bulgaria, Scott Righetti. Here's to many more decades of Fulbright!

Fulbright Media Presence

Thanks to support from our partners at the America for Bulgaria Foundation, who helped organize media features on several ETAs, the Fulbright program was quite prominent in the Bulgarian media throughout AY2021-22.

- Four ETAs featured in the October 5, 2021, ABF Newsletter: <https://us4bg.org/our-stories/kids-in-pleven-speak-with-a-chicago-accent-heres-why/>
- Chris Nash, the first ETA ever at "St. Kliment Ohridski" Secondary School, Dobrich, was interviewed for the school newspaper: <https://bit.ly/3J42O9t>; <https://bit.ly/35ABiSn>; https://youtu.be/Uy7w_8tZmuk
- Julia Lynch, our ETA at "Geo Milev" Foreign Language High School, Dobrich, attracted the attention of the Bulgarian media with her work for the BEST Foundation's debate program: <https://bit.ly/3HoSQPa>
- Our new partner school, Tsar Simeon Veliki in Ivanyane, celebrated Enlighteners' Day by displaying photos and quotes of their teachers in the Crystal Garden in Sofia. Our first ETA at the school, Giovanni Gamalong, was featured on Bulgarian National Television (starting at 6:15'): <https://bit.ly/3KWVQ7C>

Fulbright EducationUSA Advising Center

The EducationUSA Advising Center at the Bulgarian-American Fulbright Commission is a full-service center which offers on-site as well as virtual, individual and group advising.



EducationUSA advising is a major component of the Commission's grant-supporting activities. It is an effective and time-tested instrument of promoting the EducationUSA brand, the strengths of the U.S. educational system and the Fulbright program in Bulgaria by providing up-to-date information and competent guidance on educational opportunities in the U.S., admission procedures at U.S. universities, financial aid, testing, language training, the annual Opportunity Funds and other competitions. The Fulbright EducationUSA Advising Center has acquired an even greater importance in the context of Bulgaria's integration with the European Union and the strong competition from European universities. Annually, the center services over 5400 inquirers.

EducationUSA-Bulgaria Virtual Group Advising Program

Since 2013, the EducationUSA Advising Center has implemented an innovative virtual educational group advising program which prepares high school students from all over the country to successfully apply for admission with financial aid to fully accredited U.S. colleges and universities. The program is run in partnership with Fulbright English Teaching Assistants, the American Spaces, Fulbright students/scholars, and others. It has both a virtual and in-person component and was developed by the adviser to make educational advising available to students beyond Sofia. The advising program has had very good results. This past academic year, there were 230

students in the program. Nine program participants were accepted to Harvard College, MA; Yale University, CT; Dartmouth College, NH; Miami University, FL; Drexel University, PA; Illinois Institute of Technology, IL; New Jersey Institute of Technology, NJ; California University of Pennsylvania, PA, and AUBG, Bulgaria; with a total scholarship amount of \$479,666 for the first academic year (\$1,918,664 for all four years of their bachelor's education), including one full-ride scholarship to AUBG, Bulgaria. They will be studying Business, Computational Sciences, Computer Science, Economics, Engineering, Mathematics, Public Relations, and Software Engineering.

Opportunity Funds-Bulgaria Program

The Opportunity Funds-Bulgaria program, which helps ten to twelve talented students from economically disadvantaged communities apply to U.S. universities, has again showed strong results. MIT, MA; University of Pennsylvania, PA; Columbia University, NY; Franklin and Marshall College, PA; Colby College, ME; NYU Abu Dhabi; Florida Tech, FL; and Widener University, MD, offered acceptance to five program participants with a total scholarship amount of \$531,707 for the first academic year (\$2,126,828 for all four years of their bachelor's education), including three full-ride scholarships to MIT, MA (Kalina Nikolova); Franklin and Marshall College, PA and NYU Abu Dhabi (Miraya Gesheva).

The admitted students will be studying Aerospace Engineering, Liberal Arts, and Computer Science/Mathematics.

Official guests at the first one-week Opportunity Funds training from April 4-8, 2022, were Her Excellency Herro Mustafa, U.S. Ambassador to Bulgaria, and Brent LaRosa, Cultural Attaché, U.S. Embassy (CAO). In their inspirational opening remarks, they shared their college and study abroad experiences with participating students and answered their college-related questions. The students greatly appreciated their assistance in preparing them for the competitive, holistic U.S. college application process.

Fulbright Testing and Training Services



During FY2022, the Bulgarian Fulbright Commission continued to operate a Prometric Testing Center in Sofia, which is the only place in the country where prospective candidates can take the GRE and TOEFL exams, and even attracts international candidates. The center is also the exclusive national provider of the European Personnel Selection Office (EPSO). In recent years, our test center has consistently been ranked as one of the top ten Prometric Test Centers in Europe. Also, there are two new major clients delivering tests at the Prometric network: CFA (Chartered Financial Analytics) and UKVI (United Kingdom Visa and Immigration) exams.

The Bulgarian Fulbright Commission continues to offer GRE, GMAT and other test preparation courses, but this was again challenging due to fluctuating pandemic restrictions that made advance planning difficult. Nevertheless, Fulbright Bulgaria's project management training program conducted six training sessions with a total of 43 participants as well as in-house advisory services by Fulbright PMP trainers. The Fulbright Bulgaria PMP team also served as volunteer coaches during the American University in Bulgaria's two-day Better Community Club Annual Innovation Starter campaign. An intense GRE prep course was organized in August 2022 for newly selected Bulgarian degree-seeking students to help improve their test scores.

Major Program and Enrichment Events



**US GRANTEES
ORIENTATION IN SOFIA**

**FULBRIGHT
INTERNATIONAL
SEMINAR "Strategies for
Strengthening Democracy"**

**OPPORTUNITY FUNDS
MODULE: Essay Writing and
Common App Training**

**VISITS TO ETA
PARTNER SCHOOLS**

ORIENTATION for Fall
Semester US Scholars

ETA TRAINING WEBINARS
in Online Teaching and
Creative Strategies

FULBRIGHT AT 75
Celebration in DC +
Alumni Happy Hour

**ETA ONLINE
CLASSROOM
OBSERVATIONS**

**BEST FALL
TOURNAMENTS
ONLINE**



Sep

Oct

Nov/Dec



ONLINE MID-TERM MEETING for US Grantees

ORIENTATION for Spring Semester US Scholars

ONLINE INTERVIEWS with US Candidates for AY20-21 Fulbright Programs

ONLINE LANGUAGE LESSONS for Ukrainian Refugees

OPPORTUNITY FUNDS MODULE: SAT Preparation

BEST NATIONALS TOURNAMENT LIVE at AUBG

VARNA MEDIA LITERACY SEMINAR for Bulgarian Teachers

IN-PERSON WRAP-UP SEMINAR in Burgas with US Grantees and Host Schools

PRE-DEPARTURE ORIENTATION for Bulgarian AY 22-23 Grantees

sCool MEDIA BOOTCAMP for High School Students in Plovdiv

BEST DEBATE CAMP IN LOZEN

OPPORTUNITY FUNDS MODULE: IELTS/TOEFL Preparation



Jan/Feb

Mar/Apr

May/Jun

Jul/Aug

Fulbright Camps and Workshops in Media Literacy and Critical Thinking



BEST Student Leader Training

Fulbright Bulgaria again worked with partners to offer camps, workshops and other training opportunities for our community members throughout the year.



BEST Student Leader Training

We were proud to support our legacy organization, the BEST Foundation, conduct three events throughout AY2021-22: a Student Leaders Retreat (September 2021), Debate Coaches Training (2021), and Debate Camp (August 2022). These unique events empower students to think critically, express themselves creatively and help create a dynamic community that truly cares about the success and the future of Bulgaria.

The Fulbright Commission again partnered with the Association of European Journalists-Bulgaria to organize a sCool Media Bootcamp for Young Journalists in Plovdiv in July 2022, restarting this joint initiative for the first time post-pandemic, after the success of the 2019 edition. This selective, week-long program invited 24 high school journalists



sCool Media Bootcamp for Young Journalists

from across the country to take part in practical workshops and create original journalistic pieces. There were guest lecturers from Bulgaria and abroad, including Fulbright scholar Matthew Brunwasser. There were also several “field trips” throughout the city of Plovdiv to visit the Bishop’s Basilica of Philippopolis, as well as tours of local news outlets such as Kapital’s Plovdiv office and Pod Tepeto.



ETAs at the BEST Coaches Training

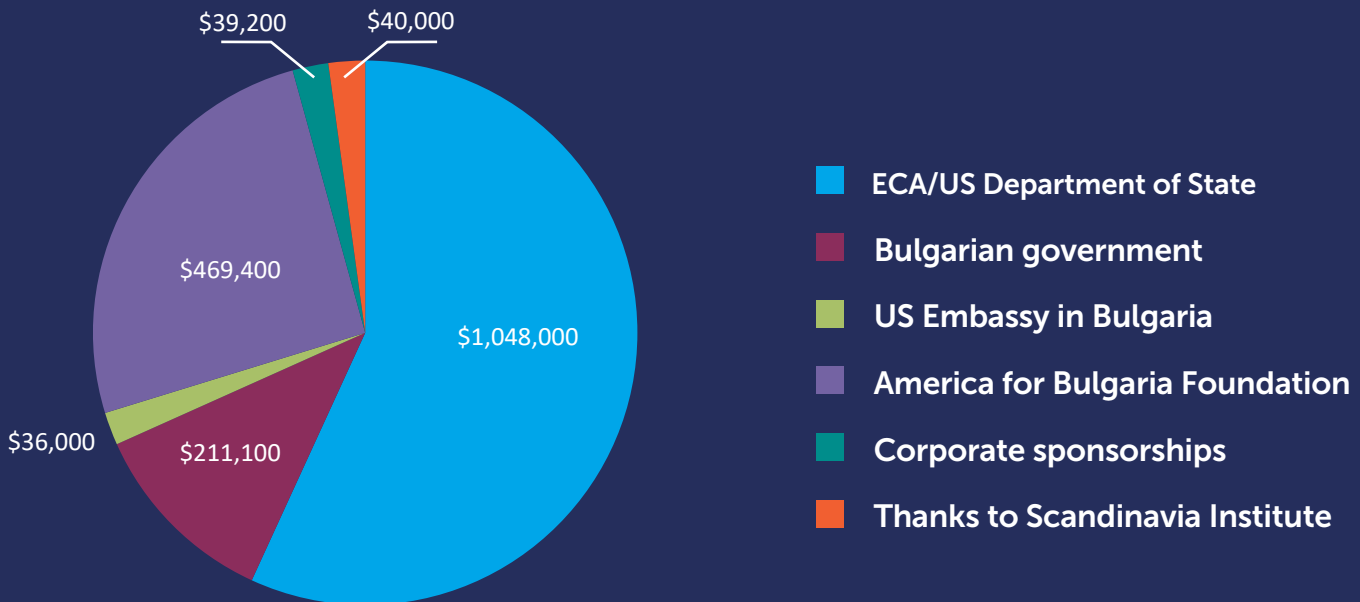
Following on the success of four online Media Literacy Workshops for teachers during the pandemic, Fulbright and AEJ-Bulgaria were thrilled to organize the first in-person seminar in Varna on May 14-15, 2022. Fifteen high school and middle school teachers from eleven cities took part in the training, as well as one representative of the regional inspectorate of the Ministry of Education in Ruse. Over the two training days, participants learned more about the hybrid war, recognizing fake news, and free instruments and platforms for fact-checking. They worked in groups to analyze recent media publications and discuss real-life cases. The discussions about social media platforms commonly used by students, issues of online privacy and security, and the role of family vs. school in education drew a lot of interest and concern among the teachers, who agreed that media literacy education should find its place in the school curriculum as early as primary/ middle school.



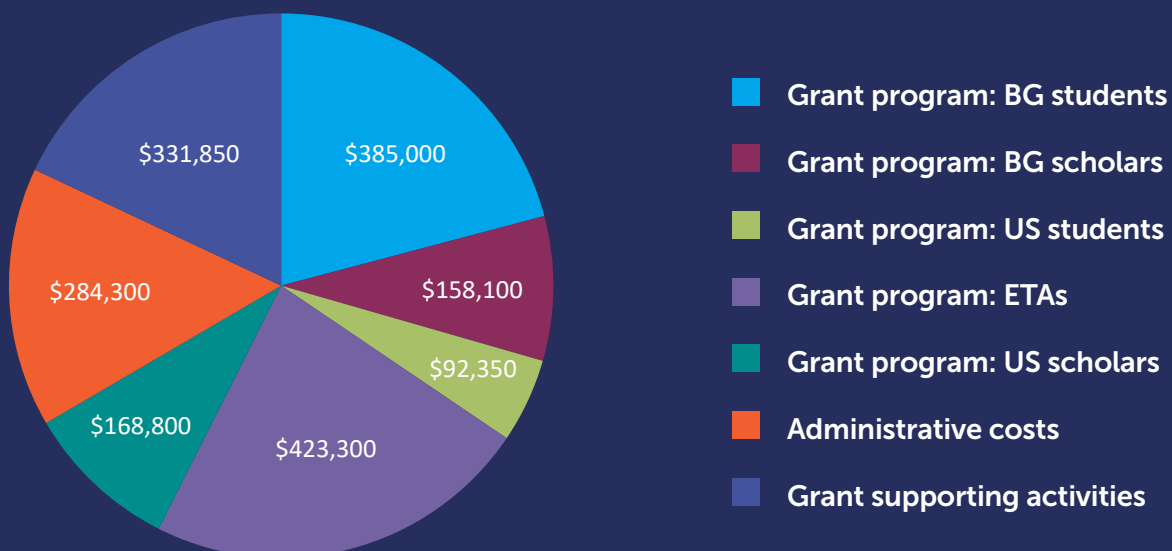
BEST Debate Summer Camp

Fulbright Bulgaria Budget

Fulbright Programs Funding Sources (Oct 2021- Sept 2022)



Fulbright Programs Costs (Oct 2021- Sept 2022)



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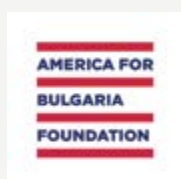
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