



20th Anniversary of the Bulgarian Fulbright Commission

On November 4, 2013, the Bulgarian Fulbright Commission celebrated 20 years of its establishment. Participating in the event were over 200 Fulbright alumni, grantees and friends from all over Bulgaria and the US.

Special guests were EU Commissioner and Fulbright alumna Dr. Kristalina Georgieva, US Ambassador Ms. Marcie Ries, Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. Kristian Vigenin, and Deputy Minister of Education and Science Mr. Ivan Krastev.

Prof. Julia Stefanova, Executive Director, presented an impressive overview of the Commission's history, goals and achievements.

University rectors, heads of partner institutions, and distinguished alumni offered greetings and highlighted the program's role in the internationalization of Bulgarian educational landscape.



Official Opening: From left to right, Fulbright Commission Executive Director Dr. Julia Stefanova; Deputy Minister of Education and Science Ivan Krastev; U.S. Embassy Counselor for Public Affairs and Fulbright Commission Chair Elizabeth Fitzsimmons; Minister of Foreign Affairs Kristian Vigenin

In This Issue:

20th Anniversary of the Bulgarian Fulbright Commission	01
Final Nominations for Bulgarian Fulbright Grantees in AY 2014-2015	07
After Three Months in Bulgaria	08
International Education Week in Bulgaria	10
Fulbright Office News	15
To Chicago and Back	16
Out of America	19



Bulgaria's European Commissioner Kristalina Georgieva addressing the conference



Ambassador Marcie B. Ries delivering a greeting address



Fulbright Commission staff

Two round-table discussions on the impact of the Fulbright exchange provided a platform for sharing experience and expertise.

Apart from the formal recognition of the Commission's successful work, the celebration was an emotional meeting of colleagues and friends who believe in the power of educational and cultural exchange.

Opening Address

Dr. Julia Stefanova, Executive Director

Distinguished guests, dear Fulbright alumni and grantees, colleagues and friends,

Good morning. Today is a red letter day for the Bulgarian Fulbright Commission, the Fulbright program in Bulgaria and the relations between Bulgaria and the United States. We are here to mark the twentieth birthday of an institution that was established at a turning point in the history of Bulgaria, Europe and the world – the fall of totalitarianism and the rebirth of democracy and freedom. On the scale of history, twenty years do not seem to be such a long span of time. The construction of Notre Dame de Paris took a total of 182 years, the Sagrada Familia in Barcelona was started in 1882 and its completion is anticipated in 2026. On the other hand, twenty years can be a very long time if measured by significant accomplishments: Mozart died at the age of 35 and produced over 600 works. In other words, in human terms time becomes meaningful and tangible only when, only if it is transposed into creative action for the common good. Twenty years are probably not long enough for an institution to make its appearance and establish itself irreversibly in public space. Yet, it's not impossible either, especially if it derives its *raison d'être* from a great idea and an imperishable cause. Such is the Fulbright idea and the Fulbright cause. As you very well

know, the idea of mutual understanding through exchange of knowledge and education was fathered by Senator Fulbright in 1946. It emerged like a Phoenix from the ashes of war and in the beginning and served mainly peace and appeasement in the world. Its mission can be well summed up by the expression originating in the Old Testament "Let's Beat Swords into Ploughshares" and remarkably sculpted in stone by Evgeni Vuchetich.



During the long decades of the Cold War the Fulbright exchange continued to perform its important mission, albeit under a very restrictive regime, keeping open the lines of communication between the two ideologically and culturally estranged worlds, carving chinks in the wall that unnaturally divided them. The chinks grew wider and deeper and ultimately brought the wall down.



The last decade of the 20th century ushered in a long and dramatic transition in Eastern and Central Europe, including Bulgaria. Like any momentous idea with endless potential to adjust to the priorities of the historical moment, the Fulbright idea was now harnessed to the thoroughgoing democratic reforms. In the new and incomparably more favorable political and ideological climate, it blossomed freely and bore sweet fruit. It became and is increasingly becoming a powerful tool of liberalization, democratization, internationalization and innovation, especially in education, science, and cultural diplomacy. It is at this decisive moment of history that the Bulgarian Fulbright Commission started on the

trajectory of success. In September 1992 a ten-year agreement on the establishment of the BG-US Commission for Educational Exchange was signed between the Governments of BG and US. The Commission became fully operational in February 1993. Looking back, I can see two stages in its development: a stage of establishment and survival – 1993-2003, and a stage of development: from 2003 down to the present and after. During the first stage, the main objectives of the Commission were to obtain a legal status and start building its administrative structure and public image. Given the political and social situation in Bulgaria then, this turned out to be a difficult and lengthy process fraught with ups and downs, obstacles and pitfalls. All ended well thanks to the commitment of several important Bulgarian and American supporters: the Bulgarian Ministers Marco Todorov, and the late Vice-Minister Lambo Kyuchukov, the US ambassador William Montgomery, PAO Marc Dillen, CAO Walter Theurer, the Board chairman Prof. Yordan Stoichkov and the members of the Fulbright Board. During that time the Commission focused mainly on the administration of the academic exchange. It was paramount to change radically the selection procedures and criteria from the past and introduce the principles of openness, equity, fairness, peer review and excellence. It was only natural that the Fulbright opportunity now widely advertised would attract great

public interest. In the first years we had hundreds of applications, although the number of slots was limited, as they still are today. To raise the profile of the Commission, a variety of supplemental activities and units were launched: educational advising in 1994; English language training in 1995; biennial conferences since 1994; the Fulbright alumni association in 1994; quarterly newsletters; local offices in 10 towns in the countryside; FISL in 2002 etc. These activities have continued and have expanded and today are among the most interesting and distinctive characteristics of the Bulgarian Fulbright Commission. The second stage, the stage of development, started with the signing of the second bilateral agreement in 2003 which established the Commission in perpetuity. Here I would like to acknowledge the contribution and commitment of the BG Minister of Education Igor Damyanov, the then US Ambassador James Pardue, the CAO Raffi Balian, PAO Michael Seidenstricker, and all the members of the binational Fulbright Board. The second period has been marked by quantitative and qualitative growth of all Fulbright Commission activities. It also reflects a new, positive and productive stage in the political and cultural relations between Bulgaria and the US. In 2003 the BG government started allocating funds for the Fulbright program: initially 40,000; in 2008 the annual allocation was increased to 70,000; in 2009 it was doubled to



Round-table discussions

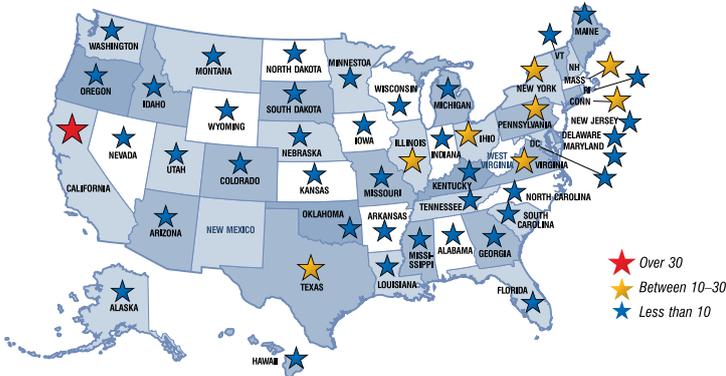
US Grantees and Alumni by Host City



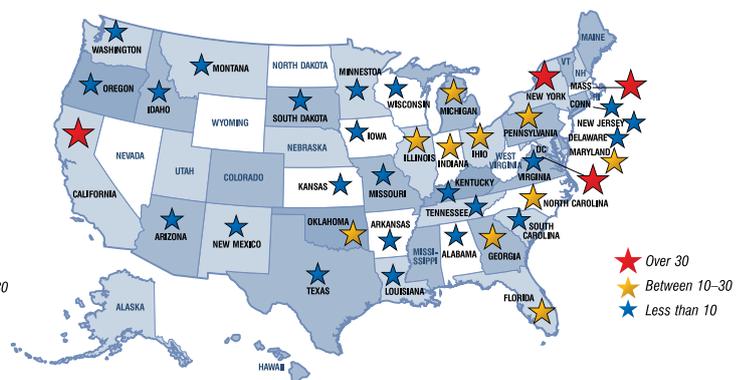
Bulgarian Grantees and Alumni by Home City



US Grantees and Alumni by Home State



Bulgarian Grantees and Alumni by Host State



140,000 thanks to the support of the then Minister of Education Daniel Vulchev. The menu of Fulbright grants was enriched, the number of grantees increased, the network of contacts with Bulgarian and American universities broadened, the involvement of the Commission in the Bulgarian educational reform became more visible through outreach, through facilitating inter-university projects; organizing international conferences; supporting the US Studies Association; participating in international events; expanding FISU and the ETA program thanks to ABF etc. Let me give some you some statistical evidence: between 1968 (when the Fulbright exchange was first) launched and 1993 (when the commission was established) there were 102 BG and 80 Fulbright alumni. From 1993 to 2013 a total of 899 specialists have been awarded grants. Today the BG-US Fulbright community consists of 1081 members - 533 BG and 548 US. The Fulbright presence is tangibly felt all over Bulgaria and in many places in the US.

The Bulgarian alumni come from 35 towns and cities.

There has been significant progress with regard to the other activities of the Commission as well, e.g. advising. For example, between 2006 and 2012, the total number of advisees serviced by the Fulbright advising center and the Fulbright local offices, including outreach visits was 54,445; the Commission offered

English language training to 5620 students; the Internet-based testing center serviced 24 458 testees in TOEFL, GRE, GMAT, EPSO, GED etc. The number of users of the Commission's websites and social networks has increased exponentially: e.g. in 2009 they were 14 578; in 2012 they number reached 63266.

By far, the most interesting and original program that the BG Commission has created is FISU. Show slide. It is our unique contribution to the Fulbright program. Over the last 12 years its popularity has grown and it has become a most effective tool of promoting the Fulbright opportunity, international education, intercultural communication, promoting the English language and Bulgaria. In 2010 the Commission received the Innovator Award from the US Department of State.

It is interesting to note, that during the second stage, still going on, the number of candidates for Fulbright grants has relatively decreased (compared to the early years) mainly due to interest in European universities and other destinations, but their quality has significantly improved. Those that come to us are by far the best and the brightest representatives of our academic, scientific and professional communities and they hold the key to the future of Bulgaria. The interest in Bulgaria from among US applicants has also increased.

Fund-raising has been another significant step forward in the growth of the Fulbright Commission. As we all know, it is not easy to raise funds in Bulgaria for at least two reasons: on-going economic difficulties and lack of solid traditions of giving and giving back. Therefore, most of our donors are American: ABF, Thanks to Scandinavia, CEE, University of Oklahoma at Norman. Of the BG donors, I would like to acknowledge the contribution of Sofia University, especially Alma Mater Humanities Complex. The total amount of donations is 1,407,000. The America for Bulgaria Foundation is our most generous donor. Since 2009 we have received a total of 1,185 000 USA. I would like to emphasize their momentous contribution to the expansion and enrichment of FISJ and the ETA program.

Dear guests, colleagues and friends, as you can see, over the last 20 years, the Fulbright Board and staff have worked hard and have accomplished quite a lot. The Commission has become a mature, yet still young, authoritative, and respected institution with immaculate reputation. Of course, there is always room to achieve more, and aim higher. Looking forward, I would like to see our activities expand along the following lines: more active involvement in the educational reforms in Bulgaria and the internationalization of BG education through facilitating contacts and linkages between BG and US institutions, and initiating joint projects and joint MA degrees; identifying more fund-raising opportunities to increase the number and quality of BG and US grantees; maintaining the ETA program to upgrade the quality of English language training at school level; helping the Alumni Association restore its activities; helping the newly returned BG grantees find employment; promoting the Fulbright program in the US and expanding the network of contacts with more US universities; strengthening outreach to underserved regions and social groups in Bulgaria etc.

Yet, whatever we did, whatever we have been doing and will continue to do as an institution and a team, the most im-

Educational Advising, Language Training, Testing

Contacts	In-Person	Outreach	Language Training	Testing	Website Visitors
FY 2006	3974	2254	407	4865	–
FY 2007	4052	3419	522	5643	–
FY 2008	3405	1967	511	3457	–
FY 2009	4285	3540	419	3271	14578
FY 2010	4234	5089	452	2643	34246
FY 2011	4664	2731	334	2522	58938
FY 2012	3306	7525	330	2057	63266

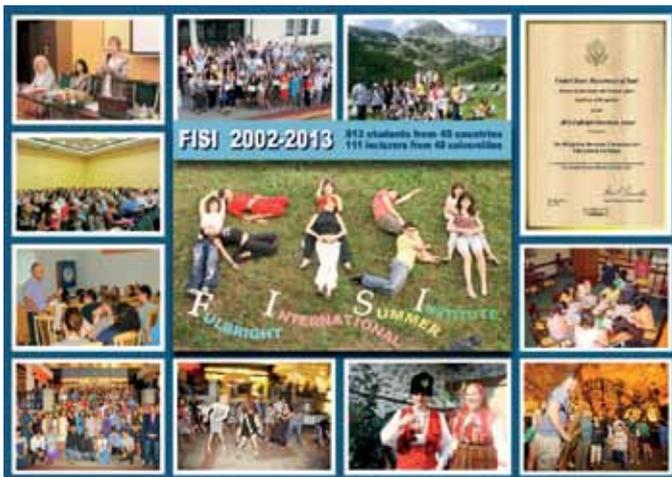
portant thing in the Fulbright exchange remains the unique experience of each individual grantee, the Marco Polo of the 21st century. I firmly believe that the person-to-person contact will never lose its importance and charm and will win the battle with Skype, Facebook, the other social media, and even virtual education. Along with the secretary-generals of NATO and the UN, the 18 heads of state, 10 members of the US congress, the 42 Nobel prize winners, the astronaut Harrison Schmidt, the 62 Pulitzer prize recipients and many other prominent figures from 155 countries, the 533 Bulgarian and 548 American alumni (237 are here) are the contemporary culture heroes who work for the preservation of civilization and the humanization of mankind. In ancient mythology the quest of the culture heroes like Odysseus, Hercules, Theseus, Perseus and many more was a journey that went through three main stages - departure, initiation and return. The initiation stage involved perilous adventures and fights with the unfamiliar forces of chaos and evil always ending in victory and fulfillment of the mission – whether it was to kill a Cyclops, a Gorgon, a Minotaur or retrieve the Golden Fleece



Fulbright anniversary cake



Participants



or the Holy Grail. By far the most important stage of the hero's journey was the return to the homeland to share the gains with the community and thus take it to the next step of civilization and humanization. The return to the homeland and sharing the experience with the community is by far the crucial stage of the Fulbright journey. This experience also includes the acquisition of self-knowledge and knowledge of otherness which should broaden the mind and develop tolerance and acceptance of differences. Last but not least, the Fulbright traveler, whether Bulgarian or American, creates, alters and promotes the image of his or her country. In the case of Bulgaria, this is extremely important and urgent.

To further elaborate on the mythological dimensions of the Fulbright idea and cause, I would like to also say that to me it re-enacts the myth of Harmonia- the mythical marriage of Ares, the

god of war and Aphrodite, the goddess of beauty.

Thus Harmonia is a universal symbol of love, peace and mutual understanding and that's exactly the ultimate goal of the Fulbright program and the essence of intercultural education that it promotes.

Here, I would like to quote Senator Fulbright:

In conclusion, I would like to most cordially thank all of you, the members of the BG-US Fulbright community, who are present and those who are not, for what you are and what you will achieve in your personal and professional lives and careers; the BG and US Government (represented by the US Embassy, and Ministry of Education; the members of the binational Fulbright Board throughout those 20 years as well as the current members: Elizabeth Fitzsimmons, Richard Damstra, Geoffrey Dean, Angela Rodell, Tom Higgins, Lena Roussenova, Neda Kristanova, Maria Metodieva. the members of the Fulbright staff Anastassia Miteva, Maria Kostova, Rada Kaneva, Snezhana Teneva, Iolanta Koprinova, Taniya Petrova, Iliana Dimitrova, Ivan Penchev, Dora Barova, Iliana Toshkova, Adrian Zlatanov, as well as those who, unfortunately left us prematurely – Katya Radoslavova, Ani Andonova, Lyudmila Baeva, for their selfless and talented work; our partners and colleagues from ECA (especially Scott Righetti), IIE, CIES, Department of Education, university rectors and leaders of BG educational institutions as well as professors, alumni and grantees, principals and teachers from BG schools especially those who host ETAs, all our generous donors and sponsors, especially ABF, all supporters and friends of Fulbright.

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY and have an enjoyable and memorable day!

Dr. Julia Stefanova



БЪЛГАРО-АМЕРИКАНСКА КОМИСИЯ ЗА ОБРАЗОВАТЕЛЕН ОБМЕН "ФУЛБРАЙТ"

УЧЕБЕН ЦЕНТЪР КЪМ КОМИСИЯ "ФУЛБРАЙТ"

- Подготовка за тестовете iB TOEFL, SAT, GRE, GMAT, IELTS
- Подготовка по английски език за граждани и фирми
- Подготовка по бизнес английски и бизнес кореспонденция
- Компютърна самоподготовка за iB TOEFL, GRE, GMAT
- Справочна библиотека

БЕЗПЛАТНИ УСЛУГИ ЗА КУРСИСТИ

- Разговорен английски с преподаватели от САЩ
- Отстъпки при записване за повече от един курс
- Безплатни 10 часа работа с компютър
- Консултации за обучение в САЩ
- Библиотека с учебна и справочна литература

За информация: София 1504, ул. Панайот Волов 1, етаж II, тел. 944 0441, E-mail: studycenter@fulbright.bg, www.fulbright.bg

Final Nominations for Bulgarian Fulbright Grantees in AY 2014-2015



Fulbright Interview for Bulgarian Fulbright grantees in AY 2014-2015, June 12, 2013

Members of the nomination committee (from left to right): CAO Richard Damstra, Commission Treasurer; Dr. Julia Stefanova, Executive Director; Prof. Grace Fielder, Fulbright grantee

This year the Commission received 70 applications for Fulbright senior scholar and graduate study grants, Hubert Humphrey fellowships, Civil Society scholarships and non-degree grants for doctoral students.

The binational reviewing committees recommended 41 students and 20 scholars for interview. The interviews were conducted from June 10 to June 13, 2013. The applicants represented a wide variety of fields and were well qualified and motivated.

The following candidates for Fulbright scholarships, Hubert Humphrey fellowships and Civil Society scholarship in AY 2014-15 were nominated by the Commission Board:

Senior Scholars

Principal candidates:

1. Lyubov Mincheva – *political science*
2. Hristo Hristev – *law*
3. Tzvetan Spassov – *environmental science*

4. Zornitsa Popova – *agriculture*
5. Todor Tanev – *public policy*

Alternate candidates:

1. Andon Rangelov – *physics*
2. Gergana Tekath – *music/dance*

Hubert Humphrey Fellowship

Principal candidates:

1. Victor Modev – *e-government*
2. Dimiter Ruev – *urban planning*
3. Denitsa Boeva – *human trafficking*

Research Scholarship for the Study of Civil Society

Principal candidates:

1. Shaban Darakchi – *sociology*

Graduate Students – Degree Programs

Principal candidates:

1. Vesselina Stefanova – *business administration*
2. Yulian Tsolov – *international relations*
3. Iliana Lazarova – *sustainable development*
4. Vera Toncheva – *entrepreneurship*
5. Elitsa Slavova – *architecture*

Fulbright-Oklahoma MBA grant:

1. Christo Shemtov

Alternate candidates:

1. Dimiter Velkov – *communications*
2. Rositsa Dobрева – *Jewish studies*
3. Boryana Hristova – *law*

Non-Degree Grants for Doctoral Students

Principal candidate:

1. Katerina Kokinova – *literature*

“One Hundred Days in Bulgaria” Meeting



Official Opening

From left to right: Dr. Julia Stefanova, Executive Director, Fulbright Commission; Natalia Miteva, Director, Programs for Education at the America for Bulgaria Foundation, and Cheryl Francisconi, Regional Educational Advising Coordinator (REAC), Southern Europe, EducationUSA

On December 6th, 2013 the Bulgarian Fulbright Commission held its annual “One Hundred Days in Bulgaria” meeting with U.S. grantees for AY 2013/ 2014. The event took place at the Best Western Premier Thracia Hotel in Sofia.

All participants were greeted by Dr. Julia Stefanova, Executive Director of the Bulgarian Fulbright Commission, Natalia Miteva, Director of Programs for Education at the America for Bulgaria Foundation, and Cheryl Francisconi, Regional Educational Advising Coordinator (REAC), Southern Europe, EducationUSA. A

special guest to the event was CAO and Board member Richard Damstra.

The day continued with a presentation by REAC Cheryl Francisconi about the mission and services of EducationUSA. After that Krassi Topuzova, a Fulbright ETA mentor-teacher at “Acad. Lyudmil Stoyanov” FLS in Blagoevgrad talked about her experience as a participant in the *Educational Leaders’ Training Program* at the Teachers College Columbia University in New York, USA. The program, organized by the Institute of International Education, the America for Bulgaria Foundation and the Teachers College Columbia University, had brought 20 Bulgarian secondary school educators to the U.S. for a dynamic three-week professional development and training.

After a short break, Fulbright lecturers and researchers presented their projects and shared their academic and personal experiences in Bulgaria. The teaching and research projects covered various fields: from political science and journalism to computer science, geography and tourism, TEFL, creative writing and media arts. The afternoon sessions were dedicated to the 27 Fulbright English Teaching Assistant, who spoke about their exciting work at some of the best high schools in 24 Bulgarian cities.

The program concluded with a Christmas party at the Fulbright Language Training Center attended by Bulgarian and American Fulbright alumni.

On the following day, U.S. grantees took a day-trip to Rila Monastery and the American University in Bulgaria. At AUBG they were warmly welcomed by AUBG President Dr. Michael Easton. The admissions team, led by Director Boryana Shalyavska, presented the undergraduate and graduate programs available at AUBG and offered Fulbrighters a tour around the university’s new campus at Skaptopara.



Participants



REAC Cheryl Francisconi, talking to the group of U.S. grantees



U.S. grantees' presentations and discussions

International Education Week in Bulgaria

November 11-15, 2013

During and around the 14th annual International Education Week in Bulgaria (November 11-15, 2013) a number of useful activities were carried out attracting the attention of students, professors, high-school teachers, educators, professionals and parents. The Executive Director Dr. Julia Stefanova, the educational adviser Snezhana Teneva and other staff members visited the American Corners/Shelves in the cities of Sofia, Plovdiv, Pleven and Stara Zagora and 27 high schools hosting ETAs, giving presentations and engaging in productive discussions about educational opportunities in the US with over 400 high school students, including teachers, administrators, and librarians.

Over 900 students and professionals visited the Fulbright stand at the Student Recruitment Tours at the Anglo-American School of Sofia, JobTiger 2013 Career Days at the Technical University of Sofia and the Education Beyond Borders International Education Fair in Sofia.

During and around the IEW, the Fulbright advising center in Sofia was visited by representatives of four US institutions

of higher education: Wellesley College, MA, Ramapo College, NJ, Emporia State University, KS, and Webster University, Vienna, Austria. They presented their institutions, the undergraduate application process and the opportunities for international students at American liberal arts & sciences colleges at the Fulbright Advising Center and the American Corners in Sofia and Plovdiv.

As a part of International Education Week 2013, the 630 participants in the EducationUSA Achievement Program celebrated the benefits of international education and exchange by attending the International Students Day webinar and the webinars delivered by educational adviser Snezhana Teneva and English teaching assistants Athena Lao and Julianna Andrews on CA4 Common App School Forms; Extracurricular Activities, Leadership, StudyUSA Club, and Blogging.

To sum up, over 2000 individuals and representatives of institutions interested in international education and exchange activities attended 2013 IEW events and learned about study opportunities in the United States.

Visits of Fulbright Commission Staff Members to English Language Schools Hosting ETAs



Smolyan



Gabrovo



Dobrich



Razgrad



Blagoevgrad



Burgas



Dimitrovgrad



Kardzhali



Haskovo



Pleven



Pravets



Kyustendil



Montana



Pazardzhik



Pernik



Ruse



Sliven



Sofia, First English Language School



Sofia, Second English Language School



Sofia, 134 General Education School



Stara Zagora



Varna



Vidin



Vratsa



Yambol

Outreach to American Corners



Sofia



Stara Zagora



Pleven

Participation in International and National Education Fairs



Education Beyond Borders International Education Fair, SOFIA

U.S. University Visits to Bulgaria



Ramapo College, NJ



Wellesley College, MA



Emporia State University, KS



Webster University, Vienna, Austria

Fulbright Office News

Beginning of AY2013-14 celebration for US Fulbright grantees October 4th, 2013



Informal party to mark the opening of the new academic year

Fulbright-Schuman Program Presentation October 4th, 2013



Erica Lutes, Executive Director of The Commission for Educational Exchange between the United States of America, Belgium and Luxembourg, presenting on the Fulbright-Schuman Program at Sofia University.

Visit of Cheryl Francisconi, Regional Educational Advising Coordinator (REAC), Southern Europe, EducationUSA, to Bulgaria December 4-7, 2013



Cheryl Francisconi (middle) and Commission staff

To Chicago and Back

Prof. Dr. Yantsislav Yanakiev

Yantsislav Yanakiev is full professor in sociology and director of the Defense Advanced Research Institute (DARI) at the G.S.Rakovski National Defense Academy, Sofia, Bulgaria. He has been a principal national representative to the NATO Science and Technology Organization Human Factors and Medicine Panel since 2005. Prof. Yanakiev is a member of the International Sociological Association, Research Committee 01 "Armed forces and conflicts resolution" and a founding member of the NATO Defense College Alumni Association in Bulgaria. As a Fulbright senior scholar in the U.S. in AY 2012-13, he conducted research on "Challenges of Diversity in Defense Organizations: Lessons from the U.S. Experience and Implications for the Bulgarian Armed Forces" at the U.S. Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI), Patrick Air Force Base, FL.



Prof. Yanakiev in front of the Readiness Wall in the main lobby of DEOMI

I have known my host organization, the U.S. Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI), for more than five years working with the colleagues from the Research Directorate on different projects in the framework of NATO Science and Technology Organization. Actually, this was my third visit to DEOMI and it felt like returning home. I had already established a good professional relationship with Dr. Daniel McDonald – Executive Director of Research, Development and Strategic Initiatives and Mr. Jerry Scarpace – Deputy Director of Research, but this time it was different. I returned as a Fulbright Scholar and I was the first one that the Institute hosted in its 40 year history. Both colleagues and I were very much energized by this opportunity.

First, let me provide an overview of my host institution. DEOMI is located at Patrick Air Force Base on Florida's east coast between Melbourne and Cocoa Beach. Both towns are approximately 60 miles south-east from Orlando. DEOMI was established in 1971 due to serious racial tensions which existed in the U.S. and its military at that time. To address this social issue, the Department of Defense issued Directive 1322.11 which established the Race Relations Education Board and created the Defense Race Relations Institute (DRRI), the founding name of DEOMI. The primary goal of DEOMI was to foster better understanding between majority and minority racial groups in the military and to contribute to the improvement in racial attitudes, behavior, and beliefs.

Today DEOMI is a world-class center of excellence for equal opportunity, diversity management and cross-cultural competency training and research. The mission of DEOMI is to "...assist its customers in enhancing their mission readiness and capabilities by pro-

moting human dignity through education in equity, diversity, and cultural competency, as well as, research, and worldwide consultation". This is particularly important today, since the United States military participates in multinational operations in joint, interagency, and culturally diverse environments.

In the past 40 years, the Institute has graduated more than 40,000 from its Equal Opportunity (EO) programs and federal, civilian Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) programs. Most of these graduates serve as Equal Opportunity Advisors (EOAs) to commanders in the U.S. military and the U.S. Coast Guard.

One of DEOMI's most recent courses, "Leading Diverse Teams" was being piloted when I arrived. This is a one-week seminar geared to mid-grade to senior officers and senior enlisted personnel and was built upon the results of DEOMI Research which examined the theoretical and empirical nexus between diversity leadership and cross-cultural competence. This course was of particular interest to me because one of my tasks under the Fulbright project was to create a diversity management course for the Bulgarian Armed Forces.

The DEOMI Research Directorate is responsible for the implementation of several surveys for the Department of Defense. These instruments include DEOMI Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS), the DEOMI Diversity Management Climate Survey (DDMCS) and the Unit Level Cross-Cultural Competency Survey. All are available upon request from commanders and serve as proactive tools for senior leaders to improve their diversity climate and to increase cross-cultural competence in their respective organizations. The DEOCS has been well received and usage continues to increase. In FY 2011, requests for the DEOCS grew from 6,653 to 8,108 (+21.8%) in com-

parison with 2010. Usage is expected to increase in the future.

The Institute houses one of the best libraries in the world on equal opportunity, diversity, culture, and human relations topics. The DEOMI library maintains over 20,000 holdings that can be searched using an online database.

Briefly, DEOMI was just the right place to conduct my research, "Challenges of Diversity in Defense Organizations: Lessons from the US Experience and Implications for the Bulgarian Armed Forces".

What are the most important lessons that I learned from the study on the U.S. experience in managing diversity in defense organizations?

First of all, diversity is much more than race, ethnicity and gender. Focusing only on demographic measures (statistics, percentages and quotas) is an over-simplified approach and does not reflect current requirements of effective organizational performance, both in the armed forces and in the context of international deployments. Diversity management is a process of managing complex organizations, positive climate creation, and maintaining organizational culture and individual mind-set change. It is an essential element of total force readiness, contributes to human interoperability, and responds to the globalization and the new missions of the defense organizations. In this respect, clear distinction must be made between the equal opportunity policies and practices that are basically legally driven and diversity management, which is related to the inclusion of each and every member of the organization and emphasizes the talents of its people. Basically, diversity has a positive effect on the organization and team performance, if managed successfully. Otherwise, it might present a challenge.

Consequently, a multidimensional approach should be taken when defining the process of managing diversity in defense organizations. The first dimension is related to the internal aspects of diversity and includes managing demographic, cognitive, and cultural diversity in military organizations. The second dimension concerns civil-military cooperation and it is associated with managing cultural differences resulting from different organizational cultures of the military and civilians in interagency operations. The third dimension is related to managing global diversity and it is a consequence of participation of the military in international operations and missions. Previously, more attention has been focused on the internal aspects of diversity. Currently, there is a lack of research regarding the interrelation among the three dimensions of diversity and the effect on organizational outcomes.

Another important lesson learned is that diversity management should not be considered a human resources management issue only. This process must be incorporated into the core mission of an organization and become a foundation of the overall process of human capital development. In addition, inclusion and equity must be promoted as core military service values. Moreover, diversity management should be aligned with other organizational processes and cover the whole career path of military and civilian personnel. Last but not least, successful diversity management must become a priority activity of the leadership in the military at all levels.

The bottom line is that building cross-cultural competence is the key factor for successful diversity management in terms of internal, civil-military, and global dimensions of diversity in military organizations. It contributes to an organizations' capability development by pre-

paring troops to operate effectively in complex cultural encounters. In this perspective, cross-cultural competence should be defined, studied and trained at individual, team and organizational levels, and should become a key requirement for military professional development.

My research in DEOMI helped me identify several important research gaps that need further exploration. The first one is related to the development of inclusion and equity as a core value in an organization where uniformity is the traditional goal, and is perceived as important for military cohesion and effectiveness. In addition, more research is needed to construct matrixes to evaluate diversity plan implementation, encompassing observable, as well as secondary dimensions of diversity like values, attitudes and beliefs. Besides, there is a need for design and validation of matrixes to assess the effect of diversity management on organizational outcomes such as team cohesion, commitment, perceived organizational effectiveness and identification with the organization. Last but not least, research should focus on specific requirements for effective leadership in diverse military organizations and the approaches to build diversity competencies for managing internal, civil-military, and global aspects of diversity. I would suggest that all these topics can be better addressed via multinational research cooperation in the framework of the NATO Science and Technology Organization.

In addition to my research in DEOMI, I had the opportunity to participate in several academic and networking activities that helped me better understand the diversity management process in U.S. military organizations. When I arrived to DEOMI, I had the opportunity to attend the Leadership Team Awareness Seminar (LTAS) – the first course in 2013. This seminar was a one-week training program for senior officers, government civilians and senior enlisted people from the Department of Defense, Army, Navy, Air Force and the Coast Guard. Attending gave me a great opportunity to meet new colleagues and to learn directly from their practical experiences in leading diverse teams and organizations. Subsequently, DEOMI invited me to lecture in the next seminar and present results from a NATO Science and Technology Organization project on cultural and organizational challenges in multinational operations. Additionally, I had the opportunity to meet colleagues from the Florida Technological Institute and to attend a presentation about managing di-



Prof. Yanakiev and Jerry Scarpace, Deputy Director of Research, in the main lobby of DEOMI



Sunset in Venice, Florida

versity at the U.S. Air Force Academy. Finally, the workshop that the Research Directorate organized at the end of my stay at DEOMI allowed me the opportunity to discuss findings from my study which was very useful because it provided me with valuable feed-back from the colleagues.

To summarize, I feel extremely satisfied with my work at DEOMI and the results that I achieved during these five months. The Fulbright program allowed me the chance to work in close cooperation and to learn from my colleagues from the Institute. Additionally, the Fulbright award provided me with the opportunity to broaden my understanding of the U.S. diversity management policies and to identify best practices which can be adapted to the Bulgarian defense forces. I am now in the final stage of writing a monograph entitled: "Challenges of Diversity in the Post-Modern Military: International Comparisons and Implications for the Bulgarian Armed Forces", and I expect it to be published soon after my return to Bulgaria. Also, I was granted permission to use a DEOMI diversity management course syllabus, as well as the multimedia cross-cultural competence trainer. I plan to adapt them for education and training at my home institution - Rakovski National Defense Academy. Finally, the colleagues agreed to initiate adaptation of the DEOMI Diversity Management Climate Survey and the Unit Level Cross-Cultural Competency Survey for the Bulgarian military. All these activities will be implemented with the support of the DEOMI Research Directorate - a great opportunity to sustain the achieved results and further expand the established collaboration.

I hope the reader does not have the impression that I spent all my time in Florida working only on my study. On the contrary, I followed the principle of "when in Rome, do as Romans do" and tried to learn as much as possible about the American culture and its traditions. In this regard, I am extremely thankful to Dr. Daniel McDonald and Mr. Jerry Scarpate who made my stay in Florida not only a success story in terms of professional development, but a remarkable cultural experience. I will never forget the traditional Halloween evening, the boat parade at Merritt Island before Christmas, the boat excursions on Banana River, the first Baseball game that I ever experienced, the celebration of the New Year, the Thanksgiving dinner and all the other terrific events during my stay in Florida. The hundreds of pictures I took of the Florida beaches and sunsets will

always remain deep in my memory and in my heart.

I was very pleased that my family was able to join me in Florida. They also had the opportunity to explore Florida and enjoy the beauty of its preserved nature and biodiversity.

We also benefited from the Orlando attractions and spent a wonderful weekend in Miami Beach. In addition, we traveled to visit our friends in Venice on the Gulf of Mexico and enjoyed the magnificent nature of Sanibel Island and Siesta Key Beach. Moreover, we were impressed with downtown Tampa and the historic buildings of the University of Tampa, the Salvador Dali Museum in St. Petersburg, as well as the oldest town in America, St. Augustine, with its Castillo de San Marcos National Monument.

At the end of my stay in the U.S., I took the advantage and attended the Fulbright enrichment seminar in Atlanta, Georgia where I had the opportunity to meet colleagues from more than thirty countries. This was another learning and cultural experience that broadened my impression of a diverse America. Among the most memorable visits was the Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site where I increased my understanding about the human rights movement in the U.S. and Dr. King's philosophy of non-violent social change. In addition, I had the opportunity to visit the Jimmy Carter Library and Museum and to learn about noteworthy Carter Center activities to prevent diseases and help the poorest people in the world. In addition, I found the visit in the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to be very useful because we received an overview of the immense contribution the CDC has made in the U.S and around the world in support of public health policy implementation. Last but not least, I enjoyed the CNN Studio tour and experienced some of the greatest moments in news history.

Along with my interest in American society and learning about the culture, I have been aware of my duty as cultural ambassador of Bulgaria. As a result, I tried to present the best of the Bulgarian culture and traditions to my colleagues and friends at DEOMI. We celebrated St. Nikola's day on 6th December and I prepared fish and Shopska salad according to the Bulgarian tradition. In addition, I brought the Bulgarian Martenitsa and introduced our tradition to the colleagues. Now, there are souvenirs from Bulgaria in each home that I visited. Finally, I made a presentation to the DEOMI staff and provided a virtual tour of Bulgaria, where they were able to learn about our cities, the Black Sea, the mountains, and the national cultural heritage.

To conclude, my visit to the U.S. and the work on my project in DEOMI as a Fulbright Scholar was extremely rewarding and enjoyable. Previous contacts and cooperation were enhanced and my professional network was expanded. Discussions were also held with my colleagues from the Research Directorate concerning prospects for cooperation with the NATO Science and Technology Organization to validate a DEOMI-created, cross-cultural competence model and to host a future workshop later this year.

I am now preparing to return back home, but I certainly would like to return to DEOMI and to the sunshine state of Florida - the place where the summer never ends.

Disclaimer

The text is published in its original and unedited version.

Out of America

A Time of Salt and Honey

Nancy Bartley

Nancy Bartley is a Fulbright lecturer at the American University in Bulgaria, Blagoevgrad, AY 2012-13. In the U.S., she is a journalist for The Seattle Times. Nancy is the author of The Boy Who Shot the Sheriff and the Redemption of Herbert Niccolls, Jr. (University of Washington Press, 2013).

In Bulgaria every new beginning seems to be celebrated with salt, honey – and large round loaves of pogacha. A piece is broken off, dipped in the honey and the salt, the first to represent the sweetness of life, the second for the bitter. The ritual is a metaphor for life I found particularly apropos during the time I have spent here.

When I first came to Bulgaria, I was grieving the recent loss of my father and all I could see was ramshackle communist-era buildings blazed with graffiti, my apartment being in one of those buildings, and homeless cats and dogs. It wasn't easy dealing with leaking sewage and foul tap water but somehow I found the sweetness in life.

It was with my neighbors, the elderly people in my building who answered my "dobro otro," which I thought was an all-purpose greeting and not just to be used in the morning, with a return "dobro otro," and a tolerant pat on my shoulder even at 10 p.m. As I occasionally wondered if the eldest of the neighbors had the beginnings of Alzheimer's Disease from the odd looks I got, he no doubt was thinking, "Poor girl she's really not quite all there."

One night I helped my neighbors clean grapes, and drank rakia and we talked at each other, somehow making sense as people can do when good intentions are the rule. And on another occasion, the neighbor across the fence picked me a bouquet of marigolds. I miss these things now that I've moved. But it was what I needed – experiencing Bulgaria's treasure, the people.



Among the ones who inspire me the most, is a Bulgarian Orthodox priest in Blagoevgrad who as a former professional boxer, now teaches Roma children to box. I've rallied my colleagues to collect new or gently used clothing for Bulgaria's children. I've made dear and rewarding friendships on the hiking trail as well as in the classroom where I teach students how important an ethical press is to a democracy.

I feel a strong connection to my students, many who are continuing on with me next semester since the university asked me to extend my stay. My class sizes have doubled. At the university I teach Mass Communications Law and Ethics, magazine writing and advanced reporting and writing. I tailor lectures to fit the issues faced by future media practitioners in Eastern Europe where press freedom is especially challenging.



Nancy Bartley's Media Law and Ethics class

We've talked about the state of the press in Eastern Europe and the effects of mass media on post communism consumerism. We've discussed the 45 attacks on journalists in Bulgaria since 1989 and I've guest lectured at Veliko Tarnovo University, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and in a number of classrooms throughout Macedonia, and in Sofia, talking to high school students about why media ethics are important and how the press is the foundation for democracy. When it really comes down to it, the more I learn from talking to students and others or by doing research, the more I realize how little I know about Bulgaria and the more I want to know.

About two months, into my Fulbright, a man who was my second father unexpectedly died. I said good-bye to him at the airport expecting to see him at Christmas. It felt like the last good-bye I had with my father at the Phoenix airport in December 2012. The second death was especially hard. But one day, at a Dec. 6 Saint Nicholas Day booth, a woman selling survaknica sticks for the New Year ritual of tapping people with them to wish them health, told me about her grandmother.

"You can't choose only the honey of life," she said. "You must take the salt too. The sad times pass. The sweet times will return. It's part of the cycle." Somehow it made sense. The loss seemed

less personal and part of something much larger. It made it easier to let some of the grief go.

Not long after I was hiking in the Pirin Mountains with a colleague. We were in the tiny nearly deserted village by that name, when we passed a house where a man was cutting firewood. The man stopped and looked surprised to see two English-speaking Americans walking through the remote little town. He spoke little English and we spoke little Bulgarian but he invited us in for rakia. He offered us food. He offered us a place to stay. We declined, and went on with our walk, he caught up with us, showed us a police badge -- he was a police officer from Sofia and he loved to return home to his father's house for weekends. He wanted to show us something very special and urged us to follow him. It was getting near dark and we had already hiked a good 12 kilometers and had just changed into the last of the dry clothes. But at his encouragement, we continued to walk. The light was fading and storm clouds were gathering again.

We asked how much farther. "Not much more," he said. And we continued to walk. Rain began again and we again asked about the distance. "Just around the corner," he said. I thought we would see a beautiful waterfall, my colleague though a lake. And as we walked, our guide spoke of his family, his daughter, his work. But after 40 minutes and early evening gloom and rain, we asked about the distance.

Right ahead, he assured us. And we turned the corner to see the pride and joy of Pirin. It was small, concrete and connected to high-tension wires. It was not a waterfall or a lake, but it was a beautiful sight to our guide who seemed oblivious to the rain as he pointed out -- an electrical plant.

I took a photo and told our guide it was the nicest electrical plant I had ever seen. And we thanked him for showing us. We later visited his modest apartment in Sofia and met his family. But that night as we walked back in the dark in the rain, I was smiling with happiness and the honey of life, even though water was squishing out of my shoes.

Disclaimer The text is published in its original and unedited version.