



BULGARIAN MEMORY FOUNDATION

ABSTRACT

Bulgarian Memory Foundation worked on different European creative projects as well as on initiatives for preserving the Bulgarian Cultural – Heritage in terms of its contribution to the European civilization, common knowledge and prosperity. Our goal is the development of a sustainable value system in young people based on the universal principles of tolerance, solidarity, freedom and justice, which to create a feeling of European community and identity.

1. PROFILE OF BULGARIAN MEMORY FOUNDATION

Bulgarian Memory Foundation is a non-profit organization founded in 2007 – the year of the Accession of Bulgaria to the European Union, working for and with young people. The program priorities of the Foundation are implemented in five main areas:



Initiatives for development of knowledge-based economy and youth realization and entrepreneurship in Bulgaria and Europe;



Educational initiatives for integration, socialization and European perspective of the young people in Bulgaria, Bulgarian communities from the historic diaspora and EU neighbouring countries – Serbia, Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), Moldova and Ukraine;



Strengthening the sense of national and European identity of youth, through initiatives for preserving the Bulgarian cultural and historical heritage, part of the European civilization;



Initiatives for overcoming the demographic crisis and sustainable regional development in Bulgaria and Europe;

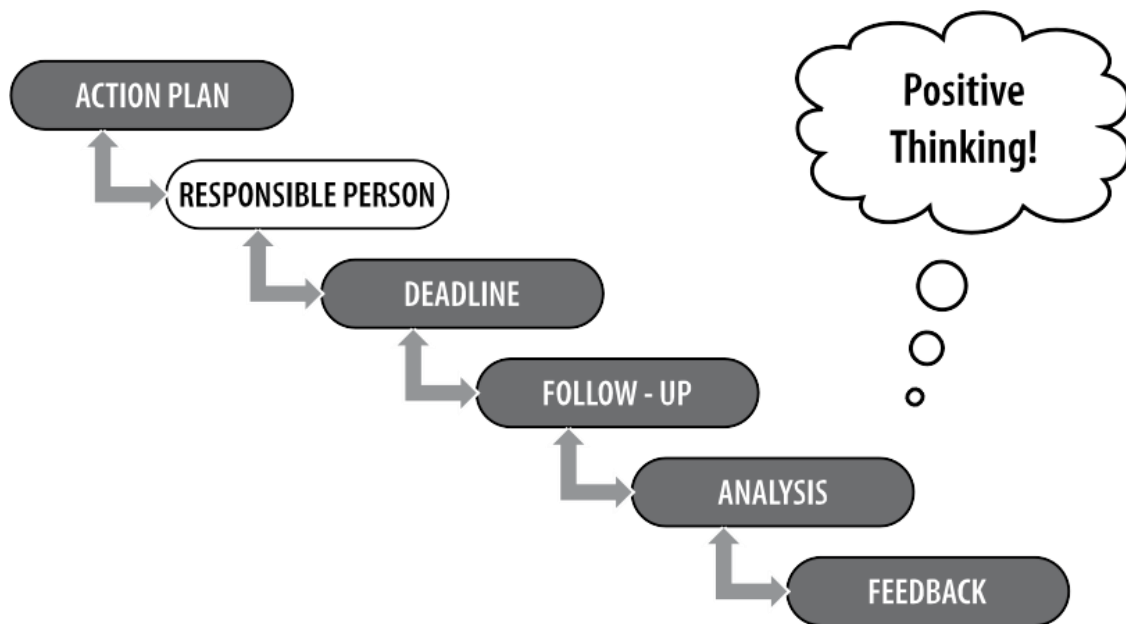


Initiatives in the field of European integration and multicultural dialogue of young people from Bulgaria and EU neighbouring countries Serbia, Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), Moldova and Ukraine.

The **target group** of the Foundation is mainly young people aged **15–24 years**, in the transition of secondary to higher education. The specific characteristics of the young people from Bulgaria are that they are mainly from small cities and villages in the Southwestern and Northeastern regions of the country and due to economic and geographic reasons they fall into the so-called **disadvantaged category**. Young people are from families with low social status, living in the so-called mixed regions characterized with differences in ethnic and religious composition.

Since 2007, nearly **5000 young people** from Bulgaria and the region of Southeastern Europe and the Eastern Partnership countries have been involved in projects and initiatives realized thanks to the many partnerships of national and European institutions, business sector representatives, non-governmental and academic organizations.

The team of the Foundation, headed by its Chairman – **Dr. Milen Vrabevski**, awarded with the **Citizen's Prize of the European Parliament for 2013**, is composed of motivated and creative people with great experience in the above mentioned fields. In 2016 Dr. Vrabevski is announced as: Apostle of the Bulgarian national traits, Member of the Public Council of the Bulgarian National Radio, Chairman of the jury in the framework of the national campaign: "Enlightener of the Year". Bulgarian Memory Foundation has developed management, administrative and technical capacity, which has the following logic and management structure:



Since 2016 Bulgarian Memory Foundation is part of the Public Council of the Committee on Interaction with nongovernmental organizations and citizen' complaints, Working group on: International and European affairs and policies, 43rd National Assembly of the Republic of Bulgaria.

2. TRADITIONAL INITIATIVES AND PROJECTS:

◆ **“Strong National Identity – Strong European Identity”** is a project which takes place traditionally twice a year as spring and autumn training seminars related to personal, social and educational development of young people from **Bulgaria, Ukraine, Moldova, Serbia and Republic of Macedonia (FYROM)**, as well as to the dissemination of European values among young people in Bulgaria and Europe. The main objective of the project is through cross-border and transnational cooperation to contribute for promoting **better mutual understanding and closer integration** among youth in Europe, coming from EU Member States, candidate countries and potential candidates for EU membership. Under the project, for the most active young people, Bulgarian Memory Foundation organizes group visits and events at the European Parliament, Brussels, Belgium;

◆ **“Path to the University”** is a traditional project, launched in 2010, which aims to organize and conduct undergraduate courses and a preparation for matriculation of young people, living in fifteen areas of the Southwest of Bulgaria characterized with limited opportunities for development and families with low social status. Every year the number of participants increases: in 2010 – they were 20; in 2011 – 70; in 2012 – 299; in 2013 – 458; in 2014 – 465; 2015 – 500 and in 2016 – 539. As a result, on an average basis more than 85% of those young people, coming from the municipalities of Yakoruda, Gotse Delchev, Belica, Hadzhidimovo, Satovcha, Dospat, Sarnitsa and Tervel, entered at university and successfully continued their education in Bulgaria and Europe as well as for participating in “Erasmus+”, Programme, the EU programme for education, training, youth and sport;

◆ **Training sessions in support of civil and youth organizations**, working to fulfil social and educational needs at local level in Southwestern and Northeastern Bulgaria, where Muslims and Christians live together;

◆ **Information campaigns** conducted among the historic diaspora in Ukraine, Moldova, Serbia and Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) about opportunities for obtaining higher education in Bulgaria and Europe;

◆ **A number of national and transnational exhibitions and events** in the field of culture and spirituality.



3. ACTIVITIES REALIZED IN 2016

3.1 Projects funded by Erasmus+ Programme

3.1.1 Project “COMPASS”, co-funded by “Erasmus+” Programme, Key Action 3, “Support for Policy Reform”



On February 26 – 28, 2016, 170 young people from the region of Blagoevgrad together with 30 youth workers and interlocutors participated in a three-day seminar organized by Bulgarian Memory Foundation in the city of Blagoevgrad, part of the project “COMPASS”.

Considering the demographic, economic and educational situation in the region of Blagoevgrad, the project aimed through a structured dialogue to

brand the Region with a special focus on **youth entrepreneurship** and **social entrepreneurship** as well as to develop an innovative “model-compass” for personal, socio-educational and professional orientation of young people.

3.1.2 Project „Tolerance and Solidarity – a tool for overcoming stereotypes among youth“, co-funded by “Erasmus+” Programme, Key Action 1 „Learning Mobility of Individuals“

Bulgarian Memory Foundation implemented the project “Tolerance and Solidarity – a tool for overcoming stereotypes among youth” in Sofia from 4th to 10th July 2016. The main objective of the project was to encourage young people between 16 and 20 years old from Republic of Bulgaria, Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) and Republic of Moldova, to improve the communication among them and to teach them how to work together in a **multicultural environment**.



The results from the seven-day event were based on the achievement of project objectives, namely: *participants to acquire key competences according to Youthpass; *to develop communication skills and ability to work through tolerance and solidarity in a multicultural environment; * to get inspired for innovation and creative initiatives in the context of European integration.

3.1.3 Project “Youth forum for entrepreneurship and demographics”, co-funded by Erasmus+” Programme, Key Action 3 “Support for Policy Reform”



From 8th to 10th September 2016, in Sofia, Bulgarian Memory Foundation implemented the project: “Youth forum for entrepreneurship and demographics”. The main objective of the forum was 50 young people from the regions of Blagoevgrad, Dobrich and Smolyan (17 – 30 years old) to learn more about the **education and employment opportunities** in the context of the entrepreneurship by conducting a **structured dialogue** with policy makers in the field of youth. At the end of 2016,

Bulgarian Memory Foundation was awarded for the implementation of this project during the Valorisation conference of „Erasmus+“ Programme.

3.1.4 Project „Creating an Entrepreneurial Culture among the Youth“, co-funded by “Erasmus+” Programme, Key Action 1 „Learning Mobility of Individuals“

From 14th to 18th November 2016, in Sofia, Bulgarian Memory Foundation implemented the project: “Creating an entrepreneurial culture among the youth” co-financed by “Erasmus+” Programme, KA1 “Learning Mobility of Individuals“. Target group of the project were young people at the transition between secondary to higher education and students, 30 in total, from the Republic of Bulgaria – EU member state, the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) – a candidate member of the EU and the Republic of Moldova – a country, signed an Association Agreement within the EU policy of good neighborliness.



The aim of the Foundation was to achieve the following results through methods of **non-formal learning**: 1) helping the young people in acquiring **entrepreneurial skills** from two points of view: in terms of starting their own business or of development of entrepreneurial attitudes in existing companies/organizations; 2) guiding the young participants in their career orientation by examining the entrepreneurship from the view point of business, NGOs and education, which are key components of the entrepreneurial ecosystem, developed by Babson College.

3.2 Traditional seminar: „Strong national identity – strong European identity“

3.2.1 XVIII spring seminar: „Strong national identity – strong European identity“, with the motto: “Perspectives for young people in Europe”



The 18th spring seminar: „Strong national identity – strong European identity“, with the motto “Perspectives for young people in Europe” took place on 4 – 9 April in Varna. It was realized with the support of Hanns-Seidel-Stiftung Bulgaria; the Representation of the European Commission in Bulgaria and the Municipality of Varna. The idea of the project was the development of **European identity** through fostering

of the mutual understanding and **closer integration** between more than 150 young people from Bulgaria, Ukraine, Moldova, Serbia and the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) – member states of the EU, countries applicants and potential applicants for membership in the EU. During the 18th spring seminar, the participants got acquainted with the development of the European idea and youth politics for entrepreneurship and active start which which EU and Bulgaria in particular offers them via its membership in the European Union.

3.2.2 XIX autumn seminar: “Strong national identity – strong European identity” with the motto: “Cultural diversity – a source of innovative ideas”

The 19th autumn seminar of Bulgarian Memory Foundation: “Strong national identity – strong European identity” took place on 24 – 28 October 2016 in Grand Hotel Varna, “St. Constantine and Helena”. It was realized with the support of Hanns-Seidel-Stiftung Bulgaria; the Representation of the European Commission in Bulgaria and the Municipality of Varna, selected for European Youth Capital for 2017. The slogan of the seminar: “**Cultural diversity** – a source of **innovative ideas**” was in line with the priority theme of social innovation which was part of the application process – “Innowave Varna” – for European Youth Capital 2017.



Erasmus+ projects implemented successfully from Bulgarian Memory Foundation:

Project Name	Number	Beneficiaries
<i>Identity of the young people in Europe</i>	2015-1-BG01-KA105-013485	<i>Bulgaria, Serbia, Republic of Macedonia</i>
<i>COMPASS</i>	2015-2-BG01-KA347-014475	<i>Bulgaria</i>
<i>Tolerance and Solidarity – a tool for overcoming stereotypes among youth</i>	2016-1-BG01-KA105-023018	<i>Bulgaria, Republic of Macedonia, Moldova</i>
<i>Youth forum for entrepreneurship and demographics</i>	2015-2-BG01-KA347-022626	<i>Bulgaria</i>
<i>Creating an Entrepreneurial Culture among the Youth</i>	2016-1-BG01-KA105-023016	<i>Bulgaria, Republic of Macedonia, Moldova</i>



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Bulgarian Memory Foundation is looking forward to cooperating with you for developing the next generation of young European leaders and entrepreneurs

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