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Lifelong Learning Programme



**ЦЕНТЪР  
ЗА РАЗВИТИЕ  
НА ЧОВЕШКИТЕ  
РЕСУРСИ**



Education and Culture DG  
Lifelong Learning Programme



**VICHO GRANCHAROV SECONDARY SCHOOL  
GORNA ORYAHOVITSA  
BULGARIA**

## **LIFELONG LEARNING PROGRAMME A COMENIUS PROJECT - MULTILATERAL PARTNERSHIPS**



**POLAND**



**ROMANIA**



**TURKEY**



**SWEDEN**



**ITALY**



**SPAIN**

**TEACHING INNOVATIVELY  
(WITH FOCUS ON ICT) AND ITS IMPACT ON  
THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**Electronic Magazine**

**Issue14**

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**Year: 2013**

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**ROMANIA**  
**COLEGIUL NATIONAL DE INFORMATICA**  
**„TUDOR VIANU"**  
**BUCHAREST**

**The fifth meeting in 2013 –**

**18-22 March 2013**

**Gorna Oryahovitsa, Bulgaria**

**This diary entry is a bitter sweet moment...**



This diary entry is a bitter sweet moment, since this is the last time I shall be writing such a “masterpiece”. I can still remember putting pen to paper, in a manner of speaking, and retracing my memories of my first Comenius meeting in this project, the one to Italy. In a way, also, it is befitting that Bulgaria should be the last country to visit before the final project meeting in Romania. This is not the first time I have visited Bulgaria.

The memories of my first visits are murky, since I was only four or five years old,

and would cross the Danube River on a ferryboat together with my mother, before the fall of communism in either country, in search of all the things we couldn't find then in Romania.

On our train journey to Gorna Oriahovita my colleagues – that is, Iulia Manicea and Mirela Marinescu – and I got to talking about our shared experiences of the country we were about to visit. Although a couple of years apart in age, we all remembered watching programmes on Bulgarian television, and even beginning to grasp some basic elements of the language, all motivated by the abysmal quality of television programmes in our own communist country. And now you see, again, the common thread, the shared experience of both countries having survived a stultifying regime, full of restrictions, and punishment, and suffering. The feeling of shared history, of being tied to people from across the border, though belonging to a different country from yours, like we experienced with the Bulgarians, would be so much better if not for the ever looming specter of past pain.

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The second time I got to visit Bulgaria was during high school, appropriately enough for a school contest. I had the chance to visit Sofia and have warm memories of that experience, but, like most tourist excursions, it was a bit superficial.

As a result, participating at this project meeting felt in a way like visiting a long-lost acquaintance that you hadn't seen in years. Although I didn't experience the same sense of trepidation and wonder that pretty much defined the other Comenius meetings I took part in, going to Bulgaria was like going to a home away from home. Gorna Oriahovita is a small, provincial place, but filled with hidden beauties. It helped that we were staying at a hotel on top of a hill, surrounded by forest, and with a beautiful view of the town, especially at night. Since the visit took place in March, everywhere we went, we saw the traditional red and white strings of the "Martisor", a custom popular in Romania too. The churches and houses seen on our visit to the Arbanasi Architectural Complex were similar in many ways to our own old churches and houses, and the feeling of a shared past and connection intensified.



On our visit to Gabrovo I felt like going from one extreme to another. On the one hand, we started off with a bang by visiting the Museum of Humour, which, true to its name, was a very funny experience, and it definitely contributed to me revisiting my inner child, though that's not something very difficult to do. I particularly liked the reputation of Gabrovians as extremely creative people, always on the lookout for new ways of saving money, since Romanians also have several traditional characters, heroes of

folk tales and legends, characterized by cunning and avarice. The story, which I saw depicted on the walls of the museum, of villagers cutting the tails of their cats so as not to lose warmth in their rooms, waiting for cats to enter or exit them, is something that we have, verbatim, in our own stories.

On the other hand, the city, though beautiful, had reoccurring reminders of the long winter of communism, be it statues in that horrid, communist realist style, or buildings, grey and dull. The same is in Romania, and other countries which shared the communist curse, but seeing it in Bulgaria served as a reminder of what a bloat on the lovely culture and customs of all these countries communism really was.

Our visit on a subsequent day to Veliko Tarnovo proved to be, at least for me, less filled with portentous reminders of the not so distant, not so nice past. The city is the old capital of Bulgaria, and it's one of those lovely medieval cities, where you find yourself wondering the cobbled streets, walking past houses and pretty stores, and, before you know it, you seem to be whisked to the past, as if you too were a merchant on business, carefully counting your gold coins. The charm of the city definitely helped remove, albeit partially, the memory of what cold weather we had that day, made even more painful by the fact that none of us were dressed adequately for such a wintery experience.

I've almost reached the end of these couple of travel snippets, and I mentioned nothing about work, not that I am actually going to delve into that topic. I do want to say that our





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Bulgarian hosts, and Polina above all, were extremely welcoming and nice, and made us feel as if our visiting there was a real pleasure for everyone.

At the end of the day, the journey to Bulgaria gave me hope, both for them and for my own country. I think that in spite of the economic hardships, and in spite of the never-ending climb from the pit of communism back to the values of democracy – of which the Comenius project is a great example - , these two countries, with so many things in common, will find their way back to a better place, like two rivers, deviated from their natural course by a great calamity, and now slowly trickling back to their river beds, gradually making their way to the sea of a borderless world ( and I think this is what you call a mixed metaphor, a bit of a literary faux pas, but definitely getting the point across). I'll end this brief account by joining my colleague, Mirela Marinescu, in saying how much I am anticipating everyone's visit to Romania in May, and how much I hope I shall be able to make my small contribution towards making everyone feel at least half as welcome as I felt on my previous Comenius meetings.

*By Andreea Dumitru, Teacher of English at Colegiul National de Informatica*

### **ICT – Interesting Comenius Trip**



I'd always wanted to be part of an exchange program. After all, this is one of the best ways to experience a country's culture. So, on March 18th I found myself boarding a train headed towards Bulgaria together with six fellow students and 3 teachers.

Roxana, Adela, Iulia, Diana and I were all hosted by different families from Gorna Oryahovitsa. We discovered that we had many things in common. My host, Vessie, was a fan of the show "Friends". Roxana's host, Sylvia, had pet turtles, just like her. The name of

Iulia's host was also Iulia. Adela discovered that Mariana was the European champion in aero modeling. Diana's host, Plamena, is an avid dancer. Basically, we got the opportunity to share a person's life and home for five days.

Despite the fact that they were living at a hotel, Vlad and Teo, or 'Toshka', as the Bulgarians affectionately named him, also had a great time with the Comenius participants. Teo immediately hit it off with the Spanish and Italians, due to their common love, football. Vlad, headphones in ears and iPad in hand, also enjoyed seeing the other countries' software programmes and discussing them with their students.

Actually, we were all impressed by the software and teaching methods presented. They were all quite entertaining and interactive and succeeded in grabbing our attention. But in the end it didn't really matter how elaborate they were- what was important was that all the students and teachers did their best to try to integrate technology in their classrooms.

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Our final day seemed to arrive too quickly, along with broken hearts and broken cups (an unfortunate consequence of a suitcase toppling over in the train station). Adela was greatly touched by her host's present: a framed picture of the two of them and also the Polish guest. We all befriended each other on Facebook and exchanged phone numbers, promising to stay in touch. Roxana even left a small gift in one of their churches: a forgotten scarf.

As I sit here at home, typing this onto my computer, I can't help but smile. This experience seems unreal, a break from reality. Now I'm back to my usual life, my usual surroundings. But I can't wait to see you all again in May, in Bucharest. Довиждане!

*By Paula Dozsa, student in the 11th grade at Colegiul National de Informatica "Tudor Vianu", Bucharest, Romania*

### **Travelling impressions from the Balkans**



Bulgaria...the neighbouring country south of the Danube, crossed by the Balkans, filled with both deciduous and pine forests, watered by clear and fast rivers, with clean, fresh air...What could be more beautiful?

Our Bulgarian hosts, people with warm, generous hearts, welcomed us with bread and salt, as a sign of appreciation, affection, kindness and generosity.

Our March visit to Gorna Oriahovita was, as a result, under the good omens of the "Mărțișor" – or "martinita" in Bulgarian - , the

traditional red and white string symbolizing the rebirth of nature, the passage from winter to spring (although during our stay it seemed the weather was desperately trying to return us to the cold embrace of winter, in spite of the trees in full bloom that made you immediately think about joy, and sunny days, and greeneries...) Even with the occasional adversarial weather, Bulgaria, a friendly country to Romania, generously revealed wonderful landscapes and welcoming people. Here are a couple of symbols of Bulgaria:

- the city of Gabrovo, situated in the center of the country (where we visited the Museum of Humour),

- the Etar Architectural-Ethnographic Complex (full of traditional shops and craftsmen's workshops all along the main road of the reconstructed traditional village, where, walking along it, we were able to witness the old way of work of potters, sculptors, furriers and confectioners; in one of these lovely looking houses we managed to find, on the top floor, a small coffee shop, resembling old grandma's house from stories of old; the rustic atmosphere combined with the cold outside simply compelled you to go inside and have a cup of hot chocolate or coffee) and

- Velico Tarnovo – a beautiful city, built on sloping hills, with cobbled streets forever climbing up and down, bursting with reminders of its old history, with old, two-storey houses that have the traditional shop on the ground floor, a city, in one word, that you want to return to again and again.

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The meeting in Bulgaria was not only the perfect occasion to meet some dear friends again, our friendships forged during the course of other Comenius meeting, but also an occasion to do some work. The participating countries presented their projects and delved into the impact of the project on their schools and communities with the help of documentaries done by students. I couldn't help but notice some of the projects:

1. testing the students' knowledge with the help of quiz games (Turkey)
2. creating a class blog through which the teachers can share most of their teaching materials with the class (Sweden)
3. explaining sounds and sound waves with the help of technology (Italy)
4. finding elements of a parabola (Poland)
5. tasting a beautiful and sweet lesson about chocolate (Bulgaria)
6. using teaching software to explain and test knowledge about medicinal plants (Romania)

A series of beautiful and interesting days, wonderfully concluded.. During the workshops we also managed to better understand the ultimate goal of such meetings. Apart from the possibility of knowing other cultures and customs, practicing your English skills and exchanging useful ideas, the participants to this project, both students and teachers, have demonstrated how important the ability to think freely is, and contributed, in their small way, to the consolidation of friendship between people from different countries, and the eventual disappearance of borders.

The last stop of this Comenius adventure is in the beautiful and plentiful land of Romania, and we are waiting for you with open arms.

*By Mirela Marinescu, Biology Teacher at Colegiul National de Informatica "Tudor Vianu", Bucharest, Romania*



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## **TURKEY**

**HASAN HUSEYIN AKDEDE ANADOLU OGRETMEN**

**Gudul, ANKARA**

**The fifth meeting in 2013 –**

**18-22 March 2013**

**Gorna Oryahovitsa, Bulgaria**



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## **Vicho Grancharov Secondary School Gorna Oryahovitsa**

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**SWEDEN**

**Hässelbygårdsskolan**

**Stockholm**

**The fifth meeting in 2013 –**

**18-22 March 2013**

**Gorna Oryahovitsa, Bulgaria**

**Hello Bulgaria!**



We would like to share our impressions from our visit to Bulgaria. We were quite curious about how it would be to visit a minor city in Bulgaria. We were quite impressed by the preparations made for our visit. You made us feel like royalties!

To Start with we were impressed to see that all students were active during their lessons and that that they were very talented in handcraft and art. It was so sweet of the participating students to prepare Bulgarian delicacies for our banquette.

It was also amusing and interesting to learn more about your town history and to meet your major.

The Bulgarian food was delicious, especially the chopska salad and the kawarma.

We also went to a nice visit to the house of fun and saw some very interesting sculptures made of metal junk. This gave us something to think of when it comes to that one can make something very beautiful from anything.

One of the most interesting trips we made during our stay was to the old churches and the old ottoman houses. It felt very exciting to see all that and to almost see the people from that time sitting there and having their Turkish coffee.

At last but not least we were most impressed by the kindness and great hospitality of the Bulgarian people and how they really made great efforts to make our visit as good as possible.

We thank you and hope to see you soon again!

*Sanna, Malin, Christina, Elham and Nils-Erik*



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**SPAIN**  
**IES NEWTON-SALAS**  
**VILLANUEVA DE LA TORRE**

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**POLAND**

## **II LICEUM OGOLNOKSZTALCACE IM. MIKOLAJA KOPERNIKA**

**CIESZYN**

**The fifth meeting in 2013 –  
18-22 March 2013  
Gorna Oryahovitsa, Bulgaria**

### **Impressions from Bulgaria**



Comenius exchange was really beneficial for me. I met a lot of nice, friendly and funny people, with whom I keep in touch all the time. There were numerous interesting classes in Bulgaria, which may help me in the future. Thanks to this exchange it's easier for me to speak English

*Katarzyna Mazur (Poland)*

### **Impressions from Bulgaria**



When I was in Bulgaria I spent there great time! I must tell that I was there for the first time and I have an opinion that Bulgaria is a beautiful country and it has got great and sociable people. I've known two guys who were my guest in Poland. I have contact with them to this day mainly via Facebook. I've never thought that people could be so kind and nice to you. All people from Comenius project are the most friendly I've ever seen. The memories will survive in my head forever.

*Dawid Pustowka (Poland)*

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**Istituto di Istruzione Superiore I.P.S.S."M. LENTINI"-  
L.S. "A. EINSTEIN "  
MOTTOLA, ITALY**

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