



A quarterly newsletter

EEA and NORWAY GRANTS in BULGARIA

Points of interest:

Three open calls have a deadline in April 2013.

See pages 6 and 7 for more info.

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FOREWORDS TO YOUR EXCELLENCY THE READER

The EEA and Norway Grants represent the contribution of Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein to reducing the economic and social disparities in Europe.

In Bulgaria, the Grants have supported various initiatives for sustainable economic and social development through protecting the environment, building local capacity, tackling challenges in health and child care and preserving cultural heritage. The results achieved so far have made the EEA and Norway Grants very popular in the country.

The new programmes under EEA and Norway Grants 2009-2014 are now getting

speed. We want to share with you our steps along the way and inform you how to get involved.

Every three months we will present to you the programmes, past and future events on the Grants, open calls and successful partnerships. If you are interested in Norwegian music and literature, you will also find information on the cultural agenda of the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Sofia.

We hope this newsletter will be your guide and friend.

Enjoy its first edition!

EEA and NORWAY GRANTS in BULGARIA

A brief on past, present and future

The EEA and Norway Grants have provided support for reducing economic and social disparities in Europe ever since the signing of the Agreement on the European Economic Area in 1994. The EEA Agreement allowed for the establishment of a single market between the EU Member States and Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein and increased trade cooperation, but it also helped in supporting key priorities in the less developed countries in the EU and the EEA.

Bulgaria became a beneficiary of EEA and Norway Grants in 2007 with 41.5 million Euro made available from the Grants in 2007-2009. The funding was targeted at areas such as environment, administrative capacity and human development, cultural heritage, energy efficiency, Schengen, etc.

The first experience for Bulgaria with the EEA and Norway Grants was very positive with 60 successfully implemented projects and a rate of absorption at around 85%.



Opening of renovated kindergartens in the town of Veliko Tarnovo. Photo: Norwegian Embassy

In the current period of the Grants, covering 2009 – 2014, the contribution to Bulgaria is increased to 126.6 million Euro.

A new programme approach is introduced and 15 thematic programmes are established. They will support projects based on calls for project proposals, which will be organised by the respectful Programme Operator.

PRESENTING THE PROGRAMMES

The Scholarship Fund



Photo: Norwegian Embassy

Norwegian Ambassador
Ms. Guro Katharina Vikør
with students from Norway and
Bulgaria

With a budget of 1 764 705 Euro, the Scholarship Fund falls within EEA Grants priority sector "Human and Social Development".

The Programme Operator here is the Bulgarian [Ministry of Education, Youth and Science](#) and it has worked on fulfilling one clear objective: developing enhanced human capital and knowledge base.

Since good networking is of great importance for such kind of programmes, three Donor Programme Partners have been designated by the Donor Countries – the Icelandic Centre for Research ([RANNIS](#)) from Iceland, the National Agency for International Education Affairs ([AIBA](#)) from Liechtenstein and the Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education ([SIU](#)) in Norway.

PRESENTING THE PROGRAMMES

The Scholarship Fund

Why is the programme needed?

Providing opportunities for student scholarships and stimulating the international mobility of students, academic staff and researchers are key measures in both national and European strategies for internationalisation of higher education and providing access to quality education and professional development.

What will the programme achieve?

The main objective of the programme is to increase higher education student and staff mobility between Bulgaria and the donor states, improve cooperation on study programme and study module development, and strengthen the competence of Bulgarian academic, research and administrative staff in higher education.

Joint projects will contribute to enhancing the quality and relevance of the education in Bulgarian higher education institutions.

How will it be achieved?

The programme will support projects under three different Scholarship measures:

- **Preparatory visits** in order to establish or further develop the cooperation between institutions, and in particular to prepare applications for one of the other measures within the programme.

- **Mobility projects** in higher education aimed at students, teachers, administrative staff and researchers in Bulgaria and the donor states.

- **Inter-institutional cooperation** projects between higher education institutions in Bulgaria and the donor states aimed at developing intensive programmes / short courses, summer schools, common curricula such as joint programmes and common study modules, and development of new teaching tools and methods. Cooperation between higher education institutions and research institutions aimed at joint research activities is also envisaged.

PRESENTING THE PROGRAMMES

The Scholarship Fund

What are the partnership opportunities?

All projects will be carried out in cooperation with a partner from one or more donor states.

All measures will be announced through open calls for proposals:

- **Preparatory visits:** two calls in 2013. Grant: up to €4 000 per visit.
- **Mobility projects** in higher education: two calls per year starting in 2013. Grant: travel cost and monthly stipend for students, post-graduate and doctoral candidates, travel and weekly allowance for staff.
- **Inter - institutional cooperation** projects: one open call in 2013 and 2014. Grant: from €50 000 to €250 000.



Photo: Garo Marukian, NFP

Who can apply for funding under this programme?

- **Preparatory visits:** Bulgarian higher education institutions and their potential partners in the donor states.
- **Mobility projects** in higher education: students, teachers, administrative staff and researchers in Bulgaria and the donor states.
- **Inter - institutional cooperation** projects: Bulgarian higher education and research institutions.

EVENTS, OPEN CALLS AND INFO DAYS



Bilateral workshop for Bulgarian and Norwegian NGOs in Sofia, Nov. 2012. Photo: OSI - Sofia

NGO Fund

Strengthening civil society development and enhancing its contribution to social justice, democracy and sustainable development is an overall objective of the EEA Grants NGO Programme. In Bulgaria, the NGO Fund is operated by Open Society Institute – Sofia and Workshop for Civic Initiatives Foundation. The programme was launched in Nov. 2012 with a series of bilateral meetings between Bulgarian and Norwegian NGOs. The first call for proposals was opened on 1 Feb. 2013. More than 700 NGO representatives attended the info days that were held in February in the six Bulgarian regions. **The deadline for application is 1 April 2013.** Find out more: www.ngogrants.bg

Calls NGO Fund

First call (ongoing)

Budget: €3.73 mln

Expected:

Second call

(beginning of 2014)

Budget: €3.95 mln

Third call

(end of 2014)

Budget: €2.33 mln

EVENTS, OPEN CALLS AND INFO DAYS

Green Innovation

The programme **Green Industry Innovation**, operated by the Norwegian state agency Innovation Norway launched a call for proposals on 4 Dec. 2012. The deadline for application is **15 April 2013**. The objective is to increase the competitiveness of green enterprises, including greening of existing industries, green innovation and green entrepreneurship. A broad launching event with more than 200 participants was held in Sofia with the publishing of the call. Information days were organised in Vratsa, Gabrovo, Stara Zagora and Bourgas.

www.norwaygrants-greeninnovation.no

Children and youth at risk

With a focus on social disparities and equal opportunities, the **Children and Youth at Risk** programme was presented on 10 Jan. 2013. The programme is implemented in cooperation with the Council of Europe and encompasses activities like reconstruction of youth centres, inclusion of children in the educational system as well as capacity building. Special attention is paid to vulnerable groups, including Roma. The first open call "Care for youth at risk" has been launched. The deadline for submission of project proposals is **30 April 2013**.

www.mon.bg/below/eeagrants

Photo: Garo Marukian, NFP



EVENTS, OPEN CALLS AND INFO DAYS

Capacity building



Photo: OP Technical Assistance Directorate, CoM

The last day of February 2013 was the opening date for the programme for [Capacity Building and Institutional Cooperation](#) operated by OP Technical Assistance Directorate at the Council of Ministers. Special guests for the event were representatives of the Donor Programme Partners – the [Norwegian Association of Local Municipalities](#) and the [Norwegian Barents Secretariat](#), as well as project promoters from the Bulgarian side – the National Association of

Municipalities and the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works. The programme aims at strengthening institutional capacity and human resource development in Bulgarian public institutions, local and regional authorities through cooperation and transfer of knowledge with similar institutions and authorities in Norway. More than 300 representatives of Bulgarian municipalities attended the launching of the programme.

Justice and home affairs

Two programmes in the field of justice were launched on 11 Feb. 2013 – Judicial capacity building and cooperation and Correctional services. The total grant allocation is €10 million. The programmes are operated by [Bulgarian Ministry of Justice](#) and implemented in partnership with the [Council of Europe](#). Eight projects are already agreed. They will contribute to the establishment of electronic summoning, better assessment of the workload of judges, improvement of the situation in prisons and introduction of alternatives to prison.

EVENTS, OPEN CALLS AND INFO DAYS

Check out the cultural agenda:

Until 31 March 2013 - Sofia Arsenal – Museum of Contemporary Art

"The Child within" woodcut exhibition by Olga Grimsmo Nilsen

18 April 2013, 18.00h, Sofia City Art Gallery

Three sonatas for piano and violin by Edvard Grieg, concert in memory of Ivan Yankov by Yossif Radionov (violin) and Zornitsa Radionova (piano)

13 May – 17 May 2013

Norwegian days at the Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"

20 May 2013, 18.00h, Sofia City Library

Contemporary Norwegian Composers, concert by Tore Dingstad (piano) and Martina Dingstad (flute)

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Photo: Garo Marukian, NFP

