

TRANSFORM4EUROPE MOBILITY WEEK

SOFIA UNIVERSITY ST. KLIMENT OHRIDSKI

The Transform4Europe Week is dedicated to the 135th anniversary of Sofia University and will welcome PhD Students, Young researchers, supervisors and administrative staff working at the PhD level

26–30 September 2023

1504, Sofia; 15, Tsar Osvoboditel Blvd., Bulgaria



SOFIA UNIVERSITY ST. KLIMENT OHRIDSKI



25 September 2023:

18:30–20:00 Welcome drink (Meeting point – Sofia University Botanic Garden at 49 "Moskovska" Str.)

20:00 Sofia Bar Tour (optional) (*Meeting point – in front of Sofia University Botanic Garden at 49 Moskovska Str.*)



26 September 2023:

09:30–11:00 Registration (*Sofia University St Kliment Ohridski Main Building, 15 Tsar Osvoboditel Blvd. – AULA MAGNA*)

11:00–12:00 Opening of the Transform4Europe Week (*Sofia University St Kliment Ohridski Rectorate, 15 Tsar Osvoboditel Blvd. – AULA MAGNA*)

12:00–13:30 Lunch Break (*Meeting point – Central Foyer, Rectorate, 15 Tsar Osvoboditel Blvd.*)

13:30–14:00 Guided Tour around the Rectorate – Sofia University Main Building (*Meeting point – Central Foyer in front of AULA MAGNA Sofia University St Kliment Ohridski Main Building, 15 Tsar Osvoboditel Blvd.*)

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14:00–16:00 Opening of PhD Students & Young researchers' courses

- Becoming a researcher (*Hall 1, floor 1, Rectorate, 15 "Tsar Osvoboditel" Blvd.*)
 - Promoting PhD research through academic writing (*Hall 2, floor 1, Rectorate, 15 Tsar Osvoboditel Blvd.*)
 - Access to information in digital platforms. Media and media structure in Bulgaria (*Room 21, floor 1. South Wing, Rectorate, 15 Tsar Osvoboditel Blvd.*)
- * *Digital Geo Twinning* course participants start for Burgas. Meeting point – courtyard.
* *Participating PhDs* will receive additional detailed course programme

13:30–16:00 Opening of the Memory and Architecture Plein Air Guided tour around the Rectorate and the Faculty of Biology (*8 Dragan Tsankov Blvd.*)

14:00–16:00 Administrative Staff and PhD Supervisors activities (*Conference Hall, North Wing, floor 2, Rectorate, 15 Tsar Osvoboditel Blvd.*)

Ice-breaking and introductions

Specifics of PhD education at Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski – Deyana Andonova, Head Doctoral Education Sector

Mentoring and learning analytics as support tools in young researchers' professional development – Svetlana Dimitrova and Tanya Yordanova, EURAXESS Bulgaria

16:00–17:30 Bulgarian Language Course (*Hall 1, floor 1, Rectorate, 15 Tsar Osvoboditel Blvd.*)

17:30–19:00 Sofia Guided Tour provided by the History Museum of Sofia (Meeting point – Courtyard)



27 September 2023:

09:00–12:00 PhD Students & Young researchers' courses (*Hall 1, Hall 2, Room 21*)

09:00–12:00 Administrative Staff and PhD Supervisor Activities (*Conference Hall, North Wing, floor 2, Rectorate, 15 Tsar Osvoboditel Blvd.*)

09:00–10:00 Introduction to the Joint T4EU PhD Programmes. Launch of the Joint Virtual PhD Support Office

11:00–12:00 Issues in Creating Joint PhD Programmes – Supervision and Assessment. Lecture delivered by Prof. Michael Byram

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12:00–13:30 Lunch Break (Central Foyer)

13:30–17:00 Cultural Programme: Trip to the Boyana church (UNESCO) (Meeting point – Courtyard)

PhD students & Young Researchers

18:00–19:30 Cultural Programme: Bulgarian traditional folk dances (Meeting point – Courtyard)

Academic and administrative staff

19:30 Official dinner (Chevermeto Restaurant – 1 Bulgaria Square, National Palace of Culture, Prono)

 **28 September 2023:**

PhD Students and Young Researchers

07:30–14:00 Cultural Programme: Hiking tour to Cherni Vrah peak (Meeting point – courtyard) *Please bring hiking shoes and warm clothing!

14:00–17:00 PhD Students & Young researchers' courses – Individual tasks / group assignments / self-study as per the detailed programme of the respective course (Rectorate, 15 Tsar Osvoboditel Blvd. – Hall 1, Hall 2, Room 21)

18:00–19:30 Cultural Programme: Performance at Alma Alter Theatre (Meeting point – Courtyard)

Academic and administrative staff

09:00–19:00 Cultural Programme: Guided Trip to Plovdiv and Bulgarian Language Course (Bulgarian for academic travellers on the bus) (Meeting point – Courtyard)

 **29 September 2023:**

09:00–12:00 PhD Students & Young researchers' courses (Hall 1, Hall 2, Room 21)

09:00–12:00 Knowledge fair – preparation and arrangement of T4EU stall (Central foyer)

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10.30–12:00 PhD Supervisors and Administrative staff activities

University Rankings and Excellence – public lecture delivered by Prof. Gilles, Rouet, University of Versailles Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines, France

12:00–13:30 Lunch Break (*packed lunch*)

Activities open to all groups of participants

15:00–18:00 Discussion clubs – Transform4Europe Thematic areas (Digital, Societal & Environmental transformation) – Transformation Labs (*Rectorate, 15 "Tsar Osvoboditel" Blvd. – Room 21*)

15:00–18:00 Round table and debate organised by the Bulgarian Bureau of L'Hermes scientific journal – "Classement des universités"

Moderators: Assoc. Prof. Stela Raicheva, IAE-ISM Versailles, France and Assoc. Prof. Sonia Georgieva, Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski

Working language: French

(*Francophone Centre, North Wing, floor 4, Rectorate, 15 Tsar Osvoboditel Blvd.*)

15:30–17:30 Round Table and discussion *Intercultural Citizenship, EU Values and Education*

Moderator Prof. Dr. Maria Stoicheva, Vice-Rector, Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski
Introductory lecture *Using education to foster democratic values and competences in young people* delivered by Prof. Martyn Barrett (*Conference Hall, North Wing, floor 2, Rectorate, 15 Tsar Osvoboditel Blvd.*)

16:00–22:00 Opening of the Knowledge Fair and of the exhibition *Faces in Science* (*Central Foyer, Rectorate, 15 Tsar Osvoboditel Blvd.*)

17:00–18:00 Memory and Architecture Plein Air Exhibition (*Alma Mater Exhibition Hall, Rectorate, 15 Tsar Osvoboditel Blvd.*)

18:00–18:30 European Researchers Night Official Opening (*Aula Magna*)

18:30–20:00 Concert and party organized by Sofia University Student Council (*Rectorate courtyard*)



30 September 2023:

09:00–13:00 International doctoral students' seminar: How my PhD research makes a better future (training rally) (*Conference Hall, North Wing, floor 2, Rectorate, 15 Tsar Osvoboditel Blvd.*)

13:00–14:00 Closing (*Hall 1, floor 1, Rectorate, 15 Tsar Osvoboditel Blvd.*)

Courses and training activities for PhD students and young researchers 26–29 September 2023

- **General (All T4EU Thematic areas): *Becoming a researcher***

The focus of this course is on the process of doing a doctorate. It follows the process from the preliminary decisions about topic through analysis of scientific literature, determining an appropriate methodology to presenting and analysing data and the significance and potential impact of the findings.

Course Tutor Prof. Michael Byram, Research Professor at Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski, Professor Emeritus at the University of Durham, UK

Classes will be held at Sofia University Main building, Hall 1, floor 1

- **General (All T4EU Thematic areas): *Promoting PhD research through academic writing***

Among the challenges PhD students face is making their work known to different kinds of audiences at various scientific fora and through publishing scientific papers in national and international journals. The focus of this course is on improving skills in writing abstracts, developing skills to analyse and make the most of abstracts, and enhancing academic writing skills with regard to writing scientific articles.

Course Tutor Prof. DSc Ivanka Mavrodieva

Classes will be held at Sofia University Main building, Hall 2, floor 1

- **Specialised (Societal Transformation): *Access to information in digital platforms. Media and media structure in Bulgaria.***

The course will focus on formats of media content and generation differences in access and usage of media content in digital platforms. One of the emphases will be on the transformation of media systems in Bulgaria over the past 20 years. A field trip to the Bulgarian News Agency as part of the course.

Course Tutor Prof. Teodora Petrova, PhD

Classes will be held at Sofia University Main building, South Wing, Room 21, floor 1

- **Specialised (Environmental Transformation): *Digital geo twining for a more effective adaptation of urban environments to climate change***

The course aims to prepare the next generation of young people who are aware of the problems and challenges of our urban environment and have the knowledge to work towards adaptation and mitigation measures to climate change. This includes also training in Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAS) geodata collection and steps for processing, analysis and geovisualization of data.

Course Tutor Assoc. Prof. Stelian Dimitrov, PhD

*Classes will be held in the city of Burgas with organized travel from Sofia – Tuesday to Friday

30 September

International doctoral students' seminar: How my PhD research makes a better future (training rally)

9.00–13.00 Sofia University Main Building, New Conference Hall, North Wing, floor 2

All PhD students are invited to participate in a doctoral students' seminar and discussion, exploring how their research can benefit the future. They are invited to prepare PowerPoint presentations in advance. Doctoral students are expected to present themselves and briefly explain their research topics. They have to address the following three pre-defined questions as well:

- How their scientific research improves everyday life and contributes to a more sustainable future
- How their research brings science closer to society – the role of open science, open innovation and citizen science
- What would their ideal scientific career be in an academic and/or business context?

Moderators Assoc. Prof. Elisaveta Gurova, PhD and Asst Prof. Albena Antonova, PhD, Faculty of Mathematics and Informatics, Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski

Sofia University Main Building, New Conference Hall, North Wing, floor 2.

Accompanying event for Art Students

Memory and Architecture Plein Air

26 September – presentation on the history and architectural features of the Rectorate and the Faculty of Biology; a guided tour with an emphasis on specific spaces, architectural and decorative details.

27–29 September – participants work in a studio of their choice, interpreting the theme or motif related to the buildings in various art forms (graphics, recycled paper, sculptural relief or poster).

(Sofia University, Faculty of Educational Studies and the Arts, 69A Shipchenski Prohod Blvd, Sofia 1574)

29 September – Exhibition opening at the Alma Mater Gallery *Alma Mater Exhibition Hall, Rectorate, 15 Tsar Osvoboditel Blvd.*)

Lectures/Talks for academic and administrative staff

27.09.2023

Issues in Creating Joint PhD Programmes – Supervision and Assessment

Prof. Michael Byram, Research Professor at Sofia University, Professor Emeritus at Durham University UK

I shall draw on our research projects and books* to raise some of the issues which may arise when joint PhD programmes are planned. There are advantages to emphasize, and problems to overcome. The former include the range of experience and enrichment for all concerned: supervisees, supervisors and examiners. The latter include different starting points and assumptions about the nature of supervision and examining, as well as the different natures and schemes of doctoral programmes. It is not feasible or desirable to offer a 'solution' to the problems but I shall focus on the question of examination criteria as an example of what may be needed.

* Byram, Michael and Stoicheva, Maria. (eds) 2019. *The Doctorate as Experience in Europe and Beyond*. London: Routledge.

* Byram, M. and Stoicheva, M (eds.) (2022) *The Experience of Examining the PhD: An International Comparative Study of Processes and Standards of Doctoral Examination*. London: Routledge

29.09.2023

University Rankings and Excellence

Prof. Gilles, Rouet, University of Versailles Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines, France, member of the SUMMIT Advisory Board

International and national rankings of higher education establishments have invaded media spaces over the past decade or so.

Stakeholders – students, of course, but also employers, public authorities and funders – need information, but in the end, it's the ranking character of the rankings, rather than their informative power, that explains their success: the ranking summarizes excellence without having to explain it, on the basis of a synthesis of criteria and data that are rarely explained and criticized, and even more rarely put into perspective with a definition of "excellence".

In almost all countries, universities can no longer ignore the rankings, as public authorities, in the case of public institutions, or private financiers in the case of others, are sensitive to the attractiveness of the country or the reputation of organizations. You need to be as visible as possible, and after a period of denunciation, ignorance or refusal of the rankings, some governments are now trying to improve their establishments' scores...

Rankings have thus become a framework for action, particularly in France.

However, international rankings only take into account a small proportion of the world's universities, in a limited number of countries, and are mainly based on indicators linked to research or reputation. The rankings thus provide a simplistic

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picture of the mission, quality and performance of institutions, which is irrelevant to the vast majority of universities.

But they can no longer be ignored. They are omnipresent, and their credit is very important. However, beyond their flaws and shortcomings, rankings are helping to establish a culture of performance within universities, and of performance measurement, and therefore of excellence, which is above all concerned with stakeholder satisfaction. This positive evolution requires the construction of relevant indicators, and efforts to measure and improve transparency, in order to ensure accountability and change in practices.

Using education to foster democratic values and competences in young people

Prof. Martyn Barrett, affiliated Research Professor at Sofia University, Professor Emeritus at University of Surrey, UK

Recent reports have highlighted numerous challenges to democracy across the world. These include the rise of authoritarian populism, political polarisation, widespread disinformation campaigns, government attacks on the press and on the independence of the judiciary, increasing ethnic diversity of populations linked to immigration, and economic insecurity and inequality among populations. As the institutional guardian of human rights, democracy and the rule of law across Europe, the Council of Europe (2022) has recently expressed deep concern about the democratic backsliding that is currently taking place across the continent. It has argued that respect for human rights, democracy and democratic culture are never established once and for all, but that instead citizens need to strive to uphold democratic standards each and every day, continuously, at all levels of government, and to guard against authoritarian leaders and democratic backsliding. The Council of Europe further argues that one of the means that may be used for this purpose is education. This is because education can be used to equip citizens with all of the democratic and intercultural competences that are required to function effectively as active and respectful democratic citizens and to uphold democratic standards and processes in everyday life within and across all contexts. In order to assist its member states to equip citizens with these competences, the Council of Europe has recently developed the *Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture* (RFCDC). This is a set of materials that can be used by actors within the education sector to promote and protect democracy and human rights by equipping citizens with all of the necessary competences that are required for respecting human rights and for upholding democratic standards and processes in everyday life. This presentation will provide an overview of the RFCDC and of the proposals that it makes on how formal education – ranging all the way from pre-school through to university level – can be used to equip young people with the competences needed for participating actively in democratic culture, for engaging in respectful intercultural dialogue, and for promoting and defending human rights. The presentation will conclude with some of the key messages for education policymakers and practitioners that emerge from the RFCDC. The discussion will enable participants to explore a range of issues concerning the RFCDC and the role of education in fostering and protecting democracy and human rights.

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