

BULGARIA

Youth Delegate Programme



Existing since: 2007, organized by the United Nations Association of Bulgaria ("UNA"), in close cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria ("MFA").

Sending Youth Delegates to:

UN General Assembly in October – Third Committee. (In 2014, Bulgarian Youth Delegates were allowed to participate in Second Committee as well.)

ECOSOC - Commission for Social Development in February.

Call for Application: The call for application is usually announced in spring. The Bulgarian selection procedure is characterized with its transparent and democratic nature. The call is open to a very broad spectre of young people, between 18-29 years, without strict academic or work requirements, which enables more young leaders to apply. The contest is nation-wide and highly competitive in four selection rounds. In the final round, representatives of various partner institutions and organizations participate in the selection jury, which symbolizes the inclusive stakeholder character of the Program and strengthens its legitimacy.

Number of Youth Delegates: Annually, two Youth Delegates are chosen for a mandate of a year and a half. There is an overlap period of 6 months, during which the gained knowledge and experience are transferred. Thus, sustainability, one of the core values of the Program, is ensured.

Length of Term: 18 months (12 active months on international and national level + 6 months on national level):

For the first 12 months of their mandate, the Youth Delegates are active both nationally and internationally.

At the 12-month mark, new delegates are elected. Over the next 6 months, there is an overlap in the mandates of the incumbents and the newly elected delegates. The former Youth Delegates are active on the national level and are responsible for the training of the new generation of youth delegates.

Criteria for Applying: The application criteria are in line with the core values of the Program: Commitment, Creativity, and Continuity. The technical requirements for the Bulgarian Youth Delegates are the following:

- Age between 18 and 29
- Fluent English
- Residence in Bulgaria for the whole mandate of 18 months

Selection Process

The selection process has four stages.

Stage 1: Online Application Form with motivation of the candidate. An option for nomination of an appropriate candidate by his friend/colleague has been added since 2015.

Stage 2: UN questionnaire, CV and an inquiry about candidate's plans, priorities and future events during the mandate.

Stage 3: Assessment Center – two-day center, encompassing non-formal education instruments, participatory methodology, simulations of the YD mandate and the UN, interviews, evaluation of the leadership and teamwork skills, etc.

Stage 4: Interview in front of a panel selection jury with representatives of all partners of the Program, hosted by the MFA. The longest partners of the Program have been so far the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the National Youth Forum, the International Student Identity Card (ISIC).

Focused on progress and innovation, the Program has trying to constantly improve the selection processes by consulting with facilitators, HR experts, psychologists, other YD programs, etc. The selection process aims not only to choose the best candidates, but as well to educate about the UN and to inspire more people to contribute to youth activism.

Before the General Assembly

Before the General Assembly the Bulgarian Youth Delegates go through series of preparatory meetings and trainings with the UNA, incumbent Youth Delegates, partner organizations such as MFA, Ministry of Youth and Sport, etc. A good practice is to conduct surveys, other forms of research and meetings in order to get the opinions of as many young people as possible. Based on all of this and on Bulgarian national priorities, the priority areas of the Youth Delegates are formed. Moreover, Youth Delegates create a Strategy and Action Plans with goals, priorities, events, etc. for their mandate. They as well form a volunteer team to help them through the mandate.

When Returning Home

When returning home, Bulgarian Youth Delegates report to MFA and UNA. Moreover, they present the latest UN youth developments to the umbrella youth organization, the National Youth Forum, other partners, universities, media and other stakeholders. They are strongly encouraged to attend and organize different presentations and events with youth to popularize the UN youth policies.

One of the differentiating characteristics of the Program is that it focuses a lot on activities with youth in Bulgaria. Thus, the mandate is structured in a way that has a minimum necessary obligations (research of opinion of youth; meetings of youth and institutions; participation in policy-making; art platform; etc.), but the freedom of the concrete topics as well the initiative to organize other relevant projects is left to the Youth Delegates.

Funding

Funding is now available from the MFA concerning travel to New York and accommodation.

Very limited funding available for national-level events by the UNA. One of the obligations of the Youth Delegates is to actively fund-raise and to find in-kind support and partnerships.

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