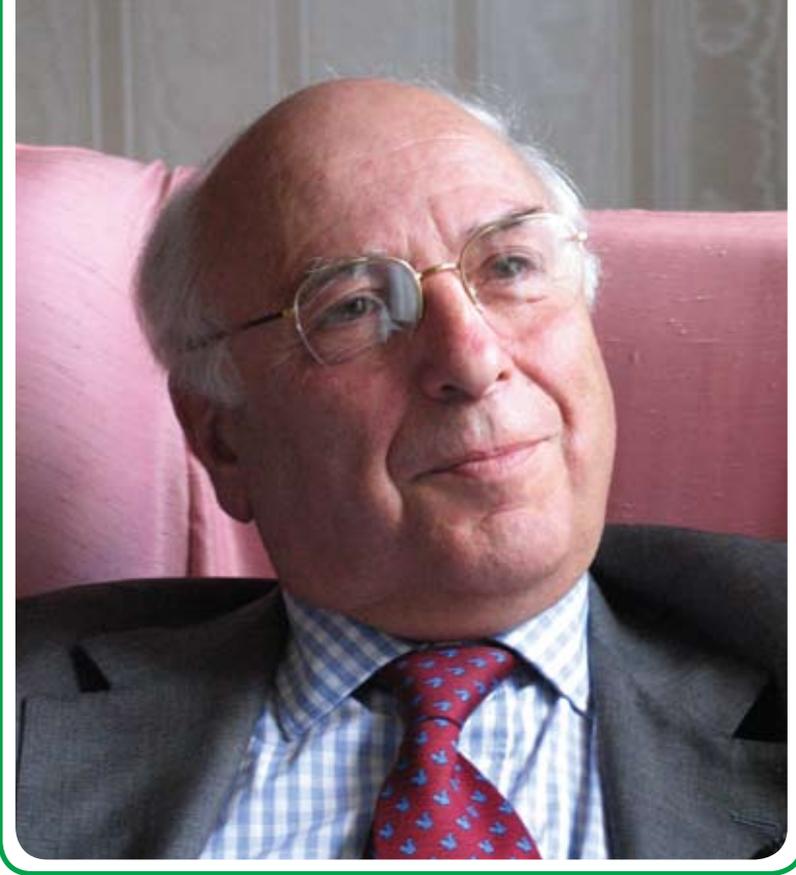




Bulgarian
School of Politics
“DIMITRY PANITZA”
New Bulgarian University



“In every man’s life there comes a time when he or she ought to return to society at least a bit of what they have received from it through the years. This was one of the reasons why I created the Bulgarian School of Politics. To those young people, who wish to undertake political careers, I would say: NEVER GIVE UP! DESPITE THE DIFFICULTIES. AND NEVER EVER, REALLY NEVER TAKE YOURSELVES TOO SERIOUSLY. LIFE IS TOO SHORT FOR THAT.”

Dimi Panitza,
founder of the Bulgarian School of Politics
(1930 – 2011)



OUR MISSION

We are the **Bulgarian School of Politics “Dimitry Panitza”** – an organisation, which has been training the political and civic leaders of Bulgaria since 2001.

Our mission is to support the creation of a community of civic and political leaders with an active stand in national, European and

global political and public life, devoted to contemporary democratic values of pluralism, tolerance and informed debate.

For more than a decade we have been sharing **our unique experience** with other countries in Southeast Europe, North Africa and Ukraine.





OUR FOUNDER

The **Bulgarian School of Politics (BSoP)** was established on the initiative of **Dimitriy – Ivan Evstatiev Panitza** – a patriotic Bulgarian and philanthropist. He was descended from the illustrious Panitzas – a family that played a significant role in the Bulgarian National Revival and, prior to 9 September 1944, had engendered many army volunteers, fighters for the liberation of Macedonia, politicians and officers of the Bulgarian Army. Until his death in 2011, Dimi Panitza worked with astounding vigour for the development of the democratic society in Bulgaria.

OUR SCHOOL

We are the co-founders of the **Network of Schools of Political Studies** under the auspices of the Council of Europe. The Network comprises schools from different regions, including Central and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and North Africa.

We are an **independent institution**, which trains representatives of the parliamentary represented political parties and civil society. We create an environment in which they can **work together**, discuss the most pressing issues in the society and formulate practical solutions.

Our programmes have hosted more than **600 Bulgarian and 200 foreign leaders** – Members of Parliament, leading politicians, senior government officials, judges, prosecutors, members of the business community and civic leaders.

They maintain an **ongoing ethical debate**, united by the principles of rule of law, transparency and integrity.





OUR GOALS

- Enable young political and civic leaders within the entire political spectrum to discuss the pressing problems in Bulgarian society and look for solutions;
- Enrich their knowledge about the principles of good governance and the different dimensions of the democratic process;
- Promote transparency in decision-making as a process that takes into account different views and public interest alike;
- Develop the skills of young leaders to take part in public debate and engage in dialogue with their opponents;
- Foster understanding of the meaning of participation in public life and contribute to the development of a viable and active civil society;
- Motivate young leaders to actively participate in shaping Europe's agenda.



OUR MODUS OPERANDI

UNIQUE WORKING ENVIRONMENT

We provide opportunities to members of the political parties represented in Parliament and civil society young leaders to work together and learn from each other, combining training and expert work with a strong practical bias.

TRAINING METHODS

- Our lecturers are leading Bulgarian and foreign analysts, academics, active politicians - Members of Parliament, mayors, city councillors, diplomats and journalists.
- We maintain a balance between theoretical and practical training, and lectures and exercises.
- We use interactive methods, such as group work, simulations, individual and group case studies
- We develop realistic case studies in key policy areas, which the participants are asked to address during the programme.

Examples of these include the long-term measures needed in the field of education and the low-carbon economy and reform of the judiciary, which have been elaborated during the course of training.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Our institutional stability is based on a long-term development strategy and the diverse sources of funding we rely on.

PROFESSIONAL TEAM

We have proven know-how the following areas of expertise: civic participation in the political process, climate and energy, philanthropy, media, and foreign policy.

WIDE NETWORK OF CONTACTS

We maintain close co-operation with the National Parliament, government institutions, local authorities, and leading non-government and international organisations. The Network of Schools of Political Studies acts as a platform for establishing contacts and exchanging experience with countries from Central and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and North Africa.





OUR PROGRAMMES

The National Program “Governing Skills” has been taking place since 2002. It is aimed at civic leaders and the young politicians from the parties represented in Parliament.

The programme creates a unique environment for interaction between representatives of the entire political spectrum and civil society, bringing them together to debate policies and Bulgaria's future.

Participants are MPs, mayors, councilors, Heads of provincial, municipal and local authorities, civil servants, and members of the judiciary, the business community and the media.

They gain an understanding of the main ideas of political theory, develop leadership, communication and negotiation skills; and

improve their cognitive skills and ability to formulate and propose long-term solutions.

We train approximately 40 leaders each year whose average age is below 40 years. The BSoP promotes equality between men and women and people of different ethnic or religious background and encourages the participation of professionals with diverse backgrounds from different regions.

The annual academic programme comprises four workshops. The closing workshop is organised by the Council of Europe within the framework of the World Forum for Democracy, which is held annually in Strasbourg. During the forum representatives of the Schools of Political Studies discuss the global challenges faced by the democracy, governance and leadership.

Our regional programmes for Southeast Europe, North Africa and Ukraine help us share the wealth of experience we have gathered in training young political and civic leaders in the spirit of tolerance, pluralism and informed debate.

In 2012, our support was instrumental for the establishment of the Tunisian School of Politics. During its first two years of operation more than 200 MPs, politicians and representatives of civil society have completed the school programmes, which we support methodologically, including by sharing our know-how in the area of adult learning.

In 2013, we became the first international partner of the Citizen School for Political Studies in Morocco. Together, we develop new programmes and encourage the exchange of knowledge between the alumni of the two schools.

In 2014, we organised the first Summer Academy for the Development of Democracy through Cultural Diplomacy – an experience sharing between the Schools of Politics in Bulgaria, Morocco and Tunisia. The Summer Academy was attended by eighteen alumni from the three schools.

We implement our international programs by actively co-operating with the International Organisation of the Francophonie (OIF), which provides both financial and expert support. We have organised a special course for representatives from Benin, Central African Republic, Cameroon, Guinea, Burkina Faso, Morocco and Mauritania, aiming to support the creation of Schools of Politics in Africa. We have also provided support for the establishment of the School of Politics and Citizenship in Yaoundé, Cameroon.

Since 2007, we have been working in Ukraine where we share Bulgaria's experience en route to NATO and EU membership.

In the period between 2003 and 2011, more than 200 young political and civic leaders from the countries of Southeast Europe, including Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Kosovo, Macedonia, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, participated in the Regional Programme 'Political Debate in Southeast Europe'. Our aim was to develop the skills of young political and civic leaders from the Western Balkans for responsible leadership and good governance and encourage the transnational dialogue between political parties, civil society and media in the region.





OUR PROJECTS

ENERGY AND CLIMATE

We believe that sustainable low-carbon economic growth in Bulgaria, Europe and the world is one of the greatest challenges facing humanity today. We assist both the legislative and executive branches of government and representatives of the NGO sector, the media and businesses with knowledge, information and know-how. We are convinced that an informed debate, which enables all voices to be heard, is the right path to sustainable solutions on climate-related issues.

- We organise forums, round tables and discussions and debate the politics of green economic growth and energy efficiency, aiming to foster dialogue between all stakeholders;
- We develop strategies; do research work; and conduct analyses. We aim to assist the legislative and executive branches of government in formulating long-term, sustainable policies and practices for low-carbon development;
- We promote energy-saving among children and adults and develop “green” awareness materials.

PHILANTHROPY

The philanthropic idea has been intricately interwoven into our philosophy since the establishment of the BSoP. The School’s founder Dimi Panitza was a philanthropist with a long-standing and rich experience and a firm believer in the important role of philanthropy in a democratic society. The current participants and alumni of our programs are actively engaged in different charitable causes, which they support through a host of fundraising initiatives. Each class of the National Program chooses its cause and continues to work on it after graduation. We are convinced that philanthropy in Bulgaria should not be confined to sporadic campaigns but should rather be treated as a value that society needs to learn and embrace.

- The alumni network helps us create a stable core community of givers. We nourish the young leaders’ understanding of philanthropy as a long-term personal commitment towards a given cause.
- We spread the Bulgarian and international experience in the field of philanthropy and publish books and anthologies on the topic. We analyse the challenges facing individual and organisations willing to donate or receive donations.
- We organise conferences and discussions; share our experience and research insights; and study the image of the modern philanthropist.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

We consider the level of citizen participation in policy making as an indicator of the standard of democracy. Our aspiration is to more actively engage citizens in the political process and raise interest in elections and other forms of citizen participation. We believe that a wider engagement of civil society in the decision-making process will improve the standard of decision-making and ultimately lead to better governance.

- Through the online tools ‘Glasovoditel’ and ‘Glasosleditel’ we enrich the voters’ knowledge about political parties and their strategic documents.
- We encourage citizens to participate in national and European Parliament elections in Bulgaria and organise public and training debates about the differences in the platforms of the leading political parties.
- We believe that the media are a key player in the democratic development of the country and monitor their condition and the role they play to ensure that citizen are able to make informed choices.
- We study the European experience in the area of active engagement of citizens in the decision-making process and the good practices of the consultative organs and online forms of public consultations.
- We organise public lectures of world famous politicians and analysts in order to

stimulate the public debate about the future of Bulgaria, Europe and the world. Our guests include Ms Kim Campbell, former Prime Minister of Canada, Ms Kristalina Georgieva, EU Commissioner, Professor James Robinson, co-author of the book “Why Nations Fail”.





OUR ALUMNI

The BSoP Alumni Association has been steadily growing in strength and number each year. The School has developed a special alumni programme, which features various activities – an annual meeting of all classes, a program for continuous alumni training, public lectures of renowned researchers, politicians and public persons.

We invite the alumni as lecturers and guests of our National Programme and organise public discussions, conferences and debates on current issues in which they participate.

We keep in touch with them through our monthly newsletter and invitations for different events and initiatives.

CONTACT US

Our office is in 17 Tsar Shishman Street, Sofia.

You can contact us by telephone on **(+359 2) 952 68 82**.

Or send us your questions at: **office@schoolofpolitics.org**

You can also visit our website **www.schoolofpolitics.org**

You can follow us on Facebook, where we publish information about the School and initiate discussions on current issues.

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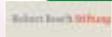
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