



Brussels, Jan 11, 2009

To the members of the Admissions Committee

Dear Sirs/Madams:

I am writing to recommend Georgi Kardjaliiski as a valuable future member of your institution. I have come to know Georgi as an ambitious young leader and a loyal collaborator through his active support for initiatives targeting the development of Bulgarian youth. In this letter I will address several of Georgi's strengths. These have struck me from the very first moment he approached me to express his interest in participating in the activities of Step for Bulgaria Foundation, which I manage.

Step for Bulgaria Foundation was initially set up in 2007 with the goal to facilitate the integration of Bulgarian teenagers, living without parental care, into society and the job market after they leave the foster home at age 18. We do this mostly through educational programs for underprivileged youth. A unique aspect of our programs is that the majority of our instructors are carefully selected student volunteers recruited from top U.S. and Bulgarian universities and high schools. In 2007, 30 underprivileged teenagers and 20 volunteers participated in the Foundation's first project: STEP Bulgaria. In 2008, the numbers almost doubled, and a new initiative, WorldTeach Bulgaria Summer, was launched in partnership with the U.S.-based NGO WorldTeach. Its first session involved 14 U.S. volunteers working with over 200 young Bulgarians for two months to improve their English and train their life skills. After the successful launch of WorldTeach Bulgaria we started looking into expanding the program to more cities in Bulgaria. Since the moment he found out about the initiative, Georgi has been actively promoting setting up the program in the region of Pazardjik. In addition, he has provided us with essential information tools and local knowledge to establish critical institutional partnerships allowing the program's implementation.

For your deeper understanding of Georgi's participation, let me retell how he approached us and got involved with the project. Georgi read about our educational projects for young Bulgarians in a Fulbright Foundation newsletter and immediately contacted me to share his enthusiasm to become involved in our initiatives. In addition, he mentioned his prior experience as a Red Cross volunteer and organizer of local charity activities. Initially, I was doubtful we could do something together as he lived in Pazardjik – a region we had no institutional connections with. However, Georgi's determination and capacity to fulfill his commitments and to leverage his experience and local connections, has allowed us to take significant steps towards expanding Step for Bulgaria's projects into the schools and foster homes of Pazardjik. To illustrate, he has initiated actions to establish a partnership between our Foundation, the Pazardjik municipality, the local Rotary Club, and Pazardjik schools. He has helped us chart letters to request support from these institutions and has taken up the responsibility to arrange meetings and represent our common initiative before potential partners. I have rarely seen such a degree of result-oriented self-initiative even among our best volunteers. Therefore, I fully recommend Georgi as a worthy candidate to your institution.

I am confident that this young man has a lot to contribute to the educational institution that chooses to have him in its community. I remain open to your further questions regarding my experience with the applicant.

Yours Sincerely,

Evgenia Peeva
Executive Manager