

SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS EXPERIENCES EUROPEAN CONFERENCE 2019

These scholarships were provided with generous donations to the “Youth Development Conference Fund” made by members of the PTPI Berlin Chapter, Michael and Mary Hermida, Ernst Honegger, Charlotte Scheller, Valeria Magistrelli and Barbara Capozzi

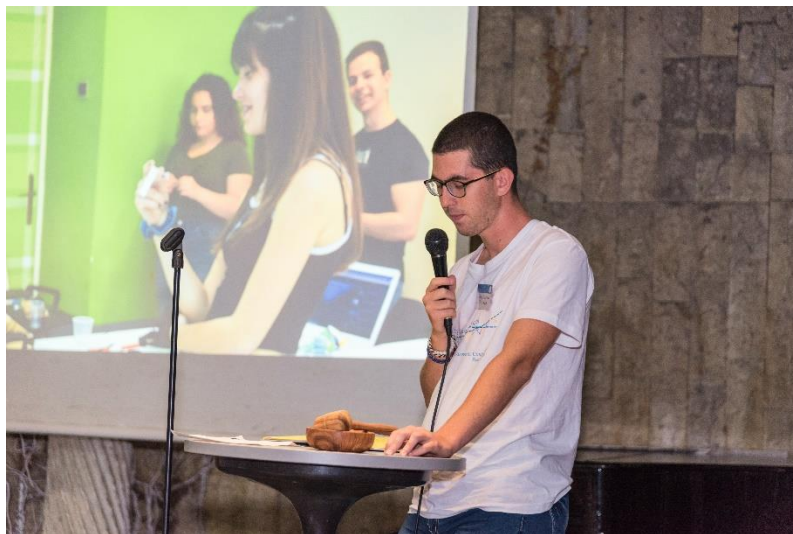


Andrej Todorovski – Skopje, North Macedonia

The European Conference in 2019 was a once in a lifetime experience for me. It was a mixture of excitement, friendships, experiences, and many other things. The conference this year was held in Plovdiv, Bulgaria, which was also the 2019 European city of culture and one of the most amazing cities I have ever visited. The city was full of surprises, with incredible buildings, beautiful



streets and amazing people. I was quite surprised by the astonishing architecture the city had and I enjoyed every second of my time there. Thanks to the PTPI Scholarships, the students, including myself, had no expenses and no worries. The food, the traveling cost, the homestay, everything was covered. The most amazing thing was the PTPI homestay program that allowed the students to become even closer to each other, while experiencing the whole culture Plovdiv had to offer, the food, the tradition, and the language. The most challenging part of the conference, for me, was the presentation I was supposed to present at the European Council Meeting. Having to talk in front of all those people was a little bit frightening for me, but somehow I managed to do just fine. It definitely helped me develop my presentation



skills and to get over my fear of public speeches. The conference itself was well organized, everything was previously planned and delivered perfectly. All things considered, I enjoyed the most all the new friendships I formed with the PTPI members. All the amazing conversations, the activities we did, the

games we played, the songs we sang, I will definitely never forget and every time I think about them, my heart will get warmer.



Karina Karagyozy – Varna, Bulgaria

To be part of PTPI is the best decision that I have ever made. Firstly, I was only a volunteer, but then I had found out that I want to be more engaged with the organization. That's why I became a Public Relations Coordinator for my chapter. As I'm taking up this position, I have started to acquire more about what PTPI is. That notably happened when I had the opportunity to attend the PTPI Conference in Plovdiv last September.

On the other hand, the scholarships were also great fortune for the young volunteers to experience their adventure to Plovdiv to the fullest. Thus, I was so lucky and pleased to win together with my friends from my chapter scholarships. It was also given us the chance to present activity which covers one of the 17 sustainable development goals. As a Public Relations Coordinator, I had to prepare the speech for the presentation. Firstly, I was, of course, a little bit nervous. Then I came to Plovdiv, met all these kind and awesome people, and my worries about the presentation had gone away. The best thing about this conference was precisely to be with people who came from all around the world. It was my first time exploring other traditions, cultures, and habits. Until this conference, I hadn't thought about that I will have so much in common with people who came from so far. I realized the real meaning of PTPI. All PTPI volunteers are pleasant and positive, independently of their age and country. That's the thing which connects us.



Furthermore, I hadn't visited Plovdiv although I'm from Bulgaria. I have been to incredible places that have left a memory in my heart for a lifetime. It was



also my first time to live in a host family.

Every time I go back to the memories of the Plovdiv conference, I think these were some of the best days of my life that I never want to forget. I hope that for a long time, the volunteers will have the opportunity to be part of this

incredible organization that connects people to people.

Neli Danailova – Plovdiv, Bulgaria

My PTPI fairy tale began in October 2018 and I feel the luckiest to have celebrated this incredible anniversary just a month ago. One year ago, it was safe



to say I was a wallflower, shy and quite. Who would have thought that these past twelve months would help me develop so much, feel the change I was a part of and create such strong bonds with communities in my home as well as across the whole wide world? My teachers were and until this day continue to be all of the selfless, kind individuals on the Smiles

Chapter. This organizations really does connect people to people in the purest, most natural way possible - through a web of good deeds which have massive influence on whole societies. Although, I managed to participate in many other events of great value and cherished memories, the cherry on the top of this adventurous year was certainly the 2019 European Conference we got the incredible opportunity to host.

All of the days, I had the chance to work on something so significant, shaped me even more as a person. The months of careful preparation, meetings with the chapter, emails and phone calls were a great pleasure but they could have never exceeded the moment when I saw everything that I have been making lists and drafts of, come to life.



The first day was the beginning of an avalanche of positivity, laughter, joy, awe, inspiration and gratitude. At registration, I met some of the most affectionate I

have ever gotten the chance to in my 15 years of existing. Both the teenagers and the adults were carrying the warmest souls. After checking in, we headed to the first activity we've planned - an art installation conveying the message of



support, friendship and appreciation. Everybody participated in creating a web of colorful yarns which in the end stood as a monument of the belief that no matter how different we, people, seem are a big family that just has a hard time connecting the dots sometimes. The following evening was spectacular because it was under the

name of "The night of Cultures" and as marvelous as it sounds, it lived up to its expectations. All of the countries took part in a vibrant presentation of world's beauty. With dances, poems and songs the first day ended but the second began with yet another extraordinary activity. We played the chapter's trademark game - "Crazy people are never fatigue". The venture followed five teams exploring my beautiful hometown, while completing a variety of little challenges. I was a team guide and was so surprised by the way I found so many new things about the town I've lived in for years. My teammates gave me a while new perspective not only about Plovdiv. That same evening we celebrated a holiday called "Unification day". We united on the square and watched the fireworks. It was simply unforgettable.

On the third day, there was a council meeting held. There all of the chapters showed us some of theirs greatest projects, I was in awe looking through the pictures and listening to their stories. I felt inspired - there's no word that could express better what had gone through my mind and heart. Sadly I wasn't able to attend the fourth day. Despite that, getting to know not only such amazing adults but also young people my age fighting for what they believe in and working for it, made me realize how lucky I am to be a part of this family. We danced, singed, experienced whole patterns of happiness and, of course, some nostalgia and created memories that would forever be stored in a little folder with a big heart

on it labeled "PTPI family". This is one of the greatest things that have happened in my life and I am not ashamed to admit that the third night I was saying goodbyes to fellow friends with rheumy eyes but filled with satisfaction and felicity. Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! Even now when memories flood back, I can't help but feel even more grateful and hopeful for our next adventure.



Aya Ganeva – Sofia, Bulgaria

We, from the PTPI Sofia chapter- The Doves, are so happy to have attended this year's conference in Plovdiv! It was an amazing and very memorable event. We met people from all around the world



and made a lot of new friendships. Not only that, but we exchanged genius ideas about projects that can really help the cause of every chapter!

The hospitality and great game-ideas of the Plovdiv chapter

really brought everybody together. Whenever a person looked around themselves, they could see smiles and laughing. This shows how positive the PTPI community is and how much everybody wants to make people feel comfortable, as if they are at home.

And as to the formalities, the presentations of the student chapters were very touching and optimistic. Every chapter shared what they have done for the past year or two. This was helpful both for the long-term members of PTPI and for the students. This way experience and inspirations are shared and they really widen the view of all the members. For us, the voting for different positions in the administration of PTPI was quite interesting to watch. We saw how people are nominated and chosen, after giving a short speech

about the reason they want the certain position. We felt as part of the process, and that felt very responsible and exciting.

As a whole, we had an amazing time and learned a lot. We are sure that the conference is Skopje will be very educative and fun as well! See you next year!



Beatrisa Culaj – Klinë, Kosovo



The European Conference of 2019 was an experience that turned out to be out of my expectations. The conference was held in Plovdiv, Bulgaria, a city that was a mixture of the modern and the antique, a city that gave me a warm feeling without knowing why, because this was the

first time I was visiting the city. This conference united some of the best people I have ever known. Everyone there was so welcoming, positive and full of life. And I think this is the power and the beauty of PTPI; it brings people together, stronger, it gives us chances to meet new people, different cultures, it helps us learn new things, it helps us show ourselves and the work we do.

PTPI sponsored a scholarship for the students, so the travelling, the visa, the food and the homestay were covered. The PTPI homestay program gave us the opportunity to spend our nights at a PTPI's member home instead of a hostel. My host was Gabriela, a member of The Smiles chapter in Plovdiv, who along with her family made me feel like I was home. The most generous gesture from their side was that



they accepted to host both me and my sister. Her parents were excellent cooks and had a very cute apartment. They weren't fluent in English, but we still had some pretty good conversations.



We created a strong bond with the participants. We went all together in lunches, in dinners, they showed us around the city; the monuments, the shops, cafes

and all the beautiful places. We opened up to each other, told the most interesting and funny stories, had the deepest conversations, we shared laughs together, and most importantly, we made each other feel better.

The Conference was well organized. It was not boring or formal; we had already started feeling close with each other so we felt free to speak up and share our work. We got to see the activities of all the chapters and all the hard work we all do for a better future. It was heartwarming and productive. This conference brought out the best of us and it was an adventure I will definitely never forget.

