

# ESTABLISHMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONFUCIUS INSTITUTE AT *ST CYRIL AND ST METHODIUS* UNIVERSITY OF VELIKO TARNOVO, BULGARIA (2012 – 2022)

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**Abstract:** The paper presents the development and achievements of the Confucius Institute at St Cyril and St Methodius University of Veliko Tarnovo during the 10-year period since its establishment. It consists of 5 parts: 1. Establishment and basic information, including lists of the members of the Board of Advisors, teaching and administrative staff; 2. Chinese Language Teaching and Cultural Activities; 3. Operation Mechanism and Cooperation with Partners; 4. Implementation of Key Programs; 5. Academic Research and Achievements.

**Keywords:** Confucius Institute; University of Veliko Tarnovo; Bulgaria; China; 10th anniversary

## **Part I. Establishment and Basic information**

The Confucius Institute at *St Cyril and St Methodius* University of Veliko Tarnovo (hereinafter “CIUVT”) was established in 2012 with the cooperation and support of the Office of Chinese Language Council International (Hanban)/ Confucius Institute Headquarters in Beijing. Its Chinese partner is China University of Geosciences (Wuhan) (hereinafter “CUG”). The opening ceremony was held on 10<sup>th</sup> of October in the presence of Mr. Guo Yezhou, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of PR China and a delegation from CUG, led by its vice-president – Prof. Tang Huiming.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Detailed report about the first five years of CIUVT was published by prof. Plamen Legkostup in *Diplomatic, Economic and Cultural Relations between China and Central and Eastern European Countries*, pp. 25 – 59, 2018.

For the 10-year period of existence 3 Chinese directors: Prof. Li Xiaokui (2012 – 2014), Assoc. Prof. Long Tao (2015 – 2018), Prof. Dong Yuanxing (2019 – present), 1 Bulgarian Director: Assoc. Prof. Iskra Mandova, PhD (2012 – present) and Board of advisors, consisting of 7 people have worked for the establishment and development of the CI at UVT.



*Pic. 1. Opening Ceremony, 10 October 2012  
First line from the left: Prof. Tang Huimin, H.E. Mr. Guo Yezhou,  
Prof. Plamen Legkostup, Prof. Ding Zhenguo*

### **Members of CIUVT Board of Advisors:**

#### **2013:**

Prof. Plamen Legkostup, Prof. Tang Huimin, Prof. Bagrelia Borisova, Prof. Ma Changqian, Assoc. Prof. Zhang Lijun, Prof. Hristo Bondzholov, Dr. Iskra Mandova

#### **2014, 2015, 2016, 2017:**

Prof. Plamen Legkostup, Prof. Hao Fang, Prof. Hristo Bondzholov, Prof. Ma Changqian, Assoc. Prof. Zhang Lijun, Assoc. Prof. Penio Penev, Dr. Iskra Mandova

**2018, 2019:**

Prof. Hristo Bondzholov, Prof. Plamen Legkostup, Prof. Lai Xulong, Prof. Ma Changqian, Assoc. Prof. Zhang Lijun, Assoc. Prof. Penio Penev, Assoc. Prof. Iskra Mandova

**2020:**

Prof. Hristo Bondzholov, Prof. Plamen Legkostup, Prof. Liu Yongsheng, Prof. Gan Yiqun, Assoc. Prof. Zhang Lijun, Assoc. Prof. Svetoslav Kosev, Assoc. Prof. Iskra Mandova

**2021, 2022:**

Prof. Hristo Bondzholov, Prof. Plamen Legkostup, Prof. Lai Xulong, Prof. Gan Yiqun, Assoc. Prof. Fan Luwei, Assoc. Prof. Svetoslav Kosev, Assoc. Prof. Iskra Mandova

A total of **101** Chinese lecturers and volunteers have worked at CIUVT since 2012, as well as **8** Bulgarian volunteer teachers and **4** part-time local teachers:

**Chinese volunteer teachers and lecturers (2012 – 2022):**

**2012/2013:**

Volunteers: Liu Na, Liu Ying, Guo Beina

Lecturer: Assoc. Prof. Yin Hailiang

**2013/2014:**

Volunteers: Liu Na, Dong Hao, Meng Linying, Xiong Yuhuan, Wu Jianxiu, Yang Wei, Yin Siqin

Lecturer: Zeng Chunying

**2014/2015:**

Volunteers: Fu Lei, Zhao Huimin, Qi Shunfang, Xu Chenhui, Yang Yanxin, Zhu Xun, Wang Luchao, Meng Linying, Liu Yueyou, Liu Chenyin, Gao Wei, Lyu Xiaowen, Zhao Hongye, Yi Dongdong

**2015/2016:**

Volunteers: He Junjie, Zhou Quan, Shu Shan, Zhang Keqi, Zhu Tingyu, Hu Xue, Li Pan, Zeng Tianyun, Ren Yanli, Ouyang Yujuan, Jin Zhong, Zhao Panyu, Zeng Li, Zhu Tingting

Lecturer: Fu Lei

**2016/2017:**

Volunteers: Fu Jiarui, Wang Han, Yu Qin, Wu Hao, Jiang Hong, Xu Qianwen, Li Jing, Zeng Li, Ren Yanli, Feng Dandan, Li Meng, Tong Yaqi, Lu Yinchao, Lin Qi, Zhu Dan, Cui Ting, Che Yuanjun

Lecturer: Bu Yuanjun

**2017/2018:**

Volunteers: Wang Han, Song Shuang, Lu Yingchao, Chai Siru, Bian Ting, Li Jiahui, Shi Yanbin, Zhu Dan, Tu Yue, Dong Yiman, Xiao Yiqi, Xu Wei, Cai Jiyuan, Wu Yulin, Liang Ziyang, Liu Zitong, Hu Min

Lecturer: Bu Yuanjun

**2018/2019:**

Volunteers: Liu Zitong, Chang Yuanyuan, Xu Qi, Zhu Qi, Lin Dandan, Pu Yunru, Shi Yanbin, Yang Danchen, Su Chang, Li Yonghan, Shi Sanjuan, Dou Suhui, He Xuan, Yu Fanyu, Ge Lijiao, Pan Xixi, Tu Liqin

**2019/2020:**

Volunteers: Liu Zitong, Ge Lijiao, Xu Qi, Su Chang, Shi Yanbin, Li Yonghan, Yu Fanyu, Wang Qiuna

Bulgarian volunteer teachers: Mariya Shalamandova, Teodora Stoyanova, Radoslav Kosev, Elisiya Ivanova, Siyana Simeonova, Adelina Ilieva

**2020/2021:**

Volunteers: Chen Dapeng, Zhang Yuxin, Lai Jinting, Guo Xinyi, Ma Lingyun, Li Rui, Zhang Miao, Wu Feng, Wang Qiuna

Lecturers: Huang Yan, Su Chang

Bulgarian volunteer teachers: Borislava Lecheva, Siyana Simeonova

**2021/2022:**

Volunteers: Xu Xinyu, Zeng Jinzhu, Chai Jiamin, Guo Xinyi, Mu Siqi, Lai Jinting, Liu Qian, Wang Qiuna, Yang Zifan, Wang Lin

Lecturers: Huang Yan, Su Chang, Chen Dapeng

Bulgarian volunteer teachers: Viktoriya Todorova, Borislava Lecheva

Bulgarian part-time teachers during the years were Iskra Mandova, Svilena Encheva, Polina Tsoncheva, Teodora Yonkova and Georgi Zlatev.

**Administrative staff:**

**2012, 2013:**

Svilena Encheva, Nelly Voinova

**2013, 2014, 2015, 2016:**

Nelly Voinova, Martina Dimitrova

**2017:**

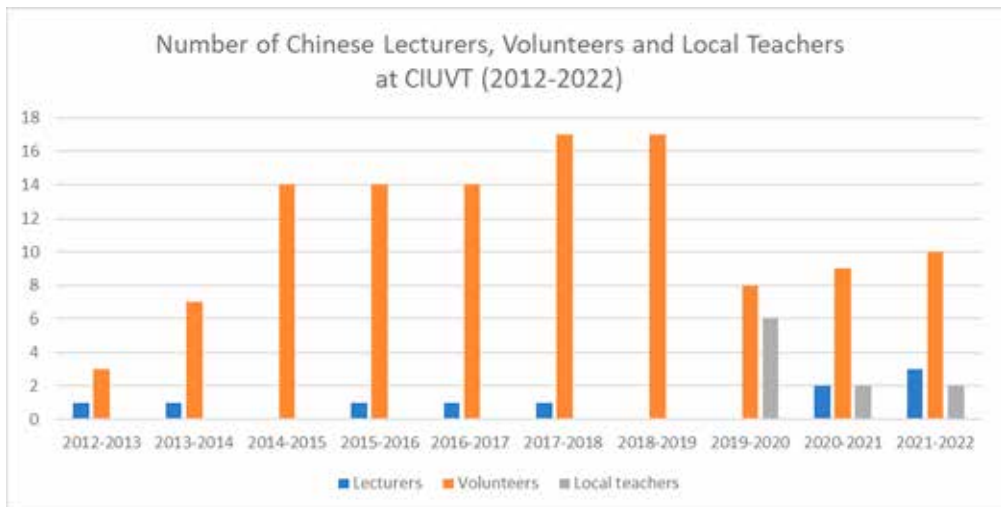
Martina Dimitrova, Svilena Encheva, Aneliya Kalinova, Dr. Polina Tsoncheva

**2018, 2019, 2020, 2021:**

Martina Dimitrova, Aneliya Kalinova, Georgi Zlatev

**2022:**

Martina Dimitrova, Aneliya Kalinova, Dr. Diana Maglova



In December 2012 CIUVT with the help of CUG and Hanban, organized its first VIP seminar in China for university and school leaders. The delegation

consisted of Prof. Hristo Bondzholov (Dean of the Faculty of Modern Languages, UVT), Prof. Raicho Ilarionov (Rector of the University of Gabrovo), Prof. Margarita Georgieva (Rector of the University of Shumen), Mrs. Rozaliya Licheva (Director of Veliko Tarnovo Education Inspectorate), Assoc. Prof. Boris Zhelev and Assoc. Prof. Penio Penev (Dean and Vice-dean of the Faculty of Fine Arts at UVT), Mr. Georgi Ivanov (Deputy principal of Vasil Levski High School in Ruse. Later on, 3 more seminars for educational and cultural exchange were organized: in September 2016: 10 delegates, including Dr. Darin Dimitrov – Mayor of Targovishte, Prof. Sasho Penov – Dean of Faculty of Law in Sofia University (now Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Bulgaria), as well as school principals from Veliko Tarnovo, Targovishte and Sliven. In August-September 2017 21 delegates from Bulgarian universities and Municipalities, including the Rector of the University of National and World Economy – Prof. Stati Statev, the Vice-Mayor of Burgas – Mrs. Yordanka Ananieva, representatives of the Ministry of Education and Science, school principals etc. took part in the seminar. In July 2018 the last group organized by CIUVT, consisting of 13 people, visited China. The Rector of Ruse University – Prof. Hristo Beloev, the Vice-mayor of Targovishte – Mrs. Raya Mateva, Mr. Neyko Genchev – owner of “Faber” Publishing House (now Vice-mayor of



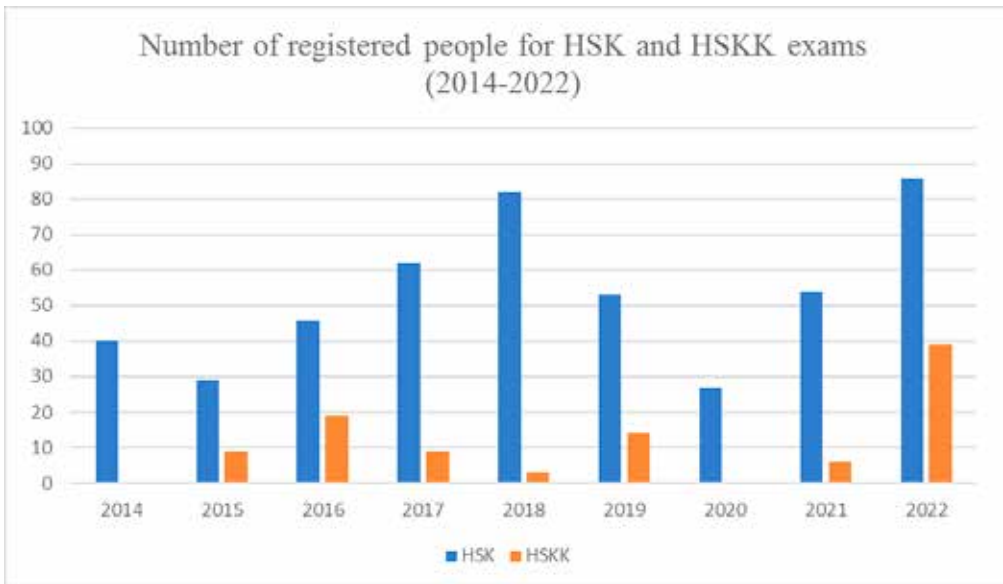
*Pic. 2. Seminars for educational and cultural exchange (2017)*



*Pic. 3. Seminars for educational and cultural exchange (2018)*

Veliko Turnovo), municipality officials and school principals were included in the seminar. A total of 51 people attended the exchange seminars in China and visited the Confucius Institute Headquarters in Beijing<sup>4</sup>.

In 2014 the CI at UVT became the second certified Chinese Proficiency Test (HSK) center in Bulgaria. A total of 578 people have applied for the HSK and HSKK exam since then.



<sup>4</sup> More information with pictures in: Legkostup 2018: 48 – 49.



In the 2012–2022 period CIUVT opened more than 60 Chinese language teaching sites in Bulgarian kindergartens, primary, secondary and high schools, libraries, education centers and universities in 18 Bulgarian cities: Veliko Tarnovo (5), Shumen (1), Targovishte (10), Ruse (1), Varna (7), Dimitrovgrad (5), Popovo (5), Razgrad (1), Burgas (5), Sliven (3), Svishtov (1), Dryanovo (1), Sofia (1), Chelopech (2), Slivnitsa (1), Kazanlak (1), Tutrakan (7), Ispirih (4). Due to the COVID-19 epidemic, the China-sponsored international Chinese education volunteers were unable to arrive at their posts in time for the fall semester of 2021, which seriously affected the regular teaching schedule of the new school year in Svishtov and Kazanlak. As a result, the two cities have decided to suspend the teaching of Chinese courses (from September 2022).

In 2015, 10 students from different majors at UVT got full scholarships to study in China University of Geosciences in Wuhan. In 2016 the largest group of UVT students, consisting of 21 people started their 1-year specializations in Chinese language in Wuhan.

The first Confucius Classroom (CC) at CIUVT was officially opened on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2016 in Hristo Botev Secondary School in Targovishte. The second CC was established two weeks later in the biggest school outside the capital – Vasil Levski High School in Ruse. Summer camps for high school students were organized with the partnership of China University of Geosciences (Wuhan) and



*Pic. 4. Summer Camp, Luoyang 2016*





*Pic. 5. Chinese and local teachers training at CIUVT 2017*

Confucius Institute Headquarters in 2016 (Beijing, Luoyang, Shaolin Temple, Shanghai) and in 2018 (Beijing, Xi'an, Shanghai). In 2022 an online Cultural Exchange Camp “The Charm of Traditional Costumes in the Eyes of East and West” in cooperation with the Center for Language Education and Cooperation of the Ministry of Education of PRC and BLCU was organized and nearly 100 teachers, university and high school students took part in it.

Since 2014 the CI at UVT has been organizing teacher trainings annually, which include basics of Bulgarian language and culture, Bulgarian educational system introduction etc. In January 2017, during the visit of a delegation from Beijing University of Language and Culture, the Rector of the University of Veliko Tarnovo signed an agreement on the establishment of a Center for Qualification and Training of Chinese Language Teachers at the Confucius Institute, which started operation immediately. Two big trainings were held in 2018 and 2019, where Chinese volunteers from all over Bulgaria gathered together with their Bulgarian colleagues.

Throughout the period, the various activities and achievements of CIUVT enjoyed more than a thousand online and offline instances of media coverage in Chinese, English and Bulgarian by Chinese and foreign media: Xinhua Agency, China Government Network, China State Council News, People's Daily Online,

Global Times, Phoenix News, Bulgarian newspaper *China Today*, Bulgarian National Television, Bulgarian National Radio, Bulgarian Telegraph Agency and other national, international and regional media.

## **Part II. Chinese Language Teaching and Cultural Activities**

During the past 10 years, the Confucius Institute at UVT has offered courses in Veliko Tarnovo in many categories and levels, such as “Elementary Chinese”, “Intermediate Chinese (part 1,2,3)”, “Chinese for children”, “Business Chinese” “HSK/HSKK Tutorial”, “Martial Arts (Tai Chi, Qigong, Kungfu for kids)”. These courses were delivered through the Internet or on the basis of an integrated online and offline mode, which met the individualized learning needs of different types of learners. Considering all teaching sites, there were approximately 1,500 – 2,000 registered students annually during the last years. Because of the COVID situation Chinese the language courses for beginners and intermediate students, as well as for children, HSK and HSKK tutorial classes, as well as Chinese martial arts courses were taught in an online environment.

The CI staff had to overcome various difficulties which arose from the COVID-19 epidemic and thanks to the joint efforts of teachers and leaders at all levels, gradually normalized Chinese language teaching at affiliated teaching sites, and diversified cultural activities as well. The efforts of the Institute’s team were focused on maintaining interest in the Chinese language and culture on the Internet through its social media. “A bit of Chinese every day” was the name of the section with online Chinese language lessons, which gained popularity on Facebook. Ms. Li Yonghan, a volunteer teacher in Sliven, shared short videos online several times a week, which got the attention of the audience in our Facebook group. Along with that, the members of the group had the opportunity to follow another initiative – Chinese martial arts showcase, performed and filmed by Mrs. Borislava Lecheva. The series of videos showed various forms of Tai Chi and Qigong in a fascinating and descriptive way. The CI team also tried to maintain the interest of the audience by regularly preparing and publishing articles on various topics with many facts about China, Chinese culture, history, traditions, landmarks, and so on. The daily online activity increased and the number of members of the Facebook group doubled in a short time.

Since 2012 CIUVT has organized more than 300 cultural events and public lectures throughout Bulgaria. The largest and most popular ones are listed below:

## **1. Chinese New Year Celebrations:**

### Veliko Tarnovo:

Spring Festival at the Confucius Institute and University of Veliko Tarnovo (2013, 2014, 2015, 2020); “Happy Chinese New Year” Concert in the Municipality Hall of Veliko Tarnovo (2016); Chinese New Year – Customs and Traditions, together with the Faculty of History (2016); Chinese New Year Concert in Veliko Tarnovo – dancers from Beijing Dance Academy (2018); New Year Celebrations in “Iskra” Community Center for the children from “Sonya” Kindergarten and “St. Patriarch Euthymius” Secondary School (2019);

### Varna:

Spring Festival in Grand Mall Varna (2013), Gala Concert “Spring Festival” in “Stoyan Bachvarov” Drama Theatre in Varna (2016), “Feel China and Become Part of the World” Concert in University of Economics Varna (2017); Chinese New Year Celebrations in Grand Mall Varna (2020);

### Targovishte:

Chinese New Year in Targovishte (2014), Gala Concert (2015), Chinese New Year Concert (2017), Chinese New Year Celebrations (2018, 2019, 2020);

### Ruse:

Chinese New Year Concerts in Kaneff Center, Ruse University, Ruse (2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020). Due to COVID-19 Pandemics “What do you know about China and Chinese culture?” Quiz was organized in “Vasil Levski” High School in Ruse in 2021 and 2022.

### Dimitrovgrad:

Chinese New Year Concert in Dimitrovgrad (2016);

### Razgrad:

“A Touch of China” New Year Event in Razgrad (2016);

### Popovo:

Lantern Festival “China – Near and Far away” in Popovo (2016); Chinese New Year at “St Cyril and Methodius 1882” Community Center in Popovo (2019)

### Burgas:

Chinese New Year Celebrations in Burgas (2018, 2019)

## 2. Photo and Art Exhibitions:

- Exhibition of awarded pictures from “Bulgaria and China – Ancient and Unique Civilizations” Competition in CIUVT every year since 2013;
- Exhibition of photos, shot by UVT students, who specialized in China, Veliko Tarnovo (2014);
- “Beautiful China” photo exhibition in Targovishte (2015);
- Photo Exhibition “Winter China” in Varna, Ruse and Veliko Tarnovo Malls, as well as in the Regional Library in Targovishte (2017) and in Sofia (2018);
- “China through the lens of... the phone” photo exhibition (2018);
- Photo Exhibition “Happiness for the World” in Burgas (2019);
- Photo Exhibition “70 Years of Diplomatic Relations between Bulgaria and China” in Targovishte (2019);
- “Mirror of Civilizations” Chinese painting and calligraphy exhibition in “Boris Denev” National Art Gallery in Veliko Tarnovo, which included 60 artworks by 12 Chinese artists, art master Liu Wenxi being one of them (2019);
- Charity Exhibition of Chinese and Bulgarian Cartoonists, titled “Thank you, Doctor” in the COVID sectors of the “Dr. Stefan Cherkeзов” Municipal Multi-specialty Hospital for Active Treatment, “Dr. Treiman” Pneumophysiatriк Hospital in Veliko Tarnovo and in “St. Ivan Rilski” Multi-specialty Hospital for Active Treatment in Gorna Oriahovitsa (2022);
- Photo Exhibition: “Veliko Tarnovo and Xi’an – Ancient and Unique Capitals” (2022);
- Photo exhibition: “China in my eyes” in “Vasil Levski” High School (2022).



Pic. 6, 7. “Thank you, Doctor” Initiative (2022)

### 3. Workshops of Chinese Cultural Experience and Chinese Culture Festivals:

Chinese Culture Day at UVT (2013); Chinese Art Workshop at the Faculty of Fine Arts at UVT (2013); Dragon Boat Festival in Shumen (2014); “China – Close and Faraway” Initiative at “Lyuben Karavelov” Regional Library in Ruse (2015); Go (Weiqi) Tournament in Ruse (2015); Presentation of President Xi Jinping’s book “Chinese Dream” in Targovishte (2015); Chinese Language and Culture Day in Varna (2016); Chinese Workshop under the Sky in Ruse (2016); Chinese Language and Culture Presentation in the town of Dryanovo (2016); “Touch China and Become Part of the World” Project in the University of Economics in Varna (2016); Chinese workshop in Varna and Sofia (2017); Workshop in Dryanovo (2017); Literary event on the occasion of World Book’s Day – April, 23 (2017); Outdoor Chinese Workshop in Ruse (2017, 2018); “The Magic of China” – Chinese Culture Week in “Boris Denev” National Gallery in Veliko Tarnovo (2018); Chinese Cuisine Evening in Targovishte (2018); Workshops for the children from “Dimitar Blagoev” Secondary School and INTELEKTI Education Center in Veliko Tarnovo (2019); Chinese Culture Day in Chelopech (2019); Chinese Culture Workshop in “Pythagoras” First Mathematics High School in Sofia (2019); Chinese Culture Weeks in “Vela Blagoeva” High School



*Pic. 8. Chinese Culture Weeks  
at “Vela Blagoeva” High School and “St. Patriarch Euthymius” Primary School*





*Pic. 9. Chinese Culture Weeks  
at “Vela Blagoeva” High School and “St. Patriarch Euthymius” Primary School*

and “St. Patriarch Euthymius” Secondary School in Veliko Tarnovo (2021); “Day of Chinese Cuisine” in Targovishte (2022); “To feel the charm of the Chinese language together” Festival in Chelopech on the occasion of the UN’s Chinese Language Day (2022); East Asian Cultures Festival (2022), together with the Department of Classical and Eastern Languages at UVT.

### **3. Chinese Film Weeks and Lectures about Chinese cinema:**

Days of Chinese Cinema in Turgovishte (2015); Chinese Film Festival in the towns of Veliko Tarnovo, Targovishte and Popovo (2016, 2017); Chinese Cinema Week in “Sea Casino” Burgas (2021) and “Cinema under the Stars” in Burgas (2022).

Public lectures and opening speeches were delivered by Assoc. Prof. Andronika Martonova, expert in Asian cinema, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. Topics: “Chinese Watercolor Animation” (2016); “China and Bulgaria: A Dialogue through the Movie Screen” (2019); “Codes of Chinese Cinema – Tradition, Expressiveness, Aesthetics” (2022).



#### **4. Martial Arts Demonstrations and Lectures:**

- Mr. Viktor Azmanov, Chairman of the Bulgarian-Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry; topic: “One Bulgarian in Shaolin Temple” (2013);
- Mr. Tihomir Todorov, Director of the Affiliated School of Yang Style Taijiquan in Stara Zagora; topic: Chinese Martial Arts and Taijiquan (2013);
- Grandmaster Yang Jun, fifth-generation descendant of the Yang family, topic: “The Method of Practicing Yang-style Taijiquan” (2014);
- Fifth International Yang Family Taijiquan Seminar with Grandmaster Yang Jun (2015);
- Mr. Stanislav Bagalev, European WingTsun Organization (EWTO), topic: “China’s Tradition Incorporated in the Self-defense Martial Art Wing Tsun” (2015);
- Ms. Borislava Lecheva, Wushu trainer CIUVT, topic: “Wushu and Qigong – touching the traditional Chinese Martial arts and mastering of inner energy” (2016);
- Open-air Taiji Demonstration with Borislava Lecheva (2017);
- Master Borislava Lecheva, CIUVT, topic: “The World of Chinese Martial Arts and Healing Regimes” (2022);

#### **5. Public Lectures about Chinese Arts, Chess, Literature, Medicine, Economics, Geography by prominent Bulgarian and Chinese experts:**

- Prof. Ouyang Debiao, Xiang Dongwen, Liu Chunbing (Wuhan, PRC), topic: “Bulgarian-Chinese art bridge”: “Chinese Traditional New Year Pictures”, “Ancient Pottery”, “Chinese Painting: A Look at the Works of Jing Hao” (2014);
- Mr. Teodor Nedev, Bulgarian Xiangqi Federation and BMST: Chinese chess (Xiangqi) seminar in Veliko Tarnovo and in Ruse (2014);
- Mr. Petko Hinov, translator, topic: Mo Yan’s Novel “Life and Death are Wearing me out” – Translator’s Notes (2015);
- Prof. Nako Stefanov, Head of the East-Asian Studies Department at Sofia University, topic: “China – Social and Economic Development from Antiquity to Present Days” (2015);
- Assoc. Prof. Iskra Mandova, Director of CIUVT, topic: “16+1” Regional Cooperation Framework (2016);
- Mr. Michael Chen, Counselor at the General Consulate of Bulgaria in Shanghai, topic: “History and Current Status of Chinese Economic Development” (2016);

- Mr. Petko Hinov, translator, topic: The translation of “The Seven Heroes and Five Gallants” (2016);
- Dr. Alexander Uzelats, Institute of History in Belgrade, topic: “The Golden Horde – between China, Europe and the Balkans” (2016);
- Dr. Evelina Hein, Sofia university, topic: “Happiness without Limits: Traditional Perceptions of Well-being in China” (2017);
- Tsvetomir Kolev, “Body, Mind & Soul Training”, topic: “Weiqi – the Perfection of Intelligence” (2017);
- Prof. Nako Stefanov, Sofia University: “16+1” Format – Role in the Geopolitical Strategy of PRC” (2017);
- Prof. Huajing Maske, University of Kentucky, USA, topic: “Three Perfections: Chinese Poetry, Calligraphy and Painting” (2017);
- Dr. Yana Shishova, 138 High School Sofia, topic: “Specifics of Servicing the Chinese Tourists in Bulgaria” (2017);
- Prof. Bora Belivanova, Sofia university and UVT, topic: “Beauty in the Works of Poets and Writers from Ancient Asia” (2018);
- Prof. Zheng Jiaping, Beijing Language and Culture University, topic: “Integrating Intensive Chinese Language Learning and Chinese Culture: A Case Study from the Elementary Chinese Comprehensive Course” (2019);
- Prof. Fang Ming, Beijing Language and Culture University, topic: “The Blending of Chinese and Western Cultures” (2019);
- Dr. Yana Shishkova, topic: “Chinese Mythology” (2020);
- Anna Pesheva, “Practical Lessons in Chinese Medicine” (2022).

#### Online public lectures:

- Dr. Yana Shishkova, topic: “Entertaining Geography of China” (2021);
- Dr. Teodora Peneva, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, topic: “Chinese Investments in Bulgaria” (2021);
- Dr. Evelina Hein, Sofia University, topic: “The Traditional Chinese Holiday Qingming and its Digitalization during the Pandemic of COVID-19” (2021);
- Dr. Yana Shishkova, topic: “Chinese Mythology – Cycles of Myths and Folk Beliefs” – part 1 (2021);
- Dr. Anton Agov, topic: “Chinese Medicine – from Ying to Yang” (2021).

## **6. Participation in Local Festivals**

Rose Festival in Kazanlak (2014, 2015, 2018, 2019): Parade of Nations and International Folk Festival – participation with Dragon or Lion Dance; International Humor Carnival in Gabrovo (2015); Varna Spring Festival (2016);

“Open Heart” Festival (2016); Board games Festival in Veliko Tarnovo (2017); Spring Active Fest in Veliko Tarnovo (2017); “The Muses” International Youth Festival of Arts in Sozopol (2016, 2017, 2018, 2022); “Kukerlandia” Mask Festival in Yambol (2016, 2017, 2018, 2019); “The Sweetest Day” – Varna Cultural Forum for Youngsters (2017, 2019); Varna Carnival (2019).



*Pic. 10. The Muses Festival*



*Pic. 11. Rose Festival in Kazanlak*

## 7. Gala Concerts and Anniversary Concerts

- Gala Concert at the Konstantin Kisimov Musical and Drama Theater in Veliko Tarnovo – 65th anniversary from the establishment of PRC and diplomatic relations between China and Bulgaria (2014);



*Pic. 12. The Charm of Chinese Kungfu (2017)*



*Pic. 13. Mr. Daniel Panov, Mayor of Veliko Tarnovo at the Gala Concert (2019)*

- “The Magic of Chinese Culture” Sanxun Program – CIUVT, CUG and Hanban: in Veliko Turnovo and Varna (Bulgaria), Romania and Serbia (2014);
- “People-to-people bond, Friendship forever”, concert on the occasion of the 5th anniversary of CIUVT (2017);
- “The Charm of Chinese Kungfu” Show (2017), co-organized with the Capital University of Physical Education and Sports (2017);
- Gala Concert in celebration of the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Bulgaria in the City Theater co-organized with Veliko Tarnovo Municipality (2019);
- Gala Concert “10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Confucius Institute at UVT (2022)”;

## **8. Contests and Competitions**

- Chinese Bridge Competition (National round – Bulgaria) in Veliko Tarnovo (2013, 2015, 2017, 2019, 2022);
- “Bulgaria and China – Ancient and Unique Civilizations” every year since April 2013;
- Brand Idea – Fourth competition for creative students’ projects, organized by the Innovation and Development Center at the University of Economics in Varna (2014);
- “Sing with me in Chinese” Competition in Ruse every year since 2014;
- China History Bridge at the University of Economics in Varna (2016);
- Translation Competition in memory of the translator and sinologist Petko Hinov (2022);

## **9. Open door days and Confucius Institute Day**

Many pupils and students from various institutions have visited CIUVT during the period: “1st of June” Kindergarten (2013), “Dimitar Blagoev” Primary and school (2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2022), “Sonya” Kindergarten (2015, 2017, 2020), “Bacho Kiro” and “St. Patriarch Euthimius” Primary School (2016), “P. R. Slaveikov” High School (2017), “Alen Mak” Kindergarten (2018), Children’s Education Center “Intelekti” (2018), “Winnie the Pooh” Private Kindergarten (2022)

- CIUVT’s Birthday + open doors day (2017);
- Public Lesson in Chinese Language (St. Patriarch Euthymius School) (2018);
- Open lesson in Chinese Language at the CC in Targovishte (2019);

- 7<sup>th</sup> Birthday of CIUVT with a lecture on Chinese geography and culture by Dr. Yana Shishkova (2019);
- 10<sup>th</sup> Birthday of CIUVT with children from the “Sonya” Kindergarten. October 2022 ushered in the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of CIUVT. With strong support from the two partner universities, the Bulgarian and Chinese directors carefully planned and held a grand birthday celebration for the CI. On the 10<sup>th</sup> of October, Prof. Dimitar Dimitrov, Vice Rector of UVT, Assoc. Prof. Iskra Mandova, the Bulgarian Director, and Prof. Dong Yuanxing, the Chinese Director, jointly planted a magnolia tree in the lawn in front of the CI, which symbolizes the friendship between China and Bulgaria, and also expresses the good wishes that this tree shall grow along with the development of CIUVT.

### **10. Conferences, seminars and scholarly forums**

The first conference, organized by CIUVT was “65 Years of Diplomatic, Economic and Cultural Relations between Bulgaria and PRC” in 2014.

- “Diplomatic, Economic and Cultural Relations between PRC and Central and Eastern European Countries” (held annually since 2015);
- “Exchange of Good Practices” Seminar between CC in Ruse and Targovishte (2016);
- Bulgarian-Chinese Forum on International Cluster in Varna (2018);

### **Part III. Operation Mechanism and Cooperation with Partners**

The Board of Advisors of CIUVT holds at least one formal meeting every year, either in Bulgaria or in China. In previous years, this meeting was mostly held during the Global Confucius Institute Conference. In 2021 and 2022 it was held online. Members of BOA from both China and Bulgaria conduct serious discussions on major issues related to the institute and make corresponding decisions. In daily communication, CI staff at all levels (including BOA members) transfer documents, post notices of various activities, and share pictures of ongoing events and media coverage by means of email and social software such as WeChat, Facebook, and QQ.

To make the CI’s work more convenient and efficient, a set of rules and regulations was developed concerning common issues often encountered in daily management, in teaching activities or by Chinese teachers and volunteers. These regulations, aiming at modeling the organization structure, the work procedure and the staff behavior, were officially promulgated and put into effect on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015 with the approval of BOA and signed by the Rector of UVT.





*Pic. 14. BoA Meeting, Wuhan (2016)*

They stipulate the duties of all the CI staff in line with the regulations of UVT and Bulgarian law. Upon arrival at CIUVT, every new Chinese teacher and volunteer shall carefully read the relevant text and get familiarized with these rules and regulations and sign a compliance statement as required. As a special unit of UVT, the CI's archives are managed in accordance with UVT rules, and all the CI finances are also implemented strictly in line with the relevant regulations of UVT.

In the past 10 years since its establishment, CIUVT has been in close contact with both UVT and CUG. With the support of the two partner universities, the work of the CI has been progressing smoothly. At the same time partnership with Beijing Language and Culture University has been greatly encouraged through the years.

In December 2015 Prof. Plamen Legkostup, Chair of CIUVT's BoA, was appointed Senior Advisor to Hanban/Confucius Institute Headquarters by Madam Xu Lin in person. On 24 October 2016 Prof. Plamen Legkostup, became Honorary Professor of Beijing Language and Culture University and Senior Advisor of Confucius Institute International Teacher Center. Meanwhile, the Bulgarian Director – Iskra Mandova was employed as a Consultant to the Confucius Institute Teacher Training Center at BLCU.



*Pic. 15. Prof. Legkostup and Madam Xu Lin (2015)*



*Pic. 16. Iskra Mandova and Prof. Cui Xiliang (2016)*

### **Visits of Chinese delegations during the period:**

- **October 2012:** Delegation from China University of Geosciences (Wuhan), led by Prof. Tang Huimin, Vice-Rector, together with Prof. Ding Zhenguo, Prof. Dong Yuanxing, Prof. Shuai Bin, Assoc. Prof. Zhang Lijun;
- **May 2013:** Delegation from China University of Geosciences (Wuhan), led by the President Prof. Wang Yanxin, together with Assoc. Prof. Zhang Lijun, Dean of International Education College;
- **June 2013:** Delegation from Confucius Institute Headquarters, led by Madam Xu Lin, Director General of the Office of Chinese Language Council International (Hanban) and Chief Executive of the Confucius Institute Headquarters;
- **November 2013:** Delegation from Wuhan: Chinese artists and professors in fine arts: Prof. Ouyang Debiao, Xiang Dongwen, Liu Chunbing;
- **October 2014:** Delegation from China Executive Leadership Academy Pudong, led by Prof. Jiang Haishan, Vice-president of CELAP;
- **April 2016:** Delegation from China Executive Leadership Academy Pudong;
- **January 2017:** Delegation from Beijing Language and Culture University, led by Prof. Liu Wei, Vice-president of BLCU and Assoc. Prof. Chen Lixia, Director of BLCU Confucius Institute Development Office;
- **October 2017:** Delegation from China University of Geosciences (Wuhan), led by the Vice-president Prof. Lai Xulong;
- **September 2018:** Delegation from Beijing Language and Culture University, led by Prof. Zhang Baojun, Vice-president of BLCU and Assoc. Prof. Chen Lixia, Director of BLCU Confucius Institute Development Office;
- **October 2018:** Delegation from the University of International Business and Economics (UIBE), led by the Dean of the School of Chinese Language and Literature – Prof. Deng Rubing;
- **May 2019:** Delegation from Beijing Language and Culture University, led by Prof. Zhang Wangxi, Vice-president of BLCU, together with Assoc. Prof. Tian Xin, Deputy Director of BLCU Confucius Institute Development Office;
- **May 2019:** Delegation from China University of Geosciences, led by Prof. Hu Kai and Prof. Yuan Yue, together with their students who took part in the Gala Concert to celebrate the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Bulgaria and in the first Festival of Chinese Culture;
- **May 2019:** Delegation from Beijing Language and Culture University, led by Prof. Cui Xiliang, President of BLCU (2005 – 2017), together with Prof. Liu Shanhua, Dean of BLCU's Faculty of Arts.



*Pic. 17. Visit of Madam Xu Lin (2013)*

*Pic. 18. Delegation from CELAP (2014)*



*Pic. 19. Delegation from BLCU (2017)*



*Pic. 20. Delegation from CUG*

Resistance against educational institutions spreading foreign religion and culture arose both in Bulgaria and in China at certain stages of history: in China against missionary schools, in Bulgaria – against Protestant, Catholic, Muslim, etc. (Tsoncheva 2020: 23). At the news about its opening 10 years ago, people in Veliko Tarnovo had strange reactions like why we should establish an institute teaching foreign religions as Confucianism at the University. Nowadays CIUVT is well-integrated in the Bulgarian community, not only in Veliko Tarnovo but also in many other big cities. It has successfully and effectively established cooperation with more than a dozen municipalities, with all the faculties of UVT, and with schools, kindergartens and youth centers in different cities as well. CIUVT's scholarly conferences were attended by the Chair of the Bulgarian Parliament – Mr. Mihail Mikov (2018), Vice-chairs of the Bulgarian Parliament – Prof. Yanaki Stoilov and Mr. Yavor Notev (2016), by the Vice-Minister of Justice – Prof. Nikolay Prodanov, the Deputy Chair of the Parliamentary Commission on Education and Science – Assoc. Prof. Milen Mihov (2017), the Mayor of Targovishte – Dr. Darin Dimitrov, the Chair of Veliko Tarnovo Municipality Council – Mr. Ventsislav Spirdov, Deputy Mayors of Veliko Tarnovo – Prof. Georgi Kamarashev, Mr. Gancho Karabadzakov, Rectors and Vice-rectors of many Bulgarian universities, etc (Legkostup 2018: 57 – 58).

We all know that Bulgaria is the second country in the world to establish diplomatic relations with PRC, but the relations between China and Bulgaria haven't always been perfect. The Cultural Revolution for example had a negative impact on the Bulgarian-Chinese relations, which were completely under the





*Pic. 21. In the middle: Mr. Mihail Mikov, Chair of the Bulgarian Parliament*



*Pic. 22. From the right: Prof. Dimitar Dimitrov, Vice-Rector of UVT, Prof. Yanaki Stoilov and Mr. Yavor Notev, Vice-Chairs of the Bulgarian Parliament, Prof. Plamen Legkostup, Rector of UVT (2007–2015)*





*Pic. 23. From the left: Mr. Gancho Karabadzhaikov, Vice-Mayor of Veliko Tarnovo, Assoc. Prof. Milen Mihov, Deputy Chair of the Parliamentary Commission on Education and Science, Prof. Nikolay Prodanov, Vice-Minister of Justice and Mr. Gu Hongxing from the Chinese Embassy in Bulgaria*

control of the Soviet-Chinese ones. During the period, there were no interstate visits, cultural contacts practically ceased, and so did educational exchange. The second wave of Chinese students left Bulgaria. Similarly, Bulgarian students studying in China were also forcibly returned to their homeland. Moreover, the ambassadors of both countries were recalled and for several years the embassies of PRC and Bulgaria were headed by interim governors. In short, interstate relations were frozen (Tian 2021: 142). In the last two decades, however, the cultural and educational relations between our countries have taken a huge turn for the better. As the former Bulgarian Ambassador in China – Mr. Angel Orbetsov – states, the study of the Chinese language in our country has achieved impressive success. The Confucius Institutes at Sofia University and at the University of Veliko Tarnovo, which are expanding their activities, make an important contribution to the enrichment of the Bulgarian student community’s knowledge of Chinese language and literature (Orbetsov 2021: 115).

At the opening ceremony of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations, the Deputy Mayor of Veliko Tarnovo, Mr. Neyko Genchev, on behalf of the Municipal Government, awarded the “Diploma for Special Contribution” and “Medal of the Old Throne” to CIUVT, in recognition of the contributions made by the CI to the diversification of the cultural ecology and enrich the educational connotation of Veliko Tarnovo, and to promote cultural exchanges between

China and Bulgaria. The “Diploma of Special Contribution” and “Medal of the Old Throne” represent Bulgaria’s official recognition of the industrious work and achievements of CIUVT over the past 10 years. The special sign of honor and contribution of Targovishte Municipality was also presented to the directors of CIUVT by the Mayor of Targovishte – Dr. Darin Dimitrov. The whole CI was greatly encouraged. Of course, honor represents the past. Yet it will definitely inspire all the CI people to make a persistent effort, being pioneering and innovative, so that the cause of the CI would be stable and far-reaching, and would be bound for a brilliant future.



*Pic. 24. Vice-Mayor of Veliko Tarnovo presents Diploma of Special Contribution to CI Directors*



*Pic. 25. Mayor Dr. Dimitrov presents the Special Sign of Targovishte City*

## **Major Bulgarian Partners of CIUVT:**

### **2013**

Shumen University, Targovishte Municipality, Veliko Tarnovo University.

### **2014**

Shumen University, Targovishte Municipality, “Vasil Levski” High School in Ruse, University of Economics in Varna, Veliko Tarnovo University and Municipality.

### **2015**

Shumen University, Targovishte Municipality, “Vasil Levski” High School in Ruse, University of Economics in Varna, Dimitrovgrad Municipality, Popovo Municipality, “Ekzarh Yosif” Foreign Languages High School in Razgrad, Veliko Tarnovo University and Municipality.

### **2016**

Shumen University, Targovishte Municipality, “Vasil Levski” High School in Ruse, University of Economics in Varna, Dimitrovgrad Municipality, Popovo Municipality, “Ekzarh Yosif” Foreign Languages High School in Razgrad, Burgas Municipality, Sliven Municipality, Veliko Tarnovo University and Municipality.

### **2017**

Shumen University, Targovishte Municipality, “Vasil Levski” High School in Ruse, University of Economics in Varna, Dimitrovgrad Municipality, Popovo Municipality, “Ekzarh Yosif” Foreign Languages High School in Razgrad, Burgas Municipality, Sliven Municipality, Veliko Tarnovo University and Municipality, “D. A. Tsenov” Academy of Economics in Svishtov, Dryanovo Municipality.

### **2018**

Shumen University, Targovishte Municipality, “Vasil Levski” High School in Ruse, University of Economics in Varna, Dimitrovgrad Municipality, Popovo Municipality, “Ekzarh Yosif” Foreign Languages High School in Razgrad, Burgas Municipality, Sliven Municipality, Veliko Tarnovo University and Municipality, “D. A. Tsenov” Academy of Economics in Svishtov, Dryanovo Municipality, “Pythagoras Private School in Sofia, Chelopech Municipality.

### **2019**

Shumen University, Targovishte Municipality, “Vasil Levski” High School in Ruse, University of Economics in Varna, Popovo Municipality, “Ekzarh Yosif” Foreign Languages High School in Razgrad, Burgas Municipality, Sliven Municipality, Veliko Tarnovo University and Municipality, “D. A. Tsenov” Academy of Economics in Svishtov, “Pythagoras Private School in Sofia,

Chelopech Municipality, Slivnitsa Municipality, “Exarch Antim I” High School in Kazanlak.

### 2020

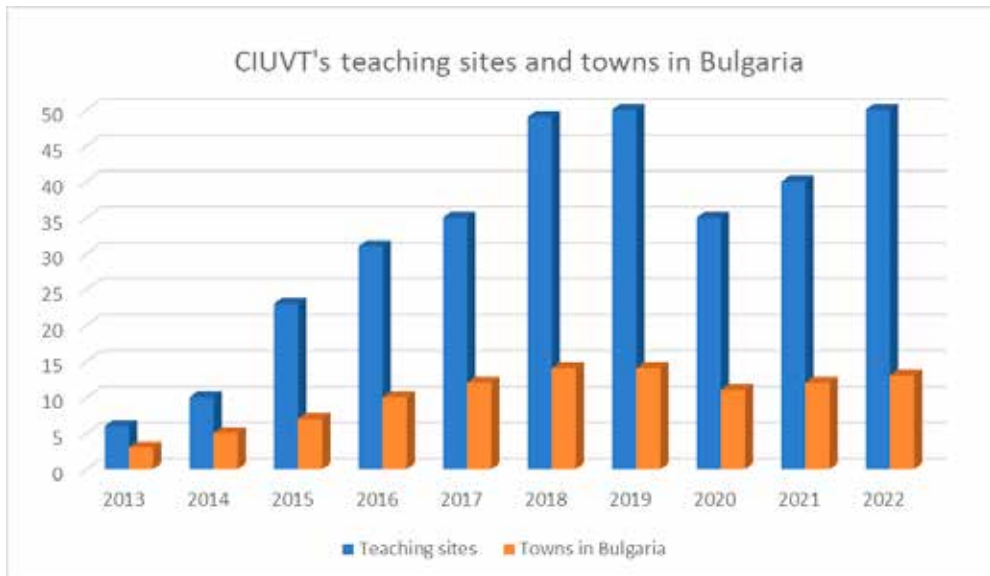
Shumen University, Targovishte Municipality, “Vasil Levski” High School in Ruse, University of Economics in Varna, Popovo Municipality, Burgas Municipality, Sliven Municipality, Veliko Tarnovo University and Municipality, “Pythagoras Private School in Sofia, Chelopech Municipality, “Exarch Antim I” High School in Kazanlak.

### 2021

Shumen University, Targovishte Municipality, “Vasil Levski” High School in Ruse, University of Economics in Varna, Popovo Municipality, Burgas Municipality, Sliven Municipality, Veliko Tarnovo University and Municipality, “Pythagoras Private School in Sofia, Chelopech Municipality, “Exarch Antim I” High School in Kazanlak, “D. A. Tsenov” Academy of Economics in Svishtov.

### 2022

Shumen University, Targovishte Municipality, “Vasil Levski” High School in Ruse, University of Economics in Varna, Popovo Municipality, Burgas Municipality, Sliven Municipality, Veliko Tarnovo University and Municipality, “Pythagoras Private School in Sofia, Chelopech Municipality, “D. A. Tsenov” Academy of Economics in Svishtov, Tutrakan Municipality, Isperih Municipality.



## Part IV. Implementation of Key Programs

Since the opening of CIUVT, the Bulgarian and Chinese Directors have attended all Global Confucius Institute Conferences (Beijing, December 2012; Beijing, December 2013; Xiamen, December 2014; Shanghai, December 2015; Kunming, December 2016; Xi'an, December 2017; Chengdu, December 2018), Joint Conferences of Confucius Institutes in Europe (Bologna, Italy, 2013; Dublin, Ireland, 2014; Sofia, Bulgaria, 2015; Budapest, Hungary, 2017; Edinburgh, Scotland, 2019) and In-service training workshops for Confucius Institute Directors (Shanghai, October 2013; Xiamen, October 2016). Being acquainted with all key programs of CI Headquarters and the newest teaching aids, the CI team has been working hard for developing and improving Chinese language teaching in Bulgaria.

In order to meet the individualized learning needs of different types of learners, teachers of CIUVT teach students according to their aptitude, and make full use of textbooks such as *Happy Chinese*, *Learn Chinese with Me*, *Chinese Paradise*, *Road to Success*, and *Standard HSK Course*. The collections of the CI library are updated every year with the latest relevant books and teaching aids in China, as well as translated literature and new books, concerning China and Chinese culture in Bulgarian. In the last year, more than 450 copies of various books and documents were added to the collection. The total number of books consists of nearly 5000 titles.

In 2013, 2015, 2017, 2019 and 2022, together with the Education Department of the Chinese Embassy in Bulgaria, CIUVT made a concerted effort to hold the Bulgarian round of “Chinese Bridge” Chinese Proficiency Competition for foreign students in Veliko Tarnovo. The competitions were successfully conducted and received unanimous praise. All of them were held offline. In 2015 Snezhana Stanilova, in 2016 Tsvetomir Velikov, in 2017 Dimitar Dimitrov, in 2019 Radoslav Kosev and in 2022 Yoana Borisova, all students of Veliko Tarnovo University, won the Bulgarian national championship in the college group. In 2022 Mr. Dong Xiaojun, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of China in Bulgaria, came to the competition site in person, reflecting the great importance His Excellency attached to this event, which was the first to have been held offline ever since the outbreak of the pandemic.

During this period, the Confucius Institute was enlarged in working and teaching areas regularly, with two new classrooms located on the second floor of the North Wing of Building 5 of UVT in 2022.

To celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of CIUVT, the 9<sup>th</sup> International Academic Conference on “Political, Economic and Cultural Relations between China and Countries in Central and Eastern Europe” was

grandly opened on October 14. Dozens of governmental and educational units expressed their congratulations via congratulatory letters or by sending representatives to make goodwill speeches, including the Presidential Office of the Republic of Bulgaria, the Bulgarian Ministry of Education and Science, the Bulgarian National Independent Trade Union, the Chinese Embassy in Bulgaria, the Chinese International Education Foundation, the Municipalities of Veliko Tarnovo, Targovishte, Burgas, etc. as well as the China University of Geosciences (Wuhan), Southwest University in Blagoevgrad, Shumen University, Confucius Institute in Sofia and so on. The symposium, as always, aimed at discussing the current situation and development prospects of political, economic, cultural and other fields between China and CEE countries under the “Belt and Road” Initiative and the “17+1” regional cooperation framework, as well at promoting education and cultural exchanges between China and CEE countries, especially Bulgaria; and at strengthening the exchanges and cooperation between Chinese and Bulgarian scholars. The conference received dozens of papers from scholars of different universities and academic institutions in China, Bulgaria and Malaysia. During the two-day conference, over 30 experts and scholars shared their latest research results, and more than 100 participating scholars conducted in-depth discussions on related topics.

On October 15, a grand 10<sup>th</sup>-anniversary celebration of the establishment of CIUVT, carefully prepared by the CI, was held at the Konstantin Kissimov Theater. Teachers and students of the CI, Chinese students in Bulgaria, the choir from Targovishte, and middle school students from Veliko Tarnovo, Sofia, Ruse and other places in the country came out on the same stage and performed wonderful songs, dances, Tai Chi, Qi Gong, Guzheng, Peking Opera and other program numbers. The hall was full to capacity and the audience applauded enthusiastically. What is particularly worth mentioning is that Mr. Neyko Genchev, Deputy Mayor of Veliko Tarnovo, played and performed himself. He sang the Chinese song “The Moon Represents My Heart” to express his best wishes for the Confucius Institute. With the performance of the Deputy Mayor the festive atmosphere of the concert reached its climax.

## **Part V. Academic Research and Achievements**

In 2014 CIUVT published the first volume of academic papers from the “Diplomatic, Economic and Cultural Relations between China and Countries in Central and Eastern Europe” International Academic Conference to commemorate the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of Sino-Bulgarian diplomatic relations. Since then, one volume of the annual journal has been



published each year. At present, the annual edition has been included in the National Reference List of Bulgaria, as well as referenced and indexed in international academic databases such as Central and Eastern European Online Library (CEEOL) European Reference Index for the Humanities and Social Sciences (ERIH PLUS), Google Scholar, Directory of Open Access Scholarly Resources (ROAD), Directory of Research Journals Indexing (DRJI), Eurasian Scientific Journal Index (ESJI), General Impact Factor (GIF), CiteFactor, etc. for free online access. In 2022, CIUVT published the 7<sup>th</sup> volume of *Diplomatic, Economic and Cultural Relations between China and CEE Countries* (ISSN 2603 – 5030 (Print); ISSN 2603 – 5391 (Online)), and the 8<sup>th</sup> is currently under compilation.



*Pic. 26. The journal Diplomatic, Economic and Cultural Relations between China and Countries in Central and Eastern Europe*

In 2019, the Bulgarian Director of CIUVT – Assoc. Prof. Iskra Mandova, together with a research team consisting of Dr. Yana Shishkova, Dr. Reny Stoyanova and Mrs. Fu Lei completed the “Chinese Syllabus for Bulgarian Middle School Students” international cooperation research project in Bulgarian and Chinese, which was published in 2020 (No.: 20JZD044, Ministry of Education of PRC). Another of her research projects in co-authorship with Assoc. Prof. Long Tao – “Foreign Language Teaching Policy and Chinese Language Teaching in Bulgaria” – was submitted and is in the process of being published.

During 2022 CIUVT sponsored the publication of *Shanhaijing* (bilingual edition), translated by Prof. Bora Belivanova, a reputed sinologist in Bulgaria.



Pic. 27. Chinese Syllabus for Bulgarian Middle School Students

The CI team, headed by Assoc. Prof. Iskra Mandova republished *The Classics of Chinese Classical Literature* (bilingual edition).

As a key member, Prof. Dong Yuanxing participated in the completion of the international Chinese education research project sponsored by the Chinese Ministry of Education – “Basic situation of demand-orientated Chinese education in country-specific (Bulgaria) secondary schools” (No.: 20YH14D). As the key PI, Prof. Dong took charge of the country-specific Chinese education research project sponsored by the Chinese Ministry of Education – “Current Situation and Countermeasures of Chinese Education in Bulgaria on the Background of the COVID-19 Epidemic” (No.: 21YHGB1120), which is currently in progress. He also co-authored the paper “Current situation and prospective research of Chinese teaching in Bulgaria”, which was published in *International Chinese Education (Chinese and English) Volume 7*. In addition, Zeng Jinzhu, an international Chinese education volunteer at CIUVT, applied for the international Chinese teaching practice innovation project “Innovative design and application of micro-lecture resources in international culture course of dragon dance”, which will be sponsored by the CLEC (Mandova, Dong, Dimitrova 2022: 12).

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