



The Opening Plenary Session

BULGARIANS HOST 20TH ANNUAL CONGRESS IN BOURGAS

Over 90 participants from Germany, Finland, Sweden, Russia, Greece, Spain and the United States convened in Bourgas, Bulgaria from April 21st through April 26th for the International Network of Productive School's 20th Annual Congress. The Congress opened with a plenary session where the Bulgarian hosts welcomed the delegates with a traditional bread offering, folk dances by the local students and speeches from local dignitaries and the hosts. The opening session and subsequent plenary meetings were held in a large hall in the newly built Free University of Bourgas. In the afternoon The Administrative Council held the first INEPS plenary session of the membership.

Then the participants were broken up into 6 groups and proceeded through a program of workshops held in 4 school sites throughout the city and countryside. They were the "Ivan Vazov High School, "Zahari Stoyanov" Evening School, the "Elin Pelin" Secondary School and the "Hristo Botev" Primary School. The workshops consisted of a combination of topics dealing with specific issues concerning Productive Learning and practical hands on experiences involving glass painting and ceramics. The workshops were informative, useful and a great deal of fun.

One afternoon the participants were treated to a visit to the old town of Nessebar with its Byzantine and Medieval wall and churches. They also took in the new resort complex "Sunny City" where they were able to wade into the Black Sea.



The Congress concluded with the leaders of each group reporting back to the participants on the outcomes of their workshops. There was a final Plenary Session where the membership discussed and voted on the suggestions made by the Administrative Council. Highlights of several decisions of particular import were:

1. The site of the next Congress which will be in Helsinki sponsored by the Nordic coalition of Sweden and Finland.
2. The updating of the addresses in the list service and reorganization of the INEPS Web site between IDAP in Spain and Helsinki to improve communication among members.
3. Review and transfer of the treasury from Berlin and IPLE to the treasurer in Finland.
4. Setting up of regional coordinators to gather information on the sites in order to send them on to the INEPS Newsletter.

The finale of the Congress was the tradition Farewell dinner held in the Hotel Bulgaria. Along with a wonderful dinner all were treated to traditional and modern dances and song performed by the local students. A special guest, Marusja Ljubcheva, Bulgarian Member of the European Parliament spoke to the gathering of her enthusiastic support of the concept of Productive Learning and promised to continue to speak out for this type of educational reform. And finally the participants from the different countries arose to present tokens from their lands to their hosts and thank them for a truly marvelous experience. The INEPS President, Angela Passa, then passed on the glass apple to the Nordic countries as the symbol of their hosting the next Congress.

