

Celebrating National Library Week in Bulgaria
Remarks by Nancy Bolt
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I was privileged to be at the very first National Library Week held in Bulgaria, ten years ago. I remember the excitement of planning this event and hoping that the libraries in Bulgaria would be willing to participate in this celebration. Clearly they were! And so it is a privilege once again to be here, this time for your 10th anniversary.

Much has happened to Bulgarian libraries over the last ten years. The ABLE project ended and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation supported the unprecedented expansion of technology and training in Bulgaria's public libraries. The National Academic Library and Information System (NALIS) created an online union catalog of academic libraries in Bulgaria. New laws were passed to support libraries and chitalisthe. BLIA has grown to both serve and represent libraries throughout Bulgaria. The America for Bulgaria Foundation has shown its commitment to library development through multiple grants.

None of this could happen without the vision, dedication, and untiring effort of Bulgaria's librarians: academic, public, regional, chitalisthe, and school. Librarians advocate for more resources at the national and local level, develop staff able to provide modern services to their users, and strive to tell their stories to governing bodies and library users about the value of a library to its community.

It is not a coincidence that National Library Workers' Day is celebrated during National Library Week. Just as events this week highlight libraries, we know it is the librarians and library workers that create the services that are delivered.

I'm pleased to be here this week on behalf of two US institutions. I bring greetings from Emporia State University, where I'm an adjunct professor in the School of Library and Information Management. With me are 11 students and 3 faculty members visiting libraries and Bulgaria's historic cultural resources. I also bring greetings from the Colorado Association of Libraries, of which I am an officer. It's an exciting time for us to be here.

In her letter of congratulations, Dr. Gwen Alexander, Dean and Richel Distinguished Professor of the School of Library and Information Management, writes: "Your theme this year, *Libraries – A Place for Learning*, emphasizes both libraries' traditional role in supporting education of a nation's youth AND new roles that libraries assume, using modern technology to help all people in a community reach their personal goals."

Joanna Powell, Dean of Libraries at the Aurora Community College and President of the Colorado Association of Libraries, also sends congratulations and writes: “National Library Week is a time to celebrate the contributions of a nation’s libraries and librarians to the people and community they serve. Your theme this year, *Libraries –A Place for Learning*, recognizes and promotes all types of libraries in the critical role of educating a citizenry to live, lead, and work in the 21st century.”

All of us wish you the very best this week and in future years to help Bulgarian libraries grow even stronger in their ability to serve the people of Bulgaria.