

## **Call for Participation in Field Research**

### **Project: The European Union: a bottom up view**

### **Emic interpretations of decline along the Lower Danube (Bulgaria)**

Base Camp Danube Km 727, Bulgaria, May – September 2018

### **Topic: ‘Is the Bulgarian North-west the poorest region in the European Union?’**

**Abstract:** The Call invites participation in field-research activities seeking answer to the question: ‘*Is the Bulgarian North-west the poorest region in the EU?*’. Our research agenda follows from preliminary findings in the summer of 2017 (see below). They have prompted a need for open and unbiased look at this question. We think that neither popular national assumptions of a proverbially depressed region, nor EU statistics, should take a positive answer to this question for granted. Research of this type will help participants to challenge existing notions of ranking regions, based on economic indexes, as well as on popular assumptions.

**Key words:** Bulgarian North-West; Lower Danube economies; EU subsidies; Roma communities; major agri-businesses; biosemiosis

**Organizers:** Prof. Yulian Konstantinov, Bulgarian Society for Regional Cultural Studies & Prof. Dr. Henrik Egbert, Department of Economics, Anhalt University of Applied Sciences.

**Time:** The overall period of activities is from May until September 2018. A Base Camp of Bulgarian Society for Regional Cultural Studies at Danube Km 727, 16 km. downriver from the Danube port city of Lom, will be continually functioning during this time. Individual researchers choose their own fieldwork periods and sites. A time of more **intensive research is planned in the first three weeks of September 2018**, when more researchers could be present at the camp.

**Seminar:** We propose a data-synthesizing seminar at Villa Pomodiana (Km 725), near the village Stanevo, coinciding with the beginning of the grape-harvest on **16-18 September 2018**.

**Contact:** Prof. Yulian Konstantinov (konstantinovyulian01@gmail.com) or Prof. Dr. Henrik Egbert (henrik.egbert@hs-anhalt.de).

**Information about previous research:** Results of the Pilot study (May to September 2017) can be viewed on *ResearchGate* under the project: “The European Union: a bottom up view—Emic interpretations of decline along the Lower Danube (Bulgaria)” (Yulian Konstantinov, Henrik Egbert).

**Financial matters:** The events of Summer '17 were self-funded. The infrastructure of Danube Camp Km 727 was taken care of by Yulian Konstantinov. The organizers acknowledge the fact that it will be difficult for students and young researchers to engage in fieldwork for greater periods within such an arrangement. The infrastructural management of the camp so it can take more people is also a challenge. For such reasons, the organizers will make an attempt for raising research funding to help participants with travel expenses and daily costs, as well as for help towards improving living conditions at Camp 727. Having said this, we would advise all interested researchers to also seek individual funding for support of their individual sub-projects whenever possible.

**Camp 727: Living conditions and health issues:** Researchers are invited to spend any length of time at the Camp. The only condition is they inform Yulian well in advance – ideally, by May next year. The Camp offers basic living conditions in tents. Water for general purposes is pumped out of the river, bottled mineral water is supplied for drinking. There is a motor-boat and two rowing boats, a 4x4 SUV, electric generator. There has been stable internet/ GSM connection all through the summer. There are good opportunities for sharing in net and rod fishing, as well as in canoeing to nearby villages or going by motor-boat to locations upriver.

CAUTION! Participants staying at the Camp should be prepared to share out-of-doors rugged life-style as practiced by the majority of Danube villagers and fishermen. People with allergies, particularly as regards blood-sucking and stinging insects (wasps, etc.) should take the necessary precautions. Wildlife's presence can be intense at times, but no accidents with wild animals have been recorded ever since the beginning of this camp back in 1976.