

Linguistics Olympiads in Bulgaria

The **first competition** in was organised in May 1983 in Plovdiv as part of an international workshop in Mathematical Linguistics. I contacted several schools in order to get them interested and in Plovdiv we had participants from the English Language School, Plovdiv (the second largest city in Bulgaria), the English Language School, Sofia (the capital) and the German Language School, Pazardzhik (town not very far away from Plovdiv). At that time in Bulgaria there were specialised language schools in most major cities/towns, usually Russian, English, French, German and Spanish (most subjects at those schools were taught in the language of the school with one 'preparatory' year when students learned the language in a very intensive fashion). In addition to the specialised language schools, a number of specialised maths schools, as well as grammar schools, 'grammar school' (more selective) or 'high school' (more comprehensive; usually non-selective), would be the term corresponding to your school in the UK; I do not know about the corresponding USA term), were particularly active. A few months later I contacted the person in charge of the mathematics education in Plovdiv and we agreed to organise the **first nation-wide (national) Olympiad in 'Mathematical Linguistics'** in 1984 in Plovdiv. Plovdiv was a host to the national competitions until 1989. Haskovo took over the organisation of the national competition in 1990 and did it until 1998.

In the years to follow, I spent a lot of time motivating schools all over the country and travelled on a regular basis to schools all over the country (Sofia, Plovdiv, Varna, Veliko Tarnovo, Stara Zagora, Yambol, Pazardzhik, Kazanluk, Russe, Burgas and many, many others). I was assisted by colleagues/ teachers or students. One or two years after the National Competition, Mathematical Linguistics was included in the annual Winter Mathematical Days (the competition took place in January, alternating Varna and Russe).

The **first international competition** in mathematical and computational linguistics was organised as early as 1988 in Stara Zagora where we had participants from USSR (Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan), Czechoslovakia, Romania, Poland and Bulgaria. I would like to mention a curious fact. There were a few more international competitions to follow (see below)

A few facts

- **First competition** in was organised in May 1983, Plovdiv
- **First official national competition** June 1984, Plovdiv
- First national summer school July 1985, Yundola, Rhodope Mountains
- **First international competition August 1988**, Stara Zagora
- First autumn training seminar 1988, October Vassil Kolarov Lake, Rhodope Mountains
- International competition Plovdiv 1989: where the best students from the Russian Olympiads took part in the Bulgarian National Competition.
- International competition at the summer school in Yundola 1989/1990 – where the best students from the Russian Olympiads took part – both in the summer school and a specially organised competition

- International competition at the summer school in Pisanica, Rhodope Mountains, 1990, where the best students from the Russian Olympiads took part in a specially organised competition
- The winners of the Bulgarian Olympiads in Mathematical and Computational Linguistics started participating in the Bulgarian participants in Moscow from 1990
- International competition at the summer school in Pisanica 1991 (with participants from Bulgaria, Japan, Poland)
- **International competition in mathematical and computational linguistics** in Pravec within the **World Federation of National Mathematics Competitions** (participants from a number of countries), 1994

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