

Bulgaria activist, teacher lectures on human rights

Regina Brown
Oregon Daily Emerald

An internationally recognized human rights activist is speaking tonight about social upheaval and human rights abuses in Eastern Europe since the fall of communism.

Demitrina Petrova will lecture at 8 p.m. in Room 100 of Willamette Hall, 1387 E. 13 Ave.

Petrova received an annual endowment from the University to international professors who promote peace within their own and other countries. She will be spending spring term at the University before she returns home to Sofia, Bulgaria.

She is teaching two courses about human rights, ethnic relations and social change in Eastern Europe.

"The U.S. has been a pillar of human rights policy."
— DEMITRINA PETROVA
Human Rights Activist

Petrova is a regional coordinator for the International Helsinki federation of Human Rights for southeast Europe. She is also the director of a Bulgarian project, which seeks to protect the human rights of gypsies, whom she said are victims of government sponsored torture.

Petrova works closely with the United States and other Western human rights groups, she said, which have sponsored the organization's work. Without their support, human rights work in Bulgaria may never have established a solid foundation. This is because post-communist regimes do not make efforts to protect human rights.

"The U.S. has been a pillar of human rights policy," she said.

Bulgaria is facing a number of economic and social problems in spite of its attempts to shed its image of a product of Soviet power, she said. In 1989, Bulgaria looked to the United States for support in improving its economy.

Although the United States does not give as much economic support to Bulgaria as she believes it should, she said the United States is still a positive influence in combating economic and social problems.

"One thing that gives me hope [for my country] is that there is still a U.S. presence in Bulgaria," she said.

Petrova was heavily involved in the Bulgarian dissident movement during the 1980s, while Bulgaria was still a communist country. This is something she declines to discuss with the media because she believes Westerners have no background for understanding the East European underground. Instead, she prefers to focus on her present work, which she believes is much more relevant to the current political situation than her past.



Speakers at ExpOregon '95 discussed aspects of international trade and business. About 180 people attended the two-day conference held at the Eugene Hilton and Conference Center.

ExpOregon '95 explored business world

Sarah Gray
For the Oregon Daily Emerald

International marketing is rapidly increasing in today's business world, and in order to provide opportunities for businesses to explore or expand international trade, ExpOregon '95, an international trade forum, took place in Eugene Monday and Tuesday.

The Eugene Hilton Hotel and Conference Center was the site of this year's forum. A variety of workshops and guest speakers contributed to the program schedule. Participants in the forum attended one of three workshops during each session, while exhibits of businesses and their unique aspects filled the conference foyer.

Around 130 people attended the conference, and nearly 160 companies were involved with some area of the forum. Representatives from businesses around Oregon and beyond sponsored and supported

the two-day event.

Most speakers in the workshops focused on specific international relations, such as with China or Latin America. Business people from around Oregon, either large or small, had the opportunity to establish important regional business contacts.

One purpose of the forum was to help businesses find their international potential. The Willamette International Trade Center, a non-profit business assistance association in Eugene, hosted the event.

DeNel Stoltz, executive director for WITC and program organizer, said that it was beneficial for all business owners to be involved with international trade and that this forum was an excellent opportunity.

"It's exciting to have all these Portland international supporting agencies here in Eugene," Stoltz said. "We've brought together a tremendous caliber of speakers, some who

have 20 years of experience in their industries."

WITC is an association that assists individuals and businesses in developing international business relations through informational, educational and networking opportunities. Their combined efforts in market research, business planning and educational preparation are designed to help large businesses to individuals.

Stoltz said the conference was a good way for people to share their business strategies, like how to market products overseas.

"It brings everyone together from different parts of the business field," Stoltz said. "The exhibits provide an opportunity to showcase a business and get the right international contacts."

The last time ExpOregon was held was in 1990, but according to Stoltz, WITC plans to have the forum every two years, probably in the Eugene/Springfield area.

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