



## Project: Media Literacy

### Activity C2 - Short term joint staff

Facts vs. Fiction, or how to deal with misinformation

Dates: 28<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> March 2022 - Galabovo, Bulgaria

Host organization: Vocational High School of Energy and Electrical Engineering, Galabovo

Address: Industrial Quarter, Galabovo, Bulgaria

A historical journey  
between antiquity and  
the present,  
discovering little-  
known facts

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The Uzundzhov  
church near  
Haskovo: from a  
mosque to a  
Christian temple



# History:

In 1500, a Christian church dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary was built in Uzundzhovo. In 1593, it was destroyed and a mosque was built in its place. This mosque was part of a huge caravanserai, i.e. an area with a place to eat and sleep for travelers and trade caravans. The main arched entrance to this caravanserai has been preserved to this day and can be seen in the churchyard.



In 1906, however, the mosque and the entire terrain around it were ceded by Turkey to Bulgaria. Shortly after, the mosque was transformed into a Christian church.

In the past, the village of Uzundzhovo itself was the center of the largest fair within the Ottoman Empire, which at its peak was attended by over 50,000 people – an impressive figure at the time. The fair was held in September and provided important contact for the local population with European traders. Sinan Pasha, the grand vizier of Sultan Murad III, is considered its founder.



*Although strange, or precisely because of this fact, the Uzundzhov church is remembered for several things:*

- the strange architecture of the temple – both a Christian church and a mosque;
- the Glagolitic script of the iconostasis. The iconostasis of the Uzundzhov church is unique because of its processing and because of its symbolism. It reflects a prayer written in the first alphabet created by the brothers-educators Cyril and Methodius - Glagolitic;
- the DNA spirals, symbolizing life, depicted in the iconostasis, just below the Glagolitic;
- the vertical icon with the Last Supper locked between the two DNA helices. In most churches, the icon is horizontal;



- the image of the tulip is in several varieties - in the decoration of the church there are tulips in several places. Some associate these tulips with master Lelio - a Bulgarian who built the mosque, who wanted to leave his signature under his work. Another interpretation of the tulip as decoration is the fashion at the time in the Ottoman Empire, according to which the tulip was an important fragment in ornamentation.
- the acoustics in the church are incredible;





Saint Mary is a monument and an orthodox chapel in Haskovo. The monument represents Saint Mary which is considered to be the patroness of the city, rising above it with her baby - Jesus.

At the entrance of the chapel you can see a „Guinness" certificate. The sculpture is long 14 meters and it weights 80 tones, it's built on top of a pedestal, which is a chapel on the inside. With this statue the city joins the Guinness book under the section - „religion" as the tallest Saint Mary statue.



The idea to build this statue came from the mayor of the city.

Because of how large the statue is , it can be seen from the entire city even at night.

The grand opening of the statue was held on 8th september of 2003 which was also the holiday - the Feast of the Nativity of Mary and ever since then , 8th september is also

the holiday of the city. During the holiday of the city there are a lot of cultural and sports events.

Close to the monument there is also the bell tower of Haskovo which is 30 meters long which makes it one of the tallest bell towers in the Balkan region.