

Научни събития и изследователски проекти  
Scientific Events and Research Projects

**The Project *Rhetoric for Innovative Education* (RHEFINE) and Bulgarian Contribution to it (Institute of Rhetoric and Communications)**

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The project *Rhetoric for Innovative Education* (RHEFINE) is a two-year KA2 Erasmus Strategic Partnership in the field of higher education. It is co-funded by Erasmus+ Programme of The European Union. The project participants are from three European countries and represent two universities: University of Warsaw, Poland and University of Zagreb, Croatia, and one Bulgarian NGO: The Institute of Rhetoric and Communications. The Centre for Applied Rhetoric, research unit within the Institute of Applied Polish Studies in the University of Warsaw coordinates the overall work of the project.

The project started in 2020 and will be completed in late 2022. The main goal of the team is to reform the academic teaching of rhetoric by presenting new possibilities to enhance the teaching of rhetoric in academic and pedagogical environments. The activities included in the work program are mainly aimed at university BA and MA students, doctoral students, academic teachers and researchers. They can be extended also to high school teachers and students and NGO workers.

*Rhetoric is an equipment for living* is the team’s motto. RHEFINE’s activities are focused on three areas (<https://rhefine.uw.edu.pl>):

- Providing a **better framework for teaching and learning of rhetoric**. This means new curricula, better fitted to the needs of students and the labor market; introducing new teaching methods; providing modern, up-to-date handbooks and materials; developing flexible forms of teaching and learning (online and blended).

- Tackling skill gaps and **enhancing students’ competences**. This means developing research-based learning and creating opportunities to train such skills as analysis and problem solving, teamwork, scientific communication, conflict management. Important competencies are also empathy and “rhetorical sensitivity”.

- **Enhancing the competencies of academic teachers**. This means creating a space for discussion, presenting new solutions and sharing experiences;

training in open science skills, conflict management, negotiations; sharing reflections on new teaching methods.

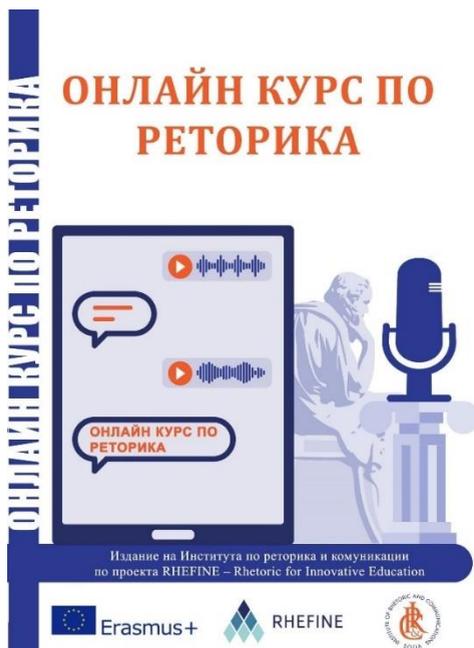
Three flagship events were organized within the project.

*Rhetoric for Innovative Education* was two-part event held online due to the pandemic and health precautions. The first part targeted at Polish students and academics took place on September 18, 2021, within the XXV Science Festival. The RHEFINE team presented and tested in practice parts from O3 output *The Rhetoric of Debate*. Second part of the event was connected with Erasmus Days at University of Warsaw on October 14, 2021.

The RHEFINE Conference was held on February 24 and 25, 2022 at Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of Zagreb University in a mixed format (in person and online). The conference's theme was *Rhetorical Research and Didactics*. Two keynote speakers took part in this event: Kris Rutten from University of Ghent and Gabrijela Kišiček from University of Zagreb. International scholars from different European countries presented 18 papers. The event was also an opportunity to present the projects outputs to a wider audience. Most attention has been given to *Rhetorical Research and Didactics*, a book by the Croatian team. During the online session, the members of the Bulgarian team Ivanka Mavrodieva and Igljka Kassabova shared their experiences on teaching rhetoric to Bulgarian students.

*Teaching Rhetoric Online* was a three-part event, organized respectively on April 11, May 3 and 5, 2022 in Sofia. The main target groups were humanity major students and high school teachers. The participants took part in workshops, seminars and simulation games. Students delivered their public speeches and took part in academic activities supervised by Ivanka Mavrodieva and Igljka Kassabova.

Apart from participating in the events mentioned above, the Bulgarian team contributed to the project's aims by publishing two books (in print and electronic format): *Online Course in Rhetoric* (Output 2) and *Open Education Resource* (Output O5).



The *Online Course in Rhetoric* (Онлайн курс по реторика) covers a number of theoretical topics and terms, rhetorical heritage and some present-day communicative practices. The publisher is the Institute of Rhetoric and Communications (Институт по реторика и комуникации) - ISBN 978-619-91989-1-9, ISBN 978-619-91989-0-2 (pdf). The course also provides examples how to apply the rhetorical techniques in pedagogical communication at universities and schools. The course is designed for students, lecturers and trainers studying rhetoric who might teach the subject in secondary schools, in training courses or in consultancy to improve oratorical skills. The course is intended to introduce some of the major

topic areas in rhetoric and to present methods of teaching oratory. The course is divided into 4 parts: - Theoretical module. It presents the theoretical knowledge of rhetoric. Links to glossary of terms and definitions grouped by different topics and areas are provided. Definitions of over 90 terms are included.

- Research module. It attempts to synthesize information from different sources concerning orators, rhetorical genres, the role of rhetoric in society, rhetorical argumentation, etc.

- Application and Practice Module. It aims at developing and improving skills of participation in different types of communications (genres and formats) and gaining practical experience. Rhetorical canons and stages are presented. Structure of different types of speeches are outlined.

- Learning Module. Training is also part of the rhetorical heritage. This module provides information (algorithm or models) how one can organize the formation, development and improvement of skills in oratory, in particular giving speeches and making presentations.

Since lecturers and teachers need a comprehensive guideline to online teaching practices, tools, methods, problem solving, etc., Bulgarian team compiled and published *Open Education Resource* (Output O5). The publisher of the handbook „Преподаване на реторика онлайн: отворени ресурси“ is the Institute of Rhetoric and Communications (Институт по реторика и комуникации) - ISBN 978-619-91989-4-0, ISBN 978-619-91989-5-7 (pdf).

The podcasts are disseminated on platforms (Spotify, Anchor, YouTube) and via the project website concerning Output 2 - <https://rhetoriconline.iorc.info/>

and in the rubric ‘Podcasts – Video’ <https://rhetoriconline.iorc.info/podcasts-video/>. Some podcast or video clips follow a scenario that is adapted to some topic, subject, and specific aim of teaching. The podcasts or video clips include a piece of brief information on the topics: rhetoric and politics, rhetoric and diplomacy, rhetoric and PR, rhetoric and education, rhetoric and virtual environment etc.



The book consists of teaching materials and lessons prepared by academic teachers, as well as useful tips on how to teach rhetoric effectively using various online tools. Models of rhetorical figures, effective speeches, debates and discussion are demonstrated. Instructions how to write and deliver different speeches are also included. Electronic resources (links to inspirational speeches from movies, addresses delivered during official events, ceremonial speeches, etc.) are included in the book. They are assessable via IRC site <https://rhetoricteacher.iorc.info>.

The podcasts are disseminated on platforms (Spotify, Anchor, YouTube) and via the project website concerning Output 5 <https://rhetoricteacher.iorc.info/> and in the rubric ‘Podcasts’ <https://rhetoricteacher.iorc.info/podcasts/>.

Some podcasts follow a scenario that adapt to some topic, subject, and specific aim of teaching of rhetoric in schools and universities. Podcasts include theoretical observation, basic terms and notions, methodological explanations, advice, demonstration how to deliver speeches, examples of speeches, and recommendations.

The results are disseminated via social media (Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram) and academic channels (portals, conferences, research papers).

The meeting held on July 1, 2022 at the IRC Office (<https://www.iorc.info/>).

The participants were: Agnieszka Szurek and Ewa Modrzejewska – Warsaw University; Diana Tomić, Elenmari Pletikos Olof - Zagreb University; Ivanka Mavrodieva, Yovka Tisheva, Stefan Serezliev, Iglіka Kassabova – Institute of Rhetoric and Communications).

The agenda included the following items: Output 2 - Online Course in Rhetoric. Activities, events, publications. Podcasts. Video clips. Our fourth transnational project meeting took place on the 1st of July in Sofia, Bulgaria. It was the second time we were able to meet face-to-face, since all our previous meetings but one was held online, and the first time all the national teams met not online nor in hybrid form. We discussed the outputs, especially O2 and O5. The platform for the online course was presented. We talked about dissemination and publication our results and made some plans for the final meeting and event in Warsaw. Overview timesheets was done.

There was also time to discuss more general matters (this is how the rhetorical think tank works). Ivanka Mavrodieva, Yovka Tisheva, Stefan Serezliev and Iglіka Kassabova presented programs and good practices of rhetoric teaching in Bulgarian universities: Sofia University, New Bulgarian University, National Academy of Theatre and Film Arts, Veliko Tarnovo University, etc. Elenmari Pletikos Olof presented the good practices at the University of Zagreb, the trainings on behaviour formation and voice improvement and the contribution of the Department of Phonetics. She presented the results of conference the University of Zagreb and the contacts with the participants, the possibilities for team building and scientific networking.



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