

**Study Tours** aims to take you into the context of Sofia's challenges and potentials for the development of urban green spaces. The study tours will enable us to understand the cities structures and visit some of Sofia's most important green spaces. There are 2 two different guided tours planned at the first conference day, from 4 pm to 6 pm. With your registration you will be asked to choose one.

<p align="center"><b>Study-Tour A</b> <i>"Urban green spaces in city centre"</i></p>	<p align="center"><b>Study Tour B</b> <i>"Neighbourhood Mladost"</i></p>
<p align="center">map of "Oberishte" and "Doctor's Garden"</p>	<p align="center">map of "Neighbourhood Mladost"</p>
<p align="center">google-earth-view</p>	<p align="center">google-earth-view</p>



## Study Tours portrait

### Study Tour A – “Urban green spaces in city center”

#### City park “Oberishte”

The park “Oberishte” was created in 1953 – 1955 on the territory of former military outfits. Its total area is 13 ha. It is placed in a residential district in the center of the capital. In this park is situated the building of the theatre “Sofia”. The park is arranged and set up as an undivided composition – it has its central part, formed with water areas, fountains and floral figures. In the periphery a sport area is integrated for tennis, volleyball and basketball. For the convenience and for the comfort of the visitors there are small cafes and snack bars settled in the park area. There are a lot of children playgrounds, so it’s one of the favourite places for people with children in the city centre. But also it is an appropriate place for people of all other ages. The park is utilized very actively by the residents of the adjoining neighborhoods, as well as by bicyclists from distant districts. That’s why its importance is not only local, but for the whole city.



The vegetative area, sweep of grass and trees, presents 58% of the total area. The flora is well shaped. Also, because of its large dimension, it is also favorable to the improvement of the microclimate in the district. It is noisy and polluted by the big number of cars that pass through this part of the city center

In the spring of 2001 in the park “Oberishte”, as suggested by the foundation “Meeting the 21<sup>st</sup> century” and with the active cooperation of the Bulgarian Ministry of culture, were placed 42 works of bulgarian modern sculpture. Today all these works of art are property of the Municipality of Sofia.



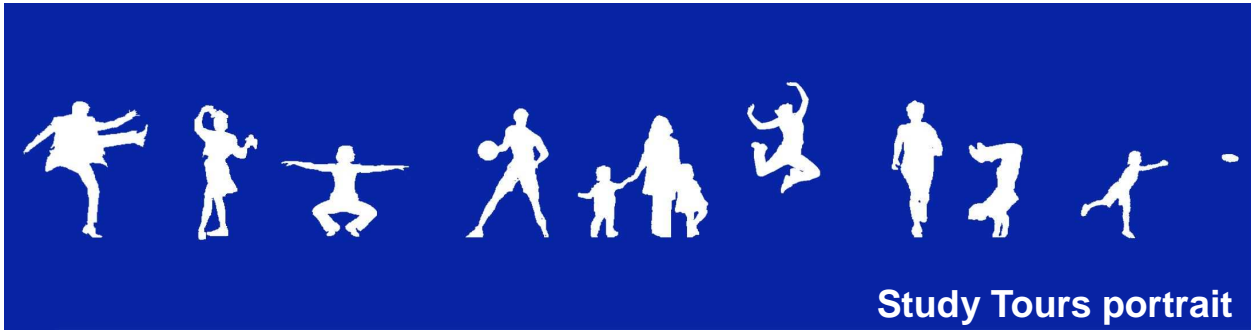
## Study Tours portrait

The standing exhibition “Sculpture – 2001” in park “Oborishte” is a Bulgarian interpretation of the idea to organize parks of sculpture on vast territories, what is typical for the world practice. Its Bulgarian realization is an interesting idea, but has its own characteristics. Not all of the works are for a park environment, although each one of them has its artistic qualities.



The main problem is that the protection of the park is insufficient and thefts and acts of vandalism occur (destruction of the garden furniture). Along with the protection and security another problem that should be paid attention on is the lighting in the park. A problem exists also concerning the places for dog walks – they aren’t precised, the dogs are walking without leashes where kids play too. That’s why it is necessary to set apart special zones for pet walks. Generally, appears the necessity of permanent control – for preventive reasons, for respecting the regulations and for preserving the green areas.

On the territory of the park in 2006 a partial irrigation system was constructed, which is planned to spread all over the whole park till 2010. The plans of the Municipality of Sofia include also to substitute the garden, a reconstruction of the flooring, as well as replacing, supplementing and enriching the existing flora.



## Garden “Doctor's Monument”

The garden was constructed in 1889, and in 1990 was granted to the Sofia University “St. Kliment Okhridski” for arranging a botanical spot. For that reason here is created and kept a comparatively big part of the richest collection of plants in the capital. Later the garden was reconstructed a couple of times and since 1936 was given back for being managed by the Municipality of Sofia and represents now a local garden.

Today the garden falls into an overbuild city area. Its territory is 5.2 ha. The network of alleys is subordinate to the directions of passing through it. There are areas where children can play and roundabout alleys where aged people can walk and rest. The center of the composition is the “Doctors monument”, erected in honor of the Russian medics who died during the Liberation War in Bulgaria (1877- 1878).



The flora around and in the green areas makes you feel comfortable because it is isolating the garden from the overloaded surrounding streets and from the noise and the dust, and is a calm green spot for a short break in your busy day.

A variety of activities takes place in the garden – children’s theatres in the open air, different children’s celebrations etc. It is situated next to the building of the Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” and is visited by students and lecturers.

Having these green areas one of the main and most serious problems is keeping them from thefts and acts of vandalism. The security is insufficient.

The lighting is renovated, but because of the insufficient security acts of vandalism are possible. Problems concerning the vegetation also occur. Some part of it is overripe and dried up and should be replaced and supplemented. The white poplar in the park is in bad condition and almost all of the trees are removed from the territory, as well as some other species like the honeylocust (*Gleditschia triacanthos*), the bald cypress (*Taxodium distichum*), the trumpet-flower (*Cathalpa europea*). There are no name-plates. There are no plates that should teach and habituate children and adults who visit the park to throw out their waste in the definite spots and to keep the green areas and the compositions.



## Study Tours portrait

An irrigation system is expected to be constructed in the garden, as well as a renovation of the vegetation. It is also planned to repair the garden furniture, mainly the alcoves and the benches because of the unconscientious citizens who break them again and again. The grassplots will be replaced in most parts of the garden because they are thin-sown in some places.

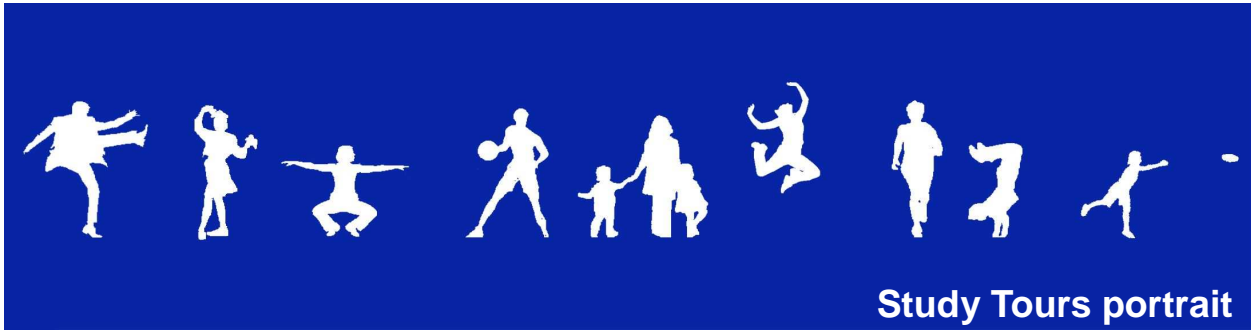
The plan of the Municipality of Sofia and in particular of the Directorate Green System includes restoring the rock-garden till 2009.



The main idea for the future development of the garden till 2010 is to isolate it with a belt of evergreen trees- cedar (Thuja).

**meeting point: Thursday, 17 April, 2008, 16:00,**

**place will be added before the conference**



## Study Tour B – “Neighbourhood Mladost”

The district “Mladost” is one of the biggest in the Municipality of Sofia and lies on a territory of about 1700 ha. The total number of inhabitants is about 120.000. There are 16 schools, 16 childcare centers, 2 local health centers, a regional hospital and other public institutions, The green areas in the district are 312 ha or 18,35% of the territory of the district (approximately 30,00 m<sup>2</sup>/ resident). The local parks in the “Mladost” district are 4 and one of them is park “Mladost – 3”, where the pilot project of the Municipality of Sofia upon the project GreenKeys is accomplished. The total territory of the park “Mladost – 3” is 5,04 ha.

The territory of the park definite it as a small park with local importance, but this green area is of high importance for the whole district where it is situated. The density of overbuilding in the district is constantly increasing, the population is increasing as well. The pedestrian and transport accessibility is good and the park is visited by many people. That’s why maintaining and managing this even not so big area are very important for providing comfort and



meeting the needs of the increasing number of habitants in spots for daily rests. In the district young people and parents with children predominate, so the main purpose of this local park is to provide a place where children and young people can play. In September 2007, after a competition, started the renewal of one of the playgrounds in the park “Mladost – 3” – new facilities, flooring and vegetation. The terrain of this playground is the newly chosen place for accomplishing the pilot project of the Municipality of Sofia upon the project Green Keys. There are courts for tennis, volleyball and basketball in the park. The territory of the park is divided into two parts. In one of them has been built an amusement center for children – an indoor amusement park “Patilantsi”. The other part is designed for a wide public use by people of different ages.



## Study Tours portrait

Like in the bigger parks and gardens of the central part of the city, in the smaller local parks and gardens the main problem again is the necessity of replacing the ground, marking the alleys for bicyclists and encouraging the bicycle modes. Thefts and acts of vandalism are another problem and the lack of strict security and the non-respecting of the regulations and the rules for preventing and using the green areas as well. This applies to the non-compliance of the dog owners who walk with their dogs on places designed for children – there are no areas designed for dog walks. The increasing population in the district can be a problem and a provocation too, because the local green areas are representing a smaller and smaller percent of the total built-up area, which makes worse the conditions of living and decreases the possibilities for daily rests and recreation.



In the short run a renovation and repair of the other children's playground in the park is planned, as well as replacement of the vegetation and planting of new trees and bushes around the playgrounds and on the whole territory of the park.

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