



CONGRESSIONAL OFFICE FOR INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP

COIL in Brief

Welcome to the September 2026 edition of the monthly COIL in Brief newsletter!

The Congressional Office for International Leadership (COIL) aims to promote congressional and citizen diplomacy with global civic and political leaders. To do so, COIL organizes the Open World Program, which brings delegates from 28 partner countries to the United States to liaise with American peers. Delegates participate in a multi-day Washington D.C. orientation, where they learn about congressional governance, meet with Members of Congress and their staff, and engage culturally with the city. From there, they travel to host communities across the nation, staying with local families and connecting with professional counterparts at the state and local level.

COIL did not host delegations during the congressional recess in August but has nonetheless been preparing for a busy slate of programming this fall.

Delegations on the Horizon

Upcoming COIL programming includes the following delegations in September:

September 9-19:

- **Balkan Regional** - Rule of Law: Combatting Transnational Organized Crime
- *Buffalo, NY*
- **Armenia** - Rule of Law: Combatting Transnational Organized Crime
- *Oklahoma City, OK*

September 16-26:

- **Ukraine** - Sister City Partnership (4 delegations) - *Toledo, OH; Dayton, OH; Oxford, OH; Bozeman, MT*
- **Ukraine** - Business Development/Technology Commercialization - *Rochester, NY*
- **Ukraine**- Veterans Reintegration - *Houston, TX*
- **Hungary** - Local Legislators - *Lincoln, NE*
- **Central Asia Regional** - Agricultural Innovation: Strengthening Rural Farming Communities - *Sacramento, CA*

September 21-October 2:

- **Bulgaria** - Members of Parliament: Energy - *Austin, TX*

September 27-October 8:

- **Vietnam** - Members of Parliament - *Troy, NY*
- **Papua New Guinea** - Members of Parliament - *Milwaukee, WI*
- **Armenia** - Members of Parliament - *Manchester, NH*

Upcoming Events

The following list details COIL-related events taking place in September:

- **Monday, September 21** (Oxford, OH): COIL Executive Director Jane Sargus and Deputy Executive Director Maura Sheldon will visit Oxford, Ohio to witness the first delegation of Ukrainians to visit in support of the Oxford-Dubno Sister City partnership established in 2023. The Dubno participants will be hosted by the City of Oxford in cooperation with Miami University. The goal of the visit is to foster good relations with international actors through collaboration, cooperation, cultural ties, civic exchanges, and demonstrations of goodwill while promoting trade and policies that promote shared goals and economic growth.
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- **Thursday, September 24** (Houston, TX): As part of their Open World Program in Houston, a prominent delegation of Ukrainian veterans will participate in a luncheon organized by the World Affairs Council of Greater Houston at Amegy Bank Tower. The event will include a panel discussion with the Ukrainian veterans on economic integration, wartime leadership, and cross-sector partnerships for an audience comprised of business and

government leaders, academics, international affairs professionals, and others in the Houston area.

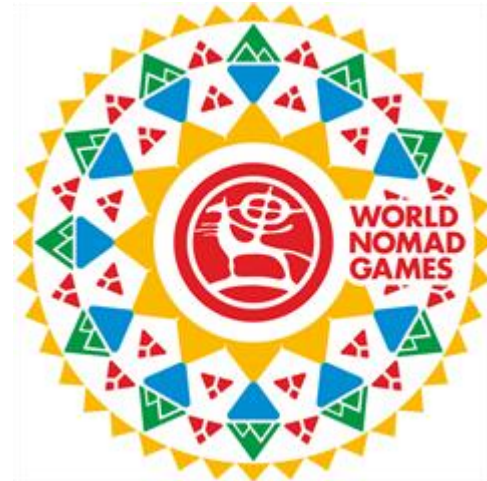
- **Monday, September 28 - Friday, September 29** (Warsaw, Poland): Belarusian alumni of U.S. government exchanges, including the Open World Program, will convene in Warsaw for a conference. COIL Executive Director Jane Sargus and Deputy Executive Director Maura Shelden will be in attendance. The keynote speaker is 2022 Nobel Peace Prize laureate Ales Bialitski.

Alumni News



Open World alumna Piret Urb was recently appointed Estonian ambassador to Greece, Albania, and Cyprus. Ms. Urb participated in the Open World program in March 2022 as part of an Estonian delegation that traveled to Washington D.C. and Baltimore, Maryland to learn about American accountable governance practices in cybersecurity. COIL is proud to see its alumni continue to grow professionally and make lasting impacts in their communities.

Read more about Ms. Urb's achievement on COIL's [LinkedIn](#).



Representatives from the Kyrgyzstan-Washington Sister Region Organization, which has hosted several Kyrgyz Open World delegations in Cashmere, Washington, are currently visiting Kyrgyzstan during the World Nomad Games. The World Nomad Games, occurring this year from August 31 to September 6, is a quadrennial event in Central Asia dedicated to showcasing the region's ethnic sports. The Americans' trip is being facilitated by an Open World alumna who owns a travel agency in Kyrgyzstan and previously traveled to Cashmere as part of an April 2024 delegation focused on the creative economy (see above). During their visit to Kyrgyzstan, the group will also meet with former Kyrgyz ambassador to the United States and Canada, Dr. Muktar Djumaliev. COIL celebrates reciprocal visits like these that reaffirm the lasting relationships built from the Open World program. See next month's COIL in Brief for further details on the trip.



Recently, an Open World-FLEX initiative in Poland wrapped up an eight-week mentoring program, offering young FLEX alumni career guidance and job shadowing

opportunities from Open World alumni. Numerous professions across government, technology, and civil society were represented, including the Ministry of Digital Affairs, Ministry of Energy, the cities of Reda, Pogorzela, and Wieliszew, Poznan Science and Technology Park, the Polish-American Freedom Foundation; and the Center for Citizenship Education. COIL applauds the efforts of its Open World alumni to continue fostering meaningful relationships after the program ends and supporting future generations of civic leaders.

Read more about this story [here](#).

Delegation Deep Dive



Vietnam: Parliamentary Staffers, Louisville, Kentucky

In July, a delegation of Vietnam parliamentary staffers focused on defense, national security, and public administration participated in the Open World Program, traveling first to Washington D.C. and then to Louisville, Kentucky. While in Washington, they engaged with their counterparts in Congress, meeting with staff from the Congressional Research Service, Committee on House Administration, House Armed Services Committee, and more to discuss public policy creation and the rise of artificial intelligence. Following their time on Capitol Hill, the group arrived in Louisville for a closer look at local and state governance. During their stay, the delegates met with the Clarksville Police Department on law enforcement practices, members of the Louisville Metro Council on city governance (see above), the Louisville Metro Office of Records Compliance on government transparency, and

others. COIL is grateful for the support of its congressional partners and the World Affairs Council of Kentucky and Southern Indiana in producing this highly successful program.



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