

**STATUTES
of the
BALKAN UNIVERSITIES NETWORK**

PREAMBLE

The Rectors of eleven Balkan Universities, and more specifically the following:

University of Tirana - Albania, University "Eqrem Cabej" of Gjirokaster - Albania, University St. Kliment Ohridski, Sofia - Bulgaria, "Ss. Cyril and Methodius" University, Skopje - FYROM, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki - Greece, University of Macedonia Economic and Social Sciences, Thessaloniki - Greece, "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University, Iasi - Romania, University of Belgrade - Serbia, University of Arts Belgrade - Serbia, University of Novi Sad - Serbia, Canakkale Onsekiz Mart University - Turkey

assembled in Conference at Thessaloniki on the 10th of February 2006, on the initiative of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, to implement the educational, scientific and cultural partnership among universities of the Balkan countries, and through a constructive dialogue and understanding, decided to establish a Network and signed the PROTOCOL of agreement, founding the BALKAN UNIVERSITIES NETWORK henceforth referred to as BUN.

ARTICLE 1: NAME AND LEGAL STATUS

The name of the Network is BALKAN UNIVERSITIES NETWORK (BUN). The Network is an independent, non-profitable, non-governmental organisation, open to universities of the Balkan countries - that is Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, FYROM, Greece, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, Turkey.

ARTICLE 2: SEAT

For administrative and organisational purposes, the official head office of BUN is at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece.

ARTICLE 3: AIM, OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Aim. The main purpose of the BALKAN UNIVERSITIES NETWORK is to provide a framework of cooperation among the universities of all Balkan countries and to be an advocate for their concerns. As established in the PROTOCOL, the aim of this Network is to undertake those initiatives that will bring together universities in the Balkan region, joining their expertise in a collaboration that would ultimately lead to the scientific, economic and cultural growth of the area. A common goal of the Network is to facilitate cross-border academic and scientific cooperation, the promotion of good neighbourly relations and respect for human rights. Moreover, the Network aims at providing mutual support towards establishing academic quality and

research “centres of excellence” which would facilitate a more competitive presence in the European Higher Education Area and the European Research Area.

Objectives. The main objectives of the BUN are to improve the quality of higher education and research through collaboration, based on the cultural and historical heritage of the region, in fields of high importance for current social and economic growth, such as education, culture, sports, the arts, natural and social sciences, and technology. The multinational and interdisciplinary character of the Network accommodates and focuses on the common historical and cultural heritage of the Balkan nations, but also engages in the promotion of new technologies, the transfer of resources, the establishment of joint postgraduate programmes, the exchange of data bases, the introduction of long-distance learning, and possibly the initiation of a “virtual university”. Special programmes for the teaching of the languages of the countries involved shall also be considered.

Members of the BUN agree to create all necessary academic conditions for enabling fruitful student and teaching staff exchange, thus enhancing cultural understanding, friendship, peace and dialogue among the member states, and contributing to the promotion of sustainable regional development.

The BUN will work towards the establishment of a joint fund to support proposed research projects. It will also engage actively in competition for educational or research programmes, offered by the European Union or other international bodies.

The BUN supports the large scale exchange of academic information and ideas inside and outside the Network, sharing common resources. This regional information network will form the basis for developing a “distance-learning system” and multimedia teaching facilities. The BUN will cooperate with other academic groups and networks having similar aims.

Activities. To fulfil the above mentioned purposes, the BUN shall engage in the following activities, implementing projects in the field of education, research and culture. More specifically the Network shall:

Cooperation

- coordinate cooperation between members of the Network and the development of effective links, featuring reciprocal exchanges of information and cultural and scientific experiences
- encourage new bilateral university relationships between the member universities
- foster multilateral cooperation projects
- organise cooperation activities with local and national bodies
- develop partnerships in higher education within the European Higher Education Area, the European Research Area and the international academic community
- develop connections with relevant European and international organisations, associations and foundations.

Education

- provide support to the members of BUN for achieving the Bologna process goals

- support its members in organising common undergraduate courses, joint postgraduate programmes, and supervision of doctoral dissertations
- offer language courses of the represented countries, including translation and interpretation training, in order to facilitate mutual understanding and cooperation
- support the use of new technologies and e-learning methods
- strengthen the widest possible access to education and training in the framework of lifelong learning.

Research

- promote and encourage joint research projects among members of the BUN in common fields of interest
- secure grants for graduate students and young researchers from member universities
- support initiatives within the framework of cooperation with transnational research bodies
- promote scientific meetings and training courses for member university researchers
- support and encourage scientific and educational cooperation among universities and research institutions
- encourage collaboration in areas of scientific innovation
- survey current research programmes carried out by individual members, particularly those supported by the EU, in order for other BUN members to join these programmes
- encourage interdisciplinary research related to the cultural and historical heritage of the region as well as contemporary arts
- promote the establishment of PhD and research programmes with a view to encouraging scientific and technical cooperation through the collaborative research projects.

Mobility

- facilitate the mobility of students and teaching staff for a wide spectrum of activities including student work practice
- ensure that student exchange follows the Socrates/Erasmus regulations and procedures including academic recognition

Information

- encourage the collection, exchange and diffusion of documentation, publications, and data bases
- provide information and other services to members of the Network
- diffuse educational and cultural facilities
- establish a website for the diffusion of information and promotion of its goals

Events

- develop human contacts and cultural cooperation by organising meetings, conferences, exhibitions, seminars, workshops, youth and art festivals, sports events, concerts and other activities.

Regional development

- give active support and guidance to members of the Network in enhancing their contributions to society and regional development

ARTICLE 4: MEMBERSHIP

The Network is open to any university willing to participate within the scope of the BALKAN UNIVERSITIES NETWORK Statutes.

Membership categories. The membership of BUN is structured in the following categories: Full Members, Associate Members, and Affiliate Members.

Full Members. Full Members are accredited universities from one of the Balkan countries, conferring all three tiers of degrees (BA, MA/MSc, PhD), recognised by the relevant Ministry of Education or other official institution with regulatory attributions in the field of Higher Education. A Full Member has one vote in the General Assembly, is informed about all projects and other relevant data available within the BUN, can initiate, promote or coordinate joint cooperative projects, has access to BUN services, is promoted by all BUN publications and website, proposes nominations and is represented in BUN eligible positions, plays an active role in the cooperative projects within the BUN, is represented at the BUN meetings and events, pays the membership fee established by the BUN General Assembly.

Associate Members. Associate Members are accredited universities from other European countries outside the Balkan area. Associate members shall be admitted in accordance with the cooperation programmes in which they are involved and their membership may be limited to the duration of each particular programme. Associate Members enjoy the rights and privileges of Full Members, except for the right to vote or hold elective office.

Affiliate Members. Universities from countries outside Europe, organisations, institutions, networks, research centres working in the field of international higher education, research and university cooperation can be granted Affiliate status. Affiliate Members will support the Network in relation to its programmatic actions.

Representation. A university shall be represented by its Rector/President/Vice-Chancellor or by a Vice-Rector/Vice-President nominated by the Rector/President/Vice-Chancellor as his/her representative.

Admission. Membership of the BUN shall be proposed by the Board to the General Assembly. The proposal of the Board shall be subject to approval by the General Assembly. The rights accorded to Members of the Network by these Statutes may be suspended or membership may be terminated by decision of the General Assembly in the case of those members who have not fulfilled their subscription obligations. Each member of the Network shall pay an annual subscription, the amount of which and the maximum delay period shall be determined by the General Assembly. Members may resign from the Network after giving six months' notice of intention to do so to the Board; the subscription for the year already started shall remain payable.

ARTICLE 5: STRUCTURE, ORGANISATION AND ADMINISTRATION

The organs of the Network are: the General Assembly, the Board, the Presidency

General Assembly

Composition. The General Assembly shall comprise one representative from each Full Member and Associate Member, with only Full Members entitled to vote. The General Assembly is the main decision-making body of the Network, thus underlying the fact that it remains a cooperation of autonomous institutions. The Members will be represented by the Rectors. A Rector may be replaced by a Vice-Rector, provided that the latter has a mandate to take decisions.

Operation. The General Assembly shall meet once a year. The quorum shall be two-thirds of voting members. The Board prepares the meeting, reports on its activities in the past year, analyses the progress made and presents the planning of the Network in the coming years. Decisions shall be made by a simple majority of those present, except where the provisions of Articles 7 or 8 apply. Extraordinary meetings of the General Assembly may be convened either by the President or by a formal request in writing from one-fourth of the Full Members. Meetings of the General Assembly may also be attended by guests with no vote invited by the Board.

Function. The General Assembly is the supreme Governing Body of the Network. The General Assembly shall:

- determine the strategic direction of the Network in fulfilling its goals
- elect the President and the Board
- approve membership applications
- review and amend the Statutes of the Network, according to the provision of Article 7
- approve the annual accounts, the budget for the forthcoming year, receive the report of the President on the activities of the past year and plans for the future.

Board

Composition. The Board comprises the President and four members. The four members shall be active Rectors or Vice-Rectors for the full two-year period of their office in the Board. They shall hold office for a term of two years and shall be eligible for re-election for one further term. There shall be no more than one Board member from any one country including the President. The Board shall appoint, on the nomination of the President, one Vice-President, from among the members of the Board. If a casual vacancy occurs as a result of the resignation of a member of the Board, Rectors or their representatives will be notified that there is an additional place to be filled at the next General Assembly. The person nominated and elected to fill that place shall hold office for the unexpired period of office of the previous holder and shall be eligible for re-nomination and re-election at the end of that period. To secure smooth functioning of the Board members, each one will be provided with adequate administrative support by his/her university, including the expenses of the Board meetings.

Operation. The Board shall meet in ordinary session twice a year. The quorum shall be three members, including the President or the Vice-President. Decisions shall be made by a simple majority of those present. It may be convened for extraordinary sessions by the President and shall be so convened by him/her on the written request of a two-thirds majority of the members of the Board. International organisations may be invited by the Board to attend Board meetings as observers.

Function. The Board is responsible for the implementation of the policy of the Network, for the planning of activities, and for the management of Network affairs. The Board is responsible for the proper execution of the decisions of the General Assembly. The Board shall:

- prepare discussion papers
- prepare proposals for the annual budget for approval by the General Assembly
- be responsible for implementation of the budget
- make proposals for new member to the General Assembly
- prepare the annual accounts and the annual report for approval by the General Assembly
- arrange programmes, including biannual meetings, for the exchange of information and experience on matters of common interest to members, and identify and disseminate good practice in universities
- set up task forces, committees or working parties, charged with the execution of specific tasks and reporting to the General Assembly.

Presidency

Composition. The Presidency shall comprise the President and the Vice-President.

The President. The President shall be elected by the Full Members of the Network. The President is eligible for presidency provided s/he has a two-year term ahead as Rector at his/her university. The President shall hold office for two years and shall be eligible for re-election for one further term. The President shall be a Rector or Vice-Rector of a Full Member institution. In case the President resigns, s/he is represented by the Vice-President until the next General Assembly meeting, when a new President is elected for the unexpired period of office of the previous holder and shall be eligible for re-nomination and re-election at the end of that period. The President shall:

- lead and represent the Network
- convene meetings of the General Assembly and the Board
- chair meetings of these bodies.

The Vice-President. The Vice-President assists the President in the execution of his/her duties, and deputises for the President in his/her absence.

Secretariat

The administration of the BUN will be supported by the BUN Secretariat and the Institutional Secretariats.

BUN Secretariat. The BUN Secretariat is established and supported by the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and serves as the official organisational centre of the

Network. The BUN Secretariat shall undertake activities such as the following, depending on its capacity:

- keep files and distribute relevant information
- issue and deposit the official documents of the BUN
- be in permanent contact with the members, Institutional Secretariats, centres and other structures of the BUN
- take care of all the technical matters in organising BUN meetings
- follow the activities of the BUN implementing the decisions of the General Assembly, the Board and the President
- keep the contacts with related bodies and other regional and international organisations
- maintain and update the BUN database
- edit and circulate the BUN newsletter
- follow the payments of membership fees and other incomes
- implement the distribution of funds
- assure the promotion of the BUN and its members in Europe and worldwide
- organise a centre for information on higher education in the Balkan area and the dissemination of this information
- provide a platform for the better distribution and exchange of laboratory material, books and other facilities for university study and research
- facilitate the student and academic staff mobility
- undertake such and other tasks as are comparable with the aims of the Network

Institutional Secretariats. The Institutional Secretariats shall be contact points among the Full Members of the Network, supporting the Rector or Vice-Rector representing the institution in the BUN.

ARTICLE 6: FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Subscription. All categories of Members are required to pay an annual subscription. The General Assembly approves the amount, scale and criteria of the membership fees. A Member shall be entitled to vote only if all due subscriptions have been paid. In cases where payment is overdue, membership will be suspended or withdrawn by the Assembly, on the recommendation of the Board.

Other resources. The BUN may receive grants, endowments, bequests, or other forms of donations from public or private sources, both national and international, and the European Union, allocated to the specific purposes covered by its aims.

Management. The administrative and accountancy management of the Network is carried out according to the provisions regulating the Administration, Finances and Accountancy of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, the Network's seat. The bank account and accounting registers are kept by the BUN Secretariat. The Board is financially accountable to the General Assembly. A financial report has to be prepared and presented to the General Assembly. A Board Member shall be responsible for fund-raising and the management of the financial affairs of the Network.

Financial year. The financial year of the Network shall run from 1 January to 31 December.

ARTICLE 7: AMENDMENT

Amendments to these Statutes shall require a decision of the General Assembly. A proposal to amend the articles of the Statutes may be made by the Board or upon a written request of at least one-fourth of the Full Members. The Articles may be amended by a decision of a meeting of the General Assembly at which at least one-half of all Full Members are present. A proposal to amend the Articles shall require the approval of at least two-thirds of those present at a meeting of the General Assembly. If a meeting of the General Assembly fails to achieve the required quorum of Full Members, a proposal to amend the Articles may nevertheless be adopted if approved by at least one-third of all Full Members.

Proposals for the amendment of these Statutes shall be submitted in writing to the Board not less than five months before the opening date of the General Assembly at which they are to be considered, and copies shall be sent to all Full Members. Regulations which are complimentary to the Statutes but do not alter them may be proposed by the Board and submitted for ratification to the next General Assembly.

ARTICLE 8: DISSOLUTION

A proposal to dissolve the BUN may be made by the Board on its initiative or acting on the initiative of the President or upon a written request of at least one-fourth of the Full Members. The Network may be dissolved by a decision of a meeting of the General Assembly at which at least two-thirds of the Full Members are present. A proposal to dissolve the Network shall require the absolute majority of all Full Members.

The merger of the Network, whether by way of takeover or by way of combination, or its conversion into another kind of legal entity, may be decided by the General Assembly under the same quorum and majority conditions as applicable in case of dissolution.

In the event of dissolution, the assets of the Network shall be transferred to a non-profit organisation promoting inter-university cooperation in the Balkan area. If that is not possible, the assets shall be equally divided among the Full Members.

In case of the General Assembly making a decision to terminate the BUN, the Assembly shall appoint a dissolution commission to handle the matters pertaining to the dissolution.

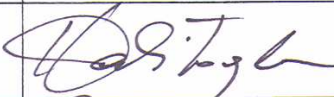
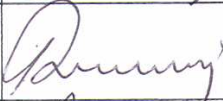

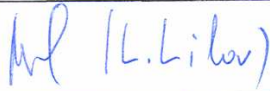

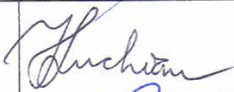

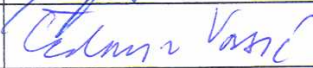

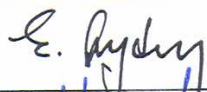

ARTICLE 9: MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

The working language of the Network is English.

ARTICLE 10: FINAL PROVISIONS

The present Statutes are an attachment to the PROTOCOL establishing the BALKAN UNIVERSITIES NETWORK approved by the Conference of Rectors held on February 10, 2006, in Thessaloniki, Greece.

The members signing the PROTOCOL are the founding members of the BALKAN UNIVERSITIES NETWORK.

UNIVERSITIES	RECTORS / VICE-RECTORS	SIGNATURES
Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece	Prof. E. Douka-Kabitoğlu, Vice-Rector	
University of Tirana, Albania	Prof. Sezai Rokaj, Rector	
University "Eqrem Cabej" of Gjirokaster, Albania	Prof. Mema Bektash, Vice-Rector	
University St. Kliment Ohridski, Sofia, Bulgaria	Prof. Ljubomir Lilov, Vice-Rector	
"Ss. Cyril and Methodius" University, Skopje, FYROM	Prof. Gjorgji Martinovski, Rector	
"Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University, Iasi, Romania	Prof. Henri Luchian, Vice-Rector	
University of Belgrade, Serbia	Prof. Ljubisa Topisirovic, Vice-Rector	
University of Arts Belgrade, Serbia	Prof. Cedomir Vasic, Rector	
University of Novi Sad, Serbia	Prof. Radmila Marinkovic - Neducin, Rector	
Canakkale Onsekiz Mart University, Turkey	Prof. Ramazan Aydin, Rector	
University of Macedonia Economic and Social Sciences, Thessaloniki, Greece	Prof. Ilias Kouskouvelis, Vice-Rector	

Thessaloniki, 23rd of June, 2006