

PROTOCOL
FOR THE "BALKAN UNIVERSITIES NETWORK"

The undersigned Rectors, representing Universities most of which are already cooperating with Aristotle University in successful scientific agreements, met at Thessaloniki on the 10th of February 2006 and, through a constructive dialogue and understanding, decided to establish the BALKAN UNIVERSITIES NETWORK.

The aim of this network is to undertake those initiatives that will bring together Universities in our 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 neighborly 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.

The multinational and interdisciplinary character of the network would accommodate and focus on the special historical and cultural characteristics of our nations, but also engage, at a later stage, 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 involved could also be considered.

The main aim of the "Balkan Universities Network" would be 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 history, education, culture and the arts.

The network is open to any university willing to participate in joint projects or educational programmes within the scope of the "Balkan Universities Network" agreement.

Members of the "Balkan Universities Network" agree to harmonize their curricula, if possible, to enable students and teaching staff exchange, thus contributing to the promotion of cultural understanding, friendship, peace and dialogue among the member states.

The "Balkan Universities Network" will work towards the establishment of a joint fund to support proposed research projects, especially in the fields of Balkan history, culture and the arts. It will also engage actively in competition for educational or research programmes, offered by the European Union or other international bodies.

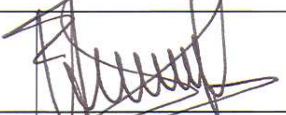

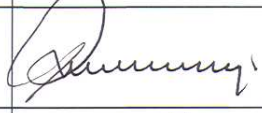

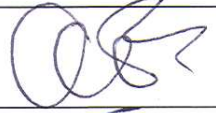
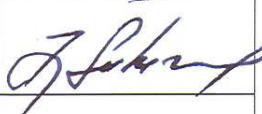

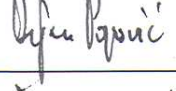
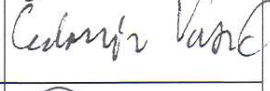

The "Balkan Universities Network" will exchange information by establishing a strong regional information network based on high technology, and share common knowledge resources. This regional information network will form the basis for developing a "distant learning system" and multi-media teaching facilities.

The "Balkan Universities Network" will cooperate with other academic groups and networks having similar aims.

The structure and function of the network will be defined by the Statute of the "Balkan Universities Network".

Signed in Thessaloniki on February 10th, 2006

Participating Universities:

Aristotle University of Thessaloniki - Greece	Prof. John Antonopoulos, Rector	
University of Macedonia Economic and Social Sciences, Thessaloniki - Greece	Prof. Konstantinos Velenzas, Rector	
University of Tirana - Albania	Prof. Sezai Rokaj, Rector	
University "Eqrem Cabej" of Gjirokaster-Albania	Prof. Hristaq Kikinas, Rector	
University St. Kliment Ohridski, Sofia-Bulgaria	Prof. Alexander Fedotoff, Vice-Rector	
"Sts. Cyril and Methodius" University, Skopje - FYROM	Prof. Ljubica Suturkova, Vice-Rector	
"Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University, Iasi - Romania	Prof. Dumitru Oprea, Rector	
University of Belgrade, Serbia - Montenegro	Prof. Dejan Popovic, Rector	
University of Arts Belgrade, Serbia - Montenegro	Prof. Cedomir Vasic, Rector	
University of Novi Sad, Serbia - Montenegro	Prof. Radmila Mainkovic-Neducin, Rector	
Canakkale Onsekiz Mart University - Turkey	Prof. Ramazan Aydin, Rector	