

REPORT OF THE FIRST EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING OF THE BLACK SEA UNIVERSITIES NETWORK

1. The First Meeting of the Black Sea Universities Network was held on 11 December 1998 in Bucharest, Romania.

2. The meeting was attended by the following participants:

ROMANIA

Prof. Adrian Bavaru: President, BSUN

ALBANIA

Prof. Leka Bezhani: Vice Rector, Tirana State University

AZERBAIJAN

Prof. Rafiq Mehdiyev: Rector, Azerbaijan Technical University

BULGARIA

Prof. Anna Nedialkova: President, Varna Free University (VFU)

Prof. George Enchev: Director, International Relations, VFU

REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

Prof. Valentin Amariei: Vice rector, Technical University

TURKEY

Prof. Suha Sevuk: Rector, Middle East Technical University

YUGOSLAVIA

Prof. Svetolik Avramov: Rector, University of Novi Sad

GUESTS

Prof. Andrei Marga: Minister, Romanian Ministry of National Education

Prof. Mihai Korca : Secretary of State, Romanian Ministry of National Education

Mircea Muresan: Public Relations Manager, Romanian Ministry of Education

Academician Mircea Malitza: Founding President, Black Sea University Foundation

Prof. Cornel Leucutia: Executive President, BSUF

Luminita Ivanciu: Program Manager, BSUF

BSUN INTERNATIONAL PERMANENT SECRETARIAT TEAM

Rita Avram

Prof. Laurentiu Constantin

Prof. Nina Macarov

3. Agenda of the meeting:

I. Approval of the agenda;

II. Report of Activity;

III. The 1999-2000 Program of BSUN;

IV. BSUF - measures to develop BSUN;

V. The Structure of BSUN.

4. The meeting was chaired by Professor Adrian Bavaru, President of BSUN, who thanked the participants for their attendance.
5. The agenda was discussed and approved.
6. Professor Bavaru presented the report of activity for the period that followed the Second Conference of BSUN Rectors.

The main concern of the International Permanent Secretariat was to publish the third issue of the BSUN Bulletin, which was exclusively, devoted to the works of the Second Conference of BSUN Rectors.

The draft Framework Program for 1999-2000, comprising the activities approved by the Executive Board is to be published in the next Bulletin of BSUN.

To evaluate the conditions in the member countries, the President of BSUN, Professor Adrian Bavaru visited, from 1st to 8th November 1998, several universities from Turkey, where he met and had talks with representatives of the Middle East Technical University from Ankara, Istanbul Technical University, and Bosphorus University from Istanbul. Together with Istanbul University, The National Council for Higher Education Ankara, and the TUBITAK, all agreed to join BSUN. On the same occasion the delegation visited the General Secretariat for Cooperation in the Black Sea Region, where the President of BSUN, Professor Adrian Bavaru met Vassil Baytchev, Secretary General of BSEC. It was agreed that BSEC should apply for the status of observer with BSUN.

Since the next conference of BSUN will be held in Varna, a delegation from Varna Free University visited Ovidius University of Constantza in an exchange of experience.

In November, a delegation from Istanbul University visited Ovidius University Constantza to establish long term cooperation with BSUN. The Romanian Ministry of National Education was informed about these activities as well as of the desire of the National Council for Higher Education from Turkey to cooperate with the Romanian Ministry of Education and approved them.

The participants were informed that the European Academy for Science and Arts from Austria expressed its wish to join BSUN as associate member.

7. The Draft Program was presented and approved by the Executive Board.

8. In his speech, academician Mircea Malitza presented some BSUF materials and spoke of the interest in BSUN of a number of universities and institutes from the USA. The Black Sea University Foundation will organize post-graduate courses open to all the members of BSUN, who are expected to offer courses in fields of interest in exchange. Academician Mircea Malitza announced the decision of PABSEC to create a Coordination Center for the mutual recognition diplomas within BSUF, which could then function within BSUN. He also presented the intention of the regional IOI, located in Constantza, to convene a meeting of experts on *the Ecology of the Black Sea*. He also informed that Washington State University, which is interested in creating a long-distance learning center, could become an important sponsor for BSUN. Mircea Malitza proposed that the Program of Sustainable Development and the National Center for Sustainable Development should cooperate.

9. Mr. Calin Georgescu, manager of the National Center for Sustainable Development expressed the desire of the institution he represents to become a regional center and to use its computer network to this aim. The national strategy for Sustainable Development will be presented in a few months, the first priority being the implementation of sustainable development in the Black Sea area in particular. One of the reasons for setting up such a center was to concentrate actions in Romania and the Black Sea region, and to be a source of ideas to this purpose. He presented materials about the Internet Service of the Center, and about integrating BSUN into it.

10. Mihail Korka, Secretary of State with the Romanian Ministry of Education, emphasized the necessity for regional development and the preservation of national culture and identity through joint projects in this period of transition, restructuring, major changes, and globalization. He stated that BSUN is a model of regional development. The Ministry will be informed about the results of this meeting. Mr. Korka reiterated the willingness of the Ministry of Education to support the implementation of the BSUN Program.

11. The speeches of the participants:

Rector Svetolik Avramov thanked the hosts, the Ministry of Education and the Secretariat of the Network and raised issues connected to the financial problems that Yugoslavia and most of other Eastern European countries are faced with. The universities he represents already belong to a regional network, together with Bulgarian ones, and are willing to cooperate with BSUN. In the program of that Network, which was agreed upon last year, they established cooperation ties in various fields: culture, energy, water resources. They are ready to begin cooperation by organizing meetings and summer courses on such issues as "National Problems" and "National

Minorities". They want to cooperate with our Network in fields such as sport, medical sciences, and management, the running of MA and MSc programs.

Rector Anna Nedialkova (Varna Free University) expressed the offer of her university to host the next conference and described the facilities that will be made available (building by the sea, hostel, and campus).

Rector Suha Sevuk from the METU thanked the organizers for hospitality and gave a short presentation of the university he represented. Professor Sevuk is also president of the Mediterranean Council.

Vice rector Leka Bezhani (Tirana State University) gave a presentation of his university.

Rector Rafiq Mehdiyev (Azerbaijan Technical University) mentioned some of the changes that have occurred in Azerbaijan in education since 1992. Azerbaijan switched to the European educational system, operating changes in the curricula, two year MA and MS program being run. Azerbaijan is not a Black Sea Country but it wants to cooperate with BSUN. The university that Professor Mehdiyev represented belongs to the Network of the Caspian Sea Universities. One problem worth considering is finding financial assistance for common projects. An application to join the BSUN was also made on behalf of the Azerbaijan Civil Engineering University.

Vice rector Valentin Amariei thanked for the hospitality he enjoyed and he introduced his university as one of the largest in the Republic of Moldova, consisting of technical colleges and affiliated colleges. The University offers training for engineering, scientific research and in-service training for postgraduates in a Continual Development Centre. The University has international ties with similar institutions in Romania, France, Canada, the USA and Turkey. Within the framework of BSUN, the Technical University of Moldova wishes to cooperate with other university by mobility programs, for academics and students, by the coordination of curricula in similar specialties, participation in the summer schools of the Network, common research projects and by contributing to the drawing up of a regional development program.

Professor Adrian Bavaru, President of the Black Sea University Network (BSUN) extended an invitation for two students from each Network university to take part in two summer school courses: *American Culture and Civilization* and *Romanian Culture and Civilization*.

Mrs. Anna Nedialkova stated that one of the priorities for her university is to organize the forthcoming conference. After having made contacts with several universities in Bulgaria, it has been decided for the Varna Free University to be the conference venue. The help is also needed of the BSUN International Secretariat, although other universities in Bulgaria have offered their help with the conference organization. The suggestion was made for the next meeting of the Executive Committee to take place also in Varna. The Bulgarian National Ministry of Education will be giving support for the conference current expenses.

Mr. Suha Sevuk, President of the Middle East Technical University stressed the importance of degree recognition procedures and the teacher and student mobility programs. The cooperation is extremely important for the regional development as well as for a better student training. Each university will have to make suggestions for the teacher exchange program, including the subject areas needed, the per diem and salary. The mobility program can only be started when the universities have selected qualified teachers for the program. Mr. Sevuk invites five students and a professor to take part in the Summer School courses. METU will cover all the expenses, excluding students' travel costs.

METU thinks it is able to put to good use its 5 years' experience in the regional networking programs in the hope it will give financial support for those who want to go there.

A Distance Learning Centre will be opened in 1999 and METU is willing to allow the Network to use it.

As for the Framework Program Project regarding the link between the university and the economic community, METU intends to set up a Business Incubator.

Mr. Sevuk suggests that careful consideration should be given to the negotiation procedures with the Europeans and common steps should be taken regarding the regional environmental protection and the pollution of the Danube. TUBITAK and BSEC are to be contacted in April 1999 in order to rise funding for a part of the BSUN projects.

Academician Malitza suggests connecting our Network to that of the Caspian Sea; that could be done either by an agreement between the two or by coopting the Caspian Sea network into ours. The proposal was accepted, the connection procedures being subject to further refinement. The announcement was made for a great 1999 UNESCO scientific conference;

academician Malitza suggests preparation procedures should be started for the Network to take part in the Conference in order to stress the importance of the region's potential, as well as to present our projects for the Sustainable Development, Distance Learning, degree recognition and scientific research activities.

There is a BSUN Web site on the UOC server, open to the connection of each university member in the network.

12. The organizational structure entails the debating of the three main directions:

- setting up a working group to prepare the proceedings of the forthcoming conference, stating priorities and centralizing the proposals of the member universities;
- the preparation done by the BSUN Permanent Secretariat of a material containing data about the Network, further to be sent to the Ministries of Education in each member country, together with each new activity;
- Fund - rising with various organizations, for the future academic and research activities. Decisions to be made as for a minimum sum of money to be paid by each Member university in order to cover the expenses of the Network Secretariat.

Professor Adrian Bavaru, President, explained to everyone that the Network expenses (the costs for the secretary, correspondence and communications) was covered by the UOC. It has been decided that the annual membership fee will be \$500 for each member of the Network. The universities unable to pay this year's fee can start with the next year.

A few projects will be presented in Brussels and the EU and, if they're accepted, the money will form a small budget for the Network, as well as the money obtained from sponsorship. Professor Sevuk will be searching for sponsorship with Turkish and Albanian firms.

Professor Adrian Bavaru, President, suggests that for the summer courses the diplomas awarded should have both the head of the university and of the BSUN.

Mr. Malitza suggests the use of the coupon system, currently used by UNESCO and financed by the SOROS Foundation.

The forthcoming conference will take place between 23-25 September 1999, and the Executive Board meeting between 22 and 23 May 1999. Invitations will be extended by the BSUN International Permanent Secretariat.

The seminar entitled "The University-part of the globalization" organized by UNESCO/CEPES will take place in Constantza, between 18 and 20 May.