

ALLIANCE OF UNIVERSITIES FOR DEMOCRACY

ELEVENTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

November 5 - 8, 2000 Sofia, Bulgaria

Host Universities: Kliment Ohridsky University of Sofia

American University of Bulgaria

Our 2000 conference was held starting Sunday afternoon, November 5, and ending November 8 after lunch. The Opening Session was held in the Great Hall of the University of Sofia, while other sessions were held at the host hotel, the Rodina Hotel, 8 Totleben Boulevard, 1506 Sofia.

CONFERENCE THEME: RESPONSIBLE AND RESPONSIVE EDUCATION

At the same time that differences between nations and cultures led to horrible conflicts causing suffering, devastation, and ruin to millions of people, rapid advances in science and technology have been taking place. The peoples of nations, ethnic groups, and regions, such as those living on the Balkan Peninsula, are rediscovering the need to educate themselves for utilizing better their energies and resources for constructive development in order for them to find a place in our highly competitive world.

To this end, the themes of RESPONSIBLE CITIZENSHIP and RESPONSE TO CHANGE must be somehow incorporated into higher education. Universities, because of their accepted roles in societies are well positioned to take leadership positions in this important need for progress.

The year 2000 Conference of AUDEM was organized to address these needs in the contexts of the AUDEM NEW AGENDA that characterize 21st century universities and on the founding AUDEM orientations of enhancing the role of education in promoting democratic institutions, economic development including technology transfer, decentralized decision making, human health, sustainable habitation of the earth, and common moral and social values.

Three interrelated thematic areas were featured.

I. Human Rights and Moral and Social Values.

This theme was chosen to help articulate and further develop understandings of the fundamental features of civil and democratic societies. Also discussed were applications of these concepts in higher education curricula and communities.

II. Organization of Higher Education into Regional Systems.

Ways to improve universities attempted to address two goals: first, quality instruction and research; second, ready access for many people to higher education that they can afford within the reach of their transportation and financial means. Such goals can be met best by establishing suitably structured higher-education systems at national, regional, and state levels. These systems have been highly developed in the United States. A major development in Central and Eastern Europe of such a system is now taking place in Hungary. In addition, smaller institutions are needed in many strategic locations to provide access to many people.

III. The Impact of Developments in Science and Technology.

The AUDEM NEW AGENDA has two thematic directions. First, all universities -CEE, American and all others - must recognize the rapid and sweeping changes taking place in the world. Many lines of research and development have converged to give rise to such major change agents as the Internet, electronic marketing of products and services, revolutions in telecommunications and whole new modalities of medical treatment, to name only a few. Even intellectual thought regarding democracy, theology, and ethics has taken new directions, partly because of the rapidity and pervasiveness of efficient communication and highly accelerated publication of ideas. Second, universities must realize that these changes are forcing radical alterations in how teaching will be done (electronic methodology), an expansion in the types of people taking classes (distance-learning students outside classrooms), and even re-assessments of what should be taught (concepts rather than facts now readily available electronically).

Only by becoming more integrated into the international educational network can universities in CEE and elsewhere hold their existing positions. To become internationally competitive, numerous major alterations will be necessary.

THE AUDEM 2000 DEMOCRACY AWARD

This year's award went to the OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATION SOFIA which was cited for its many years of broad ranging support of Bulgarian higher educational institutions, including many individual scholars and the Bulgarian library network (NALIN). The award was presented in the Opening Session by DR. JULIA WATKINS, Conference Program Chair and President of the American University in Bulgaria.

ANNUAL BANQUET AND EXCURSION

Hosted by the American University in Bulgaria, these events took place in Blagoevgrad. Festivities started with a performance by the noted Pirin Ensemble, sponsored by Bulgaria's Pirin Pee Foundation. This concert took place in the "Peyo Yavorov" Hall and was an exciting and colorful demonstration of the singing and dancing talent of this noted folk-art group. The Reception/Banquet that followed in the Grand Foyer of the University was a feast that featured Bulgarian and regional dishes and gave opportunities for people to make friendships

and enjoy the harp music of one of the faculty members of the University.

ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING AND REORGANIZATION DISCUSSION

A discussion of the reorganization of AUDEM (see announcement on home page) to be located in Central and Eastern Europe hosted by the American University in Bulgaria was discussed at a meeting Monday evening following the typical Town Meeting. Further discussion of these changes took place at the Annual Business Meeting when eight new and continuing members of the Board of Directors were elected.

CLOSING LUNCHEON

During the Closing Luncheon, the new Board of Directors elected the following Officers to serve for the following year starting immediately:

President: Dr. Julia Watkins, President, American University in Bulgaria

First Vice President: Dr. Ryszard Pohorecki, Professor, Chemical Engineering, Warsaw Institute of Technology

Second Vice President: Dr. David Payne, Vice President of Academic Affairs, San Houston State University, Huntsville, Texas

David A. Hake, University of Tennessee, also named the Acting Secretary-Treasurer