

## First Humboldt Kolleg in Macedonia

April 20–23, Ohrid, Macedonia

In April this year the First International Conference supported by the prestigious *Alexander von Humboldt* Foundation from Germany was held in Ohrid, under the auspice of the alumni association *Humboldt and DAAD Club-Macedonia*, German Embassy, and the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics in Skopje. This unique conference (in the German terminology of the Humboldt Foundation “Humboldt Kolleg”), entitled as “*At the door of European Union: The role of the science and research for sustainable development of the Balkan region*”, was designed to put forward the role of the research for the progress of the society in general in a form of academic discussion by leading intellectuals, i.e., Humboldt alumni fellows, their distinguished colleagues from the Balkan region, eminent group of professor from Germany, and prospective, young researchers.

The conference gathered 66 invited participants from *eight countries* (Macedonia, Bulgaria, Serbia, Kosovo, Romania, Italy, Jordan and Arab Emirates), including 27 young scholars and students, who gave a valuable contribution to the conference programme and conclusions. The conference commenced with an opening ceremony in the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts, on April 19, 2018, welcomed by the President of the Academy, Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Macedonia, German Ambassador in Macedonia, and Presidents of the two universities - Ss. Cyril and Methodius from Skopje and Goce Delčev from Štip. Besides conference participants, the opening ceremony was attained by a broad audience of more than hundred members of the academic community of Macedonia, who share the values of the excellence in the scientific research and international academic cooperation, including the first and oldest Humboldt fellow from Macedonia, Prof. Dr. Risto Buzalkov (91) (Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics in Skopje). The opening lecture on the academic values promoted by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation has been given by Prof. Dr. Valentin Mirčeski, the President of the Macedonian Humboldt Alumni Association and the initiator of the conference.

The working programme of the conference in Ohrid from April 20 to 23, 2018, encompassed rich, heterogeneous subjects spanning from natural sciences (chemistry, physics, mathematics, biology), engineering and energetic, sociology, law, history of sciences, philology, German language and translation, pedagogy and didactics, to the general presentation dedicated to the international research cooperation and networking (Humboldt alumni associations, programmes in the frame of EU Horizon 2020, EU initiatives for Western Balkan Countries, DAAD programmes, etc.). In a metaphorical sense, the working program of the conference was overwhelmed with the “Humboldt spirit”, stimulating a perfect flow of ideas and thoughts among participants, passionate discussions on the role of science and research, a critical call for the necessity of support of young, promising scholars etc.

It is not the frequent case to witness such fruitful and inspired discussions among heterogeneous academic community - natural sciences, humanities and social sciences. The conference was finalized with a *Roundtable Discussion*, coordinated by the Prof. Dr. Zoran Zdravkovski, President of the Society of Chemists and Technologist of Macedonia and Head of the Department of Culture and Education of the German Embassy in Macedonia, Mrs. Katrin Fruehinselefd. Conference conclusions as well as all other materials can be found at the webpage <http://humboldt-kolleg-ohrid.mk>.

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