

# BUANEWS

Balkan Universities Association E- Bulletin

June 2024 / 36





# Balkan Universities Association

**Signature in Vienna of the Agreement between “BOKU University of Vienna, Austria and AUT Agricultural University of Tirana.**

Happy that after many efforts and hard work by BOKU University and AUT teams, the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Republic of Austria was finalized in Vienna, specifically dedicated to the strategic project of Cooperation between BOKU University, Vienna and the Agricultural University of Tirana.

This Agreement was signed by Mr. Martin Polaschek, Austrian Federal Minister for Education, Science and Research, Mr. Norbert Totschnig, Austrian Federal Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, Regions and Water Management, Ms. Ogerta Manastirliu, Minister of Education and Sports and Mrs. Anila Denaj, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, in the presence of the management staff of BOKU Vienna University and the Agricultural University of Tirana, as the two main institutions benefiting from this Agreement.

Through this Agreement, which is historic and the most important that a HEI in Albania has achieved, AUT is ready to undertake and implement the most profound reform ever realized in a public university in Albania, aiming at the total change of the current architecture of educational programs and scientific research.

The "BOKU-AUT 2030" project, which will be implemented for the 4-year period (2024-2028), drawn

up by the working groups of both universities, plans a deep reformation of AUT, with the aim of aligning this University within the year 2030 with the standards of BOKU, Vienna (the best and most ranked university in life sciences in Europe), with the final goal that AUT functions like BOKU in Tirana.

Privileged and proud from the support of the Albanian and Austrian Governments, but responsible and aware of the challenges and opportunities offered to all the staff of AUT and especially to young Albanians who wish to study in Albania, where the diploma of BOKU University, Vienna they can get them at AUT Tirana.

**Historic agreement between AUT and BOKU.**

With the presence of Prime Minister Edi Rama, Minister of Education Ogerta Manastirliu and Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development Anila Denaj was signed the historic agreement between the Rector Prof. Dr. Eva Schulev-Steind of the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences BOKU Vienna and Rector Prof. Dr. Fatbardh Sallaku. the Agricultural University of Tirana.

This agreement will transform AUT into a center of excellence with regional influence, benefiting about 6 thousand students. They will have the opportunity to experience a radical change in the structure of teaching and learning, based on the successful model of BOKU, one of the leading universities in natural sciences. Since its establishment in 1951, Agricultural

University of Tirana has produced generations of professionals who have contributed to the development of Albanian agriculture.

In today's challenges of agricultural economic development, a new and innovative approach is necessary. Through this agreement, we are ensuring a quality education and support for the younger generations, as well as those currently studying at AUT.

Happy to start today the 4-year journey with one of the best universities in life sciences, BOKU University, Vienna. During the first meeting of the management board was discussed the main steps and activities for the implementation of this project, aimed at aligning AUT with BOKU standards.





### Launch of the 1st Level International Master in Albania: Open Innovation and Youth Entrepreneurship in the Mediterranean Green Sector.

The University of Agriculture in Tirana (Albania) hosted the launch event of the 1st Level International Master in "Open Innovation and Youth Entrepreneurship in the Mediterranean Green Sector" on 12 June 2024. This new academic programme is a significant investment in the skills of young people, to drive the process of building innovation ecosystems and support a greener and more competitive transition of local economic systems in Albania.

It is a first step in training future innovation managers who will champion new approaches and methodologies in building innovation ecosystems through the involvement of public institutions and business support organizations.

The initiative is promoted by an international partnership between the University of Agriculture of Tirana, LUM University "Giuseppe Degennaro" of Bari, the CIHEAM and the CIHEAM Bari, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, with the support of Intesa Sanpaolo Bank Albania under the auspices of the Apulia Region, the Albanian Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.

The aim of the Master is to train a new generation of innovation managers, facilitate the establishment of start-ups, and encourage private companies to participate in the green transition process towards innovative business models. In addition, the initiative aims to involve students from the Balkan countries, thereby strengthening the geopolitical and social value of the initiative.

The programme also seeks to provide attractive employment opportunities for young people from Albania and the Balkans serving their territories and local economies. Furthermore, it offers a double degree valid in Albania and Italy/EU, thanks to the collaboration between the University of Agriculture in Tirana and the LUM University in Italy.





**The Student Team "SeaCare" of AUTH ranked among the top five in the Global Innovation Final Competition "Invent For The Planet 2024"**

An innovative idea of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki's student team "SeaCare" has emerged, on a global level, as one of the top five solutions to address the topical issue of incidental catches.

The students stood out among 618 students from 19 universities around the world to take part in the "Invent For The Planet 2024" competition.

The team from AUTH has proposed a solution to a significant problem that threatens the lives of hundreds of thousands of marine organisms, including dolphins, small whales, turtles, seals, and sharks. Many of these marine species, several of which are under protection, are often at risk of unintentional entanglement in fishing nets. Within 48 hours, the team man-

aged to coordinate and propose an innovative device that utilizes photo-acoustic waves to deter large marine species, without impacting the fish that fishermen intend to catch.

**DROPSTAR: The first Greek student experiment on the REXUS rocket was carried out by the BEAM 3rd Gen team of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki**

The first Greek student experiment on a REXUS rocket flight took place on Tuesday 12 March 2024, at 7:15 in the morning (Greece time), in northern Sweden (Kiruna), by the student team BEAM 3rd Gen of AUTH.

The aim of the DROPSTAR experiment (Study of Oil Droplet Coalescence in Emulsions in Microgravity) was to produce an emulsion and study its behaviour throughout the flight of the REXUS rocket. In particular, the mechanism of emulsion droplet coalescence in microgravity was investigated.

The REXUS/BEXUS project is implemented under the bilateral Agency Agreement between the German Aerospace Center (DLR) and the Swedish National Space Agency (SNSA). The Swedish share of the payload is made available to students from other European countries through a collaboration with the European Space Agency (ESA).

The seven-member BEAM 3rd Gen team of AUTH was created in August 2020 and consists of students from the Departments of Physics and Electrical & Computer Engineering at AUTH.

For more information about BEAM 3rd Gen team of AUTH: <https://beamproject.gr/beam-3rd-gen/>



**The “Cinema and Artificial Intelligence” event, organized by was successfully hosted at the historic Atlas 1948 Cinema.**

The “Cinema and Artificial Intelligence” event, organized by İstinye University under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and with the support of the General Directorate of Cinema, was met with great interest.

Held at the historic Atlas 1948 Cinema, the event was attended by our Rector Prof. Dr. Erkan İbiş, General Director of Cinema Birol Güven, the project coordinator on behalf of İstinye University, Associate Professor Dr. Şebnem Özdemir, Head of the Data Science Department, and significant figures from the cinema world.

The event featured discussions on topics such as “Artificial Intelligence from Past to Present,” “The Struggle to Become Human with Artificial Intelligence,” “Artificial Intelligence on the Silver Screen,” and “Machines Making Cinema.” Speakers included Emrah

Kaya, Cenk Caner, Mustafa Cıvıız, Emre Yetim, Yusuf Fırat Atmaca, Renan Bilek, Barış Erdoğan, and Eylem Kaftan.

Moreover, over 600 cinema and technology enthusiasts from different cities had the opportunity to witness the journey of artificial intelligence from the past to the present, its effects on humans and cinema, through both silver screen reflections and technological presentations, from experts in the field.

As part of the event, an exhibition was also opened showcasing how artificial intelligence reinterprets films and concepts. The second edition of the “Cinema and Artificial Intelligence” event will be held in October.



## Special Students Gathered at İSÜ for the ‘Most Special Festival

As İstinye University, we hosted the ‘Sarıyer Special Education Festival’ on the occasion of May 15th, World Disability Week. At the festival, which was organized with contributions from the students of the Department of Child Development, special education students participated in various workshops, including marbling, drama, origami, and puppet making. They also enjoyed dance and choir performances and conducted a range of interesting experiments.

Each year, World Disability Week is celebrated from May 10-16, and İstinye University (İSÜ) took action by hosting today’s ‘Sarıyer Special Education Festival.’ Held at the Vadi Main Campus to raise awareness and highlight the issues faced by special education students, the festival welcomed students from special education classes and schools, along with their parents and teachers.

Starting in the morning, students enjoyed learning and having fun with a variety of specially prepared activities. The festival also featured performances by special education students and their teachers, including choir, rhythm, song, and dance shows. Additionally, students participated in workshops such as ceramics, marbling, drama, origami, puppet making, balloon shaping, and gastronomy, as well as engaging in park games and competitions for endless fun.

**“WE ARE IN COLLABORATION WITH ALL STAKEHOLDERS OF SOCIETY”**

At the event attended by Sarıyer District Governor Ömer Kalaylı, Sarıyer District National Education Director Hüseyin Özcanlar, Branch Directors Caner Budak, Kerem Akkaya, and Emrah Soylu, and Sarıyer Guidance and Research Center Director Mustafa Toprak, our Rector Prof. Dr. Erkan İbiş stated the following:

“As İstinye University, we are not only a university of science, education, and research but also of culture and the arts. At İSÜ, we collaborate with all stakeholders of society. We are a university open not only to our youth but also to our elderly, children, women,

and people with disabilities—open to all individuals, whether with or without disabilities. In this regard, we are a university that takes pride in serving and is rapidly progressing and rising on this path. Today, under these themes, we have come together in a beautiful social responsibility, societal contribution, and collaboration framework. Here, we are with our university students, special education students under the care of Sarıyer RAM, and their valuable families. I have a personal connection to the subject, as I have lived for many years with my disabled sibling who has Down syndrome. I understand what disability means and how valuable these individuals are, having internalized these feelings. Today, we are holding a wonderful event. The children here are participating in workshops and activities with our university students. I would like to thank everyone who contributed and the valuable families present here.”

The event, coordinated by Sarıyer Guidance and Research Center, also received support from Special Sarıyer Açı Schools, Martyr Lieutenant Ali Büyükdicle Special Education Practice School, Şükran Ülgezen Vocational and Technical Anatolian High School, and Sarıyer Atatürk Vocational Education Center.





## Tekirdağ Namık Kemal University is included in the European Network of Digital Innovation Centers

Tekirdağ Namık Kemal University Trakya Productivity and Innovation Application and Research Center (TRAVİM) and Namık Kemal University Technopark succeeded in being one of the 5 consortia from Turkey participating in the European Digital Innovation Centers Network with the EDIHWESTMARMARA project, which will play a key role in the digital transformation of our country's industry, SMEs and public institutions.

Our University's Trakya Productivity and Innovation Application and Research Center (TRAVİM) and Namık Kemal University Technopark, with the "EDIH WEST MARMARA" project selected as a result of the evaluation of the European Commission, have been entitled to be included in the European Digital Innovation Centers (ADIM) network, which is one of the most important mechanisms of the Digital Europe Program consisting of 151 centers across Europe, whose national coordination is carried out by the Ministry of Industry and Technology and the Digital Transformation Office of the Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, and will be one of the important actors in the digital transformation of our country's industry, SMEs and public institutions.

The EDIH West Marmara project, coordinated by Trakya Development Agency, in partnership with Tekirdağ Namık Kemal University Trakya Productivity and Innovation Application and Research Center (TRAVİM), Namık Kemal University Technopark, Balıkesir Technopolis, Çanakkale Technopark, South Marmara Development Agency, 1773 ITU TTO, Çorlu TSO, Çerkezköy OSB, will provide services such as pre-investment testing, training and skills development, investment finding support, networking and access to innovation ecosystems.

With the project, which aims to contribute to national strategies and European strategies such as Green Deal and Single Market, it is planned that 1000 SMEs will benefit from the trainings to be organized, digital and green maturity assessment studies will be made in 250 SMEs and consultancy programs will be carried out according to these assessments, more than 30 workshops on circular economy, green transformation and digital technologies will be held and 30 experts will be

trained in 48 months.



## Tekirdağ NKU ranks highest among universities in the Thrace region on the URAP list

Tekirdağ Namık Kemal University ranked at the top among universities in the Thrace region in the URAP rankings, which are based on data reflecting academic success. Rector Prof. Dr. Mümin ŞAHİN stated, "Tekirdağ Namık Kemal University is a place where knowledge, technology, and creative thinking are combined to produce science through research and pride.

**Kırklareli University officially joined TURKUNIB  
(Turkic Universities Union)**

Kırklareli University was accepted as a full member of the Turkic Universities Union (TURKUNIB), which is a part of the Organization of Turkic States, at the 7th General Assembly Meeting of the Turkic Universities Union (TURKUNIB) held in Baku on May 20, 2024. Rectors, Vice-Rectors, and representatives of the member universities attended the General Council Meeting hosted by the Azerbaijan State University of Economics. We would like to express our gratitude to the members of TURKUNIB and the Council of Higher Education for supporting us in our application with the encouragement of the President of the Council of Higher Education, Prof. Dr. Erol Ozvar. Our university is proud to join the Turkic World Universities and actively contribute to all academic-scientific cooperation and cultural activities to be carried out by the Union.

**Seminar on “Work Permit Exemptions” concerning International Students**

In cooperation with Kırklareli University, the Ministry of Labor and Social Security, and the Trakya Development Agency, an information meeting on work permit exemption processes for international students was held on 28 May 2024 at the Rectorate Cultural Center, Kırklareli.

Gül Setenay ÖNÜRME, Head of Harmonization and Institutional Cooperation Department of the Ministry of Labor and Social Security, Assistant Expert Elif AYDIN, Assistant Expert Feyzanur ÖRENBAŞ, Trakya Development Agency Kırklareli Coordinator Emre BEJİ, Provincial Immigration Administration, Provincial SGK and İŞKUR representatives and our university's Foreign Relations Office Assoc. Dr. Mehmet Fatih CÖMLEKÇİ attended the event. The meeting ended with a question-and-answer session.





## St. Cyril and St. Methodius University of Veliko Tarnovo and the Open EU alliance partners received funding from the European Commission

The OpenEU alliance, coordinated by the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (UOC), brings together 14 universities and 13 academic, business, rural, municipal and civil society associations from across Europe to create a pan-European open university. OpenEU will contribute to the digital transformation of higher education institutions and the integration of technology in teaching and learning. OpenEU is one of the 14 new alliances awarded funding as part of the European Commission's latest European Universities initiative call for proposals.



## 2024 Summer School in Turkey: EntreAction - “An Innovative Case-to-Video Story Approach in Entrepreneurial Education”.

The EntreAction project is a multinational project with a consortium of seven project partners, led by St. Cyril and St. Methodius University of Veliko Tarnovo (Bulgaria), Leipzig University (SEPT Competence Center, Germany), Maritime University of Szczecin (Poland), Science4People (Poland), Tampere University of Applied Sciences (Finland), University of Aveiro (Portugal), and Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University (Turkey) as project implementing partners.

The event was held at Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University in the period July 15 - 26, 2024 and gathered 54 students and teachers from 6 universities and 1 company to conduct intensive educational courses in three modules: entrepreneurship lectures with video cases, media content lectures and video content creation workshops.





## University of Veliko Tarnovo and Bulgarian News Agency sign cooperation agreement

On 29 April 2024 the University of Veliko Tarnovo and the Bulgarian News Agency signed a cooperation agreement.

Rector prof. Dimitar Dimitrov, PhD and director general of BTA Kiril Valchev signed an agreement to enable students of the University to complete traineeship and practice programmes at the agency's press clubs throughout the country. BTA will also publish news about significant events of the academic and scholarly life at St. Cyril and St. Methodius UVT.

"I am extremely grateful to BTA for allowing our students the opportunity to be part of a traineeship programme with a well-established media institution. Through your agency, they will be able to dip in the spring of journalism and, later, when they graduate, why not become part of the great team of the Bulgarian News Agency," the rector said at the signing of the agreement.

Assoc. prof. Anna Ivanova, PhD, vice-rector for International Relations, also attended the signing.



## UVT once again receives prestigious award

The official ceremony of the awards for Bulgaria's best universities was held in Sofia on 28 April 2024.

Rector prof. Dimitar Dimitrov, PhD, received the special award for First place for the University of Veliko Tarnovo for 2023 for the fields of "History and archaeology", "Philology", "Pedagogy", "Fine arts", "Religion and Theology" and "Theory and Management of Education" for any university outside Sofia.

"On behalf of the academic body at St. Cyril and St. Methodius UVT, I want to express my gratitude for this award and hope that it will be one of many this year. This award is for everyone working at the University. Thank you, colleagues!", prof. Dimitrov said at the ceremony.



## Self-Service Terminal

The University of Applied Sciences in Ferizaj has launched an innovative solution for receiving services from students: the Self-Service Terminal.

In an effort to facilitate the procedures of providing services to students through digitization, this innovative solution was designed and supervised by the Vice-Rector for Digitization, Innovation, and Information Technology, Prof. Assoc. Dr. Fakiye Zejnullahu. The students of UASF, under the supervision of the professors, designed the terminal, produced it in the wood processing laboratory, and colored it.

The Self-Service Terminal offers a fast and efficient way to get the desired services 24/7, without going to the administration offices.

Currently, students can receive four services from the terminal, and the number of services that will be offered from this terminal is in the process of being increased:

- The student's certificate/verification,
- Grades certificate,
- Self-photograph for ID card, and
- To initiate the request for the production of the ID card.

The Self-Service Terminal is conveniently located and easy for students to identify and use.

UASF students made this terminal. The student's contribution to the project is described as follows:

Configuration: Supervised by the dean, Prof. Assoc. Bashkim Cerchini, the installation and configuration of the equipment was carried out by the students:

1. Agon Sejfiu, Applied Informatics at UASF
2. Erand Isufi, Applied Informatics at UASF
3. Afrim Berisha, Engineering and Production Management – Master at UASF

Design: Supervised by the professor, Prof. Assoc. Dr. Muhamet Ymeri, the terminal was designed by the student:

1. Eliona Neziri, Architecture and Interior Design with Wood Products - Master at UASF

Production: Supervised by the Dean, Ph.D.c. Bujar Jashari and professor Ph.D.c. Lulzim Idriizi, the terminal was produced in the wood processing laboratory

at UASF, by the students:

1. Rron Doli, Design and Construction of Wood Products at UASF
2. Elton Lohaj, Design and Construction of Wood Products at UASF
3. Drilon Hyseni, Design and Construction of Wood Products at UASF
4. Flakron Vladi, Design and Construction of Wood Products at UASF
5. Shefki Vladi, Design and Construction of Wood Products at UASF
6. Enis Trupi, Design and Construction of Wood Products
7. Laurant Vladi, Design and Construction of Wood Products

Coloring: Supervised by Professor Lebibe Topani, while the coloring of the terminal was done by the students:

1. Hana Haziri, Faculty of Applied Arts at UASF
2. Valmira Sylejmani, Faculty of Applied Arts at UASF
3. Dren Osmani Faculty of Applied Arts at UASF
4. Elba Gashi (Senior from Ari school in Ferizaj)





## University of Applied Sciences in Ferizaj

The University of Applied Sciences in Ferizaj (UASF) is a higher education institution in Kosovo, focused on providing quality education in the field of applied sciences. As the only university of applied sciences in the Republic of Kosovo, UASF is known for its practice-oriented and innovation-oriented programs, combining theory with practical applications to prepare students for the labor market.

The university offers programs in Engineering, Design, Management and Technology, with a particular focus on areas related to industry and technological development. Modern infrastructure and well-equipped laboratories enable students to develop practical and experimental skills. UASF collaborates closely with businesses and industry, providing opportunities for professional practice and employment for students. With a qualified and dedicated academic staff, the university aims to create a fruitful academic environment where students can develop creativity and critical thinking. Through its innovative approach and focus on applied sciences, UASF is one of the leaders in higher education in Kosovo, contributing to the economic and social development of the country





## The 16th BSUN Black Sea Region Rectors' Conference was organized by the Black Sea Universities Network.

Trakya University Rector Prof. Dr. Erhan Tabakoğlu and the accompanying delegation attended the 16th Black Sea Region Rectors' Conference BSUN 2024 Congress, titled "Future Summit for the Black Sea Region". At the conference hosted by Istanbul University, Rector Tabakoğlu moderated the session on "Promoting Science-Based Decision-Making in Society and the Role of Universities".

The conference started with the opening speeches of Prof. Dr. Erol Özvar, President of the Council of Higher Education, Lazăr Comănescu, Secretary General of BSEC, Prof. Dr. Muzaffer Şeker, President of TUBA, Prof. Dr. Sorin Costreie, President of UNICA, Prof. Dr. Hasan Mandal, President of TÜBİTAK, Prof. Dr. Osman Bülent Zülfişkar, Rector of Istanbul University and Prof. Dr. Marian Preda, President of BSUN.

In his speech, Rector Tabakoğlu, who moderated the session "Promoting Science-Based Decision Making in Society and the Role of Universities," emphasized the importance of integrating technologies into education. Tabakoğlu stated that modern technologies have developed to meet changing needs and underlined the importance of identifying individual and institutional needs and creating risk management with consistent predictions for the future. In the session, Dr. Gary Lawrence Jakobs, President of WAAS, presented "Pathways to a Peaceful and Sustainable Human Future"; Prof. Phoebe Koundouri, Chair of the Department of Economics at Athens University of Economics and Business and the Technical University of Denmark and WAAS Trustee, presented "SDSN Global Climate Hub: Science-Based Solutions for Climate Neutrality and Climate Resilience", Dr. Moneef R. Zou'bi, Science Advisor at InterAction Council, "Science Diplomacy in a Post-Covid World: A Snapshot of Human Security".

Prof. Dr. İsmail Koyuncu, Rector of Istanbul Technical University, gave a speech titled "TÜBA Awards and Research Universities", Prof. Dr. Tony Spasov, Vice Rector of Sofia University, gave a speech titled "Science and Innovation in Green Technologies", Prof.

Dr. Elena Nolica Drucia, Faculty Member of Bucharest University, gave a speech titled "What is the Most Important Thing in terms of the Perception of Social Resilience in Romania?", Dr. Ahmet Aydemir, faculty member of Bilgi University, "Sustainability Literacy" in the session "A Proposal for Financing Joint Research Projects between BSUN Countries" moderated by Prof. Dr. Fahri Ovalı, Faculty Member of Istanbul Medeniyet University.

In the session "Transforming Education and Society" moderated by Prof. Dr. Sorin Costreie, President of UNICA, Prof. Dr. Lucian Ciolan, Vice-Rector of the University of Bucharest, presented "The New Learning Ecosystem of Higher Education: Structures, Processes and Digital Technologies", Janani Ramanathan, Secretary General of WAAS, 'Transforming Education towards Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4)', Alberto Zucconi, WAAS Board of Trustees and President of IACAP, "Student/Person/Human Centered Education: Empowering People to Cope with the Challenges of the Anthropocene", Prof. Dr. Joyaq Kacani, BSUN 2012-2015 Term President, 'Changes caused by the Pandemic in Education', Prof. Dr. Gülşen Eryiğit, Istanbul Technical University, 'Using Language Technologies for Learning', and Prof. Dr. Veysel Bozkurt, Istanbul University, 'ChatGPT and its Use in Education'.

At the end, the General Assembly Meeting took place. The election for the 2024-2026 presidency occurred, and Prof. Dr. Osman Bülent Zülfişkar, Rector of Istanbul University, was unanimously elected as president.



## The Balkan Countries Inter-University Search and Rescue Competition was held.

“Balkan Countries Inter-University Search and Rescue Competition” was organized with Trakya University Edirne Municipality and AFAD, hosted by Edirne Governorship Balkan Cities Cooperation Edirne Platform. In the competition 15 teams and 168 students from Türkiye, Greece, Bulgaria, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Moldova, North Macedonia and Romania competed. After the competitions, an award ceremony was held at Trakya University Karaağaç Campus.

In his speech, Edirne Deputy Mayor Ertuğrul Tanrikulu emphasized that training activities are vital for disaster preparedness and stated that it is highly significant that such an important event is held in Edirne.

Rector Prof. Dr. Erhan Tabakoğlu expressed his gratitude to the member universities for their support. Stating that disasters are a fact of our lives and everyone should be prepared for them, Rector Tabakoğlu said: “We were in Elbistan after the February 6 earthquakes. We have participated in the Gölcük earthquake and have significant work experience in this regard. Thanks to this organization, we have 15 teams ready to come with a single phone call in case of any disaster.”

In his speech at the ceremony, Edirne Governor Yunus Sezer said that disasters are not the problem of a society alone and that they deeply shake humanity and human conscience. In the 6th February earthquake, teams from AFAD, municipalities, and universities took part in rescue operations, he said: “Search and rescue units from more than 100 countries arrived in the region from the first moment of the disaster and participated in search and rescue activities there. The first of these was our search and rescue units from the Balkans. We have seen that our borders are so close that we are people of the same geography and facing the same problems.

In the competition, the International University of Sarajevo from Bosnia and Herzegovina came first, the University Ukshin Hoti Prizren from Kosovo came

second, and Bandırma Onyedi Eylül University came third. While the Çorlu Municipality team came first in the accredited non-governmental organizations' competitions for setting up tents and searching for missing people in the field, the Kırklareli team came first in the volunteer AFAD teams' competitions for setting up tents and searching for missing people in the field.





## Trakya University hosted the 2nd International Symposium on Information-Document Management and Cooperation between Libraries of Balkan Countries

“2nd International Symposium on Interlibrary Information-Document Management and Cooperation among Libraries of Balkan Countries” was held at the Balkan Congress Center with the cooperation of Trakya University Library and Documentation Department, Bartın University, Balkan Libraries Union, Presidency of State Archives, TİKA and Turkish Librarians Association hosted by Trakya University.

The opening ceremony of the symposium included Rector Prof. Dr. Erhan Tabakoğlu, Rector of Tuzla University Prof. Dr. Nermina Hadzigraphic, Rector of Canadian Institute Of Technology (CIT) University Prof. Dr. İsmail Kocayusufoğlu, Rector of Tetova University Prof. Dr. Jusuf Zejneli, Former Rector of Trakya University Prof. Dr. Yener Yörük, Former Rector of Sofia University Prof. Dr. Ivan Ilchev, Vice Rectors Prof. Dr. Osman Nuri Hatipoğlu, Prof. Ahmet Hamdi Zafer, Prof. Dr. Metin Aydoğdu, President of the Symposium Prof. Dr. Ivan Ilchev, Vice Rectors Prof. Dr. Osman Nuri Hatipoğlu, Prof. Ahmet Hamdi Zafer, Prof. Dr. Metin Aydoğdu, Head of Library and Documentation Department of Trakya University Prof. Dr. Nurten Çetin and deans, directors, many academicians and students from Türkiye and abroad attended the symposium.

Prof. Dr. Uğur Ünal, President of the State Archives of the Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye, gave information about librarianship and archiving and said: “In the last decade, we have realized highly valuable cooperation with the Balkan countries in the field of archiving. Significant progress has been made in identifying historical documents in the Balkans, as well as in their digitalization, classification, and restoration. This historical heritage represents a shared value for all of us.

Rector Tabakoğlu stated that “the Balkan Universities Association has such a significant place among the activities of Trakya University for the Balkans. Today, we came together in a special meeting that brings to-

gether the libraries in the Balkans. We wanted to bring together the libraries and archives in the Balkans to enable them to create a network among themselves and to establish a communication environment.”

After the opening ceremony, the “Balkan Libraries Document Exhibition in the Ottoman State Period” was opened in the Foyer of the Balkan Congress Center. Within the scope of the symposium, 51 papers, 2 panels, and poster presentations were held in 19 sessions.

In the “BUA Experience and Future Vision” panel moderated by Rector Tabakoğlu, the establishment of the Association and the current situation of the libraries of the member universities were discussed. Former Rector of Trakya University Prof. Dr. Yener Yörük, former Rector of Sofia University 'St. Kliment Ohridski' Prof. Dr. Ivan Ilchev, President of the Senate of Tetova University Prof. Dr. Vullnet Ameti, and Rector of Tuzla University Prof. Dr. Nermina Hadzigraphic participated as panelists.





## **The Balkan Universities Association Museum and the Balkan and Regional Representative Office of the Council of Higher Education were both officially opened**

“The Balkan Universities Association Museum” and “Balkan and Regional Representative Office of the Council of Higher Education” were opened by Trakya University in Karaağaç Campus.

The opening was attended by Governor Yunus Sezer, Rector Prof. Dr. Erhan Tabakoğlu, Bandırma University Rector Prof. Dr. İsmail Boz, Shumen University Rector Prof. Dr. Habil Nataliya Vitanova, Tuzla University Rector Prof. Dr. Nermina Hadzigraphic, Canadian Institute of Technology (CIT) University Rector Prof. Dr. İsmail Kocayusufoğlu, Tetova University Rector Prof. Dr. Jusuf Zejneli, former Rector of Trakya University Prof. Dr. Yener Yörük, former Rector of Sofia University Prof. Dr. Ivan Ilchev, Vice-Rectors Prof. Dr. Osman Nuri Hatipoğlu, Prof. Ahmet Hamdi Zafer, Prof. Dr. Metin Aydoğdu, as well as deans, directors, and many academicians from Türkiye and abroad.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, Rector Tabakoğlu said “Today is a historic day for Trakya University” and continued his speech by stating that the Edirne Rose Harvest and Sultan Bayezid II Complex Trakya University Medical and Aromatic Plants Garden were

inaugurated and that they would be opening the “Balkan Universities Association Museum” and the “Balkan and Regional Representative Office of the Council of Higher Education”. “The most important mission of Trakya University is the Balkans. We wanted to build a museum of this association that unites and integrates the Balkans and paves the way for substantial collaborations.

Governor Yunus Sezer stated that Edirne is a province that appeals not only to its region but also to the Balkans, so Edirne is a base for studies on the Balkans, and added, “During the visit of the President of the Council of Higher Education, it is notable that a unit of the Council of Higher Education is opening to develop higher-level relations with universities in educational studies for the Balkans.

After the cutting of the opening ribbon, the opening ceremony of the “Balkan Universities Association Museum” and “Balkan and Regional Representative Office of the Council of Higher Education” ended with the participants visiting the museum and the Memorial Forest of the Balkan Universities Association accompanied by Rector Tabakoğlu.



### EIT RawMaterials Center in University of Elbasan “Aleksandër Xhuvani”

The Regional Innovation Center of the European Institute of Technology and Innovation for Raw Materials ‘EIT RawMaterials’ was inaugurated at the University of Elbasan. This center focuses on promoting scientific research in this field, sharing experiences, and enhancing collaboration between Albanian professionals and those from the European Union.



### University of Elbasan “Aleksandër Xhuvani”, organized the Career and Skills Symposium

The University of Elbasan “Aleksandër Xhuvani” successfully organized the Career and Skills Symposium and the 3rd International Student Conference for its students, a unique initiative of its kind at this institution. This event opened with a panel of distinguished guests who presented concrete opportunities for students’ academic and professional development while also offering encouraging and supportive messages for their journey toward success.

