



## **Sixth International Conference on European Integration**

### **CONSTRUCTING EUROPE AS A GLOBAL POWER: FROM MARKET TO IDENTITY?**

University American College Skopje (UACS) in cooperation with Friedrich Ebert Foundation in Macedonia on Thursday, 19 May, 2011, held the Sixth International Conference on European Integration on "constructing Europe as a global power: from market to identity?". The Conference was held at the Holiday Inn hotel in Skopje, where 200 guests attended - ambassadors, professors, experts and students. The purpose of this conference was to present all the factors affecting the development of the European Union as a global power.

The conference was opened by Mr. Ferenc Kékesi, Hungarian Ambassador to the Republic of Macedonia, Mr. Dariusz Karol Bachura, Polish Ambassador to the Republic of Macedonia, Dr. Heinz Bongartz, Resident representative of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, office Macedonia, Dr. Ivan Dodovski, UACS Assistant Professor and Chairperson of the Conference Organizing Committee, Dr. Gligor Bishev, CEO and Chairman of the Board of Director of Stopanska banka Skopje and Dr. Matthias Waechter, Director of Institut Européen des Hautes Etudes Internationales, Nice, and Adjunct Professor at the University of Freiburg and EDHEC Business School.

The Hungarian ambassador told the audience that Hungary as a member of the European Union and current chair of the European Council of Europe's future looks at strengthening economic, competitive market, as well as common values and interests. The enlargement policy, said Kékesi will remain high on the priority list in the weeks that follow, along with economic growth, creating jobs and strengthening the protection of human rights.

Poland's Ambassador in Macedonia noted a few facts and figures about the advantages of being a member of the European Union. He said that Poland's GDP grew by 40 percent after joining the EU, together with wage growth and foreign direct investment. The main priorities of the Polish presidency of the Council, to which remain 43 days, according Bachura will be strengthening the internal market, diplomatic relations with the East, EU enlargement towards the Western Balkans, external energy policy, and full use of European intellectual capital.

The attendees were addressed by Dr. Heinz Bongartz from the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung institute, who emphasized the importance of the identity of the European Union. He noted that the European identity and the identity of the European Union are two different things and should not be confused.

Gligor Bisev of Stopanska Banka Skopje talked about the fiscal stimulus required for a faster exit from the financial crisis. Bisev noted concerns about the increasing public and private borrowing on the EU member states and recommended restructuring of the European economy and fiscal consolidation in the next decade.

The opening of the conference was wrapped by Dr. Matthias Waechter, who said that Europeans and Americans share common values and identities, but for the first time in EU history, the citizens begin to express distrust to the Union that only half of the citizens considered progressive and believes that membership brings greater benefits. However Waecher expressed hope that Europe can become rich and powerful society, where problems of today transcend national borders of our countries.

The main points that were discussed at the conference included, finding the additional values of the European Union to develop internal cohesion and become a global power, cultural diversification of the EU and where in all this are the Balkan countries.

Within the conference 17 academic papers were presented by Macedonian and foreign professors, academics and scholars. Presentations were held by guests from USA, France, Germany, Hungary, Russia, Turkey, Montenegro, Serbia, Bulgaria and India. The topics of these academic papers ranged from preserving the stability of national borders in the European Union as well as Macedonia and the Balkans, raising awareness of the developing green economy that will be the responsibility of the younger generation, raising the level of European competitiveness to implementation of European legislation on consumer protection in Macedonia.