

**ALMA MATER EUROPAEA – EUROPEAN CENTRE MARIBOR**

*Why a new University for bridging civilizations is needed? South-Eastern Europe, Balkan Peninsula together with the Danube region, is confronted with several contradictions arising from history, cultural values, political and economical backgrounds and ecological threats. Alma Mater Europaea - European Centre Maribor (AMA – ECM) is a network of over 200 scientists from 14 universities, 12 Countries, mostly in CSE Europe, dedicated to solve crucial issues: **Ecology, reintegration, intercultural dialogue, health and social care.***

The Balkan represented historically for more than 2000 years - similarly to the Palestine - a cradle and a **focal point of civilizations**, but also an area, where civilizations clashed many times over. After such experiences, political, economic and moral renewal is the only sustainable approach for solving these contradictions within the region. The only way of bridging civilizations is especially through application of modern technologies in education for all generations (e-learning, lifelong learning) and in form of a university network as well. In academic sphere is generally accepted, that higher education is the most promising way of long-term bridging civilizations in the Danubian region.

**AMA – ECM**, as an academic community of academics and academic institutions in Danube region, has been officially founded in 2007 after long time preparations with support of local community, business sector and national institutions in order to develop applicative, interdisciplinary and problem-oriented under- and post-graduate programmes which are complementary to existing courses and at the same time demanded in the market and to build social cohesion among nations and civilizations. Programmes, based on mobility of students and professors, thus including professors and scientists from partner institutions, especially in the Danube region and the rest of the world, will contribute to problem solving in the region and consequently to the quality of life, competitiveness, sustainable development, bridging civilizations and peace. As a high-education institution, AMA – ECM is intending to promote into an international university in 2010, after fulfilling legal and academic standards for centre of excellence that invites students and professors from different civilizations.

AMA – ECM is an international university for excellence in education, strategic and applied research and flexible delivery of learning and teaching. Primary pursuit is to develop distance education together with information and communication technology (ICT) partners. Distance education will support the Life Long Learning principles, leading towards general, professional, moral and cultural recovery in the entire region and towards promotion of bridging civilizations.

On the initiative of contemporary humanists, more than 200 academics and several dozens of academic institutions expressed willingness to participate through their knowledge and experience at the European University. They wish to continue with initiatives and achievements of existing institutions and projects in educational and research field by building bridges among civilizations, where support of good-willing individuals, responsible governments and international organizations is needed. **European academy of Sciences and Arts (EASA)** in Salzburg, March 2009, has recognize positive mission of European Centre Maribor and offered academic patronage and invited all members of EASA to participate in developing the institution and implementing the academic program. EASA has offered strong moral support to the initiative of AMA – ECM to overcome crucial issues of the region, creating peace and prosperity by organising scientific conferences as well.

AMA – ECM has **accredited a dozen academic programs** 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Bologna degree, like Ecoremediation, Financial Services, European Integrations, Social Gerontology, Physiotherapy and Health Care. Some programs are in the process of accreditation like Intercultural Communications. In the research field, the AMA - ECM has dedicated attention to intercultural dialogue and peace, creating Institute of Intercultural dialog and Jewish studies in Central Europe.

**The main object of AMA – ECM in Central and South East Europe is to promote the use of interactive technologies and to stimulate integration of new technologies to educational, research and business processes.** The main goal is to connect partners in Central and South-East Europe (CSEE) and as an active group to transfer interactive technologies from the world knowledge centres to educational institutions. The projects are focused to the new placement of education in the CSEE and to promote development potentials of each individual. Economic and cultural development is possible only if people are qualified and conscious. Consequently, intercultural and intergeneration tolerance shell lead to reintegration of Europe to achieve peace and prosperity.