

Agrarian University in Plovdiv opened the academic year as a member of the Green European University

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On 12 September, the Agricultural University – Plovdiv traditionally opened first the new 2022/2023 academic year in the presence of students, lecturers and guests from Bulgaria and abroad.

The ceremony was honoured by many official guests: Mr. Georgi Sabev – Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Aleksandar Darzhikov – Chair of Plovdiv Municipal Council, Mrs. Vanya Petkova – Deputy Regional Governor of Plovdiv Region, Mr. Kostadin Dimitrov – Mayor of “Trakia” District, Mr. Ivan Stoyanov – Mayor of Eastern District, Mr. Kalin Mutavchiev – Chief Expert at the “Science” Directorate of the Ministry of Education and Science, Mr.

Tarmo Soomere – President of the Estonian Academy of Sciences, Prof. Violeta Bozhanova – Deputy Chair of the Agricultural Academy, Mr. Korhan Küngerü – Consul General of the Republic of Türkiye in Plovdiv, Mr. Giuseppe De Francesco – Honorary Consul of Italy in Plovdiv, H.E. Tabo Thage – Ambassador of the Republic of South Africa, Major General Yavor Mateev – Commander of the Joint Special Operations Command, Karina Angelieva – Doctor Honoris Causa of the Agricultural University, Dr. Vanya Simeonova from Wageningen University – the Netherlands, rectors of higher education institutions in Plovdiv, partners from the agrarian business, members of the Board of Trustees of the Agricultural University – Plovdiv, chairs of the student councils in Bulgaria, colleagues from the Center of Plant Systems Biology and Biotechnology, guests from the University of Limpopo – South Africa.

The Rector of the Agricultural University, Prof. Dr. Hristina Yancheva, conferred the honorary title *Doctor Honoris Causa* on Dr. John Bell, Director of the *Healthy Planet* Unit of the Directorate-General “Research and Innovation” of the European Commission.

In her welcome address to the first-year students, Prof. Dr. Hristina Yancheva emphasized that the innovative education offered in the various programmes of the university will ensure the necessary knowledge, entrepreneurial skills, competence and qualities of its students, enabling them to successfully cope with the difficulties and changes in a world full of challenges. The Rector proudly noted that the current cohort will be the first after the certification of the Agricultural University as a green university in Europe in the fields of agronomy, biotechnology and natural sciences. The higher education institution is the only one in Bulgaria included in the European University Alliance UNIgreen.



The Green European University – transfer of knowledge and good practices

As of this year, the Agricultural University – Plovdiv is participating in the establishment of the Green European University, formed by 8 leading higher education institutions from the Old Continent. The Bulgarian university is the only higher education institution in Bulgaria in the field of agricultural and natural sciences included in a European University Alliance, approved for funding by the European Commission on 27 July 2022.

The following higher education institutions are participating in the “green” European university in agronomic, biotechnological and natural sciences project: University of Almería – Spain, Agricultural University – Plovdiv, Agricultural University of Iceland, Polytechnic Institute of Coimbra, Portugal, Institute of Biotechnology in Paris Sup’Biotech – France, University of Modena UNIMORE – Italy, Warsaw University of Life Sciences – Poland, HEPL Institute in Liège – Belgium.

The European UNIgreen Alliance will be a new educational and research institution that will broaden the links between partners in the fields of education, research, innovation, good practices and knowledge transfer. The aim of the European University Alliances is to respond adequately to the growing need for new educational standards in a context of agricultural, environmental and social changes and to share experience and resources in building common sustainable practices related to nature conservation.

Academic staff from the partner universities will have the opportunity to work together on international projects and research developments. Students will be trained in programmes jointly developed by the partner organisations, thereby upgrading their language and professional qualifications in the field of agronomic, biotechnological and natural sciences.

At present, there are 44 alliances in Europe, comprising 340 higher education institutions from across the continent. The Agricultural University – Plovdiv is the only higher education institution in Bulgaria in the field of agricultural and natural sciences included in a European University Alliance.

cover photo: Agricultural University – Plovdiv