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# The American University in Bulgaria and U.S. Agency for International Development Relationship

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## Abstract

Upon recognizing a need for a center of western oriented university education, an initiative committee including representatives from the Republic of Bulgaria, the city of Blagoevgrad, and the University of Maine obtained support from philanthropist George Soros's Open Society Institute and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to start a university in Bulgaria in 1991. The hallmark of its existence was that its programs would be oriented toward teaching democratic values through the American liberal arts tradition. Instruction would be in English so it could draw on students throughout the region if they were proficient in English. The university has grown from a small enrollment of 208 students to over 700 students in several disciplines in the humanities and social sciences. As the American University in Bulgaria (AUBG) has become a regional institution, the AUBG-USAID relationship has been

crucial. Now it is beginning to offer an EMBA program and has developed an excellent reputation through its graduated students.

Keywords:

- American University in Bulgaria
- Bulgaria
- USAID
- Higher education in Southeast Europe

## Notes

- <sup>a</sup>Figures are for 2002 for Bulgaria and Albania. CIA World Factbook.
- <sup>b</sup>Students graduating in the class of 2003 came from Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, Georgia, Iceland, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Mongolia, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, and the United States.
- <sup>c</sup>For a brief discussion of the Bulgarian ethnic model, see: United Nations Development Program. Putting Tolerance First.

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