

MONOGRAPH

UNIVERSITY SKOPJE

20 YEARS

2006–2026

TWENTY YEARS OF VISION,

KNOWLEDGE, AND

CREATING THE FUTURE

Skopje, 2026



For the jubilee edition



This monograph is dedicated to the twenty-year development of University Skopje from its initial academic steps in 2006 to its current status as a modern higher education institution, with a well-developed mission encompassing teaching, scientific research, international engagement, and social responsibility.

It bridges the memory of the first decade with the achievements of the second, presenting the institution's story as a continuous journey of people, ideas, values, and results.



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ADDRESS BY THE RECTOR

Twenty years of vision, knowledge, and creating the future.



Rector of the University of Skopje, Prof. Ace Milenkovski, PhD.

Dear readers, students, professors, associates, alumni, partners, and friends of University Skopje. It is with great honor, pride, and gratitude that we mark this significant milestone—the 20th anniversary of the founding of University Skopje. This monograph is more than just a record of the passage of time; it is the story of a vision turned into reality, of dreams transformed into achievements, of generations of students who built their careers, of professors who selflessly shared their knowledge, and of an institution that, over the course of two decades, has grown into a recognized symbol of quality higher education.

When we began our academic mission in 2006—initially as the Faculty of Tourism, and subsequently as the University of Tourism and Management in Skopje—we were guided by a simple yet powerful idea: to create a modern higher education institution that keeps pace with global trends, develops skilled and capable professionals, and contributes to the advancement of Macedonian society.
In those early years, we laid foundations—foundations built upon quality, professionalism, scientific curiosity, and an enduring drive for progress. Today, following years of dedicated effort, we can proudly state that those foundations have evolved into a robust academic institution, recognized and respected both within the country and beyond its borders.

Over the past twenty years, the University has carried out national and international projects, established partnerships with higher education and scientific institutions across Europe and the world, and fostered an academic environment where knowledge, research, and practical application are integral components of the educational process.

"We are particularly proud that the *UTMS Journal of Economics* has grown into an internationally recognized scientific platform, featuring an international editorial board and inclusion in relevant scientific databases. Hundreds of research papers by authors from various countries have been published in its issues, through which the University has created a lasting space for scientific exchange and academic dialogue."

Over the past two decades, the University has hosted and organized scientific conferences, international congresses, symposia, professional forums, and academic debates, creating a space for the exchange of ideas, new insights, and partnerships that transcend local and national boundaries.
We take pride in the fact that, from the very beginning, quality has been our highest priority. Our quality policy is grounded in the principles of the World Tourism Organization's (UNWTO) TedQual standards, and the continuous validation of this international standard serves as a testament to our commitment to the highest criteria in higher education.

The second decade of our existence marked a new phase in the institution's development—a period of transformation, modernization, and internationalization. From UTMS, we have evolved into the University of Skopje—a contemporary university that unites academic tradition, innovation, and a global perspective.

The rebranding of the University was not merely a formal change of name. It was a logical outcome of our growth, the expansion of our study programs, our increased international presence, and our aspiration to create an institution that is recognizable and competitive within the European and global educational landscape.

Over the past ten years, we have significantly strengthened our international presence through European programs, academic partnerships, and the mobility of students and teaching staff. Our students have gained knowledge and experience at European universities, while University Skopje has become home to numerous international initiatives that have contributed to the advancement of the educational process and scientific research.

It is a distinct honor for me—and, above all, for the University—to have received the international "Ambassador of Education" recognition, as well as to have been selected as a member of the Academic Union of Oxford. I view these accolades as a tribute to the collective work of University Skopje and to all the generations of professors, students, and associates who have built this institution through their dedicated efforts. Our active participation in the global activities of the United Nations World Tourism Organization—now known as UN Tourism—is also a source of great pride; the University contributes to the academic dialogue regarding the development of modern tourism education and scientific research.

However, the greatest recognition for us is not found in awards, certificates, or international titles. Our greatest achievement is our people.

These are the thousands of graduates who are now successfully working in institutions, companies, organizations, and enterprises across Macedonia and around the world. These are the young people who spent their academic years at the University and have since become successful managers, professionals, entrepreneurs, tourism experts, economists, and IT specialists—leaders in their respective fields. They represent our most significant investment and our greatest success.
Young people have always held a special place in our mission. For this reason, over the years, we have awarded hundreds of scholarships to talented pupils, students, and athletes, investing in their development and their future. We believe that society progresses only when it invests in younger generations; that is precisely why social responsibility remains one of the core values of University Skopje.

This anniversary is an opportunity to express our recognition and gratitude to everyone who has been part of our journey—professors, teaching assistants, administrative staff, students, the alumni community, institutional partners, and friends of the University. Each of them has contributed a part of themselves to the development of this institution. As for me, I have dedicated myself entirely to its creation and growth—with professional commitment, personal energy, and a firm belief in the mission we embarked upon.

We also owe our gratitude to the generations of students who entrusted us to be part of their education, their dreams, and their life stories.
Today, as we mark our first twenty years, we look back with a sense of fulfillment and pride—but we look ahead even more. The world is changing faster than ever before. New technologies, artificial intelligence, digital transformation, and global challenges are creating new needs and new opportunities.

Let us continue to create knowledge.

Let us continue to create leaders.

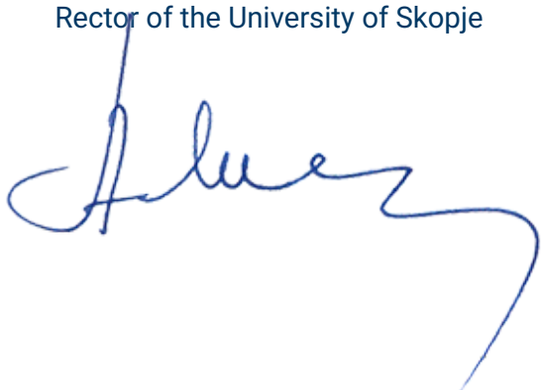
Let us continue to create the future.

I am confident that University Skopje will remain, in the decades to come, a place where knowledge is the highest value, innovation drives development, and students serve as our greatest inspiration.

Twenty years mark a significant milestone. Yet, for University Skopje, they are merely the beginning.

Thank you to everyone who has been—and continues to be—a part of this story. We move forward with the same faith with which we began, guided by a blessing and the words of Grandfather Stefan—following in his footsteps.

Prof. Ace Milenkovski, PhD
Rector of the University of Skopje




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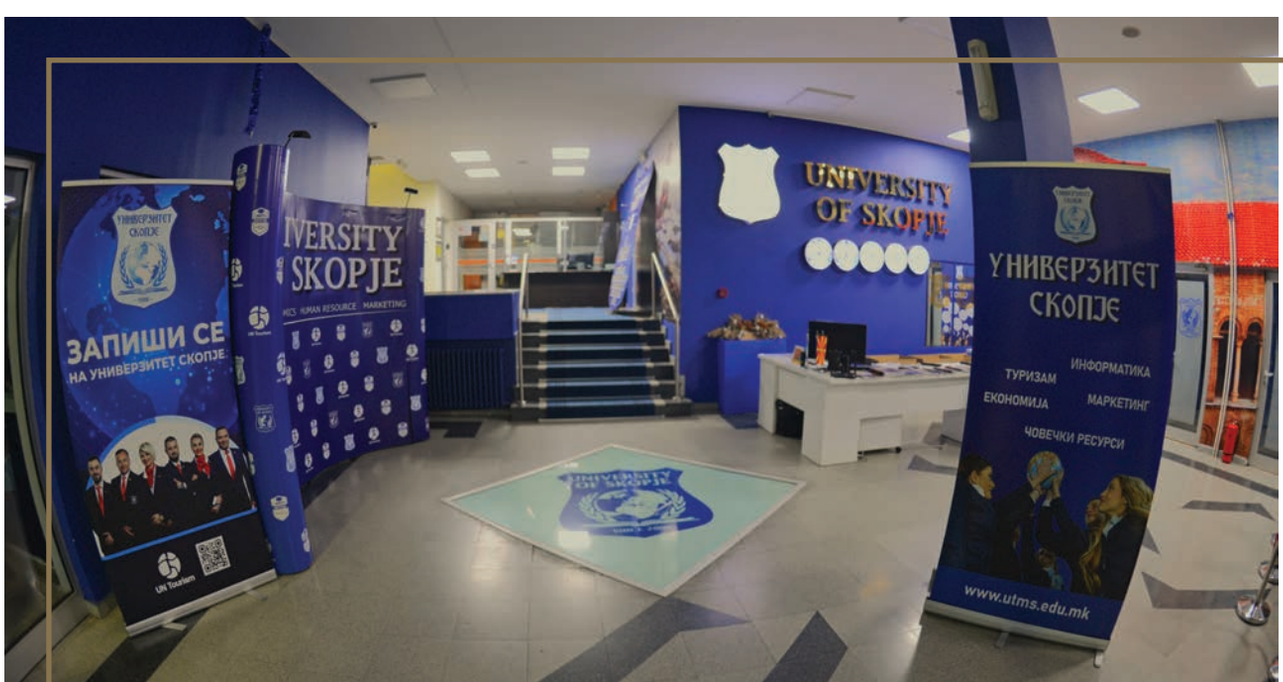
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TWENTY YEARS IN A SINGLE GLANCE

Two decades in the life of a university constitute a sufficiently long period for an idea to evolve into a tradition, and for that tradition to become a commitment to the future.

The story of University Skopje began in 2006 with the founding of the country's first private Faculty of Tourism. From the very first academic lecture, the institution has developed with a clear vision: modern education, practical knowledge, an international orientation, and an enduring culture of quality.

In the period that followed, the academic offering expanded; new faculties and institutional units were established; partnerships were forged with universities and organizations across various countries; scientific research and publishing activities were developed; and student mobility programs and practical training became integral parts of the academic experience.
The first decade was a time of establishment, expansion, and positioning. The second was a period of internationalization, modernization, and the forging of a new identity. In 2023, the rebranding as "University Skopje" marked the institution's maturity—reflecting its aspiration to operate under a name that transcends the scope of its original specialization and encompasses the full breadth of a contemporary academic mission. Today, the "20 Years of the University of Skopje" jubilee is not merely a look back at the archives. It represents a review of achievements, as well as a platform for the next phase of development—one in which digitalization, artificial intelligence, interdisciplinarity, entrepreneurship, and global academic connectivity will hold even greater significance.



University Skopje

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FROM IDEA TO UNIVERSITY
THE BEGINNINGS 2006–2009

2006 – the year the story began

On October 8, 2006, the first private Faculty of Tourism was ceremoniously opened. A day later, on October 9, the first academic session took place. These two dates remain the symbolic beginning of the institutional story of what is today the University of Skopje.

The beginning was modest in scale, yet ambitious in concept. As early as the first semester, students were engaged in practical academic training and visits to international trade fairs. In November and December 2006, the first visit to an international tourism trade fair in Athens took place—ensuring that practical and international dimensions were embedded in the academic model from the very start.

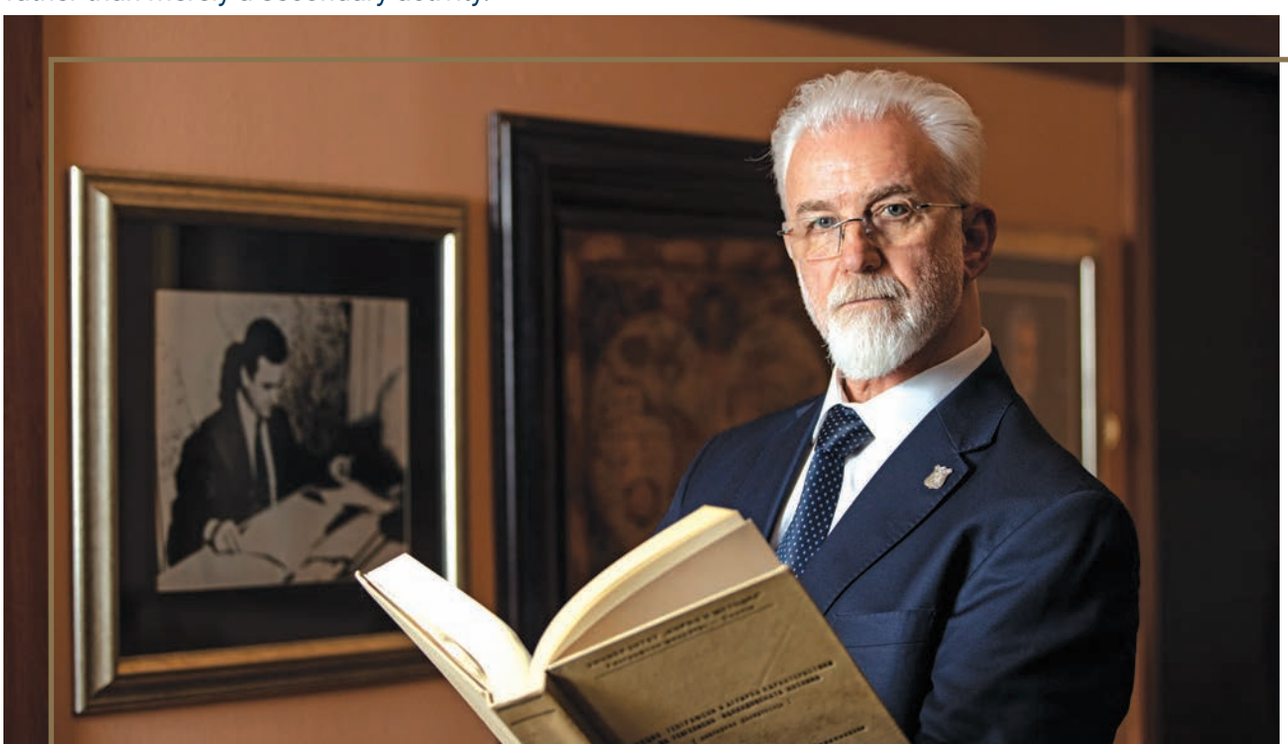


October 8, 2006 – Grand Opening of the Faculty of Tourism

2007 – The first recognitions and the first generation

In 2007, students participated in academic and scientific practical training sessions and international trade fairs in Istanbul, Thessaloniki, Novi Sad, and other centers. That same year, a summer internship program was carried out in hotels in Greece, while participation in the tourism fair in Novi Sad resulted in a Grand Prix award for the best promotional presentation. This marked the first notable international success for the young institution.

In September 2007, the "Prof. Ljube Milenkovski, PhD" Fund was established, with the mission of supporting the development of education and science through scholarships and assistance for talented pupils and students. In this way, social responsibility became an institutional value from an early stage, rather than merely a secondary activity.



Rector Prof. Ace Milenkovski, PhD next to a portrait of Prof. Ljube Milenkovski, PhD, after whom the scholarship fund for young and talented individuals is named.

"Knowledge is the beacon that guides humanity toward freedom, dignity, and progress. The University of Skopje does not merely produce graduates and master's degree holders; it shapes individuals–beacons of enlightenment, guardians of values, and architects of the future. Transform your knowledge into action, your success into responsibility, and your future into a contribution to society. Create a legacy that endures, for together, we are all part of an indelible mark."

Rector Prof. Ace Milenkovski, PhD

2008–2009 – Institutional expansion

With the growing interest in higher education, the rising number of students, and the gradual development of new academic fields, a significant process of institutional expansion began. The 2008–2009 period marked an important turning point in the institution's development, as conditions were established for the Faculty of Tourism to evolve into the University of Tourism and Management in Skopje. This transformation represented not merely a change in institutional status, but also the opening of a new developmental perspective, offering the opportunity to expand educational and academic activities.



University of Tourism Management Skopje 2009

The new status enabled the development of multiple faculties, study programs, and scientific fields, allowing the institution to gradually expand its academic offerings and set its activities on a broader academic trajectory. The creation of new educational opportunities was a response to the needs of students, as well as to changes in society and the labor market; it also served as a foundation for the further advancement of teaching and scientific research processes.

This period simultaneously marked a transition from the initial phase of institutional consolidation toward a more complex model of university functioning.
In parallel with the development of study programs and the expansion of academic fields, conditions were established for the creation and enhancement of various institutional mechanisms and services. Their objective was to provide higher-quality support for students, teaching staff, and the entire academic community.

From this point on, development was no longer measured solely by the number of students and study programs. The focus shifted increasingly toward the quality of education, academic standards, scientific research, and institutional organization. Structures were established for international cooperation, quality assurance, student support, publishing, career development, alumni relations, and scientific research.

4

THE FIRST DECADE: BUILDING INSTITUTIONS 2006–2016

The University's first decade was a period of establishing institutional infrastructure, academic expansion, and international positioning. During this time, the foundations were laid for the model that still defines the institution today: a close link between theory and practice, active cooperation with the business sector, international academic ties, and a systematic commitment to quality.

4.1.Practical Training as Part of Identity

From the very first generation, practical training has been treated as an integral part of the academic process. Students have participated in field practicums, trade fairs, professional visits, and internship programs—both domestically and abroad. This approach has enabled them, even during their studies, to establish contact with real-world professional environments and to transform theoretical knowledge into practical competencies.



Our student Ana-Marija Cirik on an internship at the Football Federation of Macedonia

4.2. Skopje as a Hub for International Academic Dialogue

In April 2011, the University organized "Skopje Travel Market 2011," during which time Skopje also hosted meetings with representatives of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). Visits by Javier Blanco and Yolanda Perdomo—directors of UNWTO Affiliate Members—along with other UNWTO representatives, as well as contacts with the then-Secretary-General, Taleb Rifai, strengthened the institution's international visibility.

In July 2014, Taleb Rifai visited the University and delivered a lecture on the importance of education and knowledge for the growing tourism sector. The visit held strong symbolic significance: it reaffirmed the University's long-standing commitment to international standards in tourism education.



July 2014: Taleb Rifai, Secretary-General of the World Tourism Organization, visits the University of Tourism and Management.

"Great things are not created in a single day, nor do great achievements rest upon chance; rather, they are built through knowledge, vision, perseverance, and faith in enduring values. A university is not merely a place for the acquisition of knowledge; it is a foundation upon which individuals, ideas, and the future of a society are built. Therefore, dear students, I expect more from you than just personal success—I expect you to create something of value for those who will come after you. Create works that will outlast time, serve as the cornerstone for new beginnings, and leave behind a legacy through which future generations will know that it was you who built the future."

Rector Prof. Ace Milenkovski, PhD

4.3. ICONBEST – a scientific platform with an international character

The International Scientific Congress ICONBEST (International Congress for Business, Education, Sport, and Tourism) is one of the signature research platforms of the University of Skopje. It was established with the vision of bringing together the academic community, researchers, professionals, and representatives from the business sector into a shared space for the exchange of knowledge, scientific findings, and contemporary ideas. The origins of ICONBEST date back to 2008, when it began as a scientific conference; by 2009, it had evolved into a scientific congress, gradually developing into a traditional international scientific event for the University.

Over the years, the Congress has encompassed the fields of business, economics, education, sport, and tourism, while its thematic scope has expanded to include management, marketing, entrepreneurship, human resources, information technology, finance, and modern societal processes.



International Scientific Congress ICONBEST

The distinct value of ICON BEST lies in its interdisciplinary nature. The congress provides an opportunity for various scientific disciplines to converge around shared issues related to economic and social development. Through research papers, plenary lectures, thematic sessions, and discussions, participants are able to present their research, exchange scholarly experiences, and open up new avenues for collaboration. The programs of previous editions have covered topics such as tourism and its socio-cultural and economic impacts, sustainable tourism, gastronomy, entrepreneurship, marketing, integrated marketing communications, leadership, human resources, management, economics and finance, business education, quality assurance, and information technology.

From a scientific conference to an international congress

The evolution of ICON BEST over the years mirrors the transformation of the University of Skopje itself—from an institution that began its journey in the field of tourism to a university with a broader educational, scientific, and social profile.
In 2016, for instance, ICON BEST was organized as the "International Business and Tourism Research Conference," featuring a plenary session and the participation of prominent international representatives from both the academic community and the professional sector. Among the speakers were Prof. Garry Jacobs,PhD, CEO of the World Academy of Art & Science; Prof. Dennis Gash, PhD, President of the International Assembly for Collegiate Business Education; and Prof. Amelia Tomašević from VERN' University of Applied Sciences in Zagreb. This progression demonstrates that ICON BEST is not a one-off event, but rather an ongoing scientific platform that has been building its international profile for over a decade. ICON BEST 2024 – "Shaping the Future" The evolution of ICON BEST over the years follows the transformation of the University of Skopje itself—from an institution that began its journey in the field of tourism to a university with a broader educational, scientific, and social profile.
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The ninth international scientific congress, ICON BEST 2024, took place on November 18 in Skopje. It was held in a hybrid format, combining in-person attendance at the University of Skopje with virtual participation from attendees abroad. The theme of the congress was "Shaping the Future: Trends and Insights for Tomorrow," focusing on contemporary trends and challenges that are shaping future development. The congress reaffirmed the importance of scientific exchange in the fields of tourism, economics, education, business, and management. Among the speakers were prominent academic and professional figures from the region and Europe, including Prof. Goran Bandov, PhD, Luis Bashur, and Prof. Zoran Ivanovski, PhD. It is particularly significant that the results of the scientific work presented at ICON BEST continue to have an impact even after the congress concludes. The papers are published in proceedings and recorded as part of the University's academic output.

A Platform for Science, Cooperation, and Development

The significance of ICON BEST, however, is not measured solely by the number of congresses held or scientific papers presented. Its essence lies in building a bridge between science and practice. The congress enables professors, researchers, doctoral candidates, and young scientists to present their latest research, while also establishing connections with colleagues from other institutions and countries. At the same time, the presence of representatives from the business sector, the public sector, and various professional fields ensures that scientific insights are placed within the context of real-world economic and societal needs.

ICON BEST in the Year of the 20th Anniversary

The tenth edition of ICON BEST in 2026 holds special significance, as it coincides with the 20th anniversary of the University of Skopje. The 10th anniversary edition of the International Scientific Congress for Business, Education, Sport, and Tourism – ICON BEST 2026 – is scheduled for October 10, 2026. The theme is "Digital Horizons: Smart Economy & Tourism Intelligence," with a particular focus on the application of artificial intelligence and digital technologies within the fields of economics, tourism, entrepreneurship, human resources, marketing, and information technology.
Thus, ICON BEST 2026 symbolically links two significant milestones: the 20th anniversary of the University of Skopje and the 10th edition of this international scientific congress. From its origins as a scientific conference in 2008 to its current status as a modern international scientific platform, ICON BEST mirrors the developmental trajectory of the University and its commitment to quality education, scientific research, international cooperation, and the creation of knowledge relevant to contemporary society.



International Scientific Congress ICONBEST

From an idea to a tradition!

From a conference to an international congress!

From scientific thought to knowledge that drives development!

ICONBEST is an important part of the scientific story of the University of Skopje!

4.4. Quality Recognized by TedQual

During the 2015/2016 academic year, an international external evaluation was conducted in accordance with the World Tourism Organization's TedQual standards. The certification reflects a commitment to systematic quality management and alignment with international standards in tourism education. Periodic reviews and renewals of the certification have strengthened a culture of continuous improvement.



Ceremonial presentation of the TedQual quality certificate to the University – Skopje, Malaga, May 2016

4.5. Ten Years – The First Major Turning Point

By 2016, when the first decade since its founding was marked, the University had already established a distinct and well-developed academic structure. Over the course of these first ten years, the institution gradually expanded its educational and scientific capacity by developing new study programs, academic fields, and support mechanisms for both students and faculty. This first decade was a period of intensive growth, institutional consolidation, and the laying of foundations for future development.

By this milestone, the University already had its own scientific journal, which provided a platform for publishing and exchanging scholarly knowledge, while contributing to the promotion of scientific research. Concurrently, international partnerships and contacts were established with higher education institutions and academic communities in various countries, creating opportunities for collaboration, the exchange of experience, and participation in broader academic processes.

Scientific gatherings, conferences, forums, and other academic events also played a significant role in this development. They facilitated direct interaction among researchers, faculty, students, and the professional community, fostering the exchange of ideas and the emergence of new research topics. In this way, the University gradually strengthened its role not only as an educational institution but also as a scientific and social one. During the same period, a scholarship fund was developed, creating additional opportunities to support students and their educational progress.

5

THE SECOND DECADE: INTERNATIONALIZATION, MODERNIZATION, AND A NEW IDENTITY 2016–2026

The second decade brought a new dynamic. While the first ten years were focused on creation and consolidation, the period from 2016 to 2026 was a time of broader internationalization, institutional modernization, new partnerships, the development of IT studies, the strengthening of scientific institutes, and a complete repositioning of the brand.

5.1. International partnerships with new intensity

In October 2017, a cooperation agreement was signed with the Pope John Paul II University in Biała Podlaska. The cooperation took on a scholarly-publishing dimension through the participation of the rectors in the editorial boards of the scientific journals of both institutions.

In March 2020, an agreement was signed with the University of Dąbrowa Górnicza in Poland. In 2021, a working visit to Uzbekistan took place, resulting in an agreement on academic mobility with the "Silk Road" International University of Tourism in Samarkand. That same year, a memorandum was signed with the Agricultural University of Plovdiv, followed in 2022 by memoranda with the University of Szeged and the University of Telecommunications and Posts in Sofia.



Signing of a Memorandum of Cooperation with Miglena Temelkova, Rector of the University of Telecommunications and Posts in Sofia.

5.2. European mobility Erasmus+

The Erasmus Charter, acquired over the previous decade, evolved into a lasting infrastructure for student and staff mobility. Through Erasmus+, students and staff gained opportunities for teaching, training, and the exchange of experience. The renewed Erasmus Charter for Higher Education for the 2021–2027 period has continued this European orientation.



Students from the University of Skopje in Porto, Portugal, via Erasmus+ 2016

5.3. New competencies and new areas

The digital transformation of the economy and education has necessitated the introduction of new study content and new academic profiles. The development of the Faculty of Informatics has expanded the institution's traditional focus—which encompassed economic, tourism, and management disciplines—to include fields such as informatics, computer science, and software engineering. Concurrently, the institutes for National Geography and for Business and Management have broadened the University's scientific research and applied professional dimensions.

5.4. Rebranding to University Skopje

In September 2023, the University of Tourism and Management rebranded as University Skopje. The new name reflects its expanded academic identity, the diversity of its fields of study, and the institution's position in the capital city. A new visual identity, an anthem, promotional videos, and various media materials were unveiled.

This change did not signify a break from the UTMS tradition. On the contrary, it placed the institution's twenty-year history within a broader framework. Its history, values, and achievements remain the foundation, while the new identity serves as a symbol of the next phase of its development.



Promoting the new name University Skopje


АЦЕ МИЛЕНКОВСКИ
УНИВЕРЗИТЕТ СКОПЈЕ
УНИВЕРЗИТЕТ СКОПЈЕ
2006
RLD
RISM
2023

5.5. International Visits

In 2025, a delegation from the University of Skopje participated in the UN Tourism General Assembly in Riyadh, an event organized during the organization's 50th anniversary year. In January 2026, students, professors, and teaching assistants visited Madrid, where they toured the UN Tourism headquarters and attended the international trade fair FITUR 2026—a symbolic bridge between the beginnings in 2006 and the jubilee year of 2026. The students took part in an academic practicum in Madrid and visited the FITUR 2026 tourism trade fair.



Students and academic staff visiting UN Tourism in Madrid, January 2026



Educational and Scientific Practicum at the Tourism Fair in Thessaloniki

Over the years, the participation of University Skopje in the tourism fairs in Belgrade and Thessaloniki has become a tradition and a source of great pleasure. Our participation offers an opportunity to reconnect with friends, partners, and colleagues from the tourism sector, to share experiences, and to create new avenues for collaboration. With each instance of participation, University Skopje reaffirms its commitment to tourism, education, and regional connectivity, bringing with it the energy of its students and professors, as well as a vision for the future.



Educational and Scientific Practicum at the Tourism Fair in Belgrade



6

ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT: FACULTIES, INSTITUTES, AND STUDY PROGRAMS

The academic structure of the University has evolved and developed in accordance with the legal framework, accreditations, labor market needs, and the institution's strategic priorities. Throughout various stages of its development, the University has included accredited faculties and programs in the fields of tourism, sports tourism, economics, entrepreneurship, international marketing, human resource management, public relations, and informatics.



Part of the academic staff with Antonio Carles, an international evaluator from UN Tourism.

6.1. Faculty of Tourism – The Starting Point

The Faculty of Tourism serves as the institutional core from which the present-day University originated. Its mission has been focused on developing professional personnel for the tourism sector, emphasizing a strong practical component and international teaching standards. Internships, field studies, participation in international trade fairs, and engagement with UNWTO/UN Tourism have established a distinct profile and a proven, high-quality reputation for the Faculty.



The first generation of students at the Faculty of Tourism

6.2. Faculty of Economics

The Faculty of Economics has expanded its academic offerings to include finance, banking, insurance, economic analysis, international marketing, and contemporary business disciplines. Within the University's current curriculum, economic studies are organized through programs in finance, banking, and insurance, international marketing management, and tourism, offering opportunities for both first-cycle (undergraduate) and second-cycle (master's) degrees.

6.3. Faculty of Human Resource Management

The Faculty of Human Resource Management focuses on one of the key functions of modern organizations: the management of people, talent, and organizational development. The programs integrate knowledge from the fields of management, organizational behavior, leadership, communication, motivation, development, and the strategic management of human capital, offering opportunities for both undergraduate (first-cycle) and master's (second-cycle) studies.

6.4. Faculty of International Marketing Management

International Marketing Management was developed as an academic field that connects marketing, market research, brand management, communications, and global business strategies. Within the current academic structure, the content from this field is also integrated into the programs of the Faculty of Economics, offering opportunities for both first-cycle (undergraduate) and second-cycle (master's) students.

6.5. Faculty of Informatics

The Faculty of Informatics marked the University's entry into the field of digital technologies. The programs encompass informatics, computer engineering, and related modern disciplines, with the aim of enabling students to acquire knowledge and practical skills for the development, application, and management of digital solutions. In the current 2025/26 academic year, programs are being offered for the first cycle (undergraduate studies) and the second cycle (master's studies).

6.6. Institute of National Geography

The Institute of National Geography continues the University's tradition in geographical and spatial analysis, tourism, regional development, and scientific research. Its role is to generate knowledge applicable to contemporary social, economic, and geopolitical processes, while remaining open to international cooperation and interdisciplinary research.



6.7. Institute for Business and Management

The Institute for Business and Management focuses on scientific research, professional application, and educational activities within the fields of business, management, and entrepreneurship. Particular emphasis is placed on practical training, engagement with the business sector, the development of entrepreneurial ideas, and the creation of a platform for the exchange of knowledge between academia and professional practice.

Under the current enrollment model for the 2026/27 academic year, University Skopje offers study programs through the Faculty of Human Resource Management, the Faculty of Economics (specializing in Finance, Banking, and Insurance; International Marketing Management; and Tourism), and the Faculty of Informatics. Meanwhile, the institution's broader organizational structure and accreditation history reflect a multifaceted academic evolution over the past two decades.

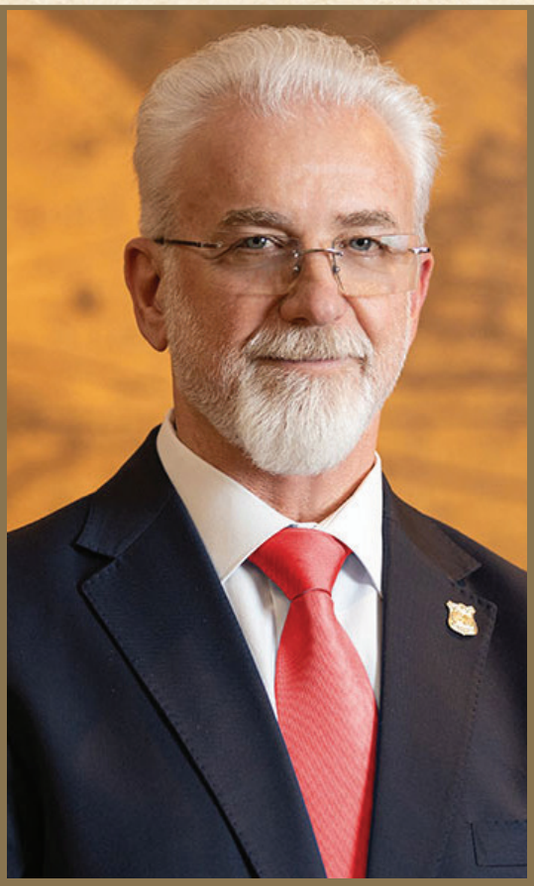
20 years,
18 graduating classes,
16 classes of master's degree graduates!

Twenty years of history, dedication,
and the creation of new generations of professionals.
Over its two decades of existence,
University Skopje has written a significant educational story,
with 18 graduating classes and 16 classes of master's degree graduates.
Behind these figures lie 5,987 bachelor's degree graduates
and 2,654 master's degree graduates—a total of 8,641 highly
educated individuals who began or furthered their knowledge
and professional journeys right here at University Skopje.
These are not just numbers. They represent 8,641 stories of
knowledge, success, ambition, and the future
generations that are now part of both
Macedonian and international society.
20 years of University Skopje: from the very
first class to thousands of success stories.



20 years of knowledge!
20 years of tradition!
20 years of the future!

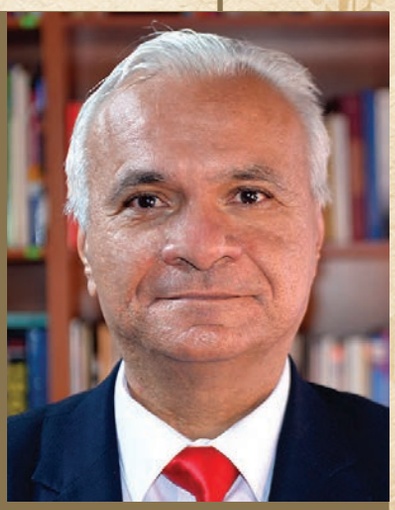
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Prof. Violeta Milenkovska, PhD



Prof. Slobodan Ivanovich, PhD



Prof. Blagica Novkovska, PhD



Prof. Aleksandar Dashtevski, PhD



Prof. Jovan Pehchevski, PhD



Prof. Valentina Angjelkoska, PhD



Prof. Sime Arsenovski, PhD



Prof. Julijana Angelovska, PhD



Prof. Ana Sekulovska Jovkovska, PhD



Prof. Dejan Nakovski, PhD



Prof. Natasha Ristovska, PhD



Prof. Blagoj Conev, PhD



Prof. Aleksandar Kostadinoski, PhD



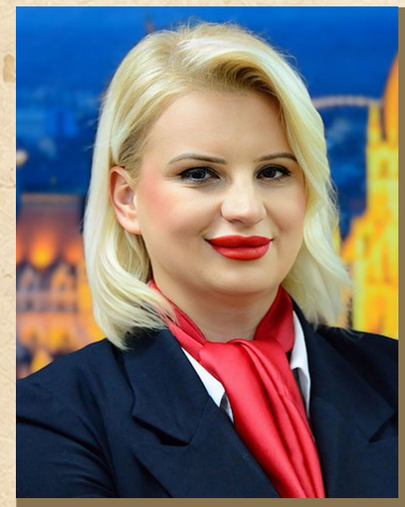
Prof. Zoran Strezovski, PhD



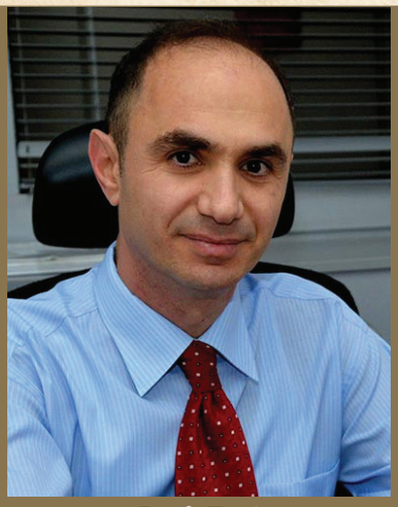
Prof. Sreten Miladinoski, PhD



Prof. Leonid Dzhinevski, PhD



Assoc. Prof. Angela Milenkovska Klimoska, PhD



Prof. Toni Malinovski, PhD



Assoc. Prof. Vera Boshkovska, PhD



Assoc. Prof. Ljupcho Milenkovski, PhD



Assoc. Prof. Borche Sibinovski, PhD



Assoc. Prof. Viktorija Trajkov, PhD



Assoc. Prof. Miodrag Cekikj, PhD



Assoc. Prof. Nina Angelovska, PhD



Assoc. Prof.
Dejan Nedev, PhD



Assoc. Prof.
Gordana Serafimovich, PhD



Assoc. Prof.
Ljupcho Janevski, PhD



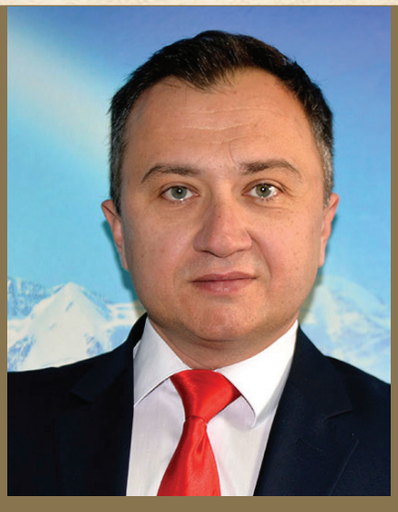
Assoc. Prof.
Flamur Miftari, PhD



Irena Andonovska, MSc



Marina Stojmirova, MSc



Goran Apostolovski, MSc



Milica Petrushevska, MSc



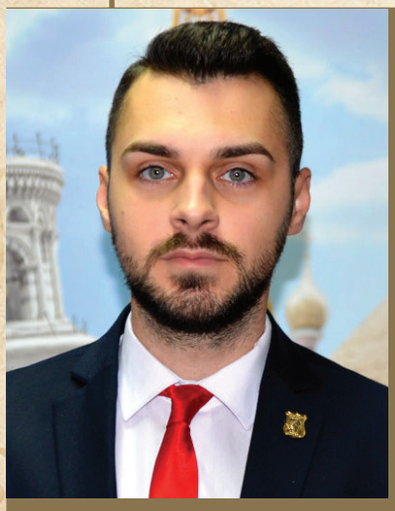
Marijana Radevska, MSc



Biljana Proeska, MSc



Elena Tasevska, MSc



Roberto Milenkov, MSc



Julijana Petrovska, MSc



Filip Nakjev, MSc



Sasho Kochoski, MSc



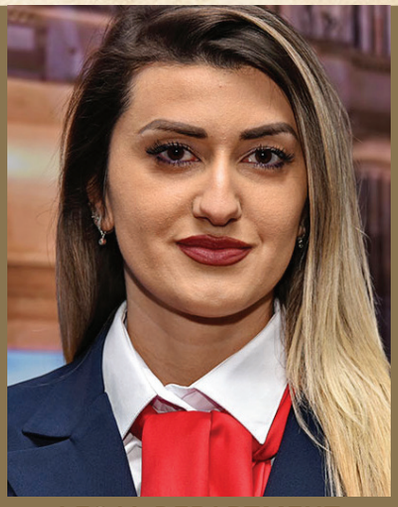
Ljupcho Risteski, MSc



Aleksandar Stojanovski, MSc



Goran Karovski, MSc



LEGAL DEPARTMENT
Emina Imeroska



Darko Karovski,
Head of Student Records



Dragi Ilievski,
Student Records Officer



Suzana Murdjeva,
Student Records Officer



Jahji Memedov,
Student Records Officer



Ljubcho Milenkov,
Student Records Officer



Secretary
Dijana Hadjiarsova



Sashko Shishkovski,
Student Records Officer

THE BOARDS – PART OF THE TWENTY-YEAR VISION FOR THE UNIVERSITY SKOPJE

The participation of the Boards for Cooperation and Public Trust across all faculties—and their contribution to the development of the academic process—is significant. Their work brings together expertise, experience, diverse professional perspectives, and a vision for the University's future development.

Through their involvement in addressing key issues and strategic directions, they help build an institutional foundation upon which the University can develop in a stable manner.

Their role is particularly significant in supporting quality, development processes, and academic standards, as well as in fostering connections with the professional and broader social environment and opening up new avenues for cooperation and development.

Over the past two decades, the University Skopje has evolved and grown in step with the times. Each new challenge has demanded new responses, and every new generation has brought new expectations. In this process, the Boards have contributed by creating a space for strategic thinking, the exchange of experience, and the establishment of directions that support the institution's long-term development.

Their value lies not merely in their formal function, but, above all, in the knowledge and experience they bring to the academic community. Diverse professional profiles enable the University to view its challenges from multiple perspectives and more easily recognize the opportunities brought about by modern higher education. Precisely for this reason, their contribution is an integral part of this jubilee story.

Through their participation and dedication, the boards are part of the process that unites these values into a shared institutional goal: for the University of Skopje to continue growing, advancing, and shaping generations prepared for the future.

In this context, the boards are part of the institutional memory, the ongoing development, and the future vision of the University Skopje.

It is within this continuous link—between what has been achieved and what is yet to be created—that the significance and contribution of the boards to the twenty-year story of the University of Skopje are truly recognized.



Twenty years of experience is the foundation!
Knowledge and wisdom are the strength!
Vision is the direction!

7

QUALITY AS AN INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE

Quality is one of the most consistent themes in the University's development. From the very beginning, mechanisms have been developed to monitor, evaluate, and improve the teaching process, with the quality policy aligned with the international TedQual standards of the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UN Tourism).

A culture of quality is not merely about obtaining a certificate. It entails clearly defined learning outcomes, modern teaching methods, feedback from students and the business community, professional development for teaching staff, regular self-evaluation, and a readiness to implement corrective and developmental measures.

Boards for cooperation and public engagement also play a significant role, enabling representatives from the professional and business communities to participate in a dialogue regarding the relevance of study programs, practical training, and the competencies required by graduates.

In this way, quality is established as a process of continuous alignment between academic standards, student needs, professional requirements, and societal changes.



UN Tourism Senior Official Antonio de Villamugo presents the TedQual certification to the University of Skopje – Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, November 2025

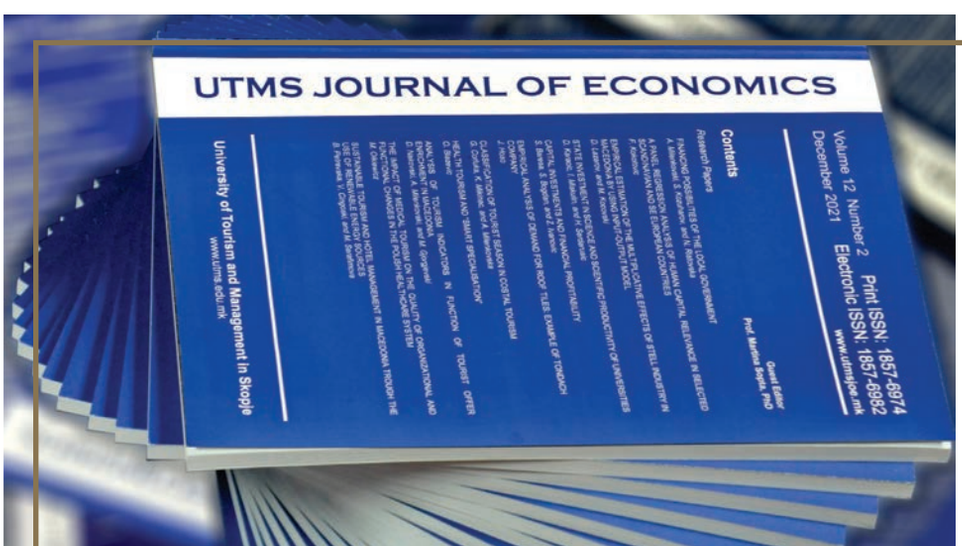
8

SCIENCE, RESEARCH AND PUBLISHING ACTIVITY

8.1. UTMS Journal of Economics

UTMS Journal of Economics is an international scientific journal dedicated to multidisciplinary research. It is published biannually and operates with an international scientific editorial board and a peer-review process. Over the course of its existence, the journal has developed into an important channel for publishing original scientific papers by both domestic and international authors, and it is indexed in several relevant scientific and bibliographic databases.

Establishing its own scientific journal was a strategic move: the University did not merely remain a consumer of existing knowledge, but instead created an infrastructure for its production, critical examination, and international dissemination.



An international scientific journal published twice a year by the University Skopje

8.2. ICON BEST Scientific Gatherings

Scientific conferences and congresses organized by the University have opened the institution up to the research community. ICON BEST brought together topics from the fields of business, economics, tourism, management, sports, and related disciplines, providing a platform for scientific findings to be presented, discussed, and published. Papers are published in the "Journal of Economics".

8.3. Projects and Applied Research

Over the years, the University and its staff have participated in national and international projects, European programs, and research initiatives. A key aspect of this work is its focus on practical outcomes—such as the development of curricula, analyses, models, and training programs, as well as research in economics and tourism—alongside the establishment of partnerships with various institutions and companies.

9

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND ACADEMIC MOBILITY

Internationalization is one of the key pillars of the University Skopje. It is implemented through institutional agreements, Erasmus+ mobility programs, participation in international organizations, joint scientific activities, guest lectures, study visits, and the exchange of publications and experiences.

9.1. Principles of International Cooperation

- Exchange of students, teaching staff, researchers, and administrative personnel;
- Joint scientific research and educational activities;
- Development and harmonization of study programs;
- Organization of conferences, seminars, workshops, and guest lecturers;
- Exchange of publications and academic resources;
- Connecting the academic community with international companies, organizations, and professional networks.

9.2. Partnerships That Expanded the Academic Horizon

During the first decade, partnerships were established with universities and faculties in Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, China, and other countries—including cooperation with the University of Ljubljana, the University of Rijeka, La Sapienza in Rome, and the University of Valencia. In the second decade, the network expanded to include partners from Poland, Uzbekistan, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Croatia.

9.3. UNWTO/UN Tourism – A Partnership with a Global Context

The relationship with the World Tourism Organization stands as one of the most prominent international connections in the University's history. Through membership, professional contacts, the TedQual quality certification, study visits, lectures, and participation in global events, the University has linked the local academic environment with global debates on tourism, education, and sustainable development.



Cooperation Agreement with the Southwestern University of Finance and Economics from China May 2026

10

THE STUDENT AT THE CENTER OF THE UNIVERSITY

The most important measure of a higher education institution's success is the experience and development of its students. In its operations, University Skopje builds a model of student support through the accessibility of teaching staff, practical work, career counseling, international opportunities, scholarships, and extracurricular activities.

10.1. Internships and Careers

Engagement with companies, institutions, tourism entities, and professional organizations allows students to gain an understanding of the real-world work environment while still pursuing their studies. Internships and professional site visits are not merely an addendum to a degree, but a bridge between academic knowledge and professional independence.



Our student Monika Janakieva is doing an internship at the Marriott Hotel.

10.2. Mobility and Intercultural Experience

Erasmus mobility programs, international internships, and study visits develop linguistic, intercultural, and professional competencies. For a student, spending time in a different academic environ-

ment offers an opportunity to test their own knowledge, build a network of contacts, and gain the self-confidence needed to work in a globalized world.

10.3. Student Community and Belonging

University life is not created solely within lecture halls. Formal ceremonies, scientific and cultural events, student initiatives, sports activities, and group trips foster a sense of belonging. It is precisely these experiences that transform the institution from a place for obtaining a degree into an academic community.



Scientific teaching practice in Egypt, July 2023



Student party in front of the University Skopje

11

ALUMNI – THE MOST VISIBLE RESULT OF EDUCATION

Over the past twenty years, generations of students have passed through the University; today, they work in public institutions, private companies, international organizations, their own businesses, and various professional sectors. Their careers serve as the most direct confirmation of the value of investing in higher education.

The alumni community maintains the bond between the University and its graduates. It facilitates the sharing of professional experiences, mentorship, networking, and opportunities for internships and employment, as well as providing feedback that helps improve academic curricula.

In a jubilee monograph, alumni stories hold special value. They represent the human dimension behind the statistics and serve as the best proof that the knowledge acquired at the University continues to live on through the professional and personal successes of its graduates.



Meeting of the Rector with the Alumni of the University Skopje

12

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY, FOUNDATIONS, AND SCHOLARSHIPS

Since the establishment of the "Prof. Ljube Milenkovski, PhD" Fund in 2007, supporting talented young people has been one of the University's most visible social missions. Over the years, scholarships have been awarded to pupils, students, and athletes, while various partnerships and donor initiatives have created opportunities for study and professional development.

Social responsibility is also demonstrated through support for educational, scientific, sports, cultural, and humanitarian activities. The University has collaborated with professional associations, sports organizations, local and national institutions, and the non-governmental sector, striving to apply its resources and knowledge for the benefit of the wider community.

In 2023, University Skopje received an award for social responsibility toward youth, which highlighted this long-standing commitment. However, the essence of social responsibility does not lie in the award itself—it lies in the continuous investment in people and the opportunities created for them.



Social Responsibility Award for University Skopje, for several consecutive years

13

AWARDS, RECOGNITIONS, AND ACADEMIC AFFIRMATION

Over the past twenty years, the University and its leadership have received domestic and international accolades for quality, management, entrepreneurship, social responsibility, and contributions to education. While each award carries a different context, they share a common message: the institution's impact extends well beyond its own lecture halls.

- Grand Prix for the best promotional presentation at the International Tourism Fair in Novi Sad – 2007;
- International management awards presented in Geneva – 2013;
- TedQual certifications, following successive positive international quality audits;
- "Golden Coin" for high standards in implementing entrepreneurship within education – 2016;
- "Recognition for Macedonian Quality 2018";
- Multiple "Super brand" recognitions in the higher education category;
- "The Top of Business 2023 – Business Leaders Awards" and the title of "Ambassador of Education" for the Rector;
- Election of the Rector as a member of the Academic Union, Oxford – 2023;
- Creditworthiness certificate with an A+ rating awarded for several consecutive years.



Rector Prof. Ace Milenkovski, PhD, elected as a member of the Academic Union of Oxford, 2023

The jubilee perspective requires that the awards be viewed not as isolated trophies, but as part of a broader process: quality work, public recognition, international contacts, and institutional reputation.



Award – "Man of Enduring Values"



"Macedonian Quality 2018" Recognition

In 2023, the Rector, Prof. Ace Milenkovski, PhD, received the title "Ambassador of Education" in Rome, and in the same year, he was elected a member of the Academic Union of Oxford. These recognitions served as an international affirmation of his long-standing work in higher education and the institutional development of the University.



Rector Prof. Ace Milenkovski, PhD, received the title of Ambassador for Education, Rome, August 2023

14

HONORARY TITLES – ACADEMIC CHRONICLE OF THE UNIVERSITY

Some people have left a mark on the history of the University of Skopje. A higher education institution does not create its history solely through the number of its graduates, scientific papers, study programs, and academic achievements. Its true history is also shaped by people—professors, scientists, intellectuals, visionaries, and friends of the University—whose work enables knowledge to transcend the boundaries of a single institution and become part of broader societal and civilization development. In this sense, the honorary titles of the University of Skopje hold a special place in its history.

In accordance with its statutory and legal authority, the University has conferred the following titles upon distinguished professors and individuals from the Republic of North Macedonia and abroad who have made significant contributions to the development of higher education, science, tourism, the economy, academic cooperation, and the international standing of the University:

Professor Emeritus (for retired professors),
Professor Honoris Causa (for active professors), and
Doctor Honoris Causa (honorary doctorates).

These recognitions are more than mere honorary titles; they serve as a testament to the enduring bond between the University and individuals whose work possesses broader academic and societal value.

Honorary professor

PROFESSOR EMERITUS

Prof. Aleksandar Stojmilov, PhD
Prof. Murat Murati, PhD
Prof. Todor Kralev, PhD
Prof. Vasil Gramatnikovski, PhD
Prof. Slobodan Ivanovich, PhD

Honorary Professor

PROFESSOR HONORIS CAUSA

Prof. Zoran Ivanovich, PhD
Prof. Chavdar Nikolov, PhD
Taleb Rifai, PhD
Academician Ivo Shlaus
Prof. Constantino Mendes Rei, PhD
Delfina Gabriela Garrido Ramos, PhD
Prof. Luiz Moutinho, PhD,
Prof. Miglena Petrova Temelkova-Bakalova, PhD
Prof. Jove Kekenovski, PhD
Prof. Antonio Carles, PhD

DOCTOR HONORIS CAUSA

Javier Blanco, MSc
Dimitar Todevski, MSc
Vanja Bitiljanu
Siegfried Stiglitz
Yolanda Perdomo
Lidija Topuzovska
Jovan Grkov
Mehmet Durmaz
Said Sergio Mussagi
Fehmi Kosovali
Marjan Gjorchev

PROFESSOR EMERITUS

Among the holders of the title Professor Emeritus are distinguished professors whose long-standing scholarly and teaching contributions have left a significant mark on higher education in Macedonia.



Prof. Aleksandar Stojmilov, PhD

Prof. Aleksandar Stojmilov, PhD
is among the professors upon whom the University has conferred the title of Professor Emeritus, in recognition of their contribution to higher education and the academic community.



Prof. Murat Murati, PhD

Through his academic and professional work,
***Prof. Murat Murati, PhD**, is one of the professors who hold the title of Professor Emeritus at the University Skopje. His name remains recorded among the distinguished professors whom the University has honored with its highest academic recognition.*

R EMERITUS



Prof. Todor Kralev, PhD

*On October 4, 2012, the Senate of then - University of Tourism and Management in Skopje decided to confer the title of Professor Emeritus upon **Todor Kralev, PhD**, in recognition of his significant contribution to the development of higher education in the Republic of Macedonia.*

The decision highlights his exceptionally rich professional career, which includes teaching and research at various higher education institutions, participation in the development of interdisciplinary studies, professional engagement in the field of industrial engineering and management, decades of research activity, and the authorship of numerous scientific and professional works. The rationale for the decision also notes that he is a recipient of the "Goce Delchev" Award for particularly significant scientific achievements.



Prof. Vasil Gramatnikovski, PhD

*On October 4, 2012, the Senate decided to confer the title of "Professor Emeritus" upon **Prof. Vasil Gramatnikovski, PhD** in recognition of his significant contribution to the development of higher education in the Republic of Macedonia. His academic career has been particularly instrumental in the development of geographical science in Macedonia. Throughout his professional life, he was affiliated with the Geographical Institute and the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics in Skopje, serving as Dean and as the head of various institutes and departments. His scholarly focus encompassed economic geography, spatial planning, population studies, and related scientific fields. His academic work was enriched by research stays abroad, as well as by the publication of over seventy scientific papers. For his contributions to teaching, research, and society, he received numerous accolades and awards, including the Order of Labor with a Golden Wreath.*

R EMERITUS



Prof. Slobodan Ivanovich, PhD

Prof. Slobodan Ivanovich, PhD *holds both the title of Professor Emeritus and the title of Professor Honoris Causa at the University Skopje. His dual status within the system of honorary titles underscores his long-standing connection to the University's academic community.*

PROFESSOR H



Prof. Zoran Ivanovich, PhD

Prof. Zoran Ivanovich, PhD *holds the title of "Professor Honoris Causa" at the University Skopje. He is a professor in the field of tourism and hospitality, and his academic affiliation with the University is further evidenced by his participation in academic and professional activities.*

ONORIS CAUSA



Prof. Chavdar Nikolov, PhD, – In Memoriam

*The title of "Professor Honoris Causa" has been awarded to **Prof. Chavdar Nikolov**, PhD, "in memoriam". With this recognition, the University pays tribute to his scientific and academic work, preserving his name as part of its own institutional history.*

PROFESSOR H



Dr. Taleb Rifai

One of the particularly significant international recognitions is the title of "Professor Honoris Causa" awarded to ***Dr. Taleb Rifai,*** *former Secretary-General of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). This distinction holds special importance for the University, as the foundation of its academic tradition is built within the field of tourism. During a formal session, Rifai was named an honorary professor, and his visit to the University was aimed at intensifying academic and professional cooperation.*

ONORIS CAUSA



Academician Ivo Shlaus

*Academician **Ivo Shlaus** from the Republic of Croatia holds the title of "Professor Honoris Causa". The decision to confer this title was made during a session of the Senate held on October 20, 2015, and the recognition was presented as part of a formal university ceremony.*

PROFESSOR H



Prof. Constantino Mendes Rei, PhD

Prof. Constantino Mendes Rei, PhD *from Portugal is among the distinguished foreign professors upon whom the University conferred the title of *Professor Honoris Causa* by a decision made in 2015.*



Dr. Delfina Gabriela Garrido Ramos

Dr. Delfina Gabriela Garrido Ramos *from Portugal holds the title of Professor Honoris Causa. She is among the international academic figures with which the University has established academic ties and cooperation.*

PROFESSOR H



Prof. Luiz Moutinho, PhD

Prof. Luiz Moutinho, PhD *is one of the most distinguished international professors to whom the University has awarded the title of *Professor Honoris Causa*. On February 23, 2017, during a formal session of the Senate, Prof. Moutinho was presented with this title in recognition of his exceptional contribution to academic cooperation with the University. His lectures, thematic meetings with students and faculty, and the sharing of his research experiences have made a significant contribution to the scientific and practical development of the academic community. His professional background is particularly notable for his extensive international academic experience and his authorship of numerous books in the fields of consumer behavior, buyer psychology, and strategic marketing.*

ONORIS CAUSA



Prof. Miglena Petrova Temelkova, PhD

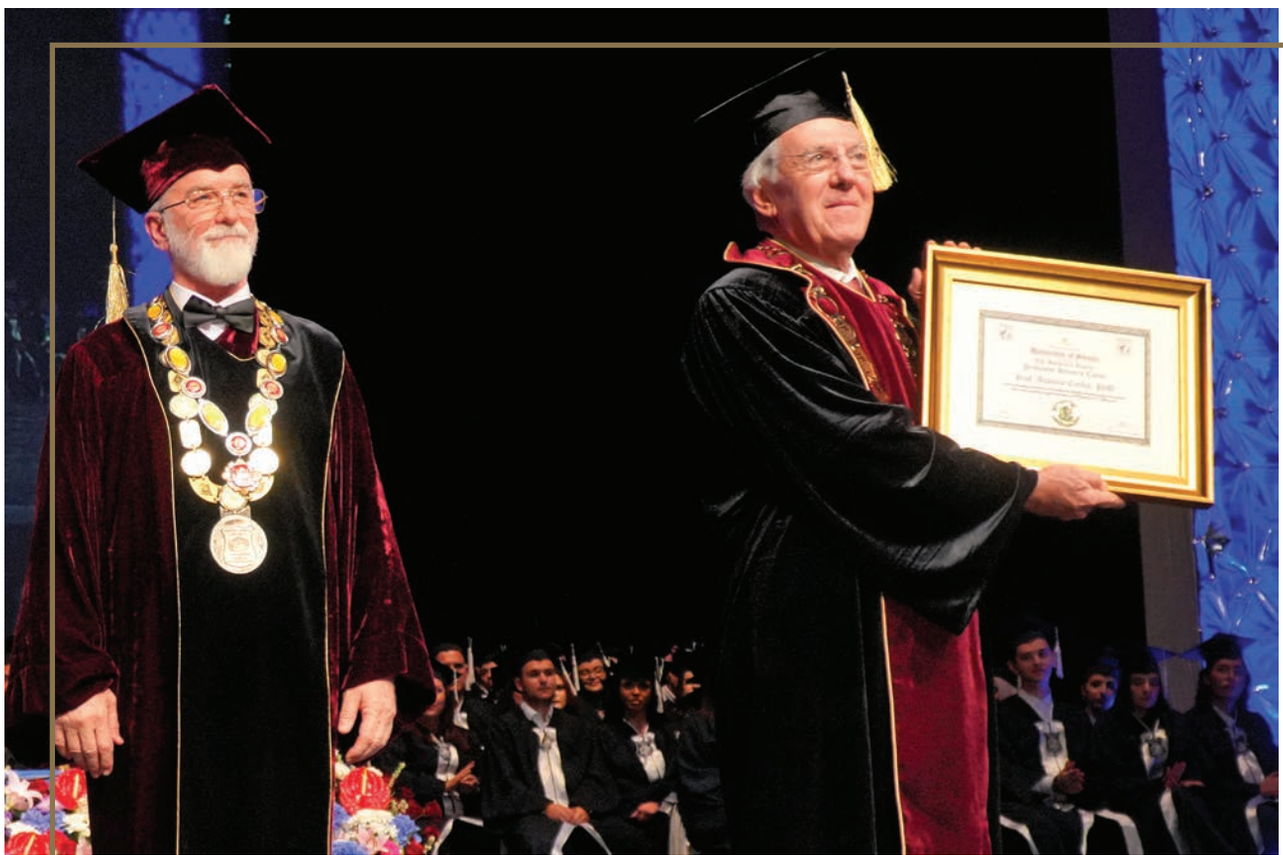
On April 24, 2023, the Senate of the University of Skopje decided to confer the title of "Professor Honoris Causa" upon Prof. Miglena Petrova Temelkova-Bakalova, PhD, in recognition of her significant contribution to the development of higher education in the Republic of North Macedonia. The formal conferment ceremony took place on May 12, 2023. Prof. Temelkova-Bakalova, Rector of the University of Telecommunications and Posts in Sofia, is the first female rector—and the first professor from Bulgaria—to be awarded this title by the University of Skopje. This recognition serves as a symbol of the academic ties between the two institutions and the two countries, as well as a commitment to using knowledge and education as bridges for trust and cooperation.

PROFESSOR H



Prof. Jove Kekenovski, PhD

Prof. Jove Kekenovski,PhD *holds the title of "Professor Honoris Causa". Jove Kekenovski is a university professor and public figure who, through his long-standing academic and public engagement, has left a distinct mark on the development of higher education and social life.*



Prof. Antonio Carles, PhD

Prof. Antonio Carles, PhD *is also a recipient of the title "Professor Honoris Causa", which underscores the international dimension of the University's honorary recognitions. Prof. Antonio Carles,PhD, serves as an international evaluator for UN Tourism.*

DOCTOR HON



Javier Blanco, MSc

Javier Blanco, MCs *is a recipient of the title "Doctor Honoris Causa" from the University of Skopje. His name is particularly associated with international tourism cooperation and the activities of the World Tourism Organization.*

NORIS CAUSA



Fehmi Kosovali

Fehmi Kosovali *holds the title of Doctor Honoris Causa from the University Skopje. He is a distinguished professional and public figure with a long-standing commitment to the fields of education and international cooperation. With this recognition, the University Skopje acknowledges his contributions and efforts toward fostering connections and cooperation within the region.*

DOCTOR HON



Dimitar Todevski, MSc – In Memoriam

*On October 4, 2012, the Senate of the University of Tourism and Management decided to confer the title of "Doctor Honoris Causa" upon **Dimitar Todevski, MCs**, in recognition of his significant contribution to the development of the economy in the Republic of Macedonia and to higher education in the field of economics. The title was formally awarded during a ceremonial session held on October 8, 2012. The rationale for this decision highlights his extensive professional career in the areas of public finance, budgetary policy, public procurement, and public administration reform, as well as his academic, research, and publishing activities.*

NORIS CAUSA



Vanja Bitoljanu

Vanja Bitoljanu *holds the title of Doctor Honoris Causa from the University Skopje. Vanja Bitoljanu served for many years as the director of "Palas Turist" and "Paler Makedonija"; he was a prominent business leader whose work left a lasting mark on the tourism sector in our homeland.*

DOCTOR HON



Siegfried Stiglitz

Siegfried Stiglitz *holds the title of Doctor Honoris Causa from the University Skopje, as one of the figures through whom the University has expanded its international academic connections.*

NORIS CAUSA



Lidija Topuzovska

***Lidija Topuzovska** holds the title of *Doctor Honoris Causa*. This distinction is part of the history of honorary titles through which the University recognizes contributions in the fields of education and social life.*
носител на титулата Doctor Honoris Causa. Нејзиното признание

DOCTOR HON



Jovan Grkov

Jovan Grkov *holds the title of Doctor Honoris Causa from the University Skopje. He is a prominent public and business figure. As a recipient of the Doctor Honoris Causa title from the University Skopje, his name is included among those who, through their work and engagement, have contributed to the promotion of the university and its values.*

NORIS CAUSA



Mehmet Durmaz

Mehmet Durmaz *holds the title of *Doctor Honoris Causa* from the University Skopje. He is a distinguished Turkish university professor and academic figure who has made significant contributions to the field of education and international academic cooperation. In recognition of his contributions and dedication, he has been awarded the honorary title of *Doctor Honoris Causa* by the University Skopje—a distinction that underscores his strong ties to the university community and his role in fostering international academic relations.*

DOCTOR HON



Said Sergio Mussagi

On December 14, 2022, during a formal session of the Senate, ***Said Sergio Mussagi*** *was awarded the title of "Doctor Honoris Causa". The title was conferred in recognition of his significant contribution to the development of the economy and economic sciences. The University's official citation highlights his long-standing support for the Macedonian economy—both regionally and globally—as well as his contribution to the development of economic educational programs.*
With this distinction, the University has welcomed Mussagi into its academic community, acknowledging his professional, scientific, and humanitarian endeavors.

NORIS CAUSA



Marjan Gjorchev

Marjan Gjorchev *is listed on the official register of the University Skopje as a recipient of the title "Doctor Honoris Causa".*
Marjan Gjorchev is a university professor, diplomat, and public figure with experience in the academic community, as well as in political and diplomatic life, who has contributed to the advancement of knowledge, education, and international cooperation.

DOCTOR HON



Yolanda Perdomo

*On February 12, 2013, the Senate decided to confer the title of "Doctor Honoris Causa" upon **Yolanda Perdomo**, Director of Affiliate Members at the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). The decision states that this recognition is awarded for her significant contribution to the development of tourism in the Republic of Macedonia and to higher education in the field of tourism.*

NORIS CAUSA

15

ACADEMIC BRIDGES TO THE WORLD

Ambassadors as Guest Lecturers at the University of Skopje

Throughout the twenty-year history of the University Skopje, its openness to the world is measured not only by the number of international partnerships, students, and professors, but also by the individuals who, over the years, have brought global academic, diplomatic, cultural, and economic perspectives into the university lecture halls. Ambassadors and high-ranking diplomatic representatives who served as guest lecturers at the

University hold a particularly significant place in this history.
Their visits were much more than mere formal occasions. They provided an opportunity for students to learn firsthand about their respective countries—their societies, cultures, economies, and tourism potential—as well as the contemporary challenges of international cooperation. In this way, the university lecture hall became a meeting point for academia and diplomacy, knowledge and experience, the local and the global.

2011 – The First Diplomatic Voices in the University Lecture Hall

Among the first documented guest appearances was that of H.E. Alen Bergant, Ambassador of the Republic of Slovenia, who spoke to UTMS students in 2011 about Slovenia and its tourism potential.

That same year, the University also welcomed H.E. Jean-Claude Schlumberger, Ambassador of the French Republic, who delivered a lecture to the students.

These visits in 2011 marked the beginning of a tradition that would, over the years, evolve into a recognizable feature of the University's academic life: direct engagement between students and diplomatic representatives of foreign states.

February 2013 – Germany through the Lens of Tourism

In February 2013, Ms. Karin Forstner, Deputy Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany, delivered a lecture to UTMS students and professors.

The topic was "Germany and Berlin as Tourism Destinations."

The lecture covered Germany's tourism and cultural potential, with a special focus on Berlin and its status as a modern European tourism metropolis. Through this example, students had the opportunity to gain insight into the experience of a country that successfully integrates cultural heritage with urban, conference, business, and other forms of tourism.

March 2013 – Great Britain and the London Experience

In March 2013, the University hosted H.E. Christopher Yvon, Ambassador of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

The lecture focused on Great Britain as a tourist destination, with a particular emphasis on London and the experience surrounding the organization and promotion of the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

For tourism students, this served as a practical lesson on how a major international event can become a tool for tourism promotion, economic development, and the global positioning of a nation.

March 2013 – Spain: Tourism as a National Calling Card

Just a few days later, on March 16, 2013, the University hosted H.E. Fernando de Galainena, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Spain.

The lecture covered Spain's tourism potential, its various regions, cultural heritage, gastronomy, and diverse tourism offerings. Spain was presented to the students as an example of a country that has transformed tourism into a powerful instrument for economic development, international promotion, and cultural diplomacy.

Taleb Rifai – A Vision for the Future of Tourism

In July 2014, the University of Skopje hosted Taleb Rifai,PhD the then-Secretary-General of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), who delivered a lecture to the academic community and students. His visit was a significant event for the University, creating an opportunity to exchange knowledge and experiences with one of the world's leading authorities in the field of tourism. Rifai spoke about contemporary challenges and opportunities in tourism, as well as its role in the development of destinations and the connecting of people and cultures. This visit remains a part of the history of the University Skopje, serving as a testament to its commitment to international academic cooperation and education with a global perspective.



UNWTO Secretary-General, Taleb Rifai



The Ambassador of Croatia to Macedonia, Ms. Danijela Barishich

September 2017 – Croatia and the Development of Tourism

In September 2017, as part of the observance of World Tourism Day, H.E. Daniela Barishich, Ambassador of the Republic of Croatia, served as a guest lecturer at UTMS.
Her presentation focused on Croatia's experiences in the development and promotion of tourism.
With its highly developed tourism industry and a distinct Mediterranean brand, Croatia served as a particularly relevant example for students envisioning a professional future in tourism and tourism management.



The Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Macedonia, Mr. Wouter Plomp

November 2017 – The Netherlands and Contemporary Tourism Trends

On November 1, 2017, the University welcomed H.E. Wouter Plomp, Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

His lecture focused on tourism trends in the Netherlands, covering contemporary models of tourism development, sustainability, MICE tourism, and the integration of tourism with broader economic and social policies.

Ambassador Plomp's visit served as further confirmation that the University, through its teaching and academic activities, keeps pace with contemporary European and global trends.

János Bóka
"Europe through Academic Dialogue"
In April 2025, the University of Skopje hosted János Bóka, Hungary's Minister for European Affairs, who delivered an academic lecture to the University's students and guests.

As part of a debate titled "How to Make Europe Great Again?" Bóka discussed the future of the European Union, European security, competitiveness, and the need for open dialogue regarding new challenges. His visit served as further confirmation that the University Skopje is a place where academia, European thought, and contemporary social issues converge.



Minister of European Affairs of Hungary, János Bóka

March 2018 – Hungary: Tourism and Economic Development

In March 2018, H.E. László István Dux, Ambassador of the Republic of Hungary, delivered a lecture to UTMS students.

The topic was:
"The Tourism and Economic Potential of the Republic of Hungary."
The Ambassador presented Hungary's economic and tourism potential, with a special focus on Budapest, Lake Balaton, cultural heritage, gastronomy, festivals, and wine routes.
The lecture served as an example of how tourism, the economy, culture, and national development can be interconnected.

November 2022 – Spain and Sports Tourism

In November 2022, the University of Tourism and Management – Skopje once again hosted the Ambassador of Spain, H.E. José Luis Lozano García.
The lecture focused on Spain as a tourist destination, with a particular emphasis on sports tourism.
Through examples from Spain, students had the opportunity to see how sports, culture, tourism, and the economy can be integrated into a unified tourism offering.



The Ambassador of the Kingdom of Spain to the Republic of Macedonia, Rafael Soriano Ortiz

June 2025 – Kazakhstan: New Horizons for International Cooperation

In June 2025, University Skopje furthered its outreach into new international spheres by hosting H.E. Satibaldi Burshakov, Ambassador of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

His lecture focused on Kazakhstan, its potential, and opportunities for developing international academic and institutional cooperation. This visit was particularly significant in the context of the University's commitment to expanding its international academic ties and creating new opportunities for students and academic staff.

March 2026 – Spain: Education, Culture, Tourism, and Diplomacy

In March 2026, ahead of the University's jubilee, H.E. Rafael Soriano Ortiz, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Spain, delivered a lecture to students at the University of Skopje.
The discussion focused on relations between Spain and North Macedonia, as well as opportunities for cooperation in the fields of education, culture, and tourism.
The event once again underscored the role of the University of Skopje as a venue for dialogue among young people, the academic community, and international institutions.



The Ambassador of the Republic of Kazakhstan, H.E. Satibaldi Burshakhov.

June 2026 – China: "Understanding China through the Prism of Hope"

In June 2026, the University of Skopje hosted H.E. Jiang Xiaoyan, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China.

The lecture was titled:
"Understanding China through the Prism of Hope."
With this visit, the University opened yet another significant window to the world—to the culture, development, vision, and contemporary processes of one of the most important nations in the world.



Chinese Ambassador Jiang Xiaoyan

AMBASSADORS

A Bridge between Nations and Macedonia



UNIVERSITY SKOPJE TODAY

In 2026, the University Skopje enters its third decade with twenty years of institutional experience, yet also with a commitment to continuous evolution. Modern higher education demands more than the mere transfer of knowledge; it requires digital competencies, critical thinking, an interdisciplinary approach, an entrepreneurial spirit, ethical responsibility, and the capacity for lifelong learning. The current academic offering reflects a focus on fields with direct social and economic relevance—economics and finance, international marketing, tourism, human resources, and informatics. The university's institutes further support scientific research and applied professional work, while international cooperation and the Erasmus+ program continue to open the institution to Europe and the wider world.

On April 16, 2026, the University's Open Day brought together around 500 high school seniors from Skopje and Belgrade. The event serves as a symbol for this milestone year: twenty years after the very first academic lecture, a new generation of young people enters the lecture halls once again, asking the same question—where does my future begin?



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A LOOK TOWARDS THE FUTURE

The coming decade will be marked by changes that are already redefining higher education. Artificial intelligence, automation, new work models, the digital economy, climate and demographic shifts, as well as the rapid emergence of new professions, demand that universities become more flexible, open, and innovative.

For the University Skopje, this means continuing its core mission through new tools: modern and regularly updated study programs, the integration of digital technologies into teaching, international and interdisciplinary projects, support for student entrepreneurship, the development of research capacities, and even stronger ties with the professional community.

At the same time, technological advancement does not diminish the importance of the human dimension—quite the contrary. In an era of rapid change, it is more essential than ever for the university to cultivate individuals capable of critical thinking, sound judgment, collaboration, and taking responsibility. While knowledge remains the foundation, character, ethics, and the capacity for continuous learning represent its most vital application. Twenty years since its inception, University Skopje carries with it the history of the Faculty of Tourism, the energy of thousands of students and professors, and the experience of two decades of institutional development. The next chapter does not start from scratch; it begins with the value created over twenty years.



18

CHRONOLOGY 2006–2026

A selection of key dates and events from the University's twenty-year development. This chapter is presented as a visual timeline, incorporating archival photographs.

08.10.2006
Grand opening—The first private Faculty of Tourism is opened, laying the foundations for what is now the University of Skopje.



Formal grand opening

09.10.2006
First academic session — Classes begin for the first generation of students.

November/December 2006
First international trade fair visit — Students participate in an educational-scientific practicum and a tourism trade fair in Athens.

June 2007
First summer internship abroad — the first cohort completed practical training in hotels in Greece.



June 2007 – The first cohort completes practical training in hotels in Greece.

September 2007
"Prof. Ljube Milenkovski, PhD" Fund — A fund established to support education, science, and talented youth.

October 2007
First Grand Prix Award — an award for the best promotional presentation at the Tourism Fair in Novi Sad.

2008–2011
Evolution into a University — Institutional expansion leads to the establishment of the University of Tourism and Management in Skopje.

April 2011
Skopje Travel Market — The University organizes an international tourism fair in Skopje and hosts representatives from the UNWTO.

January 2012
UNWTO – Madrid — A visit to the headquarters of the World Tourism Organization and meetings with its leadership.

October 2013
ICONBEST — An international scientific congress established as a platform for business, economics, sports, and tourism.

November 2013
International recognition in Geneva—The University receives two awards in the field of management.



International Recognition in Geneva—The University Receives Two Awards in the Field of Management

July 2014
Taleb Rifai at the University — The Secretary-General of the UNWTO Delivers a Lecture in Skopje.

December 2014
Association of geography professors — "Prof. Ljube Milenkovski, PhD".



In December 2014, the Association of Geography Professors "Prof. Ljube Milenkovski, PhD" was founded.

2015

Erasmus Charter — The University receives the Erasmus Charter and formalizes its participation in European mobility programs.

June 2016

TedQual — The international TedQual certification is formally awarded.

November 2016

"Golden Coin" — An award recognizing high standards in the implementation of entrepreneurship within education.



November 2016 Gold Coin – Recognition for high standards in the implementation of entrepreneurship in education.

October 2017

Partnership with Biała Podlaska — Cooperation agreement with the Pope John Paul II University.

December 2018

Macedonian Quality 2018 — The University receives national recognition for quality.

February 2019

Super brand — Recipient of the "Super brand" recognition for the first time in the higher education category.

March 2020
Cooperation with Poland — Agreement signed with the University of Dąbrowa Górnicza.



February 2019 – Recipient of the "Super brand" recognition for the first time in the higher education category.

March 2021
ESB Center — The University becomes an authorized center for the internationally recognized ESB English language certificate.

May 2021
Silk Road – Samarkand — A working visit to Uzbekistan and an agreement on academic mobility.

November 2021
Agricultural University – Plovdiv — A memorandum of international cooperation was signed.

March 2022
University of Szeged — A memorandum with the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration.

June 2022
Sofia — A memorandum with the University of Telecommunications and Posts.

December 2022
Opatija — A memorandum was signed with the School of Hotel Management and Tourism in Opatija.

September 2023
University Skopje — UTMS rebrands as University Skopje.

October 2023
Ambassador of Education — Rector Prof. Ace Milenkovski, PhD, receives the international title in Rome.

December 2023
Academic Union of Oxford — The Rector is elected as a member of the Academic Union of Oxford.



December 2023 – The Rector has been elected a member of the Academic Union of Oxford.

November 2024
A+ Credit Rating — The University in Skopje receives an A+ credit rating certificate for several consecutive years.

November 2025
UN Tourism – Riyadh — A delegation from the University participates in the General Assembly and the 50th anniversary of UN Tourism.



November 2025 — A delegation from the University participated in the General Assembly and the 50th anniversary of UN Tourism

January 2026
Madrid, FITUR 2026 — Students and academic staff visit the UN Tourism headquarters and the international trade fair FITUR.



January 2026: Students and academic staff visit the UNTourism headquarters and the international trade fair FITUR.

April 16, 2026
Open Day — Around 500 high school seniors from Skopje and Belgrade explore the study programs and the student atmosphere.

2026
20 Years of the University of Skopje — A jubilee marking two decades dedicated to knowledge, and the beginning of a new chapter of development.

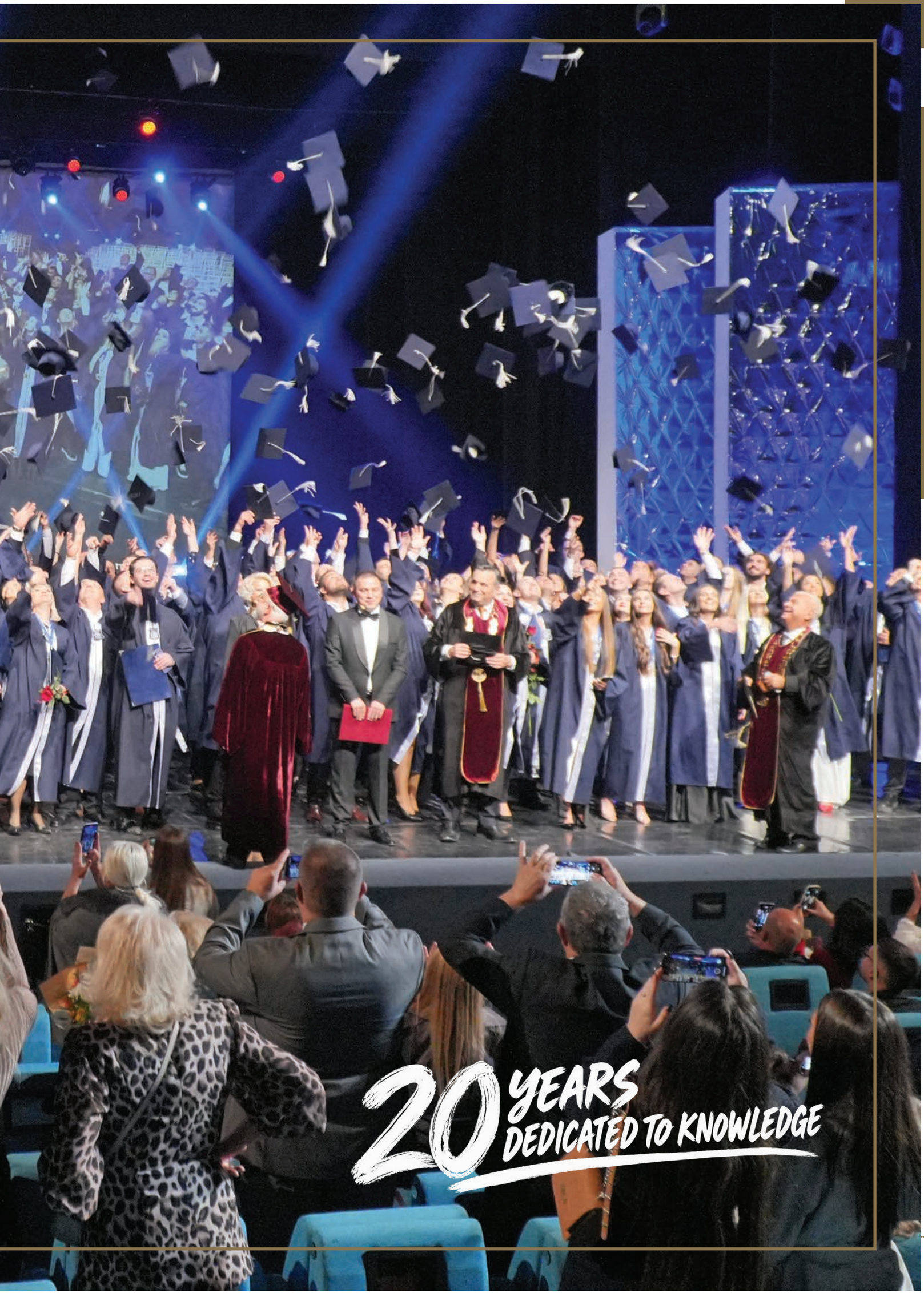
The Light That Never Fades

From the time of Saint Clement of Ohrid when the written word became the foundation of enlightenment to the present day, education has remained one of the most powerful forces for transforming both the individual and society. Saint Clement left us a legacy: knowledge is not merely a treasure to be acquired, but a light to be passed down from generation to generation. Within this centuries-old tradition, the University Skopje has carved out its own place, driven by a mission to generate knowledge and shape individuals. Over the years, under the leadership and vision of its Rector, Prof. Ace Milenkovski, PhD, the University has upheld the principle that education does not end with a diploma. Rather, it is a journey toward personal growth, professional success, and responsibility to the community. While times change, technologies advance, and the world faces new challenges, one value remains eternal: the human need to learn, to create, and to pass on the light of knowledge. From the teachings of Saint Clement to the modern university lecture hall, and from the very first lesson to each new generation of students, the work of enlightenment continues. And its brightest future is the one forged by those who believe that knowledge has the power to make the world a better place.

CLOSING MESSAGE

A university is built through decisions, programs, and institutions, yet it is remembered for its people. After twenty years, the most valuable archive of the University of Skopje consists of more than just documents, photographs, and awards. It comprises the knowledge that has been passed on, the professional paths that began here, the enduring friendships, and the generations that have carried the University's name into their careers. From the very first academic session in 2006 to this milestone year of 2026, a single idea has evolved into an academic tradition. And any true tradition holds meaning only if it continues to shape the future.




20 YEARS
DEDICATED TO KNOWLEDGE

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ABOUT US

Publisher
UNIVERSITY OF SKOPJE
Rector
Prof. Ace Milenkovski, PhD
Editor
Ljupcho Nakjev, MSc
Biljana Proeska, MSc
Photography
Goran Karovski, MSc
Roberto Milenkov, MSc
Дизајн
Jane Jancheski
Print
Datapons