**Annex A: Short History of EACs in the Traditional Region**

Scholarship Programs (SP) has a long-standing record of successful cooperation with National Foundations, whose assistance and support has been essential for the effective administration of scholarship programs in our target countries. In the 1990s our work focussed on the Central and Eastern Europe, the Balkans, and the former Soviet Union. Our primary local assistants- scholarship coordinators- were situated within the Foundations or at Soros-supported Educational Advising Centers (EACs). In the context of young, independent countries wrestling with the Soviet legacy, EACs were unprecedented creations, innovative islands of open access to libraries and academic information, compendiums of western university programs of study and opportunities for scholarships awarded through merit, not through connections. Visitors could prepare for and take the standardised tests required by Western universities and consult free of charge on the many questions and challenges associated with study abroad. Early on, the national foundations covered the administrative costs of staff and facilities for the EACs, including the portion of their work specifically for Scholarship Programs. At this time huge numbers of scholarships abroad were available in the region, including a great number from OSI intended to promote open society values and to re-build the field of social sciences and the humanities on a foundation of critical thinking and open academic inquiry.

Around 2000-2001 National Foundations were asked to re-evaluate their efforts, change their structures, cut some programs and spin off others to independent entities (including EACs) in anticipation of the Soros network’s winding down operations. Scholarships department was asked to clarify the relationship and future arrangements between SP, the Foundations, and the EACs. From our perspective SP efforts seemed to be most logically and efficiently hosted at the EACs, in part because scholarship applicants receive comprehensive services and academic resources apart from direct scholarships information. As a result of consultations with the foundations, the Education Sub-Board and internally within the SP, we decided to partially support the newly registered independent EACs. In most cases National Foundations provided them with gradually scaled down exit grants for a period of 3- 5 years. In some countries, like Armenia, Bulgaria, Hungary, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Tajikistan, the National Foundations decided to keep the scholarship coordinators within the foundations. In comparison, the first independent EACs began operations in Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Estonia, Macedonia and the Ukraine. There were also hybrid arrangements- EACs within the foundation, like in Albania, Moldova, Georgia, and Kazakhstan, but the latter two also operated a few regional EAC offices to cover large territories.

In 2005 when 10 Central and Eastern European countries joined the EU and SP ceased offering scholarships in those countries, our cooperation with the EACs in those countries likewise ended. Same for Romania and Bulgaria in 2007. Over the decade, more NFs pushed their scholarship coordinators towards independence, so that by the end of 2008 SP offered scholarships in 29 countries and supported a network of EACs in 16 countries[[1]](#footnote-1).

In terms of tasks, scholarship representation traditionally involved advertising programs in various media, distributing application forms, directing applicants to appropriate programs, running seminars on essay writing, helping applicants prepare for standardized tests and administering those tests, assisting visiting interview teams, organizing pre-departure orientations, and helping finalists with travel and last minute logistics. We started to offer summer schools from 2005 and this added additional work for the in-country partners. These tasks are not only essential for efficient program administration, they were also essential for the transparency and equity of our competitions, which defined our credibility locally and internationally.

About 2003 and onwards, the geographical shift of target countries started to change. Scholarships were given an additional grant to run programs in the Middle East, we started the South East Asia Program, gave a large number of supplemental grants to Burma, to mention a few. SP needed additional contacts to represent us locally, so we built relationships with the AMIDEAST, an American organisation promoting academic programs for the Middle East, Thabyay Foundation on the Thailand-Burma border, and Social Science Baha in Nepal. These were organizations with broader mandates and provided services for SP on the basis of service agreements. Thus, our portfolio of partner institutions expanded beyond the National Foundations and OSF regional offices. This mix of different types of partner organisations remains until the present, ranging from EACs at National Foundations, to independent EACs, and to international organisations. Finding reliable partnerships has always been a challenge. But with SP geographies completely changed by the new strategy of 2013 and the recent focus on Africa, this looms as one of the major challenges to overcome.

1. Kazakhstan took oversight of Uzbekistan after the closure of the National Foundation in 2006; Turkey had only a scholarship coordinator for one Human Rights program at Bilgi University; [↑](#footnote-ref-1)