



## PRESS RELEASE

### THE SUSTAINABILITY LEADERSHIP AND INNOVATION EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM TO BUILD FUTURE LEADERS OF CHANGE

**Sofia, March 27, 2018**

The official launch of the new Sustainability Leadership and Innovation Program was announced yesterday in Sofia. The program will provide unique opportunity to acquire knowledge on sustainable business development. It was developed jointly by the Bulgarian Soft Drinks Association (BSDA) and the American University in Bulgaria (AUBG) with the support of well-known international professors. The event was attended by representatives of the business, state administration and educational institutions in the country. The opening took place yesterday at 18:00 at AUBG Elieff Center for Education and Culture. Special guest at the ceremony was President Rosen Plevneliev (2012-2017), Ambassador of the American University in Bulgaria.

*“Sustainable development is a way of thinking. We need to unite our efforts and work together – governments, institutions, businesses and citizens. We all share one common home – the planet Earth. It’s our duty to keep what we have and to develop it in a sustainable way in order to ensure the best future for our children. We need to think smart, act sustainably and change our approach to leave future generations a beautiful, healthy and prosperous planet”,* commented during the official opening of the program Mr. Rosen Plevneliev.

The program aims to educate professionals in the field of sustainable development and best business practices. Professionals will be trained in the course of five full days on the premises of the American University in Bulgaria. The course will be offered twice this year in two cohorts. The organizers’ ambition is to continue the training in the years to come, upgrading the program and turning it into a master’s degree course at the national level.

*“The program is unique in its structure and content, with no analogue in Bulgaria. The educational modules are developed to meet the needs of the business but also to be applicable in the everyday practice”* –Jana Velichkova, Executive Director of BSDA, commented.

*“Bulgaria needs a new generation of leaders to work towards creating a more sustainable social, environmental and business system. We all share the responsibility to build a sustainable community together. I would like to thank our partners who believed in this program of the American University in Bulgaria which is extremely important for the future of the country”* – Dr. Steven Sullivan, President of AUBG said at the event.

The Sustainability Leadership and Innovation Program is part of the wider Crystal Clear initiative which was launched in April 2017 by eight companies, members of the Bulgarian Soft Drinks Association. Its goal is to introduce rules and norms to enforce compliance with the highest quality standards in the sector and promote clear, responsible and transparent business environment – both in the bottling industry and in the Bulgarian economy as a whole.

*"Sustainable development depends on our individual and common efforts as well. That is exactly why the program focuses on future leaders and carriers of change aiming to support the progress of Bulgarian society as a whole. We hope this course will motivate more and more young people to follow the principles of clean and responsible business and to work for the sustainable future of Bulgaria. We will provide them with opportunities for professional development and we will also support our employees who would like to learn and grow in this field,"* said Thomas Krennbauer, CEO of DEVIN JSC.

*"We are committed to the future of Bulgaria, all of us, the initiators of the Crystal Clear campaign. Through the development of this innovative program, a dream come true for us. It will contribute to the creation of the new entrepreneurial class of Bulgaria – people with innovative thinking, leadership skills, clear vision, honor and dignity. The program provides a unique opportunity for professional development and upgrading of the participants' personal competencies. It will open new doors and show new ways for the young people to achieve their goals" – Svetoslav Atanasov, CEO of Coca-Cola Hellenic Bottling Company Bulgaria said in his speech.*

*"Organizations don't change, people do. So it's essential we invest in our leaders of tomorrow as we move to make sustainability just good business. Our expert consultancy connects program participants to a network of global thought leaders and supports the partnership. We want to help leaders to position sustainability as innovation's new frontier, with the new program underpinning Bulgaria's ambitious plans for inclusive growth", - emphasized at the event Professor Wendy Purcell from Harvard University.*

Applicants should have a minimum of three years of working experience, previous academic degree in any discipline and proficiency in English. They should submit two professional recommendations and prepare the application materials, as well as two essays describing a challenging professional situation and their reason for applying for the Sustainability Leadership and Innovation Program.

Application documents should be submitted by April 15 at [execed@aubg.edu](mailto:execed@aubg.edu), phone: 00359 2 960 7924.

More information about the program is available at: <https://www.aubg.edu/sustainability-apply>

#### *About BSDA:*

*The Bulgarian Soft Drinks Association represents over 70% of the soft drinks industry, including bottled waters. The members of BSDA are well-established, socially responsible companies, which follow the highest quality standards and form the European image of the soft drinks industry in Bulgaria. Established in 1996, BSDA is a long-standing member of the European Federation of Bottled Water (EFBW), and the European Soft Drinks Industry (UNESDA). As of May 2017, BSDA is also a member of the European Fruit Juice Association (AIJN).*

#### *About AUBG:*

*The American University in Bulgaria (AUBG) offers high quality American education and is proud of the success of its graduates all over the world. The university holds 99.8% of the graduate students who start work or continue their MBA or doctoral degree programs after graduation. In addition, AUBG holds leading positions in the rating system of the Ministry of Education for the seventh consecutive year.*

