

## The Humboldt Club Romania: Interdisciplinary Dialogue and Human Contacts

Every month the historical building of the Bucharest branch of the Central University Library hosts in one of its elegant halls the meetings of the Humboldt Club Romania. If no administrative tasks stay prior on the club agenda, these monthly meetings usually consist of a conference on a scientific or a cultural topic of large interest held either by one of the club members or by a distinguished guest. The conferences which are open to the public are traditionally followed by a relaxing glass of wine taken in a friendly atmosphere. The theme spectrum of the Humboldt Club conferences is structured in an encyclopaedic manner so as to meet the dialogue needs of its members, scientists and scholars of various ages and specializations. Who are actually these scientists and scholars, who are these historians, engineers, musicologists, philologists, archaeologists, chemists, biologists, philosophers, doctors, physicists, psychologists, geologists or mathematicians, who proudly call themselves „Humboldtianer“, i.e. *Humboldt-Fellows*, and regard the Humboldt Club Romania as their enlarged family? The club members are all former research fellows of the renowned Foundation „Alexander von Humboldt“, which supports scholars and highly qualified scientists from all over the world to do research work in Germany, irrespective of their research field, their nationality, religion, political orientation, or gender. The Foundation bears the name of the famous German natural scientist and explorer Alexander von Humboldt, who is considered to be a symbol of the inquiring human spirit in search of scientific truth. The Alexander von Humboldt Foundation awards annually up to 500 research fellowships to foreign scientists holding a PhD for longer research stays at universities and research institutes in Germany. It also awards research prizes for outstanding research work, and is very proud to have among its fellows several Nobel prize winners. After the period of sponsoring, which is limited, the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation generously provides a life-long follow-up contact that is oriented on the academic interest of the former visiting scientists and scholars. The follow-up contact may consist in sponsoring the scientists' participation to international conferences, in donations of scientific books and scientific apparatus, in invitations to new, short stays in Germany for scientific purposes. The Humboldt Foundation also runs colloquia and regional congresses abroad on a regular basis. The monthly meetings of the Humboldt Club Romania are conceived as part of the follow-up „philosophy“ of the Foundation, which regards its research fellows as a great international family. The meetings are primarily intended to deepen and broaden the scientific and human connections existing between the

Romanian research fellows and the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. They are a means to promote the ideal of the universal dialogue of sciences as once practiced by Alexander von Humboldt himself. At the same time the monthly meetings represent a great opportunity for the club members not only to exchange memories of the times past in Germany at famous universities and research institutes but also to scientifically profit of and learn from each other. The key words that best characterize the monthly meetings of the Humboldt Club Romania are interdisciplinary dialogue and human contacts. These key words which epitomize key virtues of every „Humboldtianer“ imply receptivity towards various scientific positions, acceptance towards the point of view of another generation, open mindedness towards innovation, a critical attitude towards the inevitable narrowness of one's own field of research. An important part in the life of the Humboldt Club Romania is being played by its annually edited information bulletin which publishes not only internal news concerning the work and the scientific achievements of its members but also interesting articles on a variety of scientific topics. The bulletin is published in German, the adoptive mother tongue of every Humboldtianer, as a modest homage and a sign of deep gratitude towards the German state, which generously enabled generations of Romanian scholars to do invaluable research work in Goethe's native country. The Humboldt Club Romania also sees it as its task to help the younger generations of Romanian scientists and scholars to pave their way to German universities and research institutes in the context of an increasing demand for highly qualified specialists in all domains of knowledge and activity.

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