

Fulbright Program Forms Cultural Link Between Hungary And U.S.

UP TO 800 HUNGARIAN FULBRIGHTERS HAVE STUDIED IN U.S. SINCE 1978

Executive Director Huba Bruckner sees growing interest in the Fulbright program in Hungary, which he considers one of the largest and most successful in Central and Eastern Europe.

BY REKA A. FRANCISCK

> THE FULBRIGHT PROGRAM is the flagship of the U.S. Government's efforts in international education exchange, according to U.S. Ambassador to Hungary April H. Foley.

Active in 155 countries, its alumni include 18 heads of state, 37 recipients of the Nobel Prize, one Secretary General of the UN, one Secretary General of the NATO and a series of corporate leaders.

"The Hungarian government fully appreciates the importance of the Fulbright Program," Executive Director of Fulbright's 'Commission for Education Exchange' (CEE), Huba Bruckner, told Diplomacy and Trade.

"The Ministry of Education and Culture (OKM) provides the office space for our Commission and contributes 20 percent of total costs."

Bruckner sees growing interest in the program he considers one of the largest and most prestigious in Central and Eastern Europe. Leading the CEE, he says he is responsible for providing access to the program for Hungarian citizens,



organizing their selection and general administration. He also highlights the CEE's Educational Advisory Service (EAS), an "essential" part of his work, which he says provides the primary source of information in Hungary for those interested in U.S. education.

"We also organize annual Fulbright Road Shows, visiting university campuses to advertise the program," the Director adds.

"Since 1978, up to 800 Hungarians have studied in the U.S. and nearly 850 U.S. nationals in Hungary, out of some 300,000 Fulbright alumni worldwide.

Each year, we award 35 scholarships to Hungarian citizens, out of up to 150 applicants." Fulbright grants typically range from three months to an academic year and generally pay for travel, tuition, language courses, start-up funds, living expenses and health insurance.

"We allow applicants to shape their own projects and choose the institution that will host them," Bruckner points out, adding he would encourage anyone interested in living abroad to apply.

"It's a fantastic opportunity and a lifetime experience" he says.

"With access to more than 4,000 universities, the Fulbright Program literally offers

you the world.

And after the grant period, Fulbright Associations and the Fulbright alumni community both offer continuous support by providing further opportunities." The Fulbright program was established in Hungary in 1978, after U.S. President Jimmy Carter returned the Hungarian Holy Crown.

In 1992, a Fulbright Commission was established in Budapest by legislation as a public body supported by the U.S. Department of State to operate this official program between Hungary and the United States. <