



We would be happy to get to know something about your academic career and it would be nice if you could describe your academic work in a few words.

Assoc. Prof. Maria Schnitter completed her MA in Bulgarian Studies at the Paisij Hilendarski University of Plovdiv where she started her academic career in 1984. As a grantee of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation she specialised in the Slavic Seminar of the Freiburg University, Germany (with Prof. H. Miklas, 1992-1993), in Würzburg (with prof. Ch. Hannick, 1997) and in HU-Berlin (with prof. H. Wenzel, 2003). Dr. Maria Schnitter was a visiting lecturer for Bulgarian language and literature in the Institute of Slavonic Studies of the University of Vienna, Austria 1999-2003. After her return to Bulgaria in 2004 she became a Founder Dean of Faculty for Philosophy and History at the University of Plovdiv (2004 till 2013). She is currently Head of the departments of Ethnology and Theology at the University of Plovdiv.

Prof. Maria Schnitter's is best known as a scholar in mediaeval studies and anthropology of religion. She has worked on joint projects for research and publication of 10th-12th century Glagolitic manuscripts, financed by the Balkan Committee of the Austrian Academy of Sciences at the Institute of Slavonic Studies, University of Vienna (1997 – 1998) and the Sinaitic Glagolitic Sacramentary (Euchologium) Fragments, financed by Austrian Science Fund (2007-2009).

How do you see yourself in your role as a citizen of the EU?

As a Humboldt scholar since 1992 I have never felt a difference between myself and other Europeans in the area of scientific exchange. On the other hand, as a "regular citizen" of a country that only recently joined the EU (2007) I have still to experience what it is like to "be" European.

What is your personal opinion regarding the most important challenges and reasons regarding a participation in the European Union as a nation?

The greatest challenge for the "EU project" in my opinion is the need to balance following the universal (European) regulations and preserving the local (national and sub-national) traditions. Without achieving that balance I don't think it would be possible to bridge the gap between the theoretical "good intentions" of the European officials and their practical realization on an everyday level.

What do you think about the importance of Alumni in terms of the cultural, academic and economical exchange?

The Alumni are without doubt the best ambassadors not only of the academic but also of the cultural ideas in the modern globalized world. Outside of the virtual space where data is being spread, they can share actual experiences from direct communication with the "other" and that is a phenomenon that grows rare and valuable in today's world.