

Diana Mishkova

Director

April 2021

**CENTRE FOR ADVANCED STUDY SOFIA**  
**2020 ANNUAL REPORT**

**I. INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

**I.1. Personnel**

***I.1.1. Academic personnel and Academic Advisory Council***

Upon his own will, in July 2020, Permanent Fellow Roumen Avramov went into retirement. A staunch supporter of the cause of CAS, however, Prof. Avramov will not lose touch with the work in the Centre and will continue to contribute to its projects, seminars, discussion series, etc. His expertise and contribution have always been highly valued and we look forward to continue working together with him as long as he is willing to. The CAS director would like to propose his nomination as a member of the Centre's Academic Advisory Council.

As of April 2021, the core academic personnel of CAS include its Director, Diana Mishkova (History) and two Academic Associates: Assoc. Prof. Daniel Smilov (Law & Political Science) and Assoc. Prof. Balázs Trencsényi (History).

Presently, the Academic Advisory Council includes Prof. Ulf Brunnbauer (History, Institute for East and Southeast European Studies, Regensburg), Prof. Raymond Detrez (Slavonic and East European Studies, Ghent University), Prof. Petya Kabakchieva (Sociology, Sofia University), Prof. János Kovács (History of Economic Ideas, Vienna University, and Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest), Prof. Attila Melegh (Demography, Institute of Sociology and Social Policy, Corvinus University, Budapest), Prof. Carmen Scheide (Cultural Studies, University of Bern), and Prof. Galin Tihanov (George Steiner Chair of Comparative Literature, Queen Mary, University of London).

***I.1.2. Administrative personnel***

A new member of the CAS administrative team, Mr. Theodore Poumpalov (University of Leuven, Belgium; Comparative and International Politics) was employed to replace for Mr. George Vladev, who left CAS for personal reasons. Like his predecessor, Mr. Poumpalov is employed on a full-time basis starting in February, 2021. No further changes in the administrative staff have been introduced since the last Board meeting.

## **I.2. Financial analysis**

### ***I.2.1. Institutional funding and CAS Platform for Networking Activities***

In 2020, the institutional funding of CAS was secured primarily by the Swiss Government annual grant of **CHF 100,000.00**.

The Thomas Abegg Stiftung für Geist und Kultur, Switzerland, provides support for the *CAS Platform for Networking Activities* at the amount of **CHF 16,667.00** per year over three years (2019-2022). The *Platform* serves to sustain CAS's network and public outreach by supporting the Centre's regular alumni gatherings, Discussion Series, Public Lectures, Newsletter, conferences and round-table discussions, workshops on the initiative of CAS fellows, and the annual Guest Lecture Series. Upon recommendation of the Board, the support from the Thomas Abegg Stiftung has been reallocated to the Institutional funding.

See **AR ANNEX I** for the CAS Financial Report 2020.

### ***I.2.2. Expenditures 2020, Financial Report***

Overall expenditures (project-related and institutional) for 2020 amount to **€ 335,400.00**, of which **€ 106,083.00** institutional expenses (personnel, running costs, up-keeping costs, Academic Council meetings, external services, equipment, etc.).

The project-related costs are **€ 229,317.00**, of which **€ 193,449.00** for fellowships and **€ 35,868.00** for workshops, publications and other project-related activities.

Due to the exceptional nature of the past year, when much of the travels, workshops, seminars and in-person gatherings were cancelled, CAS incurred a significant amount of savings in both sections of the 2020 Financial Report compared to the provisions in the CAS Budget 2020.

See **AR ANNEX I** for the CAS Financial Report 2020.

### ***I.2.3. Annual Financial Statements (approved by certified auditor)***

Enclosed to this Report (**AR ANNEX II**) is the translated version of the Annual Financial Statements, including CAS' Auditor's Report.

## **I.3. Fundraising and Sustainability**

The Swiss Government grant of **CHF 120,000.00** per annum had been originally contracted until the end of 2020, and subsequently prolonged through the enforcement of the Bulgarian-Swiss Memorandum of Understanding until 2024. Furthermore, an agreement between the Thomas Abegg Stiftung für Geist und Kultur and CAS envisages a contribution of **CHF 50,000.00** to support *CAS Platform for Networking Activities* over a period of three years (2019-2022).

#### **I.4. Swiss-Bulgarian Memorandum of Understanding**

CAS continues the implementation the Memorandum of Understanding, signed on 8 November 2018 by the Swiss State Secretariat for Education and Research (SERI) and the Bulgarian Ministry of Education and Sciences (MES). The Memorandum envisages continuation of the Swiss institutional support for CAS and a new fellowship programme for young Bulgarian scholars. It involves (i) Bulgarian state support of **BGN 598,483.00 (€ 306,000.00)** for a five-year “Programme for fellowships and academic mobility of young Bulgarian scholars and support for research diaspora activities in the humanities and social sciences,” to be implemented by CAS between October 2019 and June 2024; (ii) continuation of the Swiss government institutional support for CAS at the amount of for five years (2019–2024). In November 2020 SERI officially finalised its positive decision regarding the continuing institutional support of CAS Sofia during the years 2021-2024 with **CHF 120,000.00** per annum.

#### **I.5. Partnerships and cooperation**

CAS has continued its traditional cooperation with partners in the country (major universities, academic institutes, cultural media, etc.) and a number of IAS’s abroad, most notably the *Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin*, *NEC*, *IWM*, and the *CEU* as well as the *Leibniz-Institut für Ost- und Südosteuropaforschung* in Regensburg, the *Leibniz-Institut für Geschichte und Kultur des Östlichen Europa* in Leipzig, and the Imre Kertesz Kolleg in Jena.

The cooperation with the New European College in Bucharest deserves particular mention, after the joint proposal for the ‘Relevance of the Humanities in the Digital Age’ (DigiHum) fellowship programme was approved in November 2020 by the Porticus Foundation. It concerns an individual fellowship programme with a duration of three years, and provides for two ten-month or four five-month in-residence fellowships for foreign scholars in each institution. Every year a joint workshop will be held at both institutions as a means of stimulating the outreach component of the fellowships.

The Swiss-Bulgarian Memorandum for Understanding continues to play an important role in asserting CAS as the main independent institution supporting post-doctoral research in the social and human sciences in Bulgaria. In addition, we are proud of the close partnership with the Swiss Embassy in Bulgaria, whereby CAS administers the selection of the Swiss Confederation’s Excellence Scholarships aimed at promoting international exchange and research cooperation (for more, see below under **II.4.2. Swiss Confederation’s Excellence Scholarships**).

## **II. ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES**

As international mobility and the circulation of academics and researchers have been one of the most tangibly affected areas by the current Covid pandemic, CAS has inevitably been

subject to these circumstances of hitherto unknown levels of pressure and restriction. Nevertheless, throughout the past year CAS has continued to provide space, time and collegiality to its fellows, which is believed to be crucial at all stages of academic careers. New ways of fostering scientific dialogue have been implemented successfully such as creating a more integrative audience and achieving greater outreach through the involvement of former fellows and external associates. Moreover, having registered no Covid-related cancellations and a significant increase in the number of applications for the forthcoming academic year, CAS sees itself confirmed in its reputation of a strong and attractive academic infrastructure, which reaches beyond national borders.

## **II.1. CAS Fellows**

In the course of 2020/2021, CAS hosted *19 Fellows* from 10 countries in the framework of the Advanced Academia platform (for the full list of fellows and their projects, see **AR ANNEX III**). Another *23 Fellows* are participating in the projects *Lost in Transition* and the *PREVEX* project.

## **II.2. On-going projects**

### ***II.2.1. Advanced Academia Platform***

This platform, which brings together all CAS individual-fellowship programmes, grants opportunities to junior and established scholars to conduct independent social-science and humanities research in a multidisciplinary international environment, with no restrictions to the selected areas of study—an approach intended to stimulate excellent scholarship at a high international level.

***Independent Bulgarian-Swiss Fellowship Programme for Bulgarian Junior Scholars and Bulgarian Academic Diaspora (2019-2024)*** is financed by the Bulgarian Ministry of Education and Science (MES) and provides support for young Bulgarian scientists and researchers from the Bulgarian academic diaspora. It envisages: a) 5 nine-month scholarships per year for young Bulgarian scholars (including one month in a foreign institution); b) 2 three-month scholarships per year for representatives of the Bulgarian academic diaspora working in foreign academic institutions. Last year under this programme the CAS Academic Council has selected 5 Junior scholars and 2 diaspora scholars from a total pool of 29 candidates.

***Pforzheimer Fellowship Programme (2019–2022)***, supported by a donation of the American philanthropist and bibliophile Carl H. Pforzheimer III (Co-chairman Emeritus of America for Bulgaria Foundation), provides for two to three 5-month scholarships per year to outstanding Bulgarian researchers and university professors. This grant ensures the sustainment of the Bulgarian segment of the Advanced Academia programme in its full scope, since the grant from MES does not provide support for senior Bulgarian scholars.

***Independent Fellowships for International Scholars (2011-2024)*** are granted to outstanding non-Bulgarian scholars (senior and junior) to pursue their individual research projects in residence in Sofia. The programme is supported by the Porticus Foundation—the only international funder that, after the retreat of the Thyssen Foundation, ensures the widely international profile of the Advanced Academia platform. Under this programme, for the 2020/2021 academic year, CAS Academic Council selected 6 international scholars.

***Relevance of the Humanities in the Digital Age Fellowship Programme (2021-2024)*** is guided by the belief that there is a considerable added value for humanities scholars across the academe, whatever their field, to be encouraged to rethink their topics in terms of their broader contemporary relevance (be it political, ethical, religious or academic), yet necessarily of significance for the world we are living in. The programme tallies with CAS' and NEC's institutional philosophy which upholds that the freedom of research and the responsibility of the researcher are crucial for creating and communicating important new knowledge, and that high-quality education is based on unrestricted and innovative research and its adequate translation among broader public. At the same time it aims to underscore the cognitive functions of the humanities and their potential as critical disciplines by opening them up to issues relevant in and for the contemporary world – issues that are “practical”, but also epistemological, ethical, philosophical, etc. The programme is intended to accommodate all kind of humanities and social science disciplines and themes, on the condition that they should link up to a contemporary debate, social problematique or social challenge. The programme addresses international scholars and is funded by the Porticus Foundation. From the 2021/2022 academic year onwards, the programme will provide for up to two 10-month or four 5-month fellows per institute. CAS is grateful to the Porticus Foundation for its generous and continuous support in fulfilling its mission.

***Gerda-Henkel Fellowship programme (2016-2022)*** was originally addressed to humanities and social science scholars from the countries of the former Soviet Union. Based on a favourable assessment of the results of the Programme, its duration was prolonged until 2022, the number of Fellows was doubled (from 2 to 4 per year), and its geographical scope was extended to include the Caucasus region and Turkey. Under this programme the CAS Academic Council selected 4 scholars (from Russia and Ukraine). Despite the complicated COVID-19 situation and the travel/visa restrictions of the past year, three of them were able to complete their fellowships as originally planned, although with minor delays and reshuffles. After consultation with the Gerda Henkel Foundation, we introduced the possibility for a remote participation in the programme for up to a half of the fellowship period, while the other half should be spent at CAS. Two of the four selected fellows were able to complete their periods in Sofia, one will use the hybrid format, while the fourth fellow was postponed, with the approval of the donor, for the autumn of 2021.

***Landis and Gyr Artistic Fellowships (2017-2021)***: this programme is aimed at stimulating and promoting the creative work of artists from various fields—writers, musicians, painters, sculptors, actors, film directors, architects, etc. by integrating them in a community of

humanities and social science scholars and spurring interaction between theoretical research and the arts. The fellowship programme has been provided for by the Landis & Gyr Foundation (Switzerland). Originally contracted for the period of 2017–2019, it has been prolonged by another two years, with a possibility for further extension until 2024. The programme provides for one five-month fellowship for a Bulgarian or other Eastern European artist.

As part of the Landis & Gyr Foundation international residency programme for artists and writers, the contracted grant contains a provision allowing Swiss artists to visit Sofia and work within the CAS community. Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, however, the 2020-21 residencies, for which there were three selected candidates, were postponed and have not been resumed yet. It is hoped that this could be done during the coming autumn or next spring.

### ***Overview of Advanced Academia Programme and Gerda-Henkel Independent Fellowships***

Since the beginning of the Advanced Academia programme in 2009 (later reconfigured into Advanced Academia Platform bringing together all individual-fellowship sub-programmes), CAS has granted fellowships to 97 young and established Bulgarian scholars. Through grants by the *Porticus Foundation* (since 2011) and the *Fritz-Thyssen Foundation* (2013-2019), the programme had opened to international Fellows. A total of 71 foreign Fellows (junior and senior) were enrolled between 2011 and 2020. Since 2018 the *Gerda Henkel Foundation* has contributed to the group of CAS Fellows with another two 5-month independent fellowships per year targeting outstanding young researchers from the former Soviet Republics, the Caucasus region and Turkey.

*The selection of Fellows*, carried out by the CAS Academic Advisory Council, is based on two major criteria: 1) scholarly excellence of the candidate, and 2) quality of the research proposal (especially: originality; innovative contribution; interdisciplinary and/or comparative approach), while pursuing optimal Fellows group's dynamics in terms of composition.

*The Calls for Applications for 2020/2021* (for Bulgarian and international scholars) were published and widely distributed electronically in November 2019 (with a deadline 31 March 2020). The calls yielded a total of 109 eligible applications from over 40 countries in Europe, North America, Asia, Africa and Australia: 56 for the *International module*, 24 for the *Gerda Henkel module*, 18 for the *Bulgarian Junior module*, 3 from the *Bulgarian diaspora*, and 8 for *Senior fellowships*.

Since 2017, interviewing the short-listed applicants have become an essential element of the selection process. The CAS Academic Council held its regular session on 19 June 2020 via the online Zoom platform, while the short-listed candidates were interviewed on 22 and 23 June 2020 by three council members, Prof. Carmen Scheide, Prof. Attila Melegh and Prof. Raymond Detrez, plus the CAS Director and the CAS Permanent Fellow.

Ten Bulgarian and nine international Fellows (including four Gerda Henkel Fellows from Ukraine and Russia) were selected. The academic year with the new cohort of CAS Fellows opened on 6 October 2020 (see **AR ANNEX III** for the list of the selected Fellows and the summaries of their project proposals). The pandemic outbreak imposed reshuffling of some of the plans and the restrictions imposed by many countries prevented some of the Fellows from travelling to Sofia. Thus last year's Fellowship of Dr. Alessandro Nannini was postponed and he eventually arrived in Sofia in the autumn of 2020; Dr. Jean-François Laniel's Fellowship was cancelled; and Dr. Lilia Topouzova (University of Toronto), selected under the Bulgaria Diaspora module, had to postpone her work in Sofia and is supposed to arrive in the summer of 2021. This year's Fellowship of Dr. Asiya Bulatova started with a small delay due to issues with her travelling documents, while Dr. Tetiana Onofriichuk's stay in Sofia has been shortened from 5 to 3 months in order to avoid a complicated visa procedure. Finally, Dr. Wojciech Brzozowski's Fellowship was suspended and Dr. Sorin Gog arrived in Sofia in March 2021 in his place. The rest of the international fellows have been fully committed to complete their academic work at CAS. Although we had to rearrange our programme thoroughly and cancel all public events, we continue to convene the regular CAS Fellow seminars online via the Zoom communication platform. On the brighter side, this unique situation offered the CAS fellows the rare opportunity for full concentration and intense individual work at home on long-planned manuscripts and publications.

### ***II.2.2. Lost in Transition: Social Sciences, Scenarios of Transformation, and Cognitive Dissonances in East Central Europe after 1989 (2019-2023)***

This project, funded by the *Porticus Foundation*, seeks to place the current anti-liberal and anti-democratic backlash in Eastern Europe, arguably manifesting the all-European socio-political and ideological crisis in its most acute form, into a comparative historical perspective. It raises fundamental questions concerning the intellectual contribution and responsibility of those local and international actors (scholars, experts, think-tanks, NGOs, public intellectuals, etc.) who devised roadmaps for the transition to liberal democracy and market economy, and the interplay of these roadmaps and the realities "on the ground". Drawing on the rather divergent experiences of three Central European (Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland) and three Southeast European (Bulgaria, Romania, and Serbia) countries, it aims at unravelling the various scenarios of post-socialist transition projected by local and external social scientists and experts and how these scenarios themselves became actors in the very process of transformation.

The direct beneficiary group is a cohort of young social scientists (10 doctoral and post-doctoral students) from six countries in East Central Europe, who are brought together to develop, under the supervision of a group of five established scholars (Diana Mishkova, Centre for Advanced Study, Sofia, Balázs Trencsényi, Central European University, Budapest, János Mátyás Kovács, RECET, University of Vienna, Michal Kopeček, Institute of Contemporary History, Czech Academy of Science, Violetta Zentai, Central European

University), the analytical instruments to interrogate critically the capacities of their disciplines to provide viable models. Another four scholars from Bulgaria, Serbia and Poland, or a total of 19 participants, have rounded up the research team.

The project was launched in December 2019, followed by several working sessions in 2020. In March and again in October 2020, along with the formation of the five thematic subgroups and the outline of their research focus, the senior scholars evaluated the received applications and, from a pool of 40 candidates, selected 10 junior scientists to join the team.

At the beginning of 2021, shortly after the completion of the first project year, the Porticus foundation announced its decision to freeze the funding for the second phase of the project (of another 18 months), arguably as a result of the situation posed by COVID-19. The foundation's grant manager for Central and Eastern Europe stressed that the decision had nothing to do with the quality of the team's work, which they strongly appreciated, and that if the financial situation improves, in the course of 2021 or 2022 the foundation might reconsider its decision. This led to a restructuring of the project's financing structure and consequently the removal of the subvention earmarked for institutional funding. At the same time, significant funds earmarked for the first phase of the project could be saved as most project meetings were held online. The project team had to design "austerity measures" and re-distribute the available funds in a way that will harm least the planned research. The severely reduced stipends notwithstanding, all 19 participants confirmed their continued participation in the project and many of them have already commenced their research work. Their initial findings will be reported at a workshop in May 2021. In the meantime, CAS is trying to explore the possibility of providing some supplementary funds in order to organize at least a couple of real workshops at the end of this and the next year. The project core group is also working on the preparation of an ERC synergy application.

### ***II.2.3. PREVEX project (Preventing Violent Extremism in the Balkans and the MENA: Strengthening Resilience in Enabling Environments) (2020-2023)***

The overarching objective of PREVEX is to put forward more fine-tuned and effective approaches to preventing violent extremism. Focusing on the broader MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region and the Balkans, context-sensitive, in-depth case studies of the occurrence and non-occurrence of violent extremism will be carried out and then brought together in a regional comparison. In doing so, PREVEX seeks to improve the understanding of how different drivers of violent extremism operate. Particular emphasis is placed on how to strengthen resilience through investigating the non-occurrence of violent extremism in 'enabling environment'. The project consists of a carefully assembled team of area and subject experts, representing both EU member states and the regions analysed. The project is implemented under the Horizon 2020 EU grant scheme. Its coordinator is the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, whereas CAS is in charge of WP5 tasked with the investigation of violent extremism in the Balkans.

Prof. Simeon Evstatiev, an Arabist and former CAS fellow, and Diana Mishkova are responsible for the overall coordination and supervision of the research and management activities, while another two postdoc scholars are involved with supportive functions (conducting interviews, collecting and processing data, doing field work, etc.).

CAS engagement in 2020 started by organising and reviewing focused studies of all investigated national cases – Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Kosovo, Serbia, and North Macedonia. The first country-based reports were submitted to CAS in November 2020. On this basis the CAS team prepared an integrated Policy Brief summarising the EU and other stakeholders' prevention strategy towards violent extremism in the region. In a series of subsequent public events this document was presented for discussion to regional experts and local and foreign stakeholders. Work during the project's second year, geared towards in-depth study of the occurrence and non-occurrence of violent extremism in enabling environments, is heavily dependent on the ability to conduct ethnographic fieldwork. It is hoped that all five Balkan sub-teams will be able to undertake such work in the course of the coming summer and early fall.

This project is funded by the European Union's *Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme*.

#### ***II.2.4. The Construction of Knowledge in Archaeology and Art History in Southeastern Europe (2019-2023)***

The programme investigates how archaeology creates knowledge in Southeastern Europe (namely, Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Cyprus, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia and the Turkish province of East Thrace), taking into account the particularities of the local research traditions and their connections with research traditions of other disciplines, especially art history. The project's intent is to better understand why the culture-historical way of thinking about the past remains dominant in the region, and to encourage diversity and pluralism, generated by examining the ideas in which research practices are grounded, their history, what keeps them in place. It also seeks to examine how we determine what a useful novelty is – an examination that has better chances of success if conducted by constantly comparing what we do with what is done in other traditions of archaeological research.

The programme is structured through a series of conferences and Spring Schools taking place in three different capital cities in the region (Sofia, Bucharest, and Athens) over three years. The overall structure has been envisaged as an opportunity for new synergies between scholars working across the region. Given the current state of the discipline in the region (an overbearing “western” bias associated with neglect of intra-regional collaboration), it is not uncommon for archaeologists and art historians working across a national border from one another to never have interacted in the framework of common academic research project. The two Conferences and the three Spring Schools proposed by the Programme are designed

as a way of deploying new academic networks – cross-national and cross-generational – in the region.

The programme is coordinated by the Centre for Advanced Study (CAS), in collaboration with Dr. Gheorghe Alexandru Niculescu (Vasile Pârvan Institute of Archaeology, Bucharest) and Prof. Dimitris Plantzos (Department of History and Archaeology, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens) who act as the Programme’s co-directors. It is funded by the *Getty Foundation*, as part of its *Connecting Art Histories Initiative*.

The initial phase of the programme began in September 2019 with the preparation of the Opening Conference titled “Looking at Things in Southeastern Europe: Regional Archaeology in Search of Viable Futures” and the First Spring School with the topic “The Impact of the Political on Archaeological Research”, planned to take place in Sofia in April 2020. Thirteen senior scholars from major universities and institutes in Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia and Turkey were invited to the Opening Conference. Nine prominent archaeologists and art historians from Greece, Germany, Romania, the United Kingdom, and the United States were invited to the Spring School to deliver lectures and workshop presentations. Twelve junior scholars, young researchers and doctoral students, were selected for participation in the Spring School 2020 through an open call: nine from the region of Southeastern Europe and three from outside it.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemics both the Opening Conference and the First Spring School conference had to be postponed by one year. They will take place in April 2021 with the same participants and programme. The hope that this year the participants in both these events could be brought together in Sofia did not materialise, though. Due to the continuing travel restrictions and prohibitions of public gatherings, the conference and the school will take place online.

See **AR ANNEX IV** for the programme of these two events.

### ***II.2.5. Challenges Facing the Future of Social Sciences and Humanities***

This is a pilot phase project of the Centre for Advanced Study Sofia, 2019-2022, supported by the *Centre for Culture and Governance in Europe, University of St. Gallen*.

Against the backdrop of growing global appetite for STEM at the expense of humanities and social-science oriented curricula, the project seeks to provide a detailed comparative analysis of the current evaluation policies in both minor and major non-English-speaking countries (such as most East European states) and those somewhat better positioned with regard to research funding (such as the Netherlands, Finland, Sweden, Norway), and juxtapose these with the situation in countries like Germany, Austria, Italy, France, and Spain.

The project outcomes will include (1) a detailed web-based interactive map of SSH evaluation criteria; (2) an extensive pack of specific policy support guidelines – ones that secure a brighter, more inclusive and fertile SSH future; (3) build a dynamic primary

network of scholars across the Continent to facilitate, and launching of a grander initiative: an EC-funded permanent European SSH Evaluation Observatory with the primary task of regularly updating the ‘map’ of SSH funding in diverse corners of Europe. The project is coordinated by the Centre for Advanced Study (CAS), in collaboration with Dr. Martin Ossikovski (former CAS fellow and current Assoc. Prof. at the University of National and World Economy of Sofia) who acts as the programme’s coordinator.

Despite the pandemic situation and the ensuing difficulties, the project’s first year went according to plan. Between March and July 2020 CAS launched an information campaign targeting researchers and institutions with expertise in this specific area – assessment and valorisation of academic output – and managed to form the core working group consisting of eleven members: Katerina Cidlinska (Czech Republic), Katya Dunajeva (Hungary), Daniela Irrera (Italy), Irina Kotkina (Sweden/Russia), Sanja Petkovska (Serbia), Joanna Spassova (Bulgaria), Silvio Spiri (Italy), Zuleta Ferrari (the Netherlands), Diana Andreeva, Martin Ossikovski, Georgi Nyagolov (Bulgaria). Between August 2020 and February 2021, CAS organised a series of 5 online workshops. As a result of these workshops and in line with the project’s initial calendar of activities, the methodology was finalised and the working group delivered: a) the SSH Challenges Expert Worksheet, which is the primary tool to be used to gather the data that will be processed in the second and third year; b) the SSH Health Index Survey, which shall be circulating in the second year to find out more about the actual situation on the ground in the countries under investigation.

### **II.3. Completed Projects**

#### ***II.3.1. Does Monastic Economy Matter? Religious Patterns of Economic Behaviour***

In October 2016 the Centre for Governance and Culture in Europe (CGCE) at the School of Humanities and Social Sciences in the University of St. Gallen and the Centre for Advanced Study Sofia (CAS) established a research NETWORK devoted to the history of the monastic economy in South-Eastern and Western Europe. ([www.cas.bg/en/cas-current-programs/research-network-dedicated-to-the-history-of-the-monastic-economy/](http://www.cas.bg/en/cas-current-programs/research-network-dedicated-to-the-history-of-the-monastic-economy/)). The Academic Coordinator of the project was Assoc. Professor and CAS Permanent Fellow Roumen Avramov.

The term of the project expired in October 2019, but the positive effects of the NETWORK continue to be furthered through contacts, exchange of information or cooperation between the participants, and by the dissemination of the results. The edited volume, including 18 papers from the workshops, recently received its finishing touches and will soon be published (see below under “Publications”).

### **II.4. Other Academic Activities**

#### ***II.4.1. The Shadows of Empires. Imperial Legacies and Mythologies in East Central Europe***

The Transregional Academy under the above title, organized by Prisma Ukraïna – Research Network Eastern Europe, in cooperation with CAS, the Center for Governance and Culture in Europe, University St. Gallen, and the German Historical Institute Warsaw, was planned to take place from 14–21 September 2020 in Sofia. Unfortunately, due to the travel restrictions, the Academy has been postponed to September 2021, again with its venue is Sofia.

The participants, junior scholars in the early/initial stages of their career (doctoral/postdoctoral) representing a wide variety of disciplines, have been selected by the Steering Committee following an open call. They will present and discuss their current projects related to the general theme. Explorations of the city space of Sofia has been planned as well. In a forthcoming online session of the Steering Committee decision will be taken as to the actual format in view of the still uncertain situation with the pandemic.

#### ***II.4.2. Swiss Confederation's Excellence Scholarships***

Each year the Swiss Confederation awards Government Excellence Scholarships to promote international exchange and research cooperation between Switzerland and over 180 other countries. These scholarships are aimed at young researchers from abroad who have completed a master's degree or PhD and at foreign artists holding a bachelor's degree. In Bulgaria the programme (including promotion and initial evaluation of received applications) is implemented jointly by the Swiss Embassy in Sofia and CAS. Applications are screened by the CAS Academic Associates and invited experts coming from the discipline/field of the respective candidate. In the selection round for 2020 the CAS evaluation panel recommended for further reviewing three eligible candidates. They entered a very competitive pool of young students from all over the world, whose scientific merits and individual projects during the final stage of selection were ranked by the Swiss Federal Commission for Scholarships for Foreign Students (FCS). With the announcement of the results in March 2021 came the news that one of the CAS nominees has been approved for support. We consider this a major breakthrough as in the last more than five years no Bulgarian candidates have been awarded with this prestigious grant.

#### ***II.4.3. Advanced Academia Public Lecture Series***

The public lectures are an important element of the Advanced Academia programme as they contribute significantly to enhancing the outreach of the Centre and its Fellows' research work. The series provides a valuable forum, especially for younger scholars, by promoting the visibility of their work and contributing to their career growth. In the recent years these events have gained much popularity and attention by scholars from various universities, academy institutes and other scientific organizations.

The tenth season of the series, presenting the research results of the 2019/2020 Bulgarian Fellows, was due to be opened in April 2021. The lockdown caused by the pandemic entailed postponement of the lectures series to October-December 2020. The second pandemic wave,

however, prevented the events during that period as well, so they had to be again re-scheduled for October-December 2021. The next, eleventh season of the series, presenting the results of the 2020/2021 Bulgarian Fellows, will follow suit and is expected to take place in the period January-March 2022. (For more details, see below under II.6. Public Events; for the Calendar of the 2021/2022 Public Lectures see **AR ANNEX V.**)

#### ***II.4.4. CAS Discussion Series***

##### ***II.4.4.1. Policies of the Rule of Law***

CAS Discussion Series “Policies of the Rule of Law” explores the principles of the rule of law from the perspective of various fields of study – law, political science, history and psychology. These are discussed from the point of view of constitutional theory and recent developments taking place in Europe. Within the framework of this series, since 2017 CAS has organized eight seminars involving prominent Bulgarian and foreign speakers.

Since the outbreak of the pandemic in March 2020, the series was put on hold until larger gatherings in closed spaces would be allowed again. As it is still impossible, it was decided to resume with the seminars through the online platform Zoom. The first session for this academic year took place on 26 March 2021.

##### ***II.4.4.2. Forms of Ownership – Property in Communist Bulgaria***

In the fall of 2020 CAS initiated a new series of workshops under the above mentioned title as a project that aims to present different forms of ownership that were legally allowed or tolerated in communist Bulgaria. Socialism's attitude towards property is encapsulated in a number of key socialist laws (e.g., the Citizens' Property Act, the Rent Act, the Tenancy Act, etc.). The abolition of private ownership of economic assets (and its restriction to "personal" ownership), and the merger of cooperative and socialist ownership into "unified communist ownership", are part of the socialist utopia. Unfortunately, socialist property issues are not systematically taught in the history, economics, philosophy and law faculties in Bulgaria. Part of the reason for this may have to do with what is still considered to be too short a time span (30 years), but also with the repulsive monotony of the ideological clichés with which socialism has always surrounded property: they are painfully boring to older professors, and at the same time unknown to younger ones. In today's era, when private property has been declared inviolable and public property has been pushed to the margins of property law, our society needs to make sense of the forms of property under socialism not only through the existing legal framework, but also through the methodology of history, sociology, economics and philosophy.

The idea of the project is to organize a series of seminars to discuss these and a number of other questions. The seminars are hosted by Stoyan Stavru (Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, BAS) and Roumen Avramov (CAS). When the circumstances allow, the discussions will be held at the CAS premises, but the first four seminars that took place until now were all organised through the online Zoom platform. So far within this framework, two

seminars took place in 2020 and two in 2021 with prominent speakers from different fields of study:

Prof. Stoyan Stavru (Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences) – “The Rise of Socialist Property and the Rescue of Civil Legislation in Bulgaria”;

Dr. Nadezhda Galabova (Independent researcher) – “The Right of Private Practice: Medical Doctors until 1972”;

Dr. Vassil Petrov (Judge at the Sofia Regional Court) – “The Inheritance Law of 1949 and the Fight over the Socialist Inheritance”;

Prof. Roumen Avramov (Economic Historian and Permanent Fellow at CAS) – “Ownership through the Lenses of Economic Thought under State Socialism in Bulgaria”.

Additionally, it is intended to publish a thematic collection once a critical mass of quality papers is gathered.

#### **II.4.4.3. Discussion Series “Religion and Culture”**

This series reflects on the relationships between “universal” normative religions and the socio-cultural contexts in which their followers act by “domesticating” them. It is designed as an academic forum focused on a set of perspectives to the intersection between religion and culture. The series will be run by former CAS fellow Prof. Simeon Evstatiev (Sofia University) and will build on his experience as a regular participant in the Shelby Cullom Davis Seminar at the History Department of Princeton University. The series will be organized jointly with the “Centre for Religious Studies” at Sofia University.

The launching of this series was postponed for the fall of 2021, when it is hoped to be held by actual presence in CAS rather than adding to the already long series of online events.

### **II.5. Publications resulting from CAS projects and discussion series**

#### **II.5.1. *Monastic Economy Across Time. Wealth Management, Patterns, and Trends* (ed. Roumen Avramov, Aleksandar Fotić, Elias Kolovis, and Phokion P. Kotzageorgis)**

This book is the final result of the CAS project “*Does Monastic Economy Matter? Religious Patterns of Economic Behaviour*”, which formed a network of scholars from South-Eastern and Western Europe devoted to the history of the monastic economy in a comparative perspective and to the assessment of its relevance in the long term. It was a joined effort of CAS and the Centre for Governance and Culture in Europe (GCE) at the School of Humanities and Social Sciences in the University of St. Gallen. This English volume is a collection of essays by 17 authors, edited by Roumen Avramov, Aleksandar Fotić, Elias Kolovis and Phokion P. Kotzageorgis.

The book aims at a readership of both economists and historians. Beyond the well-known Weberian thesis concerning the role of Protestantism in the development of capitalism, monastic economies are studied to assess their impact on the religious patterns of economic behaviour. Those issues are discussed in the frame of key economic concepts such as rationality, state intervention, networking, agency, and governance. The book includes essays concerning Byzantine, Ottoman and modern South-Eastern Europe, and early modern and modern Western Europe. Survival and continuity of the monastic wealth is considered as an example of successful handling of real estate transactions, flows of funds, and contacts with financial institutions. Moreover, the book focuses on the economic impact of the privileged relations of monasticism with the secular powers. Finally, the question is raised how the monastic economy (still) matters in the contemporary world.

### ***II.5.2. CAS Working Paper Series***

Up to now the research results of Bulgarian and international Fellows were published in electronic form in the Central and Eastern European Online Library (CEEOL) as *CAS Working Paper Series*. The preparation of the 2020/2021 issue of the *Series* is temporarily suspended due to the lack of institutional resources for the language editing of the texts. In previous years we relied on a special grant secured through the “America for Bulgaria” Foundation’s financial support, which expired in 2020 and was not renewed. Currently we are exploring the possibilities to allocate additional resources from the CAS limited institutional funds to this important follow-up activity.

## **II.6. CAS Library**

### ***II.6.1. Development of book collections***

CAS Library has continued to follow consistent collection development policies. They are efficient and financially sound, using both locally held information resources as well as resources from other organizations. New acquisitions are made in several ways: donations, purchase and exchange. The donations typically come from current CAS Fellows, CAS alumni and associates. During 2020 the Library has enriched its collection with 23 new books on various topics in the sphere of the humanities and social sciences.

### ***II.6.2. Library services***

#### **✓ Cooperation with Panitza Library of AUBG**

CAS Library’s cooperation with the American University in Bulgaria (AUBG) has proven especially valuable because of the guaranteed distant access to the various electronic collections of their Panitza Library. The comprehensive research databases (including JSTOR, EBSCO, Oxford Reference Online) provide CAS researchers with easy access to a wealth of full-text, science-oriented content. CAS Fellows could also use books, book chapters and request copies of journal articles, conference papers, etc. via the interlibrary

loan service in cooperation with AUBG. Both libraries use this opportunity for book exchange to assist the information needs of their users.

✓ **Availability of CAS catalogue online through NALIS**

CAS Library electronic catalogue of books is made available through the NALIS Union Catalogue (national catalogue of the academic libraries in Bulgaria) which has increased the visibility of the Centre's collections and publications.

✓ **Electronic Document Delivery Service**

The CAS library electronic document delivery service assists the distant library users with receiving articles from periodicals and book page ranges in PDF format via email. The librarian performs search in the available databases and sends the articles to the users, thus saving them a visit to the premises of the Library. During the year 2020 more than 15 articles were sent to the users.

### **III. VISIBILITY, NETWORKING, DISSEMINATION OF RESEARCH RESULTS**

Last year CAS' website underwent a radical functional update and redesigning. After more than ten years, the previous website had grown outdated in terms of usability, navigation and design. The new website is more functional and versatile, in order for it to be easily accessed through various electronic devices. The new CAS website has been fully operative since April 2020, building on new visual appeal while sustaining the institution's brand identity.

The **CAS Academic Gateway for Humanities and Social Sciences** (<http://www.gate.cas.bg/>) offers the academic community an internet space for their publications, statements and information exchange. During the nine-year existence of the Gateway, Dimiter Dimov, CAS' coordinator, continued the accumulation of useful and targeted information and its regular distribution through weekly newsletters to all registered users. To date, there are 563 registered users from academia. The annual number of unique visits averages 9,800 and more than 87,000 pages are viewed. The project is funded by CAS' institutional resources.

**Bulgarian Communism: Critical Readings** (<http://www.red.cas.bg/>). In addition to the access offered through this site to the catalogue of scholars, projects and institutions dealing with critical reading of communist history, CAS aims at stimulating a wider and more active debate on the communist legacies and on their interpretation in the present-day social and media environment. The portal contains regularly updated bibliography classified according to different topics and genres (1103 titles of books, articles and archive documents). The annual number of visits for 2020 amounts to 6,739, while 94,500 pages are viewed. This online project is also supported via CAS' institutional funds.

**CAS Working Paper Series**, which is released in the Central European Online Library, ensures international visibility for the research carried out at CAS.

Next to its electronic channels, CAS keeps insisting on the dissemination of **printed publications**, particularly of the research resulting from collective projects. Until 2019 the Centre has relied on the additional financial resources made available through the *Advanced Academia project* budget for 2016/2019, which included a subvention for pre-publication production process (language editing and printing).

Following the Board's decision, as of 2019 the Centre for Advanced Study Sofia disseminates its **newsletter** mainly electronically and a limited number of copies in printed form. The electronic version of the newsletter (in PDF format) is also accessible on the CAS webpage. The 2020/2021 issue appeared in the beginning of 2021.

Another medium of disseminating information of the Centre's events (public lectures, guest lectures, book launches, etc.) is the **CAS webpage on Facebook**. CAS has already been using this social platform for the last six years and enjoys attention by former Fellows, both Bulgarian and foreign, and other scholars and students across the country. Currently CAS has around 450 friends and followers on Facebook.

The already mentioned **Advanced Academia Public Lecture Series** is another valuable social tool for publicising and advertising the intellectual output of CAS. During recent years this series has become very popular, attracting many attendees from the Sofia academia and evoking an active response from the audience.

CAS Sofia,  
15 April 2021