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Director

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CENTRE FOR ADVANCED STUDY SOFIA

2021 ANNUAL REPORT

Two years since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the first restrictions have started to cease and a return to the old seems within reach. CAS continued to conform to the restrictions during the first semester of the 2021/2022 academic year and since early April resumed its regular seminar programme fully on-site, while also welcoming attendances for the discussion series, planned project-related meetings, as well as for the CAS Board of Trustees meeting and the forthcoming Academic Council.

The Fellows' seminars have been resumed in person by all the fellows, although online connection through the Zoom communication platform remains possible in case of absence due to a research trip. In the past months, despite a few exceptions, CAS continued to hold most of its planned workshops and discussion series online. As mentioned last year, this hybrid form offers the advantage of involving a broader public to its events, both local and international, and CAS will continue to consider this option on an ad-hoc basis whenever it deems favourable. From the point of view of the Fellows, there have been no delays or cutbacks of the in-residence period, while all have expressed their preference to spend their Fellowship in Sofia and attend the regular seminar sessions.

Throughout the year CAS' staff has continued its normal office work and has been accessible to all fellows who might need assistance or a working space. The CAS library also remained open to all the fellows.

I. INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

I.1. Personnel

I.1.1. Academic personnel and Academic Advisory Council

As of April 2022, 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), Prof. Galin Tihanov (George Steiner Chair of Comparative Literature, Queen Mary, University of London), and Prof. Roumen Avramov (Economic History), who was elected as a new member in the 2021 CAS Board meeting.

See **AR ANNEX I** for additional information on all CAS bodies, memberships and mandates.

1.1.2. Administrative personnel

In September 2021, the staff of CAS was sadly confronted with the unexpected loss of its financial manager Violeta Kuzmanova. Due to the degree of sensibility and trust required for the position, there hasn't been appointed a full-time replacement to this date. The day-to-day tasks have – to some extent – been covered by the rest of the current administrative staff, as well as by the external accountant Gergana Georgieva, who has been assisting and advising CAS for many years. Besides that, no further changes in the administrative staff have been introduced since the last Board meeting.

I.2. Financial analysis

1.2.1. Institutional funding and CAS Platform for Networking Activities

In 2021, the institutional funding of CAS was secured primarily by the Swiss Government annual grant of **CHF 120,000.00**. In addition to it, 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, the Advanced Academia Public Lectures, conferences and round-table discussions, workshops on the initiative of CAS fellows, the CAS annual Newsletter and Guest Lecture Series.

See **AR ANNEX II** for the CAS Financial Report 2021.

1.2.2. Expenditures 2021, Financial Report

Overall expenditures (project-related and institutional) for 2021 amount to **€ 358,419.00**, of which **€ 93,568.00** institutional expenses (personnel, running costs, up-keeping costs, Academic Council meetings, external services, equipment, etc.).

The project-related costs are **€ 264,851.00**, of which **€ 236,603.00** for fellowships and **€ 28,248.00** 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 significant savings in both sections of the 2021 Financial Report compared to the provisions in the CAS 2021 Budget.

See **AR ANNEX II** for the CAS Financial Report 2021.

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

Enclosed to this Report (**AR ANNEX III**) 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. The grant is mediated by the Center for Governance and Culture in Europe - University of St. Gallen, with which CAS also collaborates closely in academic matters. 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 of 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 and scholars from the Bulgarian diaspora. 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; and (ii) continuation of the Swiss government institutional support for CAS for five years (2019–2024). In November 2020, following the favourably reviewed institutional support for CAS Sofia, the latter was augmented by another CHF 20,000.00 per annum for the period 2021-2024 so that now it amounts to **CHF 120,000.00**.

I.5. Partnerships and cooperation

CAS has maintained its traditional cooperation with partners in the country (major universities, academic institutes, cultural media, etc.) and a number of IASs abroad, most notably the *Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin*, *New Europe College (NEC)*, *the Institute for Human Sciences (IWM)*, *the Central European University (CEU)* as well as *the Center for Governance and Culture in Europe* (University of St. Gallen, Switzerland), *the Leibniz-Institut für Ost- und Südosteuropaforschung* in Regensburg, *the Leibniz-Institut für Geschichte und Kultur des Östlichen Europa* in Leipzig, and the *Imre Kertész Kolleg* in Jena.

Central to these partnerships is the close cooperation with NEC in Bucharest, mediated by the *Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin* and Katharina Biegger in particular. In 2021 it unfolded in the framework of two joint activities. One is the Social Relevance of the Humanities

(RevHum) fellowship programme, financed by the Porticus Foundation and effectively launched in October 2021. This is a three-year individual fellowship programme providing for two ten-month or four five-month in-residence fellowships for foreign scholars in each institution. Each year a joint workshop is to be held as a means of stimulating fellow interaction and the outreach component of the fellowships. The first such workshop, with the participation of Porticus foundation representatives, will take place at CAS on the 4th of July 2022. The second common initiative, co-organized with and financed by the Center for Governance and Culture in Europe at the University of St. Gallen, is a workshop titled “Informal Practices in Southeast Europe – Examples and Analyses”, which took place at the Institute for the Recent History of Serbia in Belgrade on 10-11 April 2022. Following an open call, fifteen scholars from several Balkan countries were selected and joined by the Regensburg Interdisciplinary Research Cluster on Corruption in Southeastern Europe to present their research on and discuss regional forms and practices of informality – contemporary or historical – with their reasons, manifestations and effects.

The Swiss-Bulgarian Memorandum for Understanding, underwired by close collaboration with the Center for Governance and Culture in Europe at the University of St. Gallen, 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. To this we should add 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.3.3. Swiss Confederation’s Excellence Scholarships*).

II. ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

II.1. CAS Fellows

In the course of 2021/2022, CAS hosted 26 Fellows from 10 countries in the framework of the Advanced Academia platform (for the full list of fellows and their projects, see **AR ANNEX IV**). Another 19 Fellows are participating in the projects *Lost in Transition* and *PREVEX*.

II.2. On-going projects

II.2.1. Advanced Academia Platform

This platform, which brings together all CAS individual-fellowship programmes, grants opportunities to early career 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.

The Independent Bulgarian-Swiss Fellowship Programme for Bulgarian Junior Scholars and Bulgarian Academic Diaspora (MON 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: (i) 5 nine-month scholarships per year for young Bulgarian scholars (including one month in a foreign institution); and (ii) 2 three-month scholarships per year for representatives of the Bulgarian academic diaspora working in foreign academic institutions. The number of applications (26 in 2021) marks a steady increase since the beginning of the programme. From this pool, the CAS Academic Council selected 5 Junior scholars and 2 diaspora scholars, supplemented by 2 diaspora scholars, whose stays were postponed from the previous academic year.

The Pforzheimer Fellowship Programme (PfFP 2019–2022), which is funded through a donation of the American philanthropist Carl H. Pforzheimer III (Co-chairman Emeritus of America for Bulgaria Foundation), provides for two to three 5-month scholarships per year to established Bulgarian researchers and university professors. This grant ensures the full gamut of the Bulgarian segment of the Advanced Academia programme since the grant from MES does not provide support for senior Bulgarian scholars. The CAS Academic Council selected 3 senior scholars under this programme for the 2021/2022 academic year.

Independent Fellowships for International Scholars (AAP 2011-2024) are granted to outstanding non-Bulgarian scholars (established and early career) 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 2021/2022 academic year, the CAS Academic Council selected 7 international scholars.

The Social Relevance of the Humanities Fellowship Programme (RevHum 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. 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.

The first year of the implementation of this programme had certain specifics. Due to the financial restructuring of another Porticus-funded project, *Lost in Transition* (LiT, see under II.2.2), and after consultation with Porticus’ Grant Manager Dr. Markus Janzen, it was agreed to create a closer synergy between the RevHum project and the LiT team. Such

synergy became possible due to the similar research aspirations and complementary organisational design of the two programmes. Funds from the first-year RevHum budget were used to support four fellows working in the framework of the LiT project. These fellows will participate in the joint RevHum workshop at CAS in July 2022.

The Gerda-Henkel Fellowship Programme (GH 2016-2025) was originally addressed to humanities and social-science scholars with historical focus from the countries of the former Soviet Union. Based on a previous favourable assessment of the results of the programme, 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. In 2021 under this programme the CAS Academic Council selected 4 scholars (from Russia, Ukraine and Turkey). Despite the pandemic situation, three of them were able to complete their fellowships as originally planned. Only one requested postponement of his fellowship to the 2022/2023 academic year due to having obtained a tenure position at his university, which prevented him from staying in Sofia for the full period. With the approval of the donor, the fellowship was postponed for the autumn of 2022.

The Landis and Gyr International Residency Programme for Artists and Writers (L&G 2017-2025) is aimed at stimulating and promoting the creative work of artists from various fields – writers, musicians, painters, sculptors, actors, film or theatre directors, architects, etc. – by integrating them in a community of humanities and social-science scholars and spurring interaction between fundamental research and the arts. The fellowship programme, which is funded by the Landis & Gyr Foundation (Switzerland), has been running since 2017 and was recently extended until 2025. It provides for one five-month fellowship for a Bulgarian or other Eastern European artist. For the 2021/2022 academic year the CAS Academic Council selected a Bulgarian architect for participation as a CAS fellow.

Furthermore, the contracted grant contains a provision allowing Swiss artists to visit Sofia and work within the CAS community. For the academic year 2021/2022, two candidates – Mirjam Landolt and Sarah Burger, selected by the Landis & Gyr Foundation – were granted CAS fellowships allowing them to pursue their artistic research in Sofia.

Overview of the Advanced Academia Programme and the Gerda-Henkel Independent Fellowships

Since the beginning of the Advanced Academia programme (later reconfigured into Advanced Academia Platform bringing together all individual-fellowship sub-programmes) in 2009, CAS has granted fellowships to 102 early-career and established Bulgarian scholars. Through grants by the *Porticus Foundation* (since 2011) and the *Fritz-Thyssen Foundation* (2013-2019), the programme was opened to international Fellows. A total of 84 foreign Fellows (junior and senior) were enrolled between 2011 and 2022. 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. Thus, the overall number of GH Fellows to date is 17.

The selection of Fellows, carried out by the CAS Academic Advisory Council, is based on two major criteria: (i) scholarly excellence of the candidate, and (ii) 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 2021/2022* (for Bulgarian and international scholars) were published and widely distributed electronically between November 2020 and March 2021 (with the deadline for application on 31 March 2021). The calls yielded a total of 109 eligible applications from over 40 countries in Europe, North America, Asia, Africa and Australia: 648 for the *international* module, 18 for the *Gerda Henkel* module, 19 for the *Bulgarian Junior* module, 6 from the *Bulgarian diaspora*, and 9 for *Senior fellowships*.

The CAS Academic Council held its regular session on 25 June 2021 via the online Zoom platform. The short-listed candidates were interviewed on the 1st and 2nd of July, 2021 by three council members, Prof. Ulf Brunnbauer, Prof. Galin Tihanov and Prof. Roumen Avramov, joined by the CAS Director.

Thirteen Bulgarian and thirteen international Fellows (including four Gerda Henkel Fellows from Ukraine, Russia and Turkey) were selected. The academic year was opened on 4 October 2021 (see **AR ANNEX IV** for the list of the selected Fellows and the summaries of their project proposals). Several fellowships from the 2020/2021 academic year were postponed for the current academic year. Dr. Lilia Topouzova (University of Toronto) and Dr. Mirela Ivanova, both selected under the *Bulgarian Diaspora* module for 2020/2021, will arrive in Sofia in May 2022. Dr. Wojciech Brzozowski, whose fellowship was suspended last year, has recently joined the CAS fellow community. Sarah Burger, a visual artist from Switzerland selected by the Landis & Gyr Foundation, was originally planned to arrive in Sofia in 2020, but due to the pandemic restrictions in the past two years she will arrive in Sofia only in May 2022 for her three-month in-residence fellowship. All other international fellows completed their research stays according to plan. Although we still had to adjust part of our programme and cancel public events during the fall semester, we have continued to convene the regular CAS Fellow seminars in a hybrid form while gradually moving back to in-person meetings. Since the beginning of April, the fully in-person Fellow seminars have been resumed.

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 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.

As mentioned in last year’s report, at the beginning of 2021 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 since it was stressed by the foundation’s grant manager for Central and Eastern Europe that the decision had nothing to do with the quality of the team’s work, which was in fact strongly appreciated. However, it did lead 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 due to cancelled meetings in 2020 and the project team managed 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 concluded their research work. Another opportunity for supporting the LiT team came from the recently added Fellowship programme *Relevance of the Humanities* (RevHum), also funded by the Porticus Foundation. With the approval of the donor, we reallocated four LiT fellows to the RevHum payroll in order to cover five months of their Fellowship. The project group holds regular online workshops to follow-up the progress of the individual researches and debate further steps to be taken, such as the preparation of an ERC synergy application by the project core group. By July 2022 all members of the team are expected to submit their research reports, while in October the preparations will start for the final report on the project activities.

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 is being 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 environments.’ 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 European Union’s *Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme* 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.).

After the completion of the project’s first year with an integrated Policy Brief summarising the EU and other stakeholders’ prevention strategy towards violent extremism in the region, in the course of 2021 the five Balkan sub-teams undertook extensive fieldwork aimed at identifying the cause of occurrence and non-occurrence of violent extremism and providing insights into the factors that result in some ‘enabling environments’ experiencing violent extremism, while others remain relatively resilient. Based on this in-depth fieldwork, on extensive desk research and the country-based reports, in December 2021 CAS delivered an extensive “*Working Paper on enabling environments, drivers, and occurrence/non-occurrence of violent extremism in the Balkans*”, which analyses the various drivers of violent extremism in the contemporary Western Balkans and elaborates a refined, nuanced and context-sensitive understanding of the concept of ‘enabling environment’, i.e., the cluster or combination of various factors in a given society that renders the emergence of violent extremism likely. In addition, building on the findings derived from the above research, CAS submitted a policy brief titled “*Summarising lessons learnt on the EU’s measures to prevent violent extremism in the Balkans*”, which is aimed at providing concrete, evidence-based advice to the EU and its member states on how to increase the conflict-sensitivity and effectiveness of P/CVE strategies in the region. Both documents and other publications are accessible on the project’s website: www.prevex-balkan-mena.eu.

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

The programme, funded by the Getty Foundation as part of its *Connecting Art Histories Initiative*, 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), envisaged to stimulate new synergies between scholars working across the region. 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. CAS is coordinating the programme in collaboration with the former NEC fellow 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.

The Opening Conference and First Spring School, originally scheduled for April 2020, were rescheduled due to the pandemic and eventually took place in 2021. Another surge in infections in early 2021 forced the organisers, with the approval of the Getty foundation, to make a decision for the convening of both events via the online Zoom platform between 17-24 April 2021. Twelve scholars from the region of Southeastern Europe joined the Zoom sessions to present their papers at the Opening Conference “*Looking at Things in Southeastern Europe: Regional Archaeology in Search of Viable Futures.*” Nine prominent archaeologists and art historians from Greece, Germany, Romania, the United Kingdom and the United States delivered lectures and workshop presentations at the First Spring School “*The Impact of the Political on Archaeological Research.*” Following an open call, ten early career scholars and doctoral students were selected for participation in the Spring School. Despite the limitations of the virtual format, both events were a great success. The leadership of the project and the senior participants were impressed by the inspiring and thought-provoking presentations of the summoned peers and junior scholars. As an outcome, the presented papers will be published and deployed in university courses: the conference papers – as an edited volume that will survey the state of the art in Southeastern Europe; and the

spring school lectures and presentations – in open access electronic format as working papers.

In September 2021, the preparations started for the Second Spring School under the title “*Local archaeologies and their interdisciplinary practices*”, to be held in May 2022 in Bucharest, Romania and hosted by the New Europe College Institute for Advanced Study (more on the forthcoming Second Spring School can be read under *II.2.2. in the Plan for 2022*, while the full programme of the event can be seen in **AR ANNEX V**).

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

This is a pilot 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, Switzerland and Spain.

The project outcomes will include a detailed web-based interactive map of SSH evaluation criteria, an extensive pack of specific policy support guidelines – ones that secure a brighter, more inclusive and fertile SSH future, and build a dynamic primary network of scholars across the Continent to facilitate as well as launch a grander initiative: an EU-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 New Bulgarian University) who acts as the programme’s coordinator.

In continuation of the first year’s results, the core working group was expanded, currently covering a total of twelve European countries on which country-specific narrative reports will be delivered: Croatia, Czech Republic, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia and Bulgaria. For each country, the in-depth reports will provide detailed analyses of the local SSH landscapes around several focal points: 1) country-specific policy approaches to the evaluation of SSH research outputs; 2) scientometric and bibliometric channels currently in use for research evaluation in the domains of SSH; 3) the role of societal impact for research evaluation; 4) forms of interdependencies between research evaluation and funding; 5) country-specific policies and legislation affecting the general status of SSH domains. The focal points of these narrative reports follow the methodology developed in the project's first year and, eventually, will provide the qualitative skeleton of the SSH evaluation criteria map to be delivered towards the end of the project's pilot phase.

Additionally, in each one of the countries an in-depth survey is being circulated to obtain both qualitative and quantitative data about how and what SSH colleagues feel about their professional future within the respective context of the research evaluation landscape. The survey, which can be accessed at <https://forms.office.com/r/wTMeV0LUFg>, is divided into four sections: 1) demographic profile, 2) personal attitude to local SSH policies in general, 3) attitude to local SSH evaluation and funding systems, 4) home institution SSH attitudes. The country-specific qualitative data will be measured against the background of overall averages for all countries covered, which will in turn allow for the creation of a planned demo version of the SSH Health Index. While the data is collected and the team is working towards the completion of the narrative reports, there are also plans to hold an in-person recap in the summer of 2022. Additionally, first steps have been made to develop a new webtool where an interactive map will provide access to all country-specific data. This is planned to be ready in the early 2023 when the narrative reports and surveys will also be published in an open-access booklet.

II.3. Other Academic Activities

Although public events and gatherings were still hindered by the pandemic restrictions in the past year, CAS nevertheless managed to host two events with a considerable participation and hopes to gradually return to its regular schedule of academic activities.

II.3.1. 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, the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin and the German Historical Institute Warsaw, was originally planned to take place from 14–21 September 2020 in Sofia. Due to the travel restrictions, the Academy was postponed and took place from 14-21 September 2021, again with its venue in Sofia.

The participants, junior scholars in the early/initial stages of their career (doctoral/postdoctoral) representing a wide variety of disciplines, were selected by the Steering Committee following an open call. They presented and discussed their current projects related to the general theme, interspersed with lectures by established scholars Prof. Annette Werberger, Prof. Rositsa Gradeva, Prof. Diana Mishkova, Prof. Ulrich Schmid, Prof. Dimitrios Stamatopoulos and Prof. Miloš Řezník. The programme was completed by several site visits of Sofia, such as the Centre for Slavo-Byzantine Studies “Prof. Ivan Dujčev” and a historical exploration of the city that was guided by Prof. Rositsa Gradeva. The in-person format was enthusiastically welcomed by all participants, which created a lively atmosphere with insightful discussions. We want to express our gratitude to Prisma Ukraïna for the well-organised event, and in particular to Prof. Andrii Portnov for his

willingness to co-operate with CAS and building further on our previous collaborations and established connections.

II.3.2. Roundtable “Avenues of cooperation: Ideas for overcoming the Macedonian-Bulgarian impasse”

On 11 March 2022, CAS and the Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities, Skopje (ISSHS) organised a roundtable on the above-mentioned topic. Two lectures were given by Prof. Katerina Kolozova (Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities, Skopje) and Assoc. Prof. Stefan Detchev (Southwest University in Blagoevgrad and Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”), who presented some of the results of the proceedings from the Avenues of Cooperation conference. The main idea of this conference was dedicated to finding a solution to the cultural conflict between the Macedonian and the Bulgarian state related to their respective nation-building narratives, which has caused a stalemate in the Union’s enlargement process blocking the next step of North Macedonia’s accession to the European Union. Through various historical (with an emphasis on exploring the past experiences and conflicts/conflict resolutions of other Visegrad countries), cultural, and political analyses, new, practical and concrete ways of moving forward past the deadlock between Macedonia and Bulgaria were presented from multiple perspectives all coalescing around a shared goal. Thus, these proceedings offer solutions and recommendations to long standing cultural, national, historical and political disputes between the two nations with the aim of bettering relations, increasing cooperation, and, crucially, unblocking the EU enlargement process and creating models that would allow for the prevention of any such situations happening again in the future. The roundtable was moderated by Prof. Dimitar Vatsov and attended by a various number of Bulgarian participants coming from a wide range of fields of study, which richly contributed to the diversity of the discussion.

II.3.3. 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 2021, the CAS evaluation panel recommended for further reviewing two candidates. They entered a highly competitive pool of young scholars from all over the world, whose scientific merits and individual projects during the final stage of selection are ranked by the Swiss Federal Commission for Scholarships for Foreign Students (FCS). This year, however, no Bulgarian nominees were approved for support by this strongly competitive programme.

II.3.4. 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. These events had gained much popularity and attention by scholars from various universities, academy institutes and other scientific organizations.

However, in the past two years, the pandemic entailed yet another postponement of the lecture's series. Currently, the tenth and eleventh season of the series are re-scheduled to the fall of 2022, with the twelfth season of the series – presenting the results of the 2020/2021 Bulgarian Fellows – expected to take place in early 2023.

For the Calendar of the 2022/2023 Public Lectures see **AR ANNEX VI**.

II.3.5. CAS Discussion Series

Under this rubric CAS' academic associates or former fellows organise discussions clubs on themes of broader contemporary relevance or underexplored new fields. Typically, they are addressed to Bulgarian public and are held in Bulgarian, except in cases of invited foreign lecturers and when CAS foreign fellows are attending.

II.3.5.1. Policies of the Rule of Law

The 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. Due to a surge of infections in the fall of 2021 and the impossibility to resume on-site meetings, sessions have not been convened for more than a year now. Assoc. Prof. Daniel Smilov, CAS academic associate and convener of the discussion series, will have to decide on whether it will be continued.

II.3.5.2. Forms of Ownership – Property in Communist Bulgaria

In late 2020 CAS initiated a new series of workshops under the above title, which aims at presenting different forms of ownership that were legally allowed or tolerated in communist Bulgaria. The series continued throughout 2021 with monthly seminars, coordinated by Stoyan Stavru (Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, BAS) and Roumen Avramov (CAS). All seminars to date have been convened only through the online Zoom platform, but it is foreseen to soon shift to attendance meetings at the CAS premises. So far, a total of 11 topics have been presented by prominent speakers from different fields of study, with the following having taken place in the past year:

- 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”;
- Prof. Dr. Plamen Tchipev (Plovdiv University “Paisii Hilendarski”) - “Theoretical and Practical Contradictions of the Social (“Vsenarodna”) Ownership in the Socialist Political Economy”;
- Prof. Dr. Stiliyan Yotov (Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”) - “The birth of personal property (and the construction right)”;
- Ekaterina Salkova (Institute of Law at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences) - “Nationalization and the Protection of Property”;
- Assoc. Prof. Delyan Nedev (University of National and World Economy, Sofia) - “Property Acquisition in the People’s Republic of Bulgaria”;
- Assoc. Prof. Petar Parvanov (South-West University “Neofit Rilski”, Blagoevgrad) - “Copyright law during Socialism”;
- Bistra Gospodinova (attorney and practitioner) - Property Confiscation as a Form of Repression under the Socialist State;
- Dr. Petya Slavova (Sociologist and former CAS Fellow) - “The multiple significations and uses of property as an instrument for the exercise of power: on the example of the foreign trade enterprise Texim – Imextracom”

The intention is to publish a thematic collection once a critical mass of quality papers is gathered.

II.3.5.3. Discussion Series “Why Byzantium?”

This new discussion series, convened by former CAS fellow Assoc. Prof. Ivan Biliarski and hosted by the Centre for Advanced Study, deals with the influence and legacy of the Eastern Roman Empire, which withstood multiple waves of barbarian invasions and lasted more than a millennium after the fall of its western half. Apart from being an Empire, Byzantium was a cultural and historical community of enormous influence that carried the Hellenic, Hellenistic and Roman heritage or inheritances, in their Christian form, into all spheres of its existence, transmitted them to other populations and continued to live long after its fall under the Ottoman Sultans. This influence took on a strongly identitarian character – recognized or not – for many peoples, states and social establishments. The key question this discussion series will address concerns the way Byzantium comes to be perceived, studied, appreciated and understood. At the centre of interest is the perception and conceptualization of the phenomenon of “Byzantium,” and not so much the phenomenon itself. This is achieved through various paths, only one of which is historiography. In addition to historians, the

discussion series is addressed to representatives of various disciplines with an interest in the Middle Ages, the Modern Period or Late Antiquity – literary scholars, linguists, art historians, archaeologists.

The first meeting of this new discussion series was convened on 14 March 2022 with a presentation by Dr. Delyan Rusev on the topic “The Weighty Heritage of Rum: Byzantium and Medieval Bulgaria in Early Ottoman Historical Writing”. It is foreseen that meetings will be convened at CAS on a monthly basis.

II.4. Publications resulting from CAS projects and discussion series

II.4.1. 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*. After almost two years of suspension due to the lack of institutional resources for the language editing of the texts, the preparation of the 2021/2022 issue of the Series was recently resumed. As a result of saved funds under the Gerda Henkel grant, we proposed to reallocate them partly for the purpose of resuming the language editing of the Working Paper Series and are grateful to the Gerda Henkel Foundation for their approval of this.

II.5. CAS Library

II.5.1. Development of book collections

The CAS Library follows consistent, efficient and financially sound collection development policies. The library uses both locally held information resources as well as resources from other organizations. Acquisitions are made in several ways: donations, purchase and exchange. The donations come from current CAS fellows, CAS alumni and associates. During 2021 the library has enriched its collection with 35 new books on various topics in the sphere of the humanities and social sciences.

II.5.2. Library services

II.5.2.1. Cooperation with Panitza Library of AUBG

CAS Library’s cooperation with the American University in Bulgaria (AUBG) continues to prove 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.

II.5.2.2. 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.

II.5.2.3. 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.

III. VISIBILITY, NETWORKING, DISSEMINATION OF RESEARCH RESULTS

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 ten-year existence of the Gateway, CAS' coordinator Dimiter Dimov continued the accumulation of useful and targeted information and its regular distribution through weekly newsletters to all registered users. To date, there are 591 registered users from academia. The annual number of unique visits averages 10,600 and more than 90,000 page views. 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 a regularly updated bibliography classified according to different topics and genres (1143 titles of books, articles and archive documents). The annual number of visits for 2021 amounts to 6,476, while 89,600 pages were 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 value of disseminating **printed publications**, particularly of the research resulting from collective projects. To this end, the Centre continues to seek additional financial resources for language editing, layout and printing.

In the past few years, CAS has been disseminating its yearly **Newsletter** mainly electronically, with only a limited number of copies in printed form. The electronic version of the newsletter is also accessible on the CAS webpage, with the latest 2021/2022 issue having been added recently.

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 been using this social media platform for the past seven years and it continually enjoys attention by former Fellows, both Bulgarian and foreign, and other scholars and students across the country. Moreover, it has proven to be an effective tool to target and reach out to scholars and candidates for the Fellowship programmes. Currently, CAS has close to 500 friends and followers on Facebook, while its posts reach many thousands of people around the world.

The already mentioned **Advanced Academia Public Lecture Series** is another valuable social tool for publicising and advertising the intellectual output of CAS. Throughout the years this series has become very popular, attracting many attendees from the Sofia academia and evoking an active response from the audience, and we cannot wait to resume them on a regular basis once the circumstances allow for it again.

CAS Sofia,
27 April 2022