
Acknowledgements

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Finally, our work could not have been done without the support of the staff of ESF and ALLEA. Our special thanks go to Dr. Astrid Lunkes, Dr. Bernard Avril, Dr. Farzam Ranjbaran and Dr. Rüdiger Klein as scientific secretaries of the panels. Dr. Klein and Dr. Ranjbaran also acted as secretaries of the Review Monitoring Committee and coordinated its activities including support to the preparation of the final reports.

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Part A: Panel-level Report

1. Overall summary of the Institute-level scores

In this section, the scores given to all Institutes for the three criteria are summarised.

Table 1: Scores for all Institutes in PE-4

No.	Institute Name	Quality and Productivity	Relevance	Prospect
701	INSTITUTE FOR BULGARIAN LANGUAGE	B	A	A
702	INSTITUTE OF LITERATURE	B	B	A
703	INSTITUTE OF HISTORY	C	B	C
704	INSTITUTE OF THRACOLOGY	B	B	C
705	NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY WITH MUSEUM	A	A	A
706	INSTITUTE OF BALKAN STUDIES	B	A	B
707	ETHNOGRAPHIC INSTITUTE WITH MUSEUM	B	B	A
708	INSTITUTE OF ART STUDIES	C	A	B
709	INSTITUTE OF FOLKLORE	B	A	B
710	CYRILLO-METHODIAN RESEARCH CENTRE	A	B	A
711	CENTRE FOR ARCHITECTURAL STUDIES	D	B	C
801	INSTITUTE OF SOCIOLOGY	B	B	B
802	INSTITUTE OF ECONOMICS	B	A	A
803	INSTITUTE FOR PHILOSOPHICAL RESEARCH	B	A	A
804	INSTITUTE OF PSYCHOLOGY	C	B	C
805	INSTITUTE FOR LEGAL STUDIES	B	B	B
806	THE CENTRE FOR POPULATION STUDIES	B	A	B
807	CENTRE FOR SCIENCE STUDIES AND HISTORY OF SCIENCE	B	B	A

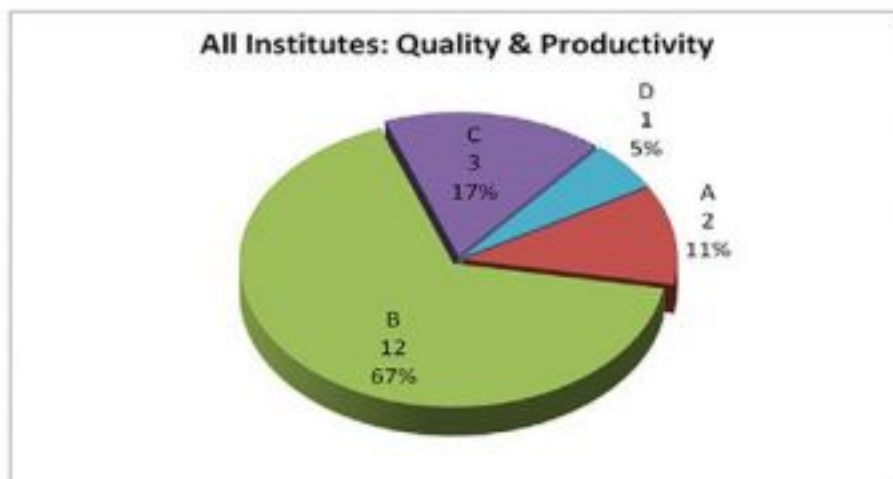


Figure 1: Distribution of Scores for "Quality / Productivity" for all PE-4 Institutes

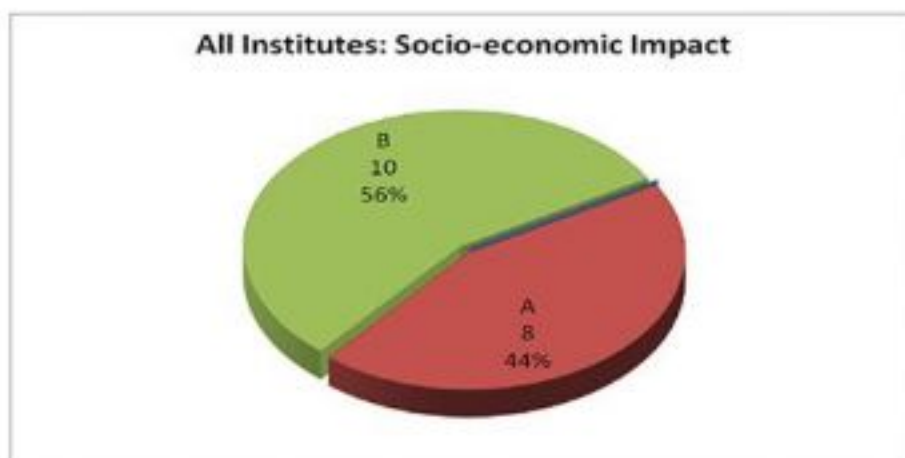


Figure 2: Distribution of Scores for "Relevance" for all PE-4 Institutes

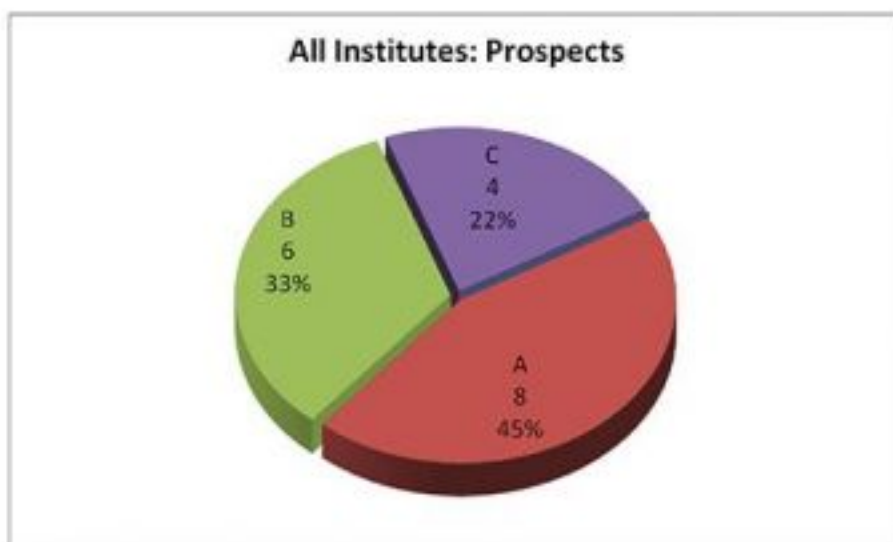


Figure 3: Distribution of Scores for "Prospects" for all PE-4 Institutes

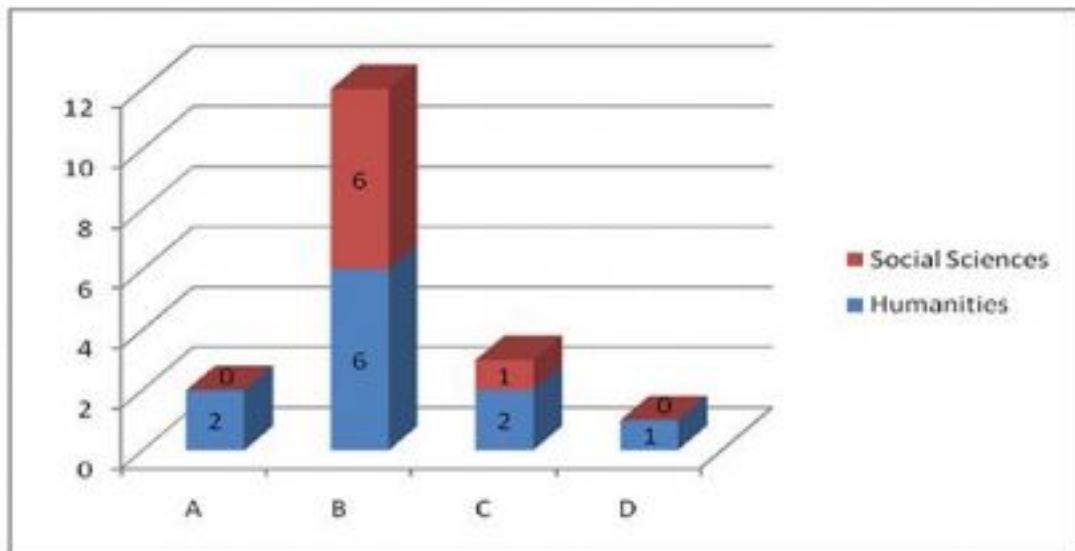


Figure 4: Distribution of Scores for "Quality / Productivity" across Divisions of PE-4

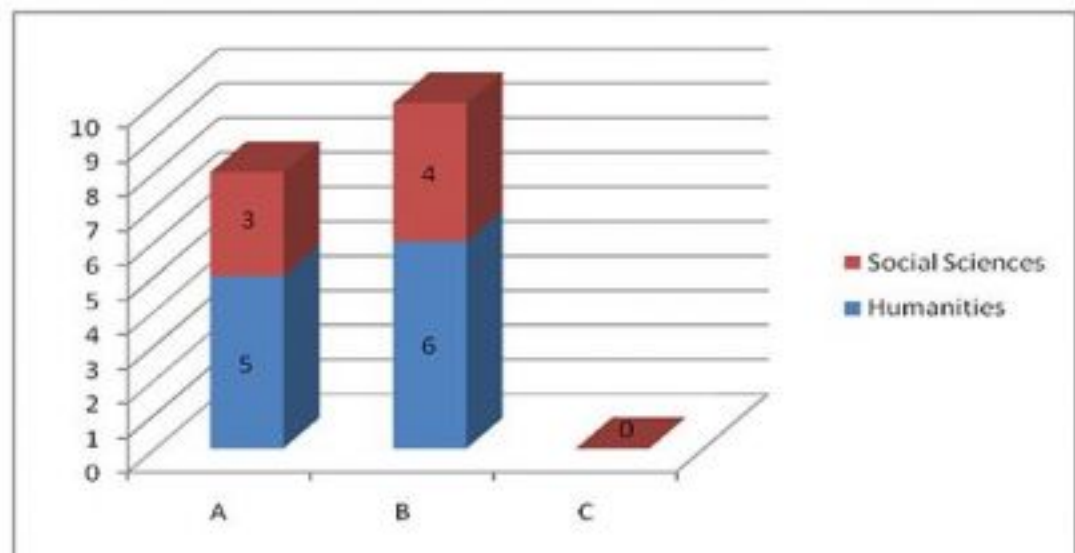


Figure 5: Distribution of Scores for "Relevance" across Divisions of PE-4

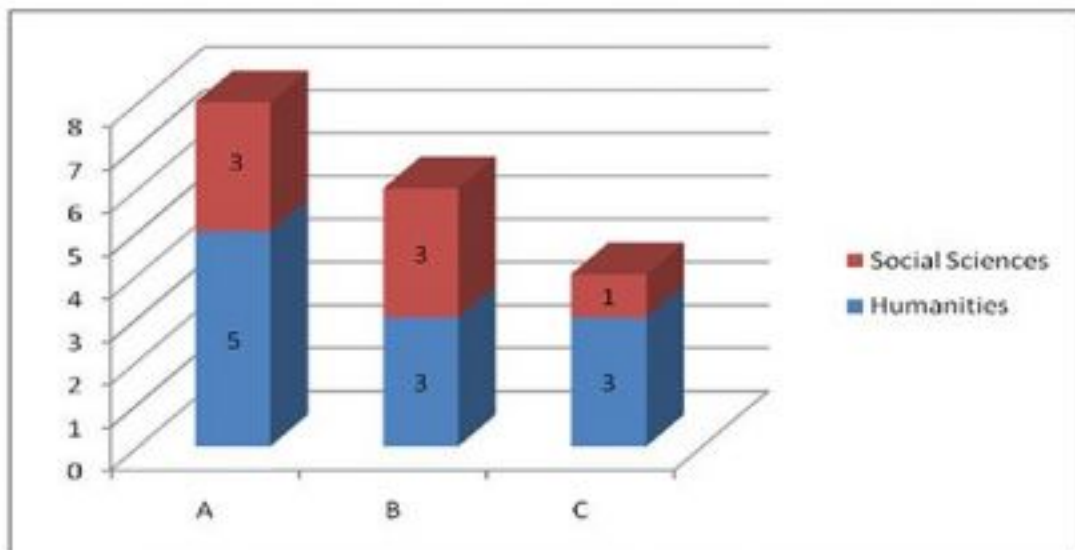


Figure 6: Distribution of Scores for "Prospects" across Divisions of PE-4

2. Panel-level executive summary

The 18 research institutes and centres of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (BAS) relating to the Humanities and Social Sciences (SSH) must all be praised for operating successfully at often remarkable levels of scientific quality in an extremely harsh environment. Admirable research is produced at these Academy institutes under sub-optimal working conditions. High added value is created in terms of socio-economic impact in return for minimal investment, valiant visions for a better future of the fields in general and of the next generations of scholars in particular are fought for against all odds. Many institute leaders have invented new ways to keep their institutes viable and vibrant; be it through quality assurance schemes, rewards and incentives, or through new formats for internal communication. And most of them welcome the enterprising attitude of the generation that had grown into networking their research in Europe and beyond. Researchers in the Social Sciences and Humanities are conscious that the new knowledge they produce is precious for Bulgaria and Europe in this phase of rapid transition and transformation, and are keen to grasp opportunities to continue improving their lot.

The Panel noted that most of the institutes are visible on the international research scene, with overall good “quality and productivity” of research; in only four cases the low level of engagement in (high-level) international debates is criticized. About half the institutes show a top performance in terms of “relevance” to society, and about half again are considered to have very good “prospects” for the future.

This section of the report will also elaborate on the scientific communication of institutes with a specific focus on Bulgaro-centric topics: the report will propose some suggestions to internationalize the Bulgaro-centric publications. On the other hand, many of the reasons why certain institutes are currently not conforming to expectations in terms of “relevance” and “prospects” cannot be put down to systemic failures; rather they are linked to specific research management issues that emerged from the reports and during the site visits.

The Panel was impressed with the overall very informative Self-Evaluation Reports (SER). They were rich in detail, largely accurate and without contradictions, clear in execution, and often included sections of remarkable analytical rigour with regard to the “big picture” (science in Bulgaria and the role of BAS). The sections on perspectives were typically shorter and often somewhat formulaic, but many valuable ideas were found elsewhere in the text, and interviews during the site visits yielded further information on the ambitions and forward planning of the institutes. The Panel greatly appreciated the ability of leadership and research staff at practically all units to provide further written data at short notice whenever the latter was requested. During the site visits, Panel members were in most cases positively surprised by the elegant and lively presentations of research highlights, and by the engaged, critical and constructive discussions of the [respective] profiles of units. In most cases institute directors made a deliberate effort to actively involve members of staff of all categories and ages, as had been requested. This being the first comprehensive and detailed international evaluation of the entire BAS system of research units, institutes dealt remarkably well with the bold assumption that a

serious, critical evaluation can become an asset in the process of rejuvenation and renewal. Site visits had been prepared with unfailing punctuality and professionalism by the secretarial staff of the two divisions at BAS evaluated by this Panel.

With a wealth of information and impressions to rely on, the Panel mostly refrained from seeking BAS-level insights into strategic priorities and central forward-planning and preferred to focus on information collected so that the report would do justice to the SERs examined and site visits conducted. Only where it was occasionally felt that certain idiosyncrasies could be better understood by referring to the wider context was this approach abandoned.

Unanimously, the Panel praised the young scholars whom they met during the site visits and during a special three-hour evening session which brought together some of the best early career researchers from all 18 institutes. They convinced all the Panel members that top-class research in the Humanities and Social Sciences will continue to be conducted at the Academy in the future, provided the current leadership in both Academy and government can agree on a plan to ensure that BAS as a national research centre, in which this talent can flourish, will be supported in the appropriate manner.

3. Panel-level evaluation report

This report deals with the institutes of two divisions, Humanities and Social Sciences, which all have specific accomplishments and which, though they share many problems, may each have unique visions for the future. This is why at this level few specific recommendations are made: in order to avoid unnecessary repetition, issues to be dealt with at BAS level and likely to concern all sciences are not raised here, nor are issues requiring specific adjustments between institutes which can be found at the institute level. Instead this section highlights some of the general problems and suggested changes identified as either concerning particularly the SSH fields, or concerning the SSH fields in a particular way.

Strategy: Relevance and basic research

The BAS institutes in the Humanities and Social Sciences have to live up to a double mission, as many other BAS institutes do. On the one hand (and this was the emphasis for this evaluation), they are expected to produce research, of a quality that compares to the best produced internationally. On the other hand, they are called upon to contribute to the wellbeing of the Bulgarian nation.

In some SSH fields, this second part of their mission is interpreted through their research practice, in more or less subtle ways, as pursuing national identity not as a contested object of study but as an objective to be affirmatively strengthened through the research products themselves. The Panel felt it difficult not to pass judgment on the political implications of these nationalistically inspired, thematic and methodological choices of individuals or institutes, but decided merely to draw the attention of the units concerned to the dangers of using terminologies and

methods that endorse essentialisms or thinly veiled nationalisms, or deliberately gloss over differences and fractures within Bulgarian society and history. The phenomenon becomes outright dangerous for the international position of Bulgarian scholarship, however, when the need to contribute to national debates is used as an excuse to shun international publication. The Panel alerted the units concerned to the problem, whenever the lack of international competitiveness could be linked to somewhat narrow approaches.

The Panel acknowledges that the institutes find themselves in a dilemma, as is indicated by the wording of the relevant and open-ended thematic section titles of funding lines offered by the Bulgarian National Science Fund which offer little in the way of an alternative: the relevant funding chapter is "Historical and Cultural Heritage, National Identity and Social Environment". In this context, many of the choices that risk causing the isolation of Bulgarian scholarship in SSH appear rational in the short term.

The Panel argued that a systematic internationalisation of the entire system – for example by introducing International Scientific Advisory Councils (see below) – might accelerate the slow transition away from a nation-centred rhetoric. Such a transition is already beginning to articulate itself through young scholars many of whom have spent years abroad and bring home innovative concepts and approaches.

The function of the Academy to serve society expresses itself through the provision of expert advice and advanced contributions to topical debates (such as ageing, migration, identity etc.): in the past, as well as in recent years, this has meant that the experts based in Academy institutes are expected to carry out research commissioned by government agencies. Often such work is not recompensed, since it is understood to fall within the remit of the particular institute's responsibilities. If core funding is secure and plentiful, this may be a flexible enough structure, allowing for sound science advice being offered alongside basic and methodologically innovative and exploratory research being conducted. As it stands, and with hardly any alternative resources to be tapped into, the structure risks becoming dysfunctional, as the preoccupation with what are *de facto* civil service consultancy tasks blocks academic resources from keeping up with (and contributing to) developments in the research field.

During site visits, a request to shift from 70:30 to 30:70 in the relationship between basic and applied research was mentioned time and again, either as a process under way or as a strongly felt expectation. The Panel felt that such a prescriptive pressure may ultimately become an impediment to good research.

When expertise becomes over-employed in providing advice, while being undernourished with resources to conduct basic and methodologically innovative research, a calamitous dynamics may ensue.

Intense consultancy work seems to reduce the international exposure of researchers (publications, conferences, scholarly exchanges), which entails the further risk that future advice may not be of the quality that should be expected. The Panel is

convinced that only by actively safeguarding a healthy balance between basic and applied research can commissioning agencies be reasonably certain that the advice they ask for will be as good as what their competitors, perhaps in other countries, may rely on.

Far from suggesting that Academy institutes in the SSH should be devoted to blue-skies research alone, this Panel would expect an Academy to play a vital societal role in contributing knowledge to public decision-making processes. However: its resources must be properly replenished for it to be able to do so.

For evaluation purposes it was somewhat difficult to assess accurately the value of those units whose operational horizon has been increasingly narrowing in that sense: their production seems to be solid, but often somewhat pedestrian (as consultancy work arguably should be): these are units that would perhaps achieve a weak "B" or "C" on internationally measured quality / productivity, but which would score high on "relevance" (e.g. folklore; population studies). In one case, the team observed an ingenious and energetic attempt to recast an entire field, guided by a strong leadership, in a way that would be surprising to many researchers at comparably large institutes elsewhere, but with a deliberate strategy in mind of making the domain more relevant for society (philosophy). Elsewhere, it is found difficult to make basic and applied research mutually enrich each other within one institute, and hence the institute as a whole remains at a "B" level throughout (sociology); and elsewhere again, the weight of history seems to be still such that expertise is not sought consistently where it might be found (law). Rare are the cases in which the Panel discovered that the level of research had, overall, fallen below a certain quality standard (history, psychology), irrespective of whether or not the expertise was required by external clients: in fact, there is no imminent danger of a poorly informed body politic, as competing expertise has been growing elsewhere (in these last two cases at a couple of good universities). \

Bulgaro-centric research

Not surprisingly perhaps, some of the best research was found in fields in which a Bulgaro-centric topic would allow researchers to benefit from privileged access to a fascinating civilisation and society: the Panel acknowledged that a number of institutes have found ways to foster a methodologically sound examination and documentation of diversity, within the country, across the wider region of South-Eastern Europe, or with regard to Europe at large. Be it through museological work, or with the preparation of corpora, databases or editions, or by many other means, such a well-understood quest for specificities can help Bulgarian scholarship to find its rightful place in Europe. In fact, the multiple layers and immense cultural and social complexity of Bulgarian society requires researchers to use tools of cutting edge scholarship: such accomplishments make their work appealing to colleagues elsewhere (resulting in frequently cited publications) and valuable for finding more advanced solutions in whatever field of knowledge they happen to be working (adding social value to their exploits).

Typical cases are the fields of archaeology, where the dynamism of transition beats the rhythm to high-powered rescue excavations which in turn yield new insights

into the deep history of the country at an astonishing rate, or in IT-supported linguistics and medieval philologies (spread over various institutes and centres) where a vast untapped wealth of cultural heritage is unlocked, or in economics where the mastery of relevant analytical and modelling tools allows for direct impact on planning processes from municipal all the way to central governments.

Fields which are by their very nature Bulgaro-centric will consequently have a large proportion of their publications in Bulgarian: typical cases are the institutes of Bulgarian language, literature, history etc., but also institutes dealing with the challenges of transition for the Bulgarian economy, law and society. As one would observe in other countries, much of the resulting scholarly production is presented in the national language – in which of course worldwide specialists will be as fluent as the domestic, non-academic end-users.

The Panel felt that there can be no argument of principle against publications in Bulgarian, provided measures are taken (evaluation incentives; technical and material support for Open Access publishing) to make the best work available also in other world languages. However: the Panel urges institutes and the BAS leadership to ensure that quality standards are not lower than what would be expected from international publications in other languages. Best practice for research journals must be identified and enforced systematically; this includes, but is not limited to, the establishment of independent international editorial boards, timeliness of periodical publications, opening of the journal to unsolicited submissions from scholars in Bulgaria and elsewhere, implementation of a rigorous protocol for peer review of all papers submitted for publication. Furthermore the Panel considers it imperative that such publications be made electronically available in full Open Access format (no significant income can be gained from them at any rate, and visibility is unnecessarily reduced), so that relevant indices capture their titles. While any insistence on publication only in foreign languages would be misguided, all measures must (and can easily) be taken to ensure that quality and accessibility of the specialist literature in Bulgarian is of world-class standard.

International networks

The institutes travel along many diverse paths in order to construct and use international networks. The specificities have been described and analysed in most of the institute reports. At the level of the two divisions another consideration imposes itself: much of the research in the Humanities and Social Sciences relies on heuristic and interpretational techniques that are acquired in a culture-specific way. The Panel saw – not surprisingly, but consistently implicitly from reports, and explicitly from site visits and the exchanges with young scholars – that the cultural specificity at work is two-fold: it depends partly on the domestic intellectual and institutional framework, and partly on the foreign schools of thought to which academics were exposed during their formative years, an exposure later perhaps reinforced through visiting scholarships of different kinds.

The fact that Bulgarian scholars based at the Academy may have worked and lived in all the cultural spheres of the continent and bring those different approaches back to their institutes is an invaluable and systematically underestimated asset: many

contacts are cultivated with Germanic, Latin and Slavonic research environments, and one does not yet observe an overpowering dominance of Anglophone influences. Surely, in a domain such as SSH, where the emphasis is on cultural heritage, such diversity must be recognized as healthy.

Young researchers and senior scholars alike would be further enriched if these diverse intellectual influences were made to intersect more deliberately, for example through cross-institute meetings where different state(s) of the art(s) could be compared. Such encounters may take, among many others, the form of open research seminars or internal, thematically focused away-days aimed at creating a space for new research questions.

For the fragile asset of intellectual diversity not to wane, the institutes and the BAS leadership must continue to support comparatively small-scale bi- and multilateral exchange programmes (which used to be typical of Academies). There is no reason not also to select some priority areas, where evident strengths could be energized further by advanced methodological exchanges (e.g. anthropology and folklore; medieval philologies).

Along the same line of reasoning, the Panel felt that across all institutes a sustained programme of awarding visiting fellowships would be beneficial.

It goes without saying that all support possible (technical, financial, additional language-training etc. etc.) must be given to those institutes striving actively to have a stronger and more successful participation in European research programmes (FP, ESF, COST etc.). The Panel noticed with some concern that currently some of the projects presented proudly as “European” were in fact not research projects at all, but often resembled HR development projects which comprised some components that were discipline- or profession-specific (law), even though they tied up (and bought in) staff on project management tasks; in other cases, the role of Bulgarian researchers was simply to collect region-specific data (psychology). Two good examples of real research projects, producing new data and weaving a new network of relevant academic and non-academic actors in Bulgaria are the projects on Ageing and Life-Long-Learning (population; sociology). Exceptionally ambitious are the research infrastructure projects in linguistics (CLARIN), and the many vibrant bi- and multi-lateral collaborations between BAS institutes and major research centres abroad which often occur outside any external programmatic support from “Brussels” in areas such as archaeology, medieval philologies etc. (see also CMRC; Literature; Balkan Studies).

Publications

The Panel found that overall productivity in terms of traditional research output in SSH fields (books, articles etc.) was good. Yet it was also struck that despite the manifold international contacts, Institutes are comparatively weak when it came to international publications.

The connection between increasing consultancy work and decreasing international exposure has already been mentioned and is evident. Conversely, institutes that did

not obtain top rankings in overall scientific quality for lack of good international publications, may include sub-units dealing with basic science (neuropsychology; some fields in sociology) that achieve such scientific visibility.

The Panel urges BAS and the institutes to introduce an incentive and support structure (see below) that ensures that more BAS-based publications reach international journals.

The Panel noticed that some inflated publication figures are derived from double counting, perhaps due to difficulties in classification, but were relieved to see that by and large there are only occasional uses of salami-slicing techniques to boost publication counts.

The organizations in charge of this evaluation (ESF, ALLEA) had decided against using bibliometrics as an evaluation tool, in order to enforce discursive analyses which lend themselves better to multi-factorial extrapolations on the “prospects” of the institutes. The Panel accepted this choice and was therefore unable to offer a modified approach to the use of bibliometric data. This is why the Panel felt it necessary to reiterate, for the benefit possible future internal evaluations, that currently existing bibliometric tools are indeed not adequate for individual or institutional assessments in most SSH fields. A strong case for the specific publication culture of the SSH fields to be respected and reflected in evaluation exercises had already been made by the Panel earlier and had been accepted at earlier plenary meetings of the review panels.

The Institutes had been asked to identify publications in relevant databases and indexes such as ERIH, AHCI, SCI. For this evaluation, SCI articles and the rare articles in journals with impact factor (e.g.: population; psychology) were considered by the Panel as indicating a level of awareness in the researchers that it is essential to seek international exposure for of their results, not as a crudely mechanistic measurement for quality. In fact, the Panel noted that publication figures in such classes of journals shot up whenever in-house journals were included in a given international index. As a consequence, the Panel used some latitude to interpret certain figures in institute reports when the need arose.

The Panel also observed the caveats about the currently limited use that can be made by the journals reference index ERIH (established by expert groups on behalf of the ESF Standing Committee for the Humanities for 15 disciplines in the Humanities and Human Sciences).

The Panel had expected and found confirmed the fact that the majority of products presented by institutes as “top-ten achievements” were books (scholarly monographs, collections of essays, critical editions, proceedings, special issues of journals and the like). This is fully in line with the importance of “books” in SSH fields and reconfirms the problematic nature of existing, journal-focused bibliometric tools for SSH. Few of those books presented were in foreign languages (or translated) but, unlike the pattern for articles, one would probably find a similar phenomenon in many SSH institutes elsewhere.

The Panel refrained from systematically comparing averages of publications per capita per institute. Instead, it noticed that the distribution of international exposure is very unevenly distributed among staff members which, to some extent, correlates with international exposure through conferences and other visits abroad. While this may be acceptable for a university (where greater teaching loads may imply reduced mobility) it is difficult to accept for a research institute (even though the Panel is of course aware of the financial limitations as well as the weight of seniority). The Panel recommends, however, that BAS should actively encourage the international mobility of its researchers (see also below). It would be important to trace, in the future, what measures are taken by institutes to support the mobility of young researchers abroad.

The Panel appreciates the activity of many institutes in popularising their research fields through appropriate publications for wider audiences. It must be clarified for future evaluation exercises that such publications are referred to under "Relevance" and not under "Scientific Productivity".

Worldwide, scholarship in the Humanities and Social Sciences has not yet started to make full use of the opportunities offered by Open Access (OA) publishing, neither in the journal nor in the monograph sector; though some spearheading projects in the field of corpora and databases have begun to show the way. BAS in-house publications in SSH could take advantage of this comparative backlog, could establish a central technical support service as argued for below, and could recast the best of the existing journals, those that respect the quality-assurance criteria mentioned above, as OA fora. A central publication unit should provide technical support for the good correlation between IT-supported data generated in a variety of formats (critical editions; analysis of surveys; etc.) and resulting publications. Similarly, it could manage a central on-line repository for successful PhD dissertations which would make brand-new, original work readily accessible – and which also might encourage students and supervisors to work towards completing theses speedily. Backed up by the necessary financial resources the same unit should aid OA publishing of articles by BAS scholars under all business models worldwide. With comparatively minor central investment, immense visibility gains could be made.

Infrastructures

Most of the infrastructures of the institutes are outdated. Libraries are often stocked with mainly old titles, are too small and too fragmented to hold the breadth of recent literature necessary to approach new themes with confidence. Most are poorly accessible (hours, catalogues, staff). Access to databases and on-line resources was found to be either problematic or non-existent. The Panel considered this state of affairs highly detrimental to independent research: researchers essentially depend on their ability to spend time abroad to catch up with current trends and relevant literature. Given that, in the reality of institute life, researchers rarely seem to be working in their offices, the Panel suggests that BAS should reflect on pooling library resources for SSH centrally, especially where institutes exist side-by-side in a campus (a special situation applies to the clusters of institutes that gravitate around their museums). Examples in other research centres (CSIC in Spain) demonstrate

the improvement in the quality of research following such investments; there is no reason not to consider such a project for a central SSH resource by BAS as an asset for the entire academic community in Sofia, and to seek funding accordingly.

In the SSH fields, libraries count as research infrastructures, but the Panel also observed the proliferation of other, institute-specific locally developed IT-support tools as part of a given project. There is no central register of such tools, and hence no possibility of ensuring positive spill-overs into neighbouring fields or cross-institutionally inspiring leadership. Many a solution found might serve the wider BAS community if central support was available. It would be a good thing if division and BAS leadership encouraged the active sharing of problem-centred solutions: this can be done through a recognised incentive scheme.

An example that is not devoid of problems is the project Bulgarian Art Archives and Advanced Research Technologies (BAAART), which is led by the Institute of Art Studies, but potentially offers tools and modules for other Humanities fields too. However, the example shows the shortcomings of the current system: infrastructures must be robust enough to offer a basis for joint research programming – and BAAART is underfunded and currently not capable of catalysing more than a recognition of its function as a repository; the IT support is too weak to ensure that important problems (semantics; ontologies) are broached, to promise timely functionality and versatility for ongoing projects, and to deliver tools subtle, flexible and open enough to stimulate new lines of research. On the other hand it is precisely this transformation of research practices in the Humanities (Digital Humanities) that drives similar exercises in other BAS-like structures elsewhere in Europe (Max-Planck-Institutes, Germany; Data Archiving and Networked Services (DANS) and the Virtual Knowledge Studio at the Royal Netherlands Academy). BAS researchers in computational linguistics have shown that they are able to climb new heights of achievements due to their consortium gravitating around the ESFRI Roadmap research infrastructure CLARIN (Common Language Resources and Technologies Infrastructure).

It can be argued that properly resourced research infrastructures could be at the heart of innovative cross-institute research efforts that would mirror, at the domestic or Academy level, the Europe-wide notion of joint programming, i.e. clustering of research efforts around jointly identified 'hot topics'. There is no reason to doubt that such issues could be identified. Currently a good deal of very closely related research occurs already, whether by responding to thematic priorities set centrally by BAS, NSD or other agencies (see above) or by picking up leads in the scientific community elsewhere (linguistics), albeit in an uncoordinated fashion in parallel and often in competition (anthropology; medieval philologies; all social science fields dealing with transition issues): if duplication proper in terms of research conducted is rare to non-existent, synergies also remain largely unexploited. In the light of changing domestic funding rules, 'joint programming', possibly extended to top university departments and research units may also allow institutes to prepare better for grant competitions requiring multiple partners (Bulgarian NSF). There is no reason to limit such clustering efforts to the Academy and national environment: in certain areas (Balkan Studies; folklore; law) the time

has come for discussions on developing regional leadership potential notably vis-à-vis Western Balkan countries.

Clustering

The Panel gave some thought to possibilities of structural re-arrangements: whether centred around research infrastructures or structured in another way, a degree of clustering and focusing may be useful for unlocking new ideas. There are certain areas of investigation where quality can probably be enhanced by pooling an existing, but dispersed, critical mass among BAS Institutes. In the Humanities, such areas include very specialised ones ('thracology') for which institutional consequences are suggested; very broad ones (interdisciplinary regional studies: Bulgaria and the Balkans), where the politically suggested focus on 'national identity' is seen as problematic and more progressive intellectual exchange is necessary; and areas which are operating competitively world-wide (archaeology and related disciplines, especially where they operate above ground; medieval philologies) or where the opposite is the case (historical research). Across the domain of Social Science 'transitology' is an obvious problem-oriented priority area, even though this is a priority on fragile ground (trusting that the transition will come to its completion in the foreseeable future).

The Panel did not consider in its evaluation whether existing structures can or should be integrated into centrally established, problem-centred, broad thematic clusters, such as 'cultural and historical heritage and national identity' or 'knowledge-based economy and society'. In management terms, these may be useful units: yet, the 'modern' sounding rubrics describe what broadly speaking is the old division between Humanities and Social Sciences, reflect what could be headings under the 'cooperation' section of the European Commission's Framework Programme, and hold out little if any promise of scientific advance. In terms of helping to stimulate new and innovative research, such units may reveal themselves to be empty shells: good collaborative research grows from superb mastery of disciplinary skills and from an understanding that those skills may not be sufficient to tackle given scientific and societal problems. Providing an environment where this combination of achievement and openness can coexist is a challenge to management.

The Panel recommends that a balance must be struck between respect for the specificity of certain methodologies (which may be more or less compatible with each other) and the need to stimulate problem-centred approaches. A possibility would be to conceive of a clustering process inspired, not by the broad-stroke descriptors of the Framework Programme 'Cooperation', but by the more finely grained categories used for 'European Research Council' panels, and further adapting those to the Bulgarian reality. Such an approach would signal an emphasis on supporting top-level research (analogy to ERC), would start with initially slightly smaller clusters (allowing for cross-institute adjustments and negotiation), would require – indeed rely on – a cycle of self-organising, rising and falling, problem-centred, intra-and inter-institute research groups (stimulating intellectual exchange within the existing structures) and would take seriously the nexus between basic and applied research as part of the aim of serving society. The Panel is convinced

that successful problem-centred structures cannot be enforced in the fields of SSH; rather, for problem-centred research to offer innovative solutions, it must be itself the outcome of an intellectually rigorous (self-) examination, of curiosity-driven exchange and inquiry. The approach we suggest here is consistent with the argument put forward above on achieving a balance between and a succession of basic and applied research. In the view of the Panel this appears a practical way to ensure that the intellectual forces in Social Sciences and Humanities are nurtured appropriately and harnessed in such a way that society can expect the most up-to-date knowledge and methodological tools to be used for the provision of advice.

Currently, cross-institute communication and coordination is deficient. There is a real danger of wasteful duplication (incidentally of both research and support work). The request for better communication across institutes was most clearly articulated by the young scholars, for whom the 'all-institutes' meeting organised by the Panel was the first such event ever; better coordination might trigger a science-driven identification of priority themes. Due to the dearth of resources, whose effects are likely to determine scientific life for some time to come, added value resides in such no- or low-cost exercises aimed to stimulate scientific exchange. SSH disciplines would benefit particularly from a moderate amount of incentive and support top-down, as most struggle to liberate themselves from isolation and because the presence of a multiplicity of schools of thought and research traditions in their midst cannot otherwise be properly exploited.

The Panel believes that this evaluation may give a first indication of obstacles and opportunities; but it is also aware that the planning and prospective thinking of most scientists at BAS institutes is determined by current conditions and constellations, that despite the talent and knowledge that abound there is little if any prospective thinking going beyond mending present-day ills caused largely by underfunding. This is why the Panel advocates the establishment of a structure that allows for a continuous process of intellectual exchange at the highest possible international level.

International Scientific Advisory Councils

The current structure and function of the Scientific Boards does not seem strong enough to set stimuli that can enhance the level of research; nor has the recent creation of 'problem[-oriented] councils' by BAS effectively stimulated new developments.

The Panel recommends that BAS establish International Advisory Councils that would prepare and accompany the clustering process of institutes and fields, and help detect potential for tackling new, cross-cutting research questions. For that reason (but also out of financial considerations), it might be wise to envisage the intervention of such International Scientific Advisory Councils at a level where, in most cases, the efforts of more than one institute would be converging at any one time – presaging, so to speak, a possible, future problem-centred structure. On the basis of current overlaps and potential synergies, one could already think of a number of existing institutes that would benefit from such closer collaboration (not taking into account that the need for substantial IT-support and expertise from

other fields in BAS may require additional alliances). Even though the process needs to be structured, it should evolve in as open-ended a way as possible, in order to avoid the levelling of existing pinnacles of research excellence (discernible, for example, in archaeology and CMRC) through forced collaboration.

The Panel also suggested several adjustments at the institute level. These suggestions are of varying urgency and motivated in a variety of ways, but at no time by budgetary concerns. Rather, they are attempts to enable better research: they are to do with the absence of critical mass (thracology), with the necessity of capturing the full intellectual breadth of a young discipline in full bloom (anthropology; currently divided between two institutes of ethnography and folklore), with the need to focus expertise (some sections of philosophy and science studies), and/or with the opportunity to stimulate more innovative approaches (Balkan Studies, history, history of science).

Even where severe doubts arose as to the viability of an existing institute (architecture), the field itself should be supported (including urban planning/urban studies) but, given the current situation, the expertise available and in the future would be safer in a different institutional context. It might be one of the tasks of an International Advisory Council to ensure that the expertise potentially reallocated in this way is not lost and remains fully integrated in the reflection process that leads up to the constitution of new research domains. In sum, the Panel does not recommend closures or mergers for the sake of creating larger units, but with the intention of eliminating barriers that risk perpetuating unhelpful isolation, or have already caused unnecessary and detrimental fragmentation.

Funding

The investigator-driven clustering process is likely to be beneficial also in terms of future applications. Bulgarian research is beginning to experience a funding logic according to which the awarding of many smaller grants is gradually being replaced by larger grants, typically adjudicated on the basis not of individual applications but of consortia (composed often, as could be observed, of BAS and non-BAS institutes).

However, the Panel urges BAS not to abandon its internal system of awarding small grants (both for travel, visits and as seed money), because this scheme is judged by many to correspond best particularly in the SSH fields to the needs of embryonic ideas seeking to grow. The emergence of a funding scheme that favours larger grants will bring to an end the multitude of minuscule 'projects' listed by institute members, which have the insidious tendency of suggesting utter fragmentation of effort, when, in effect, they are the expression of a close-to-optimal use of a sub-optimal funding system. Based on this insight this Panel chose, with very few exceptions, to refrain from criticising the current presentation of these successful grant applications. It is true, however, that all the reports bear witness to the apparent inability of the leadership to articulate clearly the scientific profile of ongoing projects outside their own sphere of interest. This observation has led this Panel to recommend a new (additional) scientific advisory structure, which should be concerned with content, not with internal procedures, promotions and the like.

Teaching

The Panel was concerned to see evidence of often very heavy teaching loads in the figures provided. The Panel learnt of (and was extremely worried by) the low salaries of BAS researchers and their resulting need to seek additional income. This situation must be remedied elsewhere; as it stands, it contributes to the risk that an imbalance will emerge (or has already emerged) between teaching and research. Bulgarian labour law, if applied to the situation at BAS, seems to indicate that a 100:25 distribution load of research and teaching is acceptable. In terms of what is desirable for a national research centre, however, a limit to a lower percentage of time allocated to teaching would be the recommendation of the Panel; furthermore, such teaching should not be at the introductory level (except perhaps for junior staff), and should focus on advanced topics, in such a way that candidates for research positions can be identified.

It goes without saying that such restrictions need to be phased in such a way that there should be no additional economic pressure on the BAS researchers; they must go hand in hand with the introduction of a more realistic salary structure, appropriate for highly qualified expert staff.

Central support structures for SSH

Beyond some obvious managerial concerns (creating larger units, hoping for smaller overheads) and reactions to external pressure (reducing staff numbers and expenditure in general), the Panel saw little trace of a central strategy for the fields of SSH. This may well be read as a good sign for an organisation that defends the right of research to develop its own dynamics and to define the appropriate balance between, for example, basic and applied research by its own parameters. Yet, the Panel also observed that the central BAS administration has a number of very important tasks to fulfil that would strengthen the research capacity of SSH institutes. Efficiency gains could be obtained if BAS were equipped to provide strategic support and tailored guidance.

It was noted with concern that a number of institutes are proud of having won European or national competitions for measures to improve various aspects of HR development in R&D fields. Yet, no common approach to these matters appears to be in place, which is unacceptable. BAS should centralise the management of such support as part of a strategic human resources development plan. This includes a mechanism to identify and transfer best practice among institutes in these and other matters of structural importance.

Along the same line, there are a multitude of other support functions which, if centralised, would probably be saving costs, facilitate the management of institutes (reduce multiple offices and tasks) and allow researchers to focus on research:

- support for international applications (including notably a proactive, division specific FP support: this is considerably more than what a simple National Contact Point for the Framework Programme can offer);
- incentive schemes that provide matching funds for successful applications (can be according to a key that values different sources of funds differently);

- publishing support office (technical and financial support for Open Access publishing of in-house titles, management of repositories, and placement of OA publications abroad under the different OA business models);
- central IT support and exchange wherever possible and necessary (many institutes have set up their own often ingenious and highly specialized IT tools as part of a given project, but other institutes may not know about them or have access to them);
- proactive centre promoting the use and knowledge of e-learning and e-research tools, including regular use of the existing publication databases (could be further supported by the existence of public consultation areas with good download and printout facilities);
- career offices for younger scientists with expert sections for the different fields of science;
- graduate school-like courses (regarding research, e.g. ethics, presentation skills, as well as other training and HR development);
- conference support centre.

In order to better equip scholars for their international exposure, language requirements must be placed on newly opening leadership positions in institutes, but also for newly recruited doctoral and post-doctoral students; language training and science language improvement facilities should be opened.

Young Researchers

The Panel was impressed by the performance of the early career researchers at the BAS Institutes during site visits and during the special three-hour-session for young scientists. Among the young researchers who presented the work of their research groups or who spoke up during discussions there was not one who would not be coveted as a member of staff by most research institutes elsewhere in Europe. However, what the Panel expresses as praise, is a curse in disguise, given the poor prospects that current conditions give to the brightest young researchers in the country. Unless Bulgaria decisively chooses to invest in supporting its young talents and high potential in academically strong institutions, pull- and push-factors will launch the combination of excellence, innate curiosity and propensity for mobility into yet another round of deleterious brain drain. For as it stands, over-bureaucratized promotion procedures, underfunded entry-level positions (with salaries lower than doctoral scholarships), non-transparent career paths, all add up to formidable obstacles placed in the way of aspiring researchers.

During the special session with young scientists it emerged that if young scholars are reasonably satisfied with the balance of guidance and freedom, they feel the lack of structured, more frequent and regular encounters with their peers within the broad section SSH. The meeting organised by the Panel was apparently the first of its kind which brought together young scholars from all institutes. Clearly there is some scope for more centralised support for the best talent in BAS to meet and exchange regularly: even a competitive element can be introduced into such meetings (monthly prize lectures rewarding good papers, chapters or dissertations of young scholars can be held in the BAS Hall, even if only 2/3 of the existing SSH institutes participate in such a scheme). In the international arena, as young scholars emphasised during site visits, summer schools could help build stronger

networks internationally, all important in view of future European collaborative projects. Such platforms for interdisciplinary exchange should be self-organized, but administratively supported and encouraged by the section secretariat.

The Panel understood that there is concern about the lack of post-doctoral positions, given the complicated procedures linked to entry into the formal BAS researchers' hierarchy; in terms of compatibility with the higher education and research systems elsewhere, but also in terms of acknowledging advanced status of research. Formal procedures for entry into the BAS researchers hierarchy may need to be reformed; meanwhile, BAS would be well advised to establish a system by which Young Leaders (current and future team and group leaders) receive relevant training.

Most Institutes expressed their concern about the difficulties to attract young researchers (with problems being identified as common across disciplines and solutions being beyond the control of individual institutes); furthermore, the gap of mid-career researchers, groomed to become leaders, looms large over the immediate future of many BAS institutes. Rather than parachuting salaried saviours from outside (which on occasion may have been helpful in dealing with promotion stalemates), identifying and training future leaders among comparatively early career BAS staff and allowing them to confirm their potential as leaders of small research groups may be a better solution. NIAM has found it beneficial to have some of its many 'rescue' excavation groups led by early career researchers; anecdotal evidence for similar experiences were collected elsewhere (e.g.: economics, ethnography).

Even though there is some financial reward for doctoral supervision and assiduous lobbying may result in the attribution of a junior position which then brings in some extra funds, the preoccupation of keeping a junior research position filled was palpable during almost every site visit. Some Panel members wondered whether this was one of the reasons that BAS institutes did not pursue a more active policy of international research mobility for their young scholars. If such an attitude could be shown to exist, it would be profoundly detrimental for the future of BAS. A mobility scheme should link opportunities to create important experiences abroad to encouragements for returnees: among the young scholars met, most returnees listed personal reasons as the main motive for their attempts to reintegrate into the Bulgarian system.

Unanimously, the Panel praised the young scholars whom they met. They convinced all Panel members that top-class research in the Humanities and Social Sciences will be conducted at the Academy also in the future, provided the current leadership in Academy and government can agree on a plan to ensure that BAS as a national research centre, in which this talent can flourish, will be supported in the appropriate manner.

4. Panel-level recommendations

Strategy

- the balance between basic and applied research must be safeguarded: good applied research cannot be produced, in the long term, without sustained investment, training and practice in basic research;
- division level exchanges should ensure the transmission of best practice in research management (including management of infrastructures; IT tools; acquisition of resources);
- a 'bottom-up' process of rethinking the boundaries between institutes in view of better tackling problem-oriented research must be launched; this evaluation provides some thoughts for and examples to reflect on critical mass, overlaps, synergies, focusing, strengthening assets etc.; temporary working groups might be one way to launch the process of identifying cross-cutting / horizontal / transversal themes, that would be conducive for scientifically innovative clustering dynamics;
- joint use of infrastructures should be considered as a point of convergence for joint research projects / programmes between different institutes;
- in order to more easily explore possibilities for collaboration between institutes, a regular platform for scientific exchange should be created (division-level seminars);
- support should be given to young scholars for creating a separate series of at least monthly seminars for their age cohort (advanced doctoral and early postdocs);
- in order to strengthen the reversal of decline and get the successful 'catching-up' under way, 'International Scientific Advisory Councils' should be formed that would help detect potential for tackling new, cross-cutting research questions, and discuss possible related institutional re-arrangements. The interventions of such International Scientific Advisory Councils should be typically envisaged at a level where the efforts of more than one institute would be converging at any one time – presaging, so to speak, a possible, future problem-centred structure;
- future internal evaluation exercises must take into account (and understand as an asset) the diversity of fields and their production and publication practices; such elements of diversity include, but are not limited to: Bulgaro-centric research (for which the internationalisation requirement is not necessarily articulated through foreign language publications), consultancy work (e.g. for health and immigration authorities, where sometimes datasets and results may not be released), outreach (exhibitions, media presence), not to speak of time invested in developing research infrastructures, setting up international scholarly networks, writing scholarly books etc.; the divisions should set up a working group and be assisted with evidence generated by the Centre for Science Studies;
- the divisions should consider establishing their own PR unit, since their research, products and insights often require an outreach format that is different from that useful for the natural sciences;

Infrastructures and Publications

- the museums operating in conjunction with SSH institutes are assets for the research process; they must be supported as research infrastructures. Professionalisation (museological training and research) are one prerequisite for the museums to be able to accompany and support BAS research in the appropriate fashion. The specific profile and tasks of scientific curatory staff at the museums, employed in addition to research staff at the institutes, must be properly designed and described;
- divisions must make sure that traditional (libraries, archives, collections) and new (laboratories, databases etc.) research infrastructures be properly maintained and kept accessible; this includes training in the appropriate use of such resources; currently, many of the institutions appear to be dysfunctional, fragmented, operating in an uncoordinated fashion without central acquisitions and disposal control and under extreme financial strain (purchasing power and staff);
- divisions and institutes must jointly secure access to the information resources to which BAS has acquired access, and promote their use by appropriate training and support among their researchers;
- divisions should consider creating a central information resource (pooling all libraries [at least where institutes are located on the same campus], archives, collections etc.) that would be run professionally (also in terms of preservation, cataloguing etc) and would serve as a resource also for bona fide non-Academy researchers;
- joint development of sharing of infrastructures (laboratories; databases; IT tools) must become part of the functioning of cross-institute cooperation and be inscribed into strategic plans;
- humanities institutes should set up a working group discussing the advantages of using BAAART, (if necessary, another tool), as basis for a joint digital Humanities strategy;
- social science institutes dealing with 'transitology' should consider establishing a working group that would explore the possibility of creating communicating datasets;
- divisions must jointly create support structures to ensure high quality publications in foreign languages (including supporting production [language] and appropriate criteria for choice [information about evaluation criteria, domestically and internationally; bibliometrics etc.]);
- an appropriate balance must be struck between Bulgarian language and foreign language publications;
- outreach publications for a broader public must be presented, in future (also future internal) publications under Relevance/Impact, not under Scientific Quality;

- in-house publications – whether in Bulgarian or in foreign languages – must conform to international standards: the establishment of an independent international editorial board, the timeliness of periodical publications, the opening of the journal to unsolicited submissions from scholars in Bulgaria and elsewhere, the implementation of a rigorous protocol for peer review of all papers submitted for publication;
- there must be central support for Open Access publishing (see below);

Cooperation

- International Scientific Advisory Councils should be established to accompany the process of reflecting on and adjusting institutional arrangements to new research needs and opportunities;
- divisions should ensure that they are represented in the relevant European-level expert groups and committees (FP; ESF; COST; etc.), to be aware in time of any new networking developments they could be part of;
- divisions should encourage strategic collaborations with universities and other institutions wherever opportunities arise for domestic applications of larger consortia;
- divisions should actively explore with sister academies and other institutions in the neighbouring countries new formats for cooperation (cross-border clustering and leadership); this may be relevant in particular vis-à-vis the Western Balkan, but also in the wider Balkan and Black Sea context;
- international cooperation through bi- and multilateral agreements between academies should be continued; divisions should alert the BAS leadership to opportunities for seeking formal collaboration with non-Academy research performing organisations relevant in their fields (CNRS, CSIC, Max-Planck etc);
- small-scale grants based on bilateral inter-academy arrangements should be maintained; as seed-money, they are often the basis for long-lasting international collaborative arrangements, and a stepping-stone to larger and more ambitious applications elsewhere;
- mobility schemes at all career levels should be promoted that envisage incentives for the beneficiaries to return to their country of origin;
- divisions should seek to build fortnightly seminars around the presence of visiting scholars as a means to enhance visibility of given collaborations, to make sure also that young scholars are exposed to the work of those foreign colleagues, and to stimulate emulation;
- all encouragement should be given to efforts to identify and develop new and emerging lines of research even where they cut across institute and division borders;

Staff

- the divisions should offer, in coordination with BAS central office, training modules and establish supervision routines that ensure timely completion of dissertations;
- promotion juries should seek to include at least one foreign member linked to the research environment under discussion (possibly from existing inter-academy or other international networks);
- wherever possible *co-tutelle* (co-supervision) agreements with foreign institutions should be established;
- dissertations should comprise a substantial summary in English and should be made available in their entirety on-line (central digital repository; see below); where the request is made, dissertations should be allowed to be written and submitted in English;
- in order to better equip scholars for their international exposure, language requirements must be placed on newly opening leadership positions in institutes, but also for newly recruited doctoral and post-doctoral students; language training and science language improvement facilities should be opened.
- staff development plans must be established that include constant updating of relevant skills (including the use of research support services);
- staff evaluation must lead up to more flexible and performance-related promotion and reward systems;
- the divisions need to reflect on the appropriate mix of indicators for their fields in the context of any system that may be introduced at BAS level;
- reward and recognition schemes for excellence in research should be established for all levels of researchers (prizes; awards; etc.), including for junior researchers (prize lectures at monthly seminars for the best article, chapter, etc.);
- divisions and institutes must establish an appropriate plan for limiting in numbers and scope the teaching hours delivered by research staff elsewhere: advanced studies should be given precedence over introductory courses (with the possible exception of early career scholars). It goes without saying that such restrictions need to be phased in in such a way that no further economic pressure is on the livelihood of the BAS researchers; they must go hand in hand with the introduction of a more realistic salary structure, appropriate for highly qualified expert staff;
- the divisions must make sure that regular methodological seminars are available to junior researchers;
- young researchers need better mentoring, clearer career structures and perspectives, platforms for intra-cohort scientific exchanges at BAS division level, inclusion into ongoing and emerging research projects; promotion procedures must become less bureaucratised, promotions for merit must be swifter;

- young researchers should benefit from more mobility schemes, including attractive formulae for returning young scholars, and from leadership training;
- leadership training should be provided to younger researchers to prepare them for positions of higher responsibility within the division.

Funding

- many of the major research endeavours in the Social Sciences and the Humanities can be conducted only if secured in the long-term. A typical example is the Academy Projects in Germany (up to 25 years). It is recommended that as part of the clustering process the divisions identify such large-scale long-term projects and that there will be a long-term funding commitment from BAS / government. Such projects can be – but are not limited to – long-term documentation efforts (folklore; ethnography; architecture), critical editions and complex excavations (language; literature; CMRC; archaeology and thracology; art), longitudinal studies (sociology; population; economics; science; law); etc.
- divisions and BAS should offer rewards for successful applications for external funds;

Central strategy and support

(This section may repeat some items raised earlier; the Panel felt that they may also be of general interest)

- a) the BAS strategy must describe the role of research institutes (including their policy advice function) as a unique feature, comprising long-term and highly specialized programmes and research infrastructures, without which no nationwide R&D strategy can be envisaged;
- b) by the same token, institutes must develop a clear and sufficiently focused mission (and vision) and a research agenda based on the identified strengths (or equally clearly identified societal needs, if such is the case);
- c) small-scale grants based on bilateral inter-academy arrangements should be maintained at least for the SSH; these small-scale support schemes which have served its researchers well in establishing and sustaining international networks and as seed-money (reporting must be such that these positive effects are explicitly reflected, rather than the impression of fragmentation: not the number of projects, but the quality of outcomes in terms of future prospects must be at the heart of reporting on small-scale grants); especially in the changing funding environment (large-scale consortia being awarded by NSF) this measure is expected to keep BAS in the lead when it comes to developing new lines of research: these grants have often been the basis for long-lasting international collaborative arrangements, and a stepping-stone to larger and more ambitious applications elsewhere;
- d) achieving a meaningful and sustainable balance between basic and applied research must be explicitly included in future strategic plans;

- e) salaries and career structures must be developed in such a way, that a research organisation (BAS) is not disadvantaged vis-à-vis teaching organisations (universities);
- f) PhD students (and supervisors) must be expected to bring to completion research projects within the timeframe envisaged; BAS can create an incentive by raising salary levels so that the transition from doctoral scholarship to an entry level academic position represents an increase in personal income;
- g) work in SSH institutes is likely to benefit from some centralised, strategic support and tailored guidance in a variety of fields; BAS should avoid unnecessary internal competition among institutes (e.g.: HR development) in areas better served by such central support units;
- h) HR development activities regarding R&D fields (it is currently still fragmented in different institutes and conducted only if competitive funding is acquired from third parties, typically EU);
- i) identify and transfer best practice among institutes in these and other matters of structural importance;
- j) support for international applications (including notably a proactive, division specific FP support: this is considerably more than what a simple FP National Contact Point can offer);
- k) incentive schemes that provide matching funds for successful applications (can be according to a key that values different sources of funds differently);
- l) publishing support office (technical and financial support for Open Access publishing of in-house titles, management of repositories, and placement of OA publications abroad under the different OA business models);
- m) central IT support and exchange wherever possible and necessary (many institutes have set up their own often ingenious and highly specialised IT tools as part of a given project, but other institutes may not know about them or have access to them);
- n) proactive centre promoting the use and knowledge of e-learning and e-research tools, including regular use of the existing publication databases (could be further supported by the existence of public consultation areas spaces with good download and printout facilities);
- o) career offices for younger scientists with expert sections for the different fields of science;
- p) graduate school-like courses (offering and cross-disciplinary training for general aspects of research careers, e.g. ethics, presentation skills, as well as other aspects of HR development);
- q) conference support centre, so that professional staff rather than ad hoc staff from the research units can deal with logistic issues.

710 Cyrillo-Methodian Research Centre

Introduction

The Centre was established in 1980. It evolved from a commission that had existed under various names between 1914-1944 and from 1971 to 1980. CMRC has been designed as becoming the world-leading institution specialized solely on the promotion and coordination of Cyrillo-Methodian studies. In order to further deepen its research activity, it was reorganised in 1993.

Today the Centre has 25 positions, of which 23.5 are occupied; scientific staff is divided into 17 researchers and 7 PhD-students supporting research. Apart from a library, CMRC is structured in five units, comprised of three thematic sections (Cyrillo-Methodian Sources, Texts, and Traditions), an editorial and publishing group, and a bibliography group. Most researchers are working in the Sections of Cyrillo-Methodian Sources (9 staff) and Cyrillo-Methodian Texts (7 staff).

According to its mission the CMRC conducts fundamental and applied research and related activities devoted to the study, preservation and popularisation of the literary and cultural heritage of the inventors of the Slavic alphabet and teachers of the Slavs, St. Constantine-Cyril and Method, their disciples and followers, and the historical development of the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition. Its members have been conducting postgraduate-courses within the CMRC and have been delivering lectures and classes in Bulgarian and foreign universities and other educational institutions.

The research field of CMRC is central for Slavistics and highly important also in the European context, as it unites two major religious and cultural traditions. The potential relevance of such a specialised research centre in terms of cultural dialogue and appreciation of cultural diversity in Europe (and at the roots of Europe) cannot be overestimated.

Evaluation summary

CMRC is a small, but well functioning and very productive institute with a remarkable position both nationally and internationally. While its quality and its international activities make it a world centre in the field, its multi- and interdisciplinarity permits the CMRC to act also as a complement to and provider for other Bulgarian university- and BAS-institutes, especially in its consultation and teaching activities (incl. successful participation in the Erasmus-programme).

Cyrillo-Methodian studies nowadays have to compete with many other scientific areas and have recently lost ground in other countries (even though a new institute is presently being built up in Nitra/Slovakia). Bulgaria is one of the leaders in this domain which is still well developed, both at universities (mainly Sofia and V.

Tărnovo, to a minor degree also Plovdiv and Shoumen) and in other BAS institutes: there are some (potential) areas of contact with the institutes for literature, Bulgarian language, History and Balkan Studies. In the Bulgarian context, CMRC fulfils the function of being a central institution for this field of research; in the view of this panel it should be given more possibilities to strengthen this coordinating function across fields and institutions.

Because of its high international standing, national projects and thematic sections are gradually being replaced. Large-scale and fast-developing publishing activity in all languages of the world of slavistics are expression of this dynamism. As yet this is not matched by (reported) income. Further plans are being made for strengthening the Centre success in competition for EU project-funding.

The Centre has made the best use of the limited possibilities to support the integration of young scientists.

The overall score on **quality and productivity** is "A". The work of the CMRC is "*internationally competitive*" (i.e. in comparison with similar, language and culture-specific institutes elsewhere). The general productivity is very high and in its own very specific field the Centre plays a central role internationally. The national impact is high: the centre promotes Cyrillo-Methodian issues through teaching at several universities and through close contacts with colleagues both from universities and other BAS institutes, but its activities remain limited largely to the purely scholarly sphere. Its **relevance** could be enhanced; currently the overall score on this account is therefore "B" ("*moderate*"). Under an energetic and goal-oriented leadership, the Centre has made good use of opportunities in general funding, cultural heritage and research infrastructure funding and emerging international contacts; its **prospects** as a worldwide-renowned centre of learning are "*high*" ("A").

Evaluation Report

a) Quality and Productivity

Quality (international recognition and innovative potential)

A major trait of CMRC is its multi- and interdisciplinarity, not only as concerns formal and informal co-operations with scholars of other institutions, but also because its members are graduates of and working in various fields of the Humanities (Slavic Philology, Byzantine Studies, Latin Philology, Slavic and East European History, Art History, etc.). This breadth of scholarly backgrounds among staff allows for internal cross-disciplinary collaborations on critical editions, or in comparative studies (translations). External cooperation has been further widened through the inclusion of Bulgarian and foreign colleagues in joint research projects and scientific meetings, organised by CMRC, bi-lateral collaboration agreements with other BAS- or university-institutes, libraries.

The CMRC has also been striving to increase its revenue, which in 2007 reached a maximum of just under 20% of the central BAS subsidy. Some income is derived from the sale of publications and from external sources both domestically (NSF, Ministry of Education and Science) and abroad. Even combined the figures are still pitifully low for a centre aspiring to world-leadership; BAS must take a strategic decision to sufficiently fund this central research unit, in which it holds a unique strength.

The Centre lists among its most important scientific achievements their publications and current work in four thematic circles. Much of CMRC research is executed in project work and even though the amount of individual projects is still relatively high (and to some extent must remain comparatively high, considering the specific tasks involved), 28 cooperative projects have been conducted during the past five years. 19 included participants from other institutions, nine of them from Bulgaria and 16 based in altogether nine other foreign countries. Among the achievements listed are important editions, studies (such as the timely contributions to the *The Holy Land and the Manuscript Legacy of the Slavs*), monographs. This is fully in line with the publishing profile of such an institute in the world-wide context. Important for the entire field are CMRC's engagement in the preservation of the Cyrillo-Methodian literary and cultural heritage in the form of collections of data and primary sources (Cyrillo-Methodian bibliography, Cyrillo-Methodian scientific archives, collection of microfilms and copies of Cyrillo-Methodian sources).

The Centre has been making efforts to improve the age balance of its research staff by opening new avenues for young scholars: with the appointment of one young researcher per annum the Centre ranks well among the humanities units of BAS.

The envisaged future development of the CMRC, its plans and strategies are aptly described. They can be read partly as a continuation of its present activities (with certain new priorities to be seen in 4 major research areas), partly they are expressed in new policies like the introduction of prizes to stimulate a competitive environment.

The international recognition and positioning of CMRC is good. It functions as a de facto secretariat and main publishing centre for Cyrillo-Methodian studies and as such maintains contacts with a high number of foreign institutes and scholars. An average of 57% of the yearly projects have been executed in international cooperation.

Much of CMRC research is executed in project work. Although the amount of individual projects is relatively high, 28 cooperative projects have been conducted during the past five years. 19 included participants from other institutions, nine of them from Bulgaria and 16 based in altogether nine other foreign countries (Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany, Israel, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Russia, Slovakia). 14 of these collaborations were organized and financed on the basis of bilateral agreements, four projects were subsidised partly or wholly by foreign organizations (German DAAD, Austrian Academy of Sciences, EU Erasmus Programme). As a total, foreign subsidies amount to c.13,600 Euro vs. 22,923 Euro of subsidies from the Bulgarian NSF in 2004-2007. These figures are astonishingly low compared to the overall achievements.

The percentage of scientific works published abroad is high: out of a total of 266 scientific books and articles almost one fourth (67) was edited in foreign countries. Of great importance in this context, both nationally and internationally, are the series CMRC has been publishing regularly over the past years in various languages: the quarterly journal *Palaeobulgarica* since 1977, and the *Kirilo-Methodievski studii* [Cyrillo-Methodian Studies] since 1984, where both monographic studies and collections of articles appear. *Palaeobulgarica* has been included in major reference databases and has the widest distribution of all series devoted to Medieval Slavic literature and culture (partly because it is distributed both directly by the CMRC and via networks in Germany and Great Britain). A joint publication with the Hebrew University of Jerusalem represents the series *Jews and Slavs*. These publication activities add to the good international visibility of the Centre's work.

13 CMRC scholars are taking part in 35 national and international expert bodies on various issues (ESF; German Humboldt Foundation; Slavonic Bible Commission at the Int. Committee of Slavists; American Society for Byzantine Music and Hymnology; Italian Assoc. for the Study of Sanctity, Cults and Hagiography, etc.). But only one scholar sits on the editorial board of a foreign journal (*Studi Slavistici*). This poor representation among editorial boards abroad is surprising (not to say worrying) for a world-class centre and must be increased, also to open up opportunities for seeing the work of Bulgarian scholars published abroad.

Partly through participation in international scientific meetings, partly through cooperative research CMRC reports 16 visits of its members to 17 foreign countries, six supported by a foreign grant or through the Erasmus Programme, and 54 visits of foreign scholars from 15 countries to the CMRC (Austria, France, Greece, Hungary, Macedonia, Serbia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, and the Ukraine as destinations; Austria, Belgium, Greece, Macedonia, Norway, Serbia, Spain, the UK and the U.S.A. as sending countries).

The CMRC was one of three BAS institutes to receive a charter to participate in the Erasmus Programme, which further increased opportunities for exchange for its young scholars: in the initial three year period (2004-07) "two doctoral students from CMRC were trained for a period of five months in Italy and Germany, and the CMRC trained four people from Poland for a period of five months. Within the framework of the same programme, the Centre accepted eight and sent six scholars to the partner universities in Germany, Italy and Poland. For the purposes of the Erasmus programme and the Training & Career Development Centre of BAS, a special multidisciplinary programme for training of doctoral students was developed ...(*"Language and Culture of Medieval Europe"*). A system of credit transfer was successfully introduced.

At the national level, many of the Centre's research staff also teach (at a variety of Bulgarian institutions of higher education). The main differences of the CMRC to research conducted at university units lies in the predominance of research work, the potential and realisation of interdisciplinarity of the research effort, and the better possibilities for team work – all of which are necessary preconditions for the preparation of critical text-editions and large databases.

Competition in the field is mainly focused on specific thematic topics, but is resolved through extensive cooperation with a number of Bulgarian universities and BAS-institutes.

Productivity (scientific output and international standing)

During the reviewed period CMRC scientists published the considerable amount of 291 works (58.2 per year / 17.11 per person). The breakdown in categories is as follows: 11 scientific monographs / collections (2.2 per year) and 255 full text-papers (51 per year), plus 3 brochures and 22 articles of popular science (five per year). This is a remarkable achievement by all accounts and especially considering the adverse funding conditions under which the Centre has been operating. A good number of the publications have been in journals that are included in relevant international citation databases, but this impression is due mainly to the inclusion of a BAS in-house journal (*Palaeobulgarica*) in a recent European reference project (ERIH).

Most scholars have regularly taken part in national and international conferences.

The educational activities of CMRC members within the period amount to a total of 2,015 lecture-hours (29 units by 10 members) and 1,049 practicals / seminar-hours (six units by eight members), altogether 3,064 or 612.8 hours per year on average. Teaching is conducted at six universities and other institutions of higher education in Bulgaria and at five foreign universities. Furthermore, one post-graduate course and five specialization courses for post-graduates in the frame of the Erasmus / Socrates Programmes were held at CMRC. The thematic range of such courses comprises also Latin, Medieval Greek, and rather rare subjects like Cyrillic Codicology and Palaeography, Mediaeval Slavonic Hymnography and Hagiography. At the same time eleven students have prepared their MA-thesis under the guidance of CMRC specialists, and seven PhD-students were trained in the CMRC (plus two from Poland in the frame of the Erasmus Programme, with two CMRC-students spending a term each in Italy and Germany).

Against this background of successful inclusion of younger scholars it is puzzling to see that apparently no degrees were awarded in the period under review; even if an economic argument is provided (salaries for employed junior researchers are currently lower than doctoral scholarships) this fact sheds a negative light on the CMRC.

The overall score on **quality and productivity** is "A". The work of the CMRC is "*internationally competitive*" (i.e. in comparison with similar, language and culture-specific institutes elsewhere). The general productivity is very high and in its own very specific field the Centre plays a central role internationally.

b) Relevance (socio-economic impact)

The research field of CMRC is central for Slavistics and highly important also for the cultural dimensions of the expansion of the European Union, as it unites two major religious and cultural traditions. The potential relevance of such a specialised

research centre in terms of cultural dialogue and appreciation of cultural diversity in Europe (and at the roots of Europe) cannot be overestimated.

Internationally the CMRC has a unique standing, as the few institutes of Slavic studies that are also analysing Cyrillo-Methodian themes are usually restricting their efforts to certain national areas and are lacking experts in others. Institutes in non-Slavic countries, on the other hand, have to concentrate their work on special problems, due to their limited number of scholars.

On the national level there are some overlaps with certain BAS- and university-institutes of Bulgarian literature and language, some of whose members are also taking up Cyrillo-Methodian problems. CMRC scholars lecture at different levels at a number of universities.

However, despite the scholarly excellence of the Centre, it must be said that efforts should be expanded in carrying towards a wider public the relevance of Cyrillo-Methodian studies, both in Bulgaria and beyond. The current low number (three brochures and 22 articles of popularising science, i.e. roughly per year) do not do justice to the importance of the field for Bulgarian heritage and to the scholarly prominence of this Bulgarian centre worldwide.

The latest project – too recent to be formally reported – which is funded through the Bulgarian NSF, is perhaps a step in the right direction: work has begun early in 2009 on “The Cyrillo-Methodian Cultural Heritage and its Bulgarian and European dimensions”. This project includes specialists in Archival Work as well as specialists in the sphere of computer software. The work on the draft contract concluded under this project for three years funded with 440 000 BGN has started and also involves scholars from abroad, and perhaps even more importantly a number of junior researchers inside the country (CMRC and others). It is more directly aimed at making core elements of the Cyrillo-Methodian heritage accessible.

The national impact of the Centre’s work is relatively high, mainly by promoting Cyrillo-Methodian studies through teaching at several universities and through close contacts with colleagues both from universities and other BAS institutes. However, the visibility of the Centre’s work remains limited largely to the purely scholarly sphere. Its **relevance** in Bulgarian society at large could be further enhanced; currently the overall score on this account is therefore only “B” (*“moderate”*).

c) Prospects (vitality and feasibility, management & leadership; future potential and ability of the Institute to tackle new scientific challenges)

The Centre has an ambitious plans for the future, including the some new and well-chosen thematic priorities, development of a web-based depository, joint applications for EU-funding, and strengthening the Centre’s own system of quality control. Some new policies are envisaged, such as the introduction of prizes to stimulate a competitive environment.

Quality control at the Centre is presently being executed – apart from the usual reviews of books, the participation of international fora etc. – through peer reviews of project-proposals on the one hand, and quarterly reports in the form of a questionnaire, which led up to a final Annual Report which is evaluated by the Scientific Council. The pay-back of the intensity of this reporting is not clear.

The leadership of CMRC is very inclusive (and yet surprisingly effective): presently seven members are involved – directorate (3), scientific secretaries (2), scientific Council (1), and General Assembly (1).

The age structure of the Centre's staff is quite good for such institutions (both by international comparison and even more so in the domestic context) and can roughly be judged by the fact that there are six young specialists with higher education, eight junior and nine senior research fellows. The average age of CMRC researchers is the lowest among the Humanities institutes of BAS (where an overall average of c.50 years was counted in 2006). During the evaluation period more than one third of the scientific staff could be recruited via promotion and/or defense of a PhD-thesis. The Centre has however been making efforts in improving the age balance of its research staff by opening up new avenues for young scholars: with the appointment of one young researcher per annum the Centre ranks highly among the humanities units of BAS. The leadership is keenly aware of the need to broaden access to younger researchers and is displaying great energy and creativity in this respect; the completion rate of PhD must be improved, however.

The Centre can be expected to continue its productive cooperation with other institutions; some thematic overlap, particularly with the BAS Institute for literature, ought to be tackled.

There is need for further infrastructural improvements. In 2008, BAS received funds from the surplus from the national budget for 2007, which was allotted to a task "Creation and development of a research infrastructure with digital libraries so that the scientific and cultural heritage that is of national importance may be preserved and presented to the public". Currently, other BAS Institutes (Literature; Bulgarian language) are main beneficiaries, and it is hoped that also this Centre will also either be supported in the same way or will be given statutory access to equipment owned by other BAS institutes.

Under an energetic, creative and goal-oriented leadership, the Centre has made good use of opportunities in general funding, cultural heritage and research infrastructure funding and emerging international contacts; its prospects as a worldwide-renowned centre of learning are "high" ("A").

Overall Strengths and Weaknesses

Strengths

- International standing of a world-wide unique research institute;
- Highly qualified staff with great experience and enthusiasm;
- Energetic and creative leadership;

- Commitment to introduce younger scholars to active research.

Weaknesses

- Improvements needed for infrastructure (computing; support for crucial bibliographic and editorial work etc.);
- Insufficient PhD completion rate;
- Unsatisfactory outreach presence.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are given against the background of an overall score on **quality and productivity** of "A". Obviously, the work of the CMRC is already "*internationally competitive*" (i.e. in comparison with similar, language and culture-specific institutes elsewhere). Also general productivity is very high and in its own very specific field the Centre even plays a central role internationally. In the national context, the Centre promoted Cyrillo-Methodian issues through teaching at several universities and through research cooperation with colleagues from universities and other BAS institutes. Its impact remains limited largely to the purely scholarly sphere. Its **relevance** could be enhanced; currently the overall score on this account is only "B" ("*moderate*"). Under an energetic and goal-oriented leadership, the Centre has made good use of opportunities in general funding, cultural heritage and research infrastructure funding and emerging international contacts; its **prospects** as a worldwide-renowned centre of learning are "*high*" ("A").

The following recommendations are therefore meant to support the case for the Centre to be further strengthened in view of its achieving a world-leading position.

- the **digitization** process (especially of data-collections), for which a project has already been started in 2008; the best use is made of the new media to secure and strengthen a world-wide unique resource position in the field;
- better exploit **collaborative potential** within BAS system: there are some (potential) areas of contact with the institutes for literature, Bulgarian language, History and Balkan Studies;
- strengthen the **coordinating function** within Bulgaria for the entire field, also vis-a-vis universities;
- only one scholar participates in an **editorial board** of a foreign journal. This is a poor representation for what is potentially a world-class centre; the Centre's leadership must be urged to increase significantly this presence abroad, also to open up opportunities for seeing the work of Bulgarian scholars published abroad (closely linked to the envisaged function of coordinating the field nationwide);
- CMRC may need to increase its **outreach activities**, to maintain awareness for the importance of its research topic;
- **underfunding** is a serious risk and must be overcome; in order to develop its potential to become a world-leading centre, the CMRC cannot be expected to rely on competitive funding alone as supplementing central

BAS subsidies. BAS must take a strategic decision to sufficiently fund this central research unit, in which it holds a unique strength.