**Opinion
of the Institute for Bulgarian Language "Prof. Lyubomir Andreychin"
of BAS in relation to the "Charter of Macedonian language" of MASA
of 03.12.2019**

**The opinion of the Institute for Bulgarian Language “Prof. Lyubomir Andreychin" of BAS on the official language in the Republic of North Macedonia, expressed repeatedly over the years, remains unchanged. The official language of the Republic of North Macedonia is a written, regional norm of the Bulgarian language** (see *Unity of the Bulgarian language in the past and today.* - Bulgarian language, book 1, 1979; electronic version at <http://www.promacedonia.org/bugarash/ed/scans/skanove.htm>).

A number of arguments of a linguistic, historical and cultural nature based on the results of numerous scientific studies by reputable Bulgarian and foreign scholars can support this opinion.

* Speech patterns from the **continuous dialectal territory of the Bulgarian language** cover the historical-geographical regions of Mizia, Thrace and Macedonia. The data from the history of the language clearly show that in these places, there was no compact population other than Bulgarian, no different language than Bulgarian.
* The "Charter of the Macedonian Language of the Assembly of MASA" is yet another attempt to incorrectly substitute the linguistic and historical truth about the origin, nature and functioning of the official standard norm in the Republic of North Macedonia.
* The study "*Unity of the Bulgarian language in the past and today*" and all further researches and opinions of the Institute for Bulgarian Language have proven the groundlessness of the thesis for "the centuries-old continuity of the Macedonian language..." **The continuity of the Bulgarian language extends beyond the state borders:** 1. In Romania - Northern Dobrudzha; 2. In Serbia, Pomoravia and the Western Outlands; 3. In Vardar Macedonia; 4. In Greece - Aegean Macedonia and Western Thrace; 5. In Turkey - Eastern (Edirne) Thrace; 6. In Albania – Korca area, Golo Bardo, Mala Prespa, part of Gora; 6. In Kosovo - part of Gora, Prizren (Zupa) and others.
* The thesis about the dialect diversity of "the Macedonian language" (with over "50 speech patterns made up by the Western dialect, the Southeastern dialect, as well as the group of Northern speech patterns") is incorrect and substitutes the objective fact that these speech patterns are a natural extension of the dialects of the Bulgarian language to the Southwest. The generalizing volumes of the **Atlas of Bulgarian Dialects** prove, at all linguistic levels, that the peculiarities of the Macedonian dialects are found in both Western and Eastern Bulgarian speech patterns which have nothing to do with the geographical area of Macedonia.
* Regarding the statement that "the development of the written Macedonian language involves at least two autochthonous alphabets, the Glagolitic and the Cyrillic alphabet...", we are obliged to remind that the Bulgarian nature of the Cyrillo-Methodian language was proven scientifically as early as the 19th century with the emergence of Slavic linguistics. There is no foreign scholar who uses the term "Old Macedonian" instead of Old Bulgarian. By the way, there is no such term in the Charter of MASA either. However, the connection between the oldest Slavic written language with the Bulgarian language territory is found on the basis of numerous phonetic and lexical features. The Slovenian scientist Vatroslav Oblak, quoted in the document of MASA, uses the terms **Old Slavic** and **Old Bulgarian** as absolute **synonyms** and repeatedly emphasizes that his informants are Bulgarians from Thessaloniki who have never set foot in Bulgaria. In recent times, a number of foreign scholars have neither essentially, nor terminologically changed the truth about the origin and nature of the Old Bulgarian language and have objectively provided abundant evidence for their own theses from the entire Bulgarian language territory in the past and today. For example, the renowned and erudite Palaeo-Slavicist, Slavicist and Bulgarianist Polish scientist Prof. T. Szimanski emphasizes in all his works the crucial importance of Old Bulgarian for the reconstruction of Proto-Slavic ("*a number of words ... will be included in the dictionary as Slavic based mostly on their early chronology in the Old Bulgarian language*”) and proves his theses with specific dialect examples from the entire Bulgarian language territory (**Szimanski** 1974, 1977, 1995, 2003). In general, the main and the most reputable part of the world Slavic studies has been advocating for almost a century the unbiased understanding for the Bulgarian nature of the Cyrillo‒Methodian language and its international significance for the Slavic linguistic world and for the Eastern European cultural space. (***Jireček***, **K.** 1929. History of the Bulgarians; ***Gutschmidt*, K.** 1983. Developmental stages of the Bulgarian literary language during the Revival, Historical development of the Bulgarian language. I. Papers (First International Congress on Bulgarian Studies. S. BAS; ***Likhachov*, D. S.** 1973. Development of Russian Literature in X-XVII c. Leningrad; ***Zeitlin*, R.M.** 1986. The vocabulary of ancient Bulgarian manuscripts of IX-XI c. S. BAS and many more).
* Regarding the codification of "the standard Macedonian language", we reiterate that there are parameters in science which are used as criteria for typologizing national standard languages ​​according to the peculiarities of the process of their formation. The written regional norm in the present-day Republic of North Macedonia is a very late phenomenon in European linguistic reality dating from the mid-twentieth century and has nothing to do with the natural origin and development of European literary languages. It is the result of secondary codification (recodification) of standard Bulgarian language. The decision to create the language standard in the Socialist Republic of Macedonia was taken on a certain date (2 August 1944), at a certain place (in St. Prohorus of Pcinja Monastery) with a political decree. The wholehearted acknowledgment of one of the members of the first language committee, G. Kiselinov, speaks for itself: “*A literary language is made by literati and journalist, and philologists have only to establish the forms of the language. But today, if we want to take a dialect of our language as a literary language, we do not have time to wait for that language to be made. We are faced with the question of having a literary language, and* ***we do not have time and we cannot wait for that language to be made by poets, writers and journalists.*”** (p. 3 of the “Verbatim Notes of the First Language Commission”, Skopje 2000).
* The recodification in the Socialist Republic of Macedonia is the result of the work of three committees for the creation of Macedonian language and spelling. The goal has been to maximally draw away this artificially created norm from the Bulgarian language, at a phonetic, graphic and lexical level. The Bulgarian literary language has been artificially partially dialecticized in order to obtain differences mainly in the fields of phonetics, accentology and graphics. The Serbian letters љ, њ, ј, џ have been introduced, the letter *ъ* (as a Bulgarian one) has been discarded and substituted by an apostrophe because the sound *ъ* exists in the dialects of Vardar Macedonia (*тъга* becomes *т’га*). Even the fact that in the "Charter" of MASA the word *памет* (memory) has been replaced by the artificially constructed foreign word *мемориjа* (memoria) speaks for itself of the deconstruction of the Bulgarian literary language in Skopje.
* The fact that "the Macedonian language is taught at a large number of foreign universities" is due to the RNM's, formerly FYROM’s, state policy for the purposeful subsidization of foreign lectureships. In this sense, the Bulgarian state owes a debt to the Bulgarian studies, which, from a well-established speciality at major world universities, are nowadays reduced almost only to courses for the study of Bulgarian language with several students each.
* It is a fact that the "Macedonian language and its dialects are entered in the "Slavic Linguistic Atlas” (SLA) and the "European Linguistic Atlas" (ELA). However, the perusal of all the maps from these atlases proves once again that the dialectal phonetic, morphological, lexical, word-forming and accentological phenomena in the territories of Bulgaria and Macedonia do not differ and outline continuous language areas.
* The continuity of the so-called Macedonian language is actually a continuity of the Bulgarian language, which, even without the existence of political frameworks during the Bulgarian Revival epoch, developed and codified itself on a broad folk basis, maintaining the connection with tradition. In this sense, the presentation of the Bulgarian Revival writers and public figures Marko Cepenkov, Kuzman Shapkarev, Grigor Parlichev, Miladinovi Brothers and others as Macedonian in its own right is another substitution of historical and scientific truth. It is a well-known fact that the collection of the two brothers from Struga Konstantin and Dimitar Miladinov "Bulgarian Folk Songs", published in Zagreb in 1861, is being republished today in Skopje with the changed title "Collection of Folk Songs" (1968). Marko Cepenkov's folklore collections are recorded in his native Prilep speech pattern, Southwestern Bulgarian dialect. In his autobiography, he wrote: "*For me to leave an everlasting memory to my dear Bulgarian people*" (M. Cepenkov, 1896). The work of the Russian scientist A. Selishthev "Polog and its Bulgarian population" is reprinted in Skopje only as "Polog". Such evidence for the substitution of scientific and historical truth can be cited for all Bulgarian national revival public figures from the geographical area of ​​Macedonia as well as for the foreign scholars who have studied our speech patterns there.
* Regarding the claim that Vatroslav Oblak was the author of the "dominant scientific theory of the origin of the Old Slavic language", we are obliged to specify that the Slovenian scholar who defeated the Pannonian theory of the origin of the Old Bulgarian language in his "Makedonische Studien" (1896) talked about "Macedonian Bulgarians" and "Bulgarians in Macedonia". He explicitly stated that the dispute in his time was whether Bulgarians or Serbs were living in Macedonia but he did not mention "Macedonian population" anywhere.

In conclusion, we can summarize: in objective science, our whole language, whether old or new, or existing in various forms (literary, written-regional, dialectal, etc.), has been known with its vernacular name, for many centuries, solely as **Bulgarian language.**

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