

Bucharest, 7/04/2022.

Dear Members, Colleagues, Associates,
and Friends from all over the world of IHR,

I am very happy and extremely honoured to receive the results of the first Commission of the Romanian Academy deciding a full, non-*ad interim* position of Director for the Institute for the History of Religions. To call a spade *a spade*, I am thrilled to be the first incumbent of such position in the history of our native country.

I would first and foremost like to thank our three earlier Directors of IHR: our founding Director, Prof. Dr. Dr.h.c.mult. **Andrei Pleșu**, the late Acad. **Dan Berindei**, my old friend Dr **Bogdan Tătaru-Cazaban** (now entering our 29th year of friendship), for all their work, insights, and dedication for the common, grand scholarly cause.

During my forthcoming four-year mandate I will stand with the core objective of our Institute and shall try helping in every single possible way our team, our projects, and the scholarly and cultural desiderata of the academic study of religions as reflected by the global string of similar institutions, universities, research centres, and institutes, worldwide and nowadays.

My (now adopted) 4-year management plan includes dozens of projects, with these three major ones: **I.** the E.C.C.E. | Ediția critică completă Eliade | the Critical Edition of all Eliade's **scholarly works** from 1921-1942/1945, **II.** the *Religious History of Romania, 1500-2000*, and **III.** the organization of an **IAHR World Congress in Bucharest**, for the very first time in Eastern Europe in 125 years.

For I: please visit <https://enescueliade.com/> as it happened I wrote some 150,000 words of forensic analysis during the last 29 months concerning Eliade (and Enescu) manuscripts auctioned in Bucharest in dubious circumstances, now subjects of penal inquiry by the judicial system. For II: A first *Religious History of Romania* belongs to the current scholarly methods and efforts to define an *europäische Religionsgeschichte* as was the title of a two-volume book my colleagues knows well. Romanian history is among the last in Europe to be considered from a History-of-religions point of view. (Remember Eliade himself contemplated a *Religious History of Dacia* etc.) We in Romania do have an exceptional mehrfacher Pluralismus! as is the subtitle of the book I presented for EASR Messina Conference in 2009, together with such luminaries as Gustavo Benavides, Giovanni Filoramo and Michael Stausberg. I guess this project would include all IHR members and some 40 others, most of Romanian origin (for best reading of the sources) now scattered as scholars of religion of a new generation all over the Northern Hemisphere, from Japan to UK to US to India and Thailand (as is my case). For III: I initiated and organized the EASR | IAHR Special 2006 Conference in Bucharest, published 5 volumes of resulting Proceedings, and think I can do more – with a bigger, more professional team – twenty years after (or so). If you are already interested in any of these I-III collective projects, please feel free to write me at e.ciurtin@ihr-acad.ro. All our IHR publications from 2008-2021, I may add, will be made freely available, as we have I guess to respect better not only our

public, but also the Romanian taxpayers. A new **National Conference in History of Religions** will be organized in Bucharest in partnership with the University of Bucharest (early October 2022).

Today is the 25th anniversary of the foundation of the Asociația Archaeus – the Romanian Association for the History of Religions (RAHR): from that historic meeting on Calea Victoriei 107 three founding members, Professors Andrei Pleșu, Tătaru-Cazaban and myself, continued to protect and exemplify the nature, value and horizon of History of discipline, and I think this is not coincidence to be all the three past and present directors of IHR, this institutional foremost offspring of RAHR.

The results were announced on 4th and 7th of April. These were 15 years ago the very dates of Arion Roșu's death and funeral. In any other terms, as today is this 15th commemoration of my magister Arion Roșu, I can but promise I will do my best in order to conserve and expand his own utmost integrity and care for our dear discipline.

Yours truly – as he wrote me in one of his last handwritten letters – *cu veche prietenie*.

Dr Eugen Ciurtin

Founding member | Research Professor (CȘ I) | Director of the IHR, 2022-2026.