

Nomination Letter

We are writing to recommend **Professor Emil Horozov for 2012 John Maddox Prize.**

E. Horozov is a renowned Bulgarian scientist, Professor of Mathematics, former Head of the Differential Equations Section at the Faculty of Mathematics and Informatics of Sofia University, Corresponding Member of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. He has many M. Sc. and Ph.D. students, now well-known mathematicians themselves, many of whom working at prestigious Universities in EU, USA, Canada, Japan
<http://www.fmi.uni-sofia.bg/~horozov/>
<http://www.fmi.uni-sofia.bg/lecturers/de/horozov/> .

We know E. Horozov both as a distinguished scientist and as an honest person. With the accuracy and scrutiny pertinent to a mathematician he is battling the malpractices and corruption that are causing huge amounts of public money meant for advancement of science to be appropriated by pseudo-scientists helped by incompetent and irresponsible high civil servants.

In January 2010 E. Horozov was appointed Director of the main research funding state Agency, the Bulgarian National Science Fund (NSF), administered by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science (MEYS). He accepted the position with the hope to introduce a better and more effective distribution of public funding based on internationally accepted competitive rules. What he found in the Fund was a poor structure and functioning without sound rules, a fertile ground for corruption. Horozov served until the end of February 2011 when he resigned in a move of strong disagreement with the official policy of MEYS.

While in office he initiated the appointment of an expert group of scientists to investigate the grant distribution in NSF during the two previous years (2008 and 2009). For these two years a budget equivalent to € 125 mln, an unusually huge amount of public money for Bulgarian standards and former practices, was allocated to the NSF. The expert group found scandalous violations and blatant forgery of even the very loose rules of the NSF.

MEYS never made public the full report of this investigation claiming “confidentiality”. Instead of directing the report to the State Prosecution, the Minister of MEYS submitted it to the Agency for State Financial Inspection (ASFI), which has neither the capacity nor the prerogatives to solve problems of wrong-awarding scientific grants.

A summary of the findings of the expert group was presented to scientific community by E. Horozov at two seminars in the Sofia University and the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. Recently he published the full report at his site http://www.fmi.uni-sofia.bg/lecturers/de/horozov/Doklad_fond_2008_2009_Full.pdf/view (in Bulgarian). The report evoked great response among the Bulgarian scientists working in the country and abroad. Several petitions in support of E. Horozov and demanding essential changes in the functioning of NSF were organized, one of them signed by more than 500 academics <http://www.ostavka.nauka2010.com/> (in Bulgarian).

E. Horozov gave several interviews to various Bulgarian e-cites. **“Nature” was the first international journal to react by publishing an article by A. Abbott about the findings of the investigation**

<http://www.nature.com/news/2011/110406/full/472019a.html>

However, the major Bulgarian mass media (internationally known for their lack of freedom) remained silent about the facts in the report.

The efforts of E. Horozov were an important step towards revealing the state corruption in science funding as the ASFI confirmed a number of irregularities in NSF. The Agency, however, explained these by administrative negligence, failing to notice the organized corruption. In order to stop Horozov’s continuing activity to expose corruption, ASFI accused also him of some administrative faults, although all clearly concerned a period before he took office. They didn’t succeed. He appealed the accusations in court. Now he is determined to take the next step. He already published an analysis that points to well elaborated schemes of draining millions of euros meant to fund Bulgarian science

<http://sci-society-bg.eu/node/31> (in Bulgarian); see also

<http://sci-society-bg.eu/sites/default/files/docs/letter.pdf> (in English)

E. Horozov reported about the manipulative and corruptive functioning of NSF at the Bulgarian Parliament. While in office he prepared a draft for new rules for the structure of NSF, admission, evaluation and control of the projects, based on the practices of science funding Agencies of the leading EU countries and submitted it to MEYS. <http://www.fmi.uni-sofia.bg/lecturers/de/horozov/Pravilnik4%20-1.doc/view> (in Bulgarian). Again high civil servants at MEYS were reluctant to take action.

E. Horozov voices whenever and wherever possible his criticism against strangling the Bulgarian science by poor management and financing. In practice civil servants that have very little in common with science make essentially all decisions about research. An example is the National “Strategy for Development of Scientific Research 2020”, recently adopted by the Council of Ministers and later by the Bulgarian Parliament which totally ignored the opinion and constructive suggestions of researchers and scientific institutions; an excerpt of the “Strategy”:

“Due to the fact that financing of basic research is a direct investment in the world economy, the public financing of such type of activity in Bulgaria is justified only by the purpose to support the educational potential of our universities”.

An article <http://sci-society-bg.eu/node/13> (in Bulgarian) by E. Horozov criticizing this document was refused publication by official media and was spread by electronic sites with numerous supporting comments by the scientific community.

In conclusion, we think, that Prof. Horozov’s activity in defense of true science in Bulgaria makes him an appropriate nominee for the prestigious John Maddox Prize. If awarded to him it will bring, together with the international recognition, strong support to the noble cause of struggle of Bulgarian scientists.

On behalf of the scientists who have confirmed their support for this nomination

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