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ASSESSMENT FOR THE CONFERMENT PROCEEDINGS OF ASSOCIATE
PROFESSOR Dr. ANNA PLIŠKOVÁ

The following is an assessment of the most important achievements in the scholarly career of Associate Professor Dr. Anna Plišková, who is being proposed for the academic rank of Professor of Slavic Languages and Literatures.

I have known the candidate, Associate Professor Plišková, since the very early 1990s and have observed quite closely her civic and academic career from that time until the present. On the basis of those observations and a careful review of the candidate's inaugural dossier, this assessment will address three aspects of what are an integral component of every university teacher's academic career: (1) scholarly publications, (2) pedagogical activity, and (3) civic activity that derives from one's professional status.

(1) Associate Professor Plišková's research, which has appeared in numerous scholarly and professional publications, may be classified into two broad categories: a. monographs and scholarly articles dealing with the sociolinguistic and linguistic aspects of the recently codified (1995) Rusyn language, in particular its variant in Slovakia; and b. Rusyn language textbooks.

Associate Professor Plišková's major monograph, *Language and National Identity: Rusyns South of the Carpathians* (2009), was published by a prestigious North American institution, Columbia University Press in New York City as part of a series of scholarly works that appear under the auspices of the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center in the United States. An earlier variant of this same monograph was published in Slovak under the title, *Rusínsky jazyk na Slovensku: náčrt vyvoja a súčasné problémy* (2007). The intellectual value of the monograph is two-fold. It discusses the evolution of the Rusyn language question not only in

the Rusyn-inhabited areas of Slovakia, but places it within the larger context covering areas that are presently in Poland (the Lemko variant of the Rusyn language) and in Ukraine (the Transcarpathian variant). As well, the monograph wisely discusses how issues related to language are part of the identity question that in general is a characteristic of national movements, in this case specifically the Carpatho-Rusyn national revival after 1989. The monograph is based on a wide spectrum of the most reputable scholarly secondary sources. In short, anyone interested in the evolution of the Rusyn language in post-1989 Europe must consult the works of Anna Plišková.

The second category of Associate Professor Plišková's scholarly publications is related to language textbooks. Here she has excelled in co-authoring a wide range of school textbooks, which employ modern pedagogical techniques for elementary, middle school, and university-level teaching. Included among her co-authored textbooks are those designed for use by foreign students, most especially those who are native English speakers.

Language textbooks would not be possible to create unless there were already a normative literary standard. In this regard, Associate Professor Plišková has herself contributed to the language codification process through substantive contributions to the first (1994), second (2007), and most recently third (2019) revised editions of a Rusyn orthographic and spelling rules dictionary, as well as a specific monograph devoted to Rusyn lexicology and word derivation (2015). Dr. Plišková's work on the standardization of the Rusyn language in Slovakia has been widely recognized by Slavists worldwide, as is evident from the numerous times her work has been cited by others in scholarly and professional publications.

(2) Associate Professor Plišková has been engaged in teaching the Rusyn language since 1999 at the university level. She has developed a wide-ranging conceptual approach that includes, among other things, the history of the Rusyn language, specific linguistic topics (dialectology, stylistics, lexicography, word derivation), as well as problems of translating Rusyn texts, especially into Slovak. Her own translations include those done at the request of

governmental institutions and include official materials from Slovak into Rusyn as part of the Slovak Republic's compliance in the use of minority languages as mandated in domestic legislation and in international accords.

Associate Professor Plišková has supervised several students who have completed their bachelor's, master's, or PhD degrees. This is of particular importance to a discipline in need of a new generation of specialists in Carpatho-Rusyn Studies. Some of those students who have earned their degrees in Rusyn-related topics (Kvetoslava Koporová, Zděňka Citriaková) have decided to continue their scholarly careers in association with Associate Professor Plišková, specifically as university teachers at Prešov University's Institute of Rusyn Language and Culture.

Also of significance is the fact that Associate Professor Plišková, after successfully defending her habilitation thesis, was appointed in 2010 as Prešov University's first guarantor (*garant*) for the bachelor and master's level program in Rusyn Language and Literature Pedagogy. This is now a distinct academic program and not an addendum to some other program as had been the case before. In that context, and in the very same year (2010), Docent Plišková also became the guarantor for a new international pedagogical project, the Studium Carpato-Ruthenorum Summer School of Rusyn Language and Culture. Established within the framework of the Institute of Rusyn Language and Culture, the Studium has had in its first ten years over 200 students from three continents. This is an outstanding example of the successful scholarly and organizational work of its guarantor, Associate Professor Plišková, and her university staff.

(3) Associate Professor Plišková has never been the kind of university teacher who is concerned with only the minimum requirements of her job: teaching courses for a specific number of hours and producing a minimum of required publications. Rather, she has excelled in creating and/or coordinating programs and heading institutions that have made possible the future development of the scholarly discipline that she has chosen as her life's calling—Carpatho-Rusyn Studies. In this regard, her greatest achievement has been the establishment

of the Institute of Rusyn Language and Culture at Prešov University. Established in 1999, it is the only institution of higher learning in the world that promotes Carpatho-Rusyn culture as a distinct intellectual phenomenon worthy of study—not as an appendage to some other national culture but as an end in itself. Although a sociolinguist and language pedagogue by profession, Associate Professor Plišková has adopted an appropriately broad conceptual approach and understands the need to include (and has functioned as the guarantor for) other disciplines within the framework of Carpatho-Rusyn studies: history, literature, theater, and ethnography.

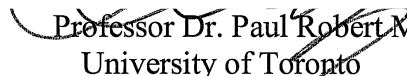
Associate Professor Plišková has consistently supported international cooperation in order that her professional and organizational work have the broadest impact and become known to scholars beyond Slovakia and Europe. In that regard, she helped to initiate a formal agreement of scholarly cooperation between Prešov University and the University of Toronto in Canada. That agreement, concluded in 2012, has resulted in the successful realization of several scholarly research and publication projects, among which of greatest importance have been three-month long visits of researchers, doctoral candidates, and students between Toronto and Prešov. These exchanges have enhanced the academic profile of the participants and their exposure to the larger world of Slavic Studies. Under her direction the Institute of Rusyn Language and Culture has maintained close cooperative relations with Slavic institutions and individual scholars in Poland, Ukraine, Hungary, Serbia, Germany, Austria, the Czech Republic, Canada, and the United States among others.

(4) On a final and more general note, something else that is unique about Associate Professor Plišková needs to be stressed. It is relatively easy to point out the specific achievements of her career, only some of the most important of which have been noted in this assessment. What is truly extraordinary is to realize that she began her career at a time when Carpatho-Rusyn Studies did not exist as a formal academic discipline and when the Rusyn language was legally banned in most of the European countries where its speakers resided and continue to reside. Moreover, professional Slavists and other specialists on central and eastern Europe were, in general, skeptical of speaking about Rusyn as a distinct language. It is against

such odds that Associate Professor Plišková began her academic career. Not only did she help to overturn such attitudes in the scholarly world, she has helped to build a solid and reputable university-level institution, create pedagogical programs, and publish works not only to promote the Rusyn language and Rusyn culture in the present but to guarantee their existence in the future.

For all of the above reasons, **I strongly support and recommend Associate Professor Anna Plišková be conferred the academic title “Professor” in the field of Slavic Languages and Literatures.**

Toronto, 24.03.2025


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