

## ACADEMIC OPINION

by

Assoc. Prof. Svetoslava Kovacheva, PhD,

Member of the Scientific Jury,

approved with order from 13.01.2020, issued by the Rector of the Sofia University “St.

Kl. Ohridski” to appoint the jury for the contest for assesment for a competition (announced in the State Gazette №. 93 from 26.11.2019) for occupying an academic position „Associate Professor” (Professional Field 3.5 Public Communications and Information Sciencies (Theory and History of Public relations) at the Department of Communication, Public relations and Advertising, Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication

### Candidates

The submitted documents are for two candidates in the competition: *Mila Ivanova Serafimova and Boyan Assenov Koutevski*. This opinion provides successively information and evaluation for each of them. The conclusion will present a summary opinion and recommendations to the distinguished colleagues, members of the scientific jury.

### Mila Serafimova

#### Candidate general information

According to the presented documents, Mila Serafimova works in the field of public relations and has considerable practical and teaching experience, as well and deep theoretical knowledge in public relations. This is clearly reflected in the presented scientific works. She is currently a lecturer at the Military Academy “G. S. Rakonski” takes public relations courses and disciplines. Also takes courses in the basics of public communication, crisis communication, media science, working withw thw mwdia ect. in other higher education institutions. She has conducted public communication courses in NATO educational and training structures outside of Bulgaria. She has graduated from the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication of the Sofia University “St. Kl. Ohridski”. She holds a PhD in Journalism on Media Management - an Ethical Aspect. She has worked as a journalist, editor, and has synthesized serious experience as an

expert in the Public Relations Department of the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Bulgaria. Her jobs history illustrates both multifaceted and reliable opportunities for precise work in the field of public relations in various organizational structures - both Bulgarian and international.

#### General characteristics of the submitted scientific papers and publications

The directions presented in the scientific works of Mila Serafimova are closely related to contemporary issues in public relations. They present several research topics that conceptualize current dynamics in social technologies. Some of the presented works trace the development of public relations in a historical context. Others offer a rethinking of the functions and tasks of PR in today's information and communication environment, including in terms of changes in audience behavior and behavior. There could be find and accept new theoretical paradigms in public relations, provoked and asserted as a result of the digitalization of communications.

#### Requirements for occupying an academic position „Associate Professor”

##### Quantitative requirements

Mila Serafimova fulfills the quantitative requirements by participating in the competition with habilitation work - monograph "PR in the digital era", monograph "PR - theoretical foundations and historical development". In addition, a monograph was presented as published on the basis of a dissertation thesis for the award of educational and scientific degree PhD. Also presented are a number of articles in the thematic area of the competition. Serafimova is the compiler and editor of a collection of scientific articles. According to the information provided for the implementation of the minimum national requirements under Art. 2 b (ZRASRB, Scientific field 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional field 3.5. Public Communications and Information Sciences), the applicant presents the following results by the different groups of criteria:

Indicator group “A” - total points - 50

Indicator group “B” - total points - 0

Indicator group “B” – total points 100

Indicator group “Г” – total points 270

Indicator group “Д” – total points 160

I cannot fail to point out that a careful examination of the attached national minimum compliance requirements report does not quite account for the total score on the last set of indicators. I assume this is the result of accidental processing and presentation of data, or is simply the result of a technical flaw. The observed incorrectness does not in any way quantitatively discredit the coverage of the respective indicator. Even with data correction, the applicant shall meet the national minimum requirements, taking into account sufficient, even outperforming the minimum, number of points per indicator group “Д”

#### Quality requirements

Mila Serafimova fulfills the quality requirements in the competition for associate professor in Theory and History of Public Relations. The scientific papers, submitted by the applicant, absolutely corresponds with the requirements and criteria for scientific works 3.5. Public Communications and Information Sciences. Her works demonstrate an extremely good, detailed knowledge of the matter. The interpretation of theoretical PR models in a modern communication environment also shows high scientific stylistics, good methodology for organizing facts, processes and events, a thorough and detailed historical overview.

#### Scientific contributions

Mila Serafimova's scientific developments contributions concern current transformations in the functions and application of public relations in the digital environment. Other of these are related to the formulation of important, new criteria, suggesting the formation of more up-to-date models in public relations. On the basis of the historical and theoretical retrospection of public relations, the candidate skillfully systematizes the basic principles of PR in various functional areas.

#### Teaching activities

According to the documents provided by the applicant, she has more than 10 years of experience in teaching at various institutions of higher education, where she conducts his main practice at the Military Academy “G. S. Rakovski”. The courses she leads correspond substantially to the announced competition in the professional field 3.5. Public Communications and Information Sciences (Theory and History of Public Relations).

## Notes and recommendations

I have no particular critical notes and recommendations for the presented scientific works of Mila Serafimova. The applicant fulfills the quantitative and qualitative requirements of the competition, so announced. With regard to the content aspect of the submitted works, I would recommend a stronger highlighting of the author's results and merits. Drawing more distinct authorial studies and conclusions would make them more vivid, at the expense of a schematic and simplistic modality. Despite the innovative direction of the research, in some of the presented works, there is a primitive interpreted understanding and even validation of truly anachronistic public relations practices.

## Boyan Koutevski

### Candidate general information

Boyan Kutevski has been working in the field of public relations, marketing and advertising for decades. This is shown by the submitted documents for the announced competition. He holds a degree in Public Relations from the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication at Sofia University "St. Kl. Ohridski". His dissertation is on "Functions of persuasive influence in propaganda and public relations". He has a noteworthy experience as a lecturer at New Bulgarian University and the College of management, marketing and trade. Among the disciplines and courses he has taken at these university and higher schools are: PR and reputation management, Political marketing, Brand management, Management of organizational reputation, Briefing techniques and others. He has also worked as an editor and journalist in electronic and print national media. He has extensive experience as a managing leader, consultant and trainer in a number of prestigious national and international business organizations.

### General characteristics of the submitted scientific papers and publications

The works presented by Boyan Kutevski testify to research directions in the field of public relations as well as in the field of integrated communications. They provide a broad perspective on the synergy opportunities based on social technologies and communication techniques in today's information environment. To a large extent, the monographs, studies, and articles presented are evidence of original research approaches to the evolutionary processes that predetermine the development and refinement of social technologies, such as public relations and propaganda. Some of the theoretical models,

considered in them, have been rethought and exposed within the current framework of modern dynamic communication paradigms. An original interpretation of the various functional interconnections in public communications and the promotion of important reputational organizational status are exposed.

#### Requirements for occupying an academic position „Associate Professor”

##### Quantitative requirements

The application of Boyan Koutevski fulfills the quantitative requirements for meeting the criteria of the announced competition. He participates in the competition with monograph - habilitation work "PR - from propaganda to management of reputation", monograph "Integrated marketing communications – an overhaul". More studies and articles covering research topics in the field of public relations, reputation, its management, branding and integrated marketing communications are presented. According to the information provided for meeting the minimum national requirements, (Art. 2 b ZRASRB (LDASRB), Scientific field 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional field 3.5. Public Communications and Information Sciences), the applicant presents the following results by the different groups of criteria:

Indicator group “A” - total points - 50

Indicator group “B” - total points - 0

Indicator group “B” – total points 100

Indicator group “Г” – total points 205

Indicator group “Д” – total points 60

##### Quality requirements

Boyan Kutevski fulfills the quality requirements in the competition for associate professor in *Theory and History of Public Relations*. The scientific works submitted by him comply with the requirements and criteria for scientific works 3.5. Public Communications and Information Sciences. The candidate's scientific papers offer a multifaceted, broad-based interpretation of current issues, related to the contemporary application of PR, such as social technology. They are also characterized by masterly high scientific stylistics and analyze perspective problems that are not without competent author's judgment and conclusions.

### Scientific contributions

Boyan Kutevski's scientific developments are present and are related to contemporaneous analysis and validation of modern PR practices, corresponding to the current communication dynamics. The author proposes new own concepts for the application of modern communication approaches the not only of public relations, but also of other socio-technological areas, related to the reputation management of organizations / entities in the public space.

### Teaching activities

According to the submitted documents, the applicant has almost seven years of experience in employment contracts as a lecturer at New Bulgarian University and the College of Management, Marketing and Trade. The courses he runs are in full compliance with the criteria for the discipline Theory and History of Public Relations in the Department of Communications, Public Relations and Advertising at the Sofia University "St. Kl. Ohridski". The documentation provided by the applicant does not reflect practice as a part-time lecturer.

### Notes and recommendations

I have no particular critical remarks and recommendations for the scientific papers submitted by the applicant. In them, he certifies his abstracts by means of a synthetic, substantially dense, expressive but precise language, in terms of the conceptual apparatus. All this, to a great extent, compensates for the feeling of, at first glance, a seeming lack of depth of analysis. The work not only demonstrates high scientific competence, but also clearly indicates the existence of a well-established conceptualization of innovative paradigms in the field of public relations, of the construction of reputation statuses in the context of global digitalization of communication. At the same time, the concepts take into account the substantive arrays of the historical and theoretical foundations of public relations.

### Conclusion

The papers submitted by both candidates not only show a high level of scientific excellence, but can adequately compete in a number of parallel studies exposed opportunely from other analysts in the relevant topic, both in national and international level. They can hardly be compared by qualitative characteristics because the

achievements of both candidates are relevant to the research needs and the implementation of new findings, based on currently synthesized communication, social and technological models.

The possibility of adopting relatively compromise, even polemical, proposals and resolutions, as a result of the evaluation, exposed in this opinion, is not entirely absent.

Both candidates strongly adhere to the national minimum requirements for occupying the academic position of “associate professor”.

However, in quantitative terms, there are some differences between the applications. Similar discrepancies, in purely quantitative measures, can be found in the teaching and teaching practice of both applicants.

Teaching activity can easily be quantified, but there is still no clear and precise metric system for its quality. Moreover, sometimes the results of teaching can be evaluated timely, but sometimes their effectiveness can only be judged by the distance of time, from the characteristics of the generations, or through the actual sense of the teacher to identify the needs of not only the generation with which it works, but also the changing trends in competences it needs to create among trainees, entirely in the context of the future needs of socio-economic, business, corporate or industrial structures in any society, country or global community.

In the context of the above, I can point out that the candidate Mila Serafimova has a quantitatively long and intensive teaching practice compared to her colleague, who is a competitor in the competition. Her application does not absent practice. She has it in particular in the area of institutional public relations. In the field of academic research practices, there is also an understandable quantitative advantage, according to the CVs.

The presented CV documents in Boyan Kutevski's application indicate less lengthy and intensive teaching activities. The number of research works is much lower in quantitative terms. At the same time, the CVs show a rich, multifaceted and promising practice in the field of social technologies, methodological and research communications, as well as marketing practices in the corporate and business environment of international and national organizations. At the same time, his scientific works explicitly highlight the synergistic effect of practice, research and analytical concepts.

Relying this opinion to the normative documents of the Sofia University, approving and applying ZRASRB and taking into account all quantitative indicators relating to the selection criteria for a candidate, I allow myself to propose to the honorable members of the scientific jury to affirm positively the candidature of Mila

Ivanova Serafimova for the announced competition for occupation of the academic position "Associate Professor" (Professional Field 3.5 Public Communications and Information Sciences (Theory and History of Public relations) at the Department of Communication, Public relations and Advertising, Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication.

Sofia/April/2020

Member of the Scientific Jury:

Assoc. Prof. Svetoslava Kovacheva, PhD