

## STANDPOINT

by Prof. DSc Tsvetelin Stepanov (St. Kliment Okhridski University)

about the qualifications and scientific works of Assoc. prof. Dr. **Martin Nikolaev Ossikovsky**, presented for the competition “Culture of research and communication in the social sciences and humanities”, announced in *State Gazette (DV)* no. 48/June 28th, 2022, to hold the academic position ‘Associate Professor’ in Professional Direction 3.1. “Sociology, Anthropology and Cultural Studies (Theory and History of Culture. The Culture of Research and Communication in the Social Sciences and Humanities)” for the needs of the Faculty of Philosophy at St. Kl. Okhridski University

The presented set of documents and materials fully meets the legal requirements, and the theme of the announced competition covers both the research interests and directions of development of the sole applicant M. Ossikovsky over the years, as well as his professional qualifications, public commitments, and activities.

### *I. Presentation of the candidate Assoc. prof. M. Ossikovsky:*

Born in 1978, he graduated (with a bachelor’s degree in philosophy) from St. Kl. Okhridski University (2002) and then the Central European University, Budapest (2003; Master in Mediaeval Studies). Ossikovsky defended his doctoral thesis in Faculty of Philosophy/Dept. History and Theory of Culture (2009) with the topic “The Church and the council in the writings of Marsilius of Padua and William of Ockham”. Between 2005 and 2010, in 2012-2013, and also in 2020-2021 he taught (as guest-lecturer) various elective courses and seminars in the field of philosophical mediaevalism, history of culture in the Middle Ages, and academic writing in the same Dept. History and Theory of Culture. In the meantime, he has also started his career at the University of National and World Economy (Sofia), where he was assistant-professor between 2010 and 2018; later, he received a promotion to associate professor (in the period 2018-2021) at the same university. There, he taught courses in media ethics, media history, academic writing, English, etc. M. Ossikovsky specialized in Oriel College (University of Oxford) (2007-2008), and a year before – in the

University of Heidelberg (DAAD-grant). In 2005, he was a guest lecturer at the University of Helsinki, and in 2018 and 2019 – at the University of Wroclaw (Poland). Ossikovsky participated in the project ENGAGE.EU European University (2019-2021) of an inter-university alliance of some EU- countries together with Norway (while holding the position ‘associate professor’ at the University of National and World Economy), and since 2020 he has been co-ordinator/head of the project “Challenges facing the future of social sciences and humanities in Europe” (currently underway) at the Center for Advanced Studies (Sofia), leading a total of 9 persons from different universities all over Europe. The latter project can also be viewed through the prism of the active “promotional” activity of Dr. Ossikovsky, displayed in the press (see two of his articles in the “Capital”-newspaper of March 2019, on the problems of ranking the scientific achievements of scholars working in the field of humanities and social sciences), an effort that later evolves into the above-mentioned project “Challenges...”; it is this Project, which tries to develop adequate scales for measuring the contributions of this type of scholarship. That same project underlines Ossikovsky’s ability in combining his theoretical knowledge and how it can be applied and adapted to the realities today, the latter aimed at carrying out in a pan-European context.

## ***II. Scientific and research activities and contributions:***

The candidate participates in this competition with one revised and supplemented monograph entitled “The Priest and the Press. *Topoi* of Faith in Foreign News, 2011-2019” (2022) (with all-new Introduction and Conclusion and with a number of additions in the book’s Chapters), with a translation with a detailed commentary and author’s chapter on two works by John Milton (2020) (*‘On Education’* and *‘Areopagitica’*, the first being translated here in Bulgarian for the first time), as well as with the book “Shelters of Faith. The Church and the council in the writings of Marsilius of Padua and William of Ockham” (2010). To them, also are added one co-edited volume (2016), 7 1/2 articles and another translation – of Abraham D. Heschel (with an introductory chapter and an *apparatus* with 201 footnotes made by the candidate). In all of them, despite their laid-back in different historical periods and geographical spaces, the intertwined lines and tensions between ideas of freedom of thought and speech in the press, of clashes in the Church over the idea of free communication and free expression of opinions on the basis of one’s own conscience (here, esp. on the reflections of John Milton, often originally translated by the candidate) and how this is tracked nowadays in the so-called religious themes of the “secular” media in the Western world are carefully presented. The contributions of M. Ossikovsky’s research can therefore be viewed from four

main focuses, namely the culture of research in the social sciences and humanities, media and communication culture, translations and edited works, and history of pre-modern political and philosophical thought. It is obvious that his interests “oscillate” between philosophical mediaevalism and the history of ideas in Europe, on the one hand, and communication and *mediality*, on the other, with common “denominators” in both such as *freedom, religious ‘otherness’, dialogue, social communications, authorities in the field of institutions*.

With his research, the candidate covers the so-called group of indicators according to the minimum national requirements of the specific national Law referring to the development of the scientific staff and its Regulations for implementation for the position of ‘Associate Professor’ as follows: 1) by group of indicators A – 50 points (min. 50); 2) by group of indicators C – 100 points (min. 100); by group of indicators D – 300 points (min. 200); 3) by group of indicators E – 105 points (min. 50). It should be noted that some of the works with which Mr. Ossikovsky participated in this competition came out of print before he took up the position of Associate Professor at the University of National and World Economy, but, at the same time, it is necessary to emphasize on the fact that he participated in the competition at that same University (2018) with other studies of his own, other than those applied for this competition.

### ***III. Educational and teaching activities:***

At the University of National and World Economy, M. Ossikovsky taught eight courses centered around media ethics, communications, Bulgarian and world business media and academic writing, and at the University of Sofia – six courses with accents on medieval political phenomena, mediaeval scholasticism, social groups in mediaeval Western Europe and, again, academic writing. At the University of National and World Economy he has also held the position of Scientific Secretary of the Dept. of Media and Public Communications, as well as that of the Secretary General for Web communications of the same University. He also possesses various digital communication skills, which is, no doubt, a benefit in modern teaching.

***To conclude***, the documents submitted by Dr. M. Ossikovsky for this competition demonstrate the variety of courses he taught at two different universities, an attestation for his acquired knowledge and skills in different chronological periods, in different sciences as well as different thematic areas. The applicant’s serious skills in communication, organization, and leadership are confirmed by his participation in international projects related both to the field

of media and, in general, to that of the particularly important topic of evaluation in the field of humanities and social sciences today. These achievements, as well as his work in both translation and public activity in the media, pointed to him as an already well-established scholar in the fields of research and in communications in social sciences as well. All this allows me to confidently vote with “yeah” for this candidate to take the position of “Associate Professor” announced in the ‘State Gazette’ (*DV*) no. 48/June 28<sup>th</sup>, 2022, for the needs of the Faculty of Philosophy.

Oct. 24<sup>th</sup>, 2022

Signature:

(Prof. Ts. Stepanov)