**STATEMENT**

**by Assoc. Prof. Vladimir Stanev, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", Faculty of History**

**in the competition for associate professor, announced by Sofia University "Kliment Ohridski" in the professional field 2.2. History and Archaeology (New Bulgarian History 1878-1944** - **Electoral Regulations and Elections in Bulgaria (first half of the 20th century), announced in the State Gazette, issue 48 of 28.06.2022.**

For the announced competition the only candidate is head. asst. Dr. Svetoslav Mihaylov Zhivkov. The documentation submitted by him for the competition includes a set of materials, which are precisely systematized in accordance with the Law on Research and Development and the Regulations for its application, as well as the Regulations for the conditions and procedure for the acquisition of scientific degrees and the occupation of academic positions at Sofia University "St. The rules and regulations of the Academic Staff of the University of Sofia.

First of all, it should be emphasized that in his professional career the candidate Svetoslav Zhivkov shows a pronounced consistency - he is a graduate of the Faculty of History of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", again in it he defended the educational and scientific degree "Doctor", he successively went through the different levels of the professional ladder. During this period, he established himself as a competent and authoritative lecturer who is able to attract the attention and gain the trust of his students. It should be pointed out that Dr. Zhivkov has also been a thesis supervisor and an academic mentor for students on several occasions. At the same time, he is a respected and beloved teacher at the National School of Ancient Languages and Cultures "St. He is a well-known and respected scholar of languages and cultures of the "Constantine Cyril the Philosopher".

Svetoslav Zhivkov is a prominent participant in the scientific life of the Faculty of History and the University, he is actively involved in various committees, in the administration of specialties, in public discussions and presentations of new books, in the preparation of textbooks and teaching aids. The candidate is a compiler of collections, a member of editorial boards of such, a member of the team that prepared the Third International Congress of Bulgarian Studies in 2013, has presented his papers at prestigious scientific national and international conferences. The role of coordinator and participant in several research and educational projects testifies to his academic activity and his ability to work in a team.

Svetoslav Zhivkov is a sought-after interlocutor and popularizer of historical knowledge, and the general public knows him from his numerous appearances on television and radio programs, podcasts, publications in newspapers, magazines and Internet platforms. The candidate is also a preferred expert by the Ministry of Education and Science in the creation of author's test tasks for the State Test, the evaluation of textbooks on history and civilization, in the conduct of the National Olympiad in History, in teacher training courses, etc.

Next, it is imperative to point out that the documents submitted by Dr. Zhivkov and the scientific metrics contained therein not only fully comply with the minimum national requirements in all indicators, but also exceed them, allowing for an objective assessment of his scientific research activities. In the latter, Svetoslav Zhivkov showed a deep interest as a student, which intensified even more over time, and in a relatively short period he became known among the academic community as a serious scientist who thoroughly studies every problem he tackles. Proof of the high scientific value of his publications are the numerous citations by Bulgarian and foreign authors.

In this competition, the candidate presented an impressive scientific output - 2 independent monographs, 13 studies and articles in scientific journals and collections. The topics in Dr. Zhivkov's research are diverse, revealing him as a scholar with wide-ranging interests, but without at the same time being unnecessarily scattered. It is focused in several thematic circles of the history of the Principality/Kingdom of Bulgaria, a period in which the candidate has a particular interest and in which he has developed professionally.

Among all the scientific production of Dr. Zhivkov, his last monograph stands out the most, which is presented as a major habilitation work: 'Proportional Representation. Elections and Electoral Legislation in Bulgaria on the Eve of the First World War". Sofia. Sofia.

It is evident from the subject of the monograph that it fully corresponds to the nature of the announced competition for the academic position of Associate Professor. The research is a legitimate result of the candidate's long-standing engagement with electoral systems in Bulgaria. It has a clear and logical structure. The theoretical grounding of the monograph demonstrates the author's self-confidence as a result of his consistent development in the field of electoral history. The pros and cons of majoritarian and proportional systems are thoroughly explored and presented. Attention is paid to the various projects for the introduction of a proportional system in Bulgaria, to the arguments and counter-arguments of all parties on this issue, to the almost complete consensus that has developed among the political elite on the issue and the reasons for it. It is shown in detail how the electoral reform changed the political picture in the country forever.

It is not only the huge volume of the monograph that is impressive, but also the deep penetration into detail and the striving for comprehensiveness in the greatest completeness. All available sources are drawn upon, and the author's endeavour to substantiate his theses, conclusions and assessments with concrete and authentic documentary material is commendable. In doing so, a remarkable synchrony between the presentation of facts and their analysis is achieved.

The writing is professional, high style, but engaging. Perhaps in places the introduction of complex formulae, coefficients and overly specific terminology makes the text difficult to understand, but where the penchant for examples from higher mathematics and foreign languages is mastered, it is a pleasure to read.

It is normal to have certain remarks to any work. For example, on p. 506 it states that the term of office of the VIIth UNSC was five years, and two pages later it is correctly defined as four years. The elections for village councils in the autumn of 1913 are only mentioned, and it would be interesting to make a comparison between them and the last ones held under the majority system.

Without a doubt, the study is evidence of reaching scientific maturity. Not only has the candidate demonstrated a thorough historiographical knowledge, but the monograph definitely contains original contributions that are Dr. Zhivkov's personal work. In this sense, the book constitutes a serious scientific work, fully meeting the requirements for first habilitation, without any evidence of plagiarism. The great topic of electoral rules, principles, systems and their application will probably be studied further, but reference to Dr. Zhivkov's essay should be mandatory.

Dr. Zhivkov's other monograph "The Progressive Liberal Party in Bulgaria: We do not do politics with Russia! (1899-1920)" deserves attention. Sofia. Kliment Ohridski", 2014. This work represents the first study of its kind on such a scale on one of the main political parties in Bulgarian political life in the late 19th century until the early 1920s - the Progressive Liberal Party (PLP). The study is built on rich and mostly unused archival material. It traces in detail the PLP's electoral participation and presence in eleven parliaments, the difference in the behaviour of its representatives in opposition and in power, and the ideological justification for the positions they took. Based on documents, the organizational development of the PLP is traced, but in the context of the overall political development of Bulgaria. The research is well structured and carried out with the professional skill and application of interdisciplinary methods inherent in the candidate's other publications.

The other attached publications, with which Dr. Zhivkov participated in the competition for "Associate Professor", are also evidence of his scientific maturity. They are related to the candidate's research interests, and impress with the author's striving for an objective view, unclouded by the imposed historiographical stamps. In conclusion, I would like to point out that the scientific works presented by Svetoslav Zhivkov are original and do not repeat those of previous procedures for obtaining a scientific title and academic position. A careful review of the publications shows that there are no elements of compilation in them; on the contrary, Dr. Zhivkov shows a commendable effort to bring something new and original to each of his publications. He is always correct in the scientific apparatus used.

Again, it should be emphasized that the attached reference of citations (120 in number) of Dr. Zhivkov's works testifies to the high quality and voluminous scientific production of an already established scientist whose research is known and used by the academic community.

In conclusion, I would like to point out that the scientific works presented by the candidate are his personal work and cannot raise any suspicion of plagiarism. They demonstrate his ability to thoroughly analyse and synthesise a vast and varied body of source material and to present a reasoned and convincing scientific thesis.

The teaching and scientific activity of the head. as. Dr. Svetoslav Mihaylov Zhivkov fully comply with the requirements for holding the academic position "Associate Professor" according to the requirements of the Academic Staff Development Act in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for its implementation. All this gives me grounds to confidently propose to the esteemed jury to award the academic position of "Associate Professor" to head as. Dr. Svetoslav Zhivkov in the professional field 2.2.History and Archaeology (New Bulgarian History 1878-1944 - Electoral Regulations and Elections in Bulgaria (the first half of the 20th century).

Sofia, 14.10.2022 Author of opinion. Prof. Stanev