***Position***

***on research and academic activities of Associate Professor Doctor of Cultural Studies Veselin Ivanov Tepavicharov, participant in the competition for the academic position “Professor” in Sociology, Anthropology and Cultural Studies (Ethnography – political ethnography)***

***Prof. Ivan Elenkov***

The academic path of Veselin Tepavicharov shows that he graduated his higher education with a Master’s Degree in History in the Faculty of History of “St. Kliment Оhridski” University – Sofia, Bulgaria.

Since 1982 he has been working and teaching in the same faculty.

In 1989 he defended his dissertation, earning his doctorate in history. By the late 1990s, his career went through the hierarchical levels of "Assistant", "Senior Assistant" and "Chief assistant". In 2000 he was habilitated with the study "Potesternal Culture in Tribal Societies", with which he received the scientific title "Associate Professor". In 2017, he defended a second PhD, with which he also earned a PhD in Culture.

His lecture courses and seminars are convincing proof of the development of his academic career. The curricula he developed are distinguished by their design, content and direct implementation with high scientific merit, methodological structure and unambiguous teaching results.

Skillful leadership and numerous research projects involving both team collaboration and individual endeavors are among the candidate’s academic activities and responsibilities that stand out the most. The results in terms of group work and own research are directly reflected and widely accepted in the scientific community. They are expressed and shared through many references to his works.

His involvement in the university’s life and his membership in prominent scientific organizations are yet another argument for his high standing and active presence in the current academic environment. An emphasis should be laid on the candidate’s positions in different university structures, State institutions and non-governmental organizations related to his academic influence: Head of the Department of Ethnology, Chairman of the General Meeting of the Faculty of History, Member of the Control Board of Sofia University, Member of the Committee on Minorities Education of the Ministry of Education and Science, Member of the International Association of Anthropologists.

Apart from the extensive list of works in the enclosed bibliography, Assoc. Prof. Tepavicharov participates in the current competition with one monograph and a total of 18 studies, articles, reports that crown the indisputable achievements of a fruitful long-standing scientific work.

Most of his research topics have earned Tepavicharov a well-deserved place as a founder of a scientific tradition. His habilitation work could be regarded as one of the leading studies outlining the groundbreaking research field of Political Ethnology; this work links methodologically politico-analytical thinking and practical anthropological field action, thus outlining the prospects for the development and promotion of political anthropology in Bulgaria.

His subsequent researches are deployed on this basis. It could be though through the prisms of the political problems of modern times, the differentiation of individual social and political groups in our society, the characterization of their political culture, the analysis of their public symbolic gestures and public appearances. Tepavicharov offers in this field his own research methodology, he develops and establishes a theoretical model for the meaning and specific content of concepts currently accepted and used in anthropological and social studies – “political subculture”, “political subgroup”, “political subculture communities”, “identity intensive levels” and so on.

Apart from purely theoretical dimensions of his scientific contributions, Tepavicharov’s research brings into circulation vast empirical information which is an extremely valuable field ethnographic material collected over 20 years by him and teams under his leadership.

His latest monograph, “Nostalgia for Socialism in Bulgaria”, is a natural center of gravity for the works presented in this competition. Focused on a specific topic and within a specific time span, it gives every reason to be considered as a representative summary of the applicant's overall scientific experience. The research in this work reaches the utmost depth when considering the chosen social and historical time, social zones, cultural contexts, social actors and events; here he applies and completes his own comprehensive research methodology.

“Nostalgia for Socialism” is a solidly grounded and significant academic contribution. It covers the whole field of ethnological research and political analysis through the prism of a concrete topic - from the historiographical review and review of scientific theories of memory and time, to the conceptualization and argumentation of working categories and ideas, to the synthesized understanding of the historical implications of memory and cultural identities that unfold while investigating the phenomenon.

The empirical density of historical reconstruction and the methodological diversity of the research procedures deployed achieve the research goals of this important book - a compelling historico-anthropological and ethnological analysis of attitudes toward the near past and the causes that generate nostalgia for it along with its destructive effects towards the democratic process currently in our country.

I have no notes or critical objections that could be involved in the position that looks at Tepavicharov's entire scientific work - his research is undoubtedly a major scientific achievement in ethnology and political ethnology. It is also interdisciplinary research with clearly expressed contributions and understanding of the human situation over past historical times.

Highlighting the excellent results of Veselin Tepavicharov's scientific production, its empirical diversity, theoretical, methodological and interpretative merits, his participation in practical developments; pointing to the visible projections of his entire creative work presented in science and publicity; considering his fruitful academic career, teaching practice and indisputable authority in the collegiate community, with full conviction in these closing words, I encourage the distinguished Scientific Jury to vote without hesitation with "YES" in choosing him a Professor of Sociology, Anthropology of Cultural Studies (Ethnography - Political ethnography).

Sofia

25.11.2019 Prof. Ivan Elenkov