

## **STATEMENT**

**by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mihail Gruev - member of the scientific jury for the competition for the academic position of Associate Professor at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" in the professional field 2.2. - History and Archaeology (Contemporary History: History of European Integration), announced in State Gazette 61/2.08.2022.**

The competition for the academic position of Associate Professor in the professional field 2.2 - History and Archaeology (Modern History: History of European Integration) was announced in the State Gazette, issue 61 of 2.08.2022. The procedures for its announcement, the appointment of the scientific jury and the establishment of the eligibility of the candidates were carried out in accordance with the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, No. Bulgaria and the Regulations on the Structure and Activities of the Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski". Only one participant submitted documents for participation in the competition - Dr. Boris Kirilov Stoyanov - Senior Assistant Professor at the Department of Modern and Contemporary History at the Faculty of History of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski".

### **1. Teaching activity of the candidate**

According to the candidate's professional CV, he has 23 years of professional experience as a lecturer, of which more than 15 as an assistant, senior and chief assistant professor at Sofia University. Dr. Stoyanov has given and continues to give seminars, lectures and workshops on sixteen subjects and disciplines in various undergraduate and graduate programmes at the University. The main part of them is devoted to Modern and Contemporary History, as well as to the history of European integration. He has also been the supervisor of 20 successfully defended Master's degree graduates - a fact that testifies to his place as a respected and sought-after lecturer who knows how to give and demand from students.

### **2. Research contributions and achievements**

In the scientific research work of Dr. Boris Stoyanov several thematic areas and spheres of interest could be distinguished. The first and the most prominent among them is the topic of the complex path of the construction of Europe after the Second World War. In fact, he has been working on it since immediately after his graduation

from university, but only those of his publications that have appeared since the defence of his doctoral thesis "Building a United Europe (1948-1957)" in 2006 will be commented on here. In his subsequent research, he expanded the chronological boundaries of this topic, gradually covering the period from the 1960s to the end of the Twentieth century. A total of 17 studies and articles are devoted to this subject. Among them, his monograph "Europe before Europe. The projects of the Third Power, the European Federation and the United States of Europe and their fate (1945-1949)", published by the Sofia University Press. In it, the author summarizes his earlier observations about the contradictory positions from which first Great Britain, and then France, and more distantly the United States, attempted to initiate a new Europe. The study rests on a respectable amount of foreign, mostly English-language literature, memoirs and diaries, minutes of various forums published in the U.S. Department of State's authoritative Foreign Relations of the United States Series, minutes of congressional records during the period under review, some of the most important newspapers published in European capitals, and so on. One of the serious problems in working on such a topic is dealing with the vast amount of literature already published, which must not only be read but also comparatively studied and critically reflected upon. It seems to me that the author has brilliantly coped with this methodological challenge, as from the hundreds of titles of various monographs, studies, articles or simply popular brochures, churned out by various European institutions, he has managed to build a study with an original structure, innovative outlook and his own analytical style. Very carefully and critically, he first of all addresses the failure of Britain to become the locomotive of European unity in a situation when its own empire had already begun to crumble. In this context, serious attention is also paid to the complex British-French relationship, interesting precisely for the attempts of the two declining colonial empires to forge a new pole in an already bipolar world. The author demonstrates a very good knowledge of political life in the main European countries during the period under review, analysing the attitude of the major ideological families towards the European idea. A special place is also given to the various movements for European unity, as part of the liberal formations in search of their new image. The next part of the study is focused on the American foreign policy and in particular the idea of Marshall Plan. Boris Stoyanov has critically examined the different views among American political and diplomatic circles about the role of the United States in the process of building its eventual European equivalent. Quite convincingly, at the end of his study, he has shown why

it was France that was able to take control of the whole process and ultimately, by subsequently building the Rome-Paris-Bonn axis, was able to complete the process successfully. It should be noted that Stoyanov's monograph seriously differs from the genre popular in the field of European studies: "For the first time in Bulgarian" and has an independent scientific weight, which, I am convinced, could have international success.

The other thematic areas in which the candidate's work is located are related to the construction and functioning of the Soviet totalitarian system and the American approach to the East-West dialogue. A total of nine of his publications are devoted to these topics.

### **3. Administrative capacity**

When making a general assessment of the qualities of a particular candidate, although this is not stated in the normative basis as a mandatory requirement for holding an academic post, it still seems to me appropriate to address his or her administrative capacity. These qualities are particularly important in terms of the prospects for recruiting new academic staff, developing new programmes and forms of teaching. In this case, the candidate has excellent experience as administrative secretary of the Department of Modern and Contemporary History at the Faculty of History, head of two master's programmes, has worked on three projects funded by the European Union's operational programmes, three projects under the Research Fund, four other projects funded by the state budget, is a member of the Faculty of History Editorial Board, etc. All this gives him a rich and varied administrative experience that could also offer him new horizons of realization.

### **4. Conclusion**

All of the above, as well as the fact that I have not found plagiarism anywhere in the candidate's publications, give me reason to conclude that a worthy candidacy has been put before the scientific jury and deserves the highest evaluation. I confidently vote in favor of election of Dr. Boris Kirilov Stoyanov to the academic position of Associate Professor at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" at the professional field 2.2. - History and Archaeology (Contemporary History.)

Sofia, 28.11.2022

Member of the scientific jury:

/Assoc. Prof. Mihail Gruev, PhD/