**REPORT**

**of Prof. Yordanka Gesheva, PhD, Institute for Historical Studies at BAS, on the competition for associate professor announced by SU "St. Kliment Ohridski" by professional direction 2.2. History and archeology (New Bulgarian history 1878–1944 - Electoral regulations and elections in Bulgaria (the first half of the 20th century), announced in the State Gazette, No. 48 of 28.06.2022**

Ch. assistant professor Svetoslav Mihailov Zhivkov, PhD is the only candidate in the competition for the academic post of associate professor, announced in the State Gazette, no. 48/ June 28, 2022. Two monographs and a group of studies and articles are submitted for review by the Scientific Jury. The candidate for the competition has more than 150 appearances in broadcasts and interviews on Bulgarian televisions, radio stations, electronic and print media, information sites, internet platforms. S. Zhivkov is involved in three projects with external funding: under the "Scientific Research" Fund, under the Operational Program "Development of Human Resources", as well as under projects organized by Sofia University. He participated as a co-organizer in five scientific conferences.

The candidate presents as the main habilitation work his monograph *Proportional Representation. Elections and Electoral Legislation in Bulgaria on the Eve of World War I.* Sofia: St. Kliment Ohridski UP, 2022. ISBN: 978-954-07-5490-1 ISBN (pdf): 978-954-07-5495-6. In it, he examines in detail and professionally the adoption and functioning of the first proportional electoral system in Bulgaria, giving at the beginning a much-needed overview of the adoption of proportional system until the First World War worldwide.

The topic of electoral systems has been of interest to S. Zhivkov for ten years, and this has given an opportunity for a thorough and reasoned presentation and understanding of the problem and what has been written on it. On the basis of what has already been achieved in historiography, Svetoslav Zhivkov makes an analysis and synthesis of the features of the majoritarian electoral system functioning until 1911 and highlights its errors and shortcomings. Attention is drawn to the amendments to the Electoral Code adopted in 1909. All projects for introducing a proportional system in Bulgaria are presented. The views and positions of the political parties, the coverage of the issue in the press, as well as the forms for this are shown. The changes in the electoral legislation in the period 1908 - 1911 are subjected to analysis and evaluation. The focus falls on the changes in the electoral law from 1909 - 1912. The specifics of the Bulgarian electoral system are sought. The stages of the adoption of a proportional system in Bulgaria have been traced. The organization and conduct of the elections for three National Assemblies (XV, XVI and XVII National Assembly), as well as the votes for regional and local representative bodies (district and municipal councils), are analyzed. The election campaigns, the violations and actions of the official authorities, the results and the reactions of the political forces are shown. The results of the application of the proportional system, its advantages, the differences with the majority system are analyzed. Voting with party lists and colored ballots is specially presented, it is indicated that the higher proportionality of the results is one of the goals of the reform, as well as the increase in voter turnout.

The second book with which the candidate participated in the contest is *The Progressive-Liberal Party in Bulgaria: We Don't Make Politics with Russia! (1899 – 1920).* Sofia: St. Kliment Ohridski UP, 2014. ISBN: 978-954-07-3733-1. The monograph is actually a fundamentally revised and expanded version of a dissertation for obtaining the educational and scientific degree "doctor". In this form, it represents a complete scientific study dedicated to the formation, history and ideology of the Progressive Liberal Party in Bulgaria (PLP), as well as its participation in eleven parliamentary elections - from the 10th to the 19th National Assembly including the 5th Grand National Assembly. The preparation and organization of election campaigns, press coverage, coalitions, and results are examined. For the first time in historiography, the dynamics of the electorate and party members, the actions of the national and local leaders, as well as their social composition, are subjected to quantitative and qualitative analysis. On the basis of documents, the organizational development of the PLP is traced - the holding of congresses, the creation of local structures, relations with followers and sympathizers, etc. Special attention is paid to the views of the party regarding the internal politics, economy and cultural development of the state; foreign policy concepts are also an object of attention. Emphasis is placed on the actions of Progressive Liberal ministers. Against the background of the events and processes in Bulgaria after the First World War, the reasons for the self-dissolution of the PLP and its merger with the People's Party into a new political entity in 1920 are traced.

It is necessary to note that Zhivkov's research was noticed and evaluated positively by the collegium. There are quite a few citations to the monograph published in 2014, as well as most of the studies and articles. It is natural that the studies on the Progressive Liberal Party have been cited more often by now, since they predate the book and the articles on the proportional electoral system in time. In recent times, the articles on the proportional system have also attracted the attention of the historical community.

In the study and analysis of the electoral legislation, its implementation, the programs, actions and policies of the parties, the author uses an interdisciplinary approach, successfully combining political science, history and demographic research methods.

For both books, it should be noted that the author knows very well the state of Bulgarian and foreign historiography and precisely cites and uses the collegium's research. The books are supplied with appendices and illustrations. The one from 2022 includes maps of the voting districts and the results, electoral maps and colored ballots, lists of deputies, photographic material, etc.

Based on the analysis of the two monographs and the articles proposed for assessment, the positive moments and contributions indicated in the opinion, the overall positive assessment of the candidate's scientific and organizational activities, I am convinced that Ch. assistant professor Svetoslav Zhivkov, PhD meets all the requirements to be elected to the academic position of associate professor for the needs of the Faculty of History of the Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", as announced in the State Gazette, no. 48 of 06/28/2022, for which I will vote with complete confidence.

Sofia, Assessor: Prof. Dr. Y. Gesheva

October 9, 2022