



STATEMENT

on the works submitted for participation in a competition for the academic position of ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR in professional field 3.5. Public Communications and Information Sciences (Persuasion and Social Influence) announced by Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" in State Gazette, No. 103 / 10 December 2021

Statement prepared by: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Alexander Traikov Hristov, University of National and World Economy

Candidate/s:

Kalin Tsvetanov Kalinov (application received on 08.02.2022)

Plamen Atanasov Atanasov (application received on 09.02.2022)

I. Evaluation of the scientific and practical results and contributions of the academic production submitted for participation in the competition

Both candidates in the competition for Associate Professor have submitted the necessary documents and materials for the competition. They have been prepared properly and in accordance with the requirements, which also warrants attention to their content.

As regards the fulfilment of the minimum national requirements for the position, both candidates meet them, with Kalin Kalinov having 540 points and Plamen Atanasov - 480.

The candidate Kalin Kalinov has clearly significant contributions in the field of persuasion and social influence, public diplomacy and strategic management of communications. Along with the explication of key factors in the development of communication forms, he offers a number of new interpretations, definitions and classifications in the above-mentioned field of research and actively uses empirical methods in the development of his writings. This is extremely valuable, especially given the interpretive nature of the field of communication, where we occasionally reflect more on phenomena that have already occurred than analyse them empirically. In this regard, the significance of the contributions to theory and practice can be described as substantial.

It is important to note the extremely serious consideration Kalin Kalinov gives to the topic of communication management. It is this topic - or rather line of thinking - that will contribute to improving the practices in the field and, to a large extent, to a paradigm shift in a positive direction, associated with the ability to manage communication processes, to create expectations and to prevent negative developments. Communication management is at the heart of good corporate and political communications.

The candidate Plamen Atanasov gives consideration to a wider range of topics, some of which even go beyond the sphere of communications. This could be seen as a good interdisciplinary approach when combined with appropriate empirical research. A significant focus of his research has been given to crisis communications, especially with regard to reputational crises, rumour spreading,



disinformation, trolls, hackers, fake news, etc., which have recently gained particular relevance.

Generally, the focusing on crises has been made with the necessary precision, and it is important to give consideration also to preventive actions in this area, which has not escaped the attention of the candidate. All of this allows for various facts, confirming theories and concepts, to be presented and the systematisation skills shown by the candidate are of the required level. The contributions in Plamen Atanasov's research work are related to the topics mentioned here - reputational crises and threats of digitalization development, negative communication manifestations such as fake news, trolls, etc., with some inclination towards the technical aspects in communication. They are also linked to deriving patterns, as well as to preparing classifications. Their relevance to communication theory and practice is at a high level.

II. Observations and Recommendations

My judgment as the author of this statement is that Kalin Kalinov has a concise style and an extremely well-focused research interest in areas that are essential to contemporary communications. The combination of innovative approaches and clear argumentation sets the stage for the candidate's growth as an authoritative scholar and productive teacher and students can only benefit from that. The recommendations are that research should be deepened and made more focused, which will make them even more relevant given the developments (and problems) in communications in recent years.

On the other hand, Plamen Atanasov's attention is also focused on topics of importance for modern society, whose relevance has, perhaps unfortunately, been revived recently, given the pandemic and the war. It is precisely for this reason that it is important for analyses and interpretations to take place on an extremely firm basis. In terms of content, Plamen Atanasov's writings, although devoted to important themes, have a slight conspiratorial bent; pushy but loud and difficult to verify statements, appealing to people who want to believe in various "hidden powers", push their way here and there. Perhaps the topics themselves suggest it, but it is important that the objectivity of the researcher should be preserved.

I accept that this is in fact the main criterion on which Plamen Atanasov's candidature falls short. That being the case, the recommendations would be that research on these topics should continue with more research precision.

One distinct advantage of the candidate Kalin Kalinov cannot be ignored. He has an active teaching experience since 2018 - first as an assistant, then as a senior assistant at FJMC. In addition, by professional impressions, he is actively involved in activities with students outside the university, for example, for several years in a row he has been the mentor of young talents in the Bulgarian Public Relations Association's student competition "Like Bernays".

For his part, Plamen Atanasov points as his teaching experience 30 hours of exercises in the course on "Persuasive Communication" and 15 hours of optional course on "Institutional Transmedia Image and Brand".



III. Conclusion

In conclusion, and based on the submitted documents, the quality and content of the academic production of the two candidates and last but not least, the teaching experience and achievements, which it is also essential to consider, I rank the candidates in the competition for Associate Professor in professional field 3.5. Public Communications and Information Sciences (Persuasion and Social Influence) as follows:

Ranked number one: Kalin Tsvetanov Kalinov

Ranked number two: Plamen Atanasov Atanasov

In this regard, I recommend to the esteemed academic jury that the position of Associate Professor at the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication be filled by Kalin Tsvetanov Kalinov.

Date: 23.03.2022

Jury Member:

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Alexander Hristov