

**OPINION**

by Prof. Nikolai Kirilov Mihailov, PhD, Sofia University "St. Kl. Ohridski",  
FJMC, Department of Communication, Public Relations and Advertising,  
on the competition for Associate Professor announced by SU "St. Kliment Ohridski" by  
professional direction **2.2. History and archeology (Modern history: History of European  
Integration)**, announced in the State Gazette, No. 61/02.08.2022 г.

**I. General characteristics of the candidates and the requirements for the competition.**

For the announced competition, the only candidate is Chief Assistant professor Boris Stoyanov, PhD. The documentation submitted by him for the competition includes all the necessary materials, which have been completed and extremely correctly systematized in accordance with the Bulgarian law and the Regulations for its application, as well as the Regulations for the terms and conditions for acquiring scientific degrees and holding academic positions at the Sofia University "St. . Kliment Ohridski". After reviewing the information on the fulfillment of the minimum national requirements for holding the academic position of "Associate professor", presented by the candidate, I found that by groups of indicators (dissertation work; habilitation work - monograph; published book based on defended dissertation work; other publications; citations, etc.) the candidate presents convincing evidence of having collected 450 points out of the required 400 and meets the minimum national requirements under Art. 2b of the Law., which makes him a fully legitimate participant in the competition.

In total, for participation in the announced competition, Mr. Stoyanov has presented a serious scientific production, including one monograph (habilitation thesis) with a topic extremely relevant to the announced competition, seven articles (one in English), as well as eleven studies, all related to problems of modern history and with significant scientific results that do not repeat those used to acquire the educational and scientific degree PhD/"doctor" by the candidate. Along with this, Mr. Stoyanov has provided information about a very intensive overall publication activity, including, in addition to academic appearances in collections and scientific periodicals through articles and studies on important historical and historical-political topics of modern history, also the compilation of scientific collections, as well as co-authorship in writing history textbooks and teaching aids for different levels of secondary education (a complex task related to a very good orientation in historical events and their specific presentation for a certain student audience). I cannot fail to note the arguments for the numerous media appearances of

the candidate in specialized TV and radio shows and podcasts that he has attached, a proof that he is a recognizable and sought-after expert with a significant social presence, necessary to orientate public opinion in the intertwined situations of modern history. Along with this, Mr. Stoyanov has provided data on achievements in the practical dimensions of his research and teaching activities with historical matter - lectures at home and abroad, participation in historical and cultural public events as a specialist, in qualification courses, etc. I can conclude that in the documentation attached as required. candidate, Mr. Stoyanov outlines his profile as an established researcher in the field of historical knowledge, an erudite teacher in the field of modern history, and an in-depth author of academic production in various genres of the scientific style of presenting research results. I unequivocally accept that, from this point of view, the candidate Mr. Boris Stoyanov not only fulfills, but also exceeds the necessary requirements for occupying the academic position of "Associate Professor" according to the Regulations of SU "St. Kl. Ohridski" in the desired professional direction.

## **II. Analysis of the candidate's scientific publications.**

It is noteworthy that the topic of the candidate's scientific pursuits presents a researcher and teacher with broad and proven interests and scientific achievements in the field of modern history and historiographical studies. The main habilitation thesis submitted for participation in the competition ("Europe before Europe: The Third Power Projects, the European Federation and the United States of Europe and their Fate, 1945 - 1949" University Publishing House "St. Kliment Ohridski", 2022, ISBN 978-954-07-5559-5, 328 pages) impresses with its scientific historical approach, independent summaries, correct classifications and comparisons, as well as detailed knowledge of the research problem. The monograph is dedicated to a complex but also important issue for modern history - that of the formation of Europe after the end of the Second World War in basic political, social, cultural and economic frameworks and as a field of conflict, but also as unification projects through which the historical process of the European continent was formed. "Knowing Europe before Europe is the best guide in unraveling the paradox that ultimately combines national and supranational power in a symbiosis unique to human history" ("Europe before...", p. 19), the candidate writes at the very beginning of his monographic study. It is also an important historiographical contribution to Bulgarian historical knowledge, as it is a systematic and comprehensive study of the projects for the unification of the Old World in the period 1945 - 1949. This scientific interest of Mr. Stoyanov requires a serious analytical approach to research, which he demonstrates in the monograph: the national-supranational relationship, the political contradictions between democratic and totalitarian state

systems, the European aspirations to preserve identity in the face of the new "colossus" the USA and the USSR, a philosophical-historical understanding of regional-global, national-pan-European contradictions. "British and French politicians and diplomats are aware of the benefits of the European project - nationally and regionally, but still find it difficult to find and defend its intersection with short-term national interests" ("Europe before...", p. 82). The research is subordinated to the main scientific intention of the author – to discover political logic and justified rational political choice in the historical development of Europe and in the projects for its unification. It is rich in data, facts, historical events, comparative analyses, which Mr. Stoyanov uses to prove his scientific vision and to give a historical explanation of the studied period. The candidate's reflections on federalist ("declares national sovereignty the root of all ills") and unionist ("the European project does not bring revolutionary change") propaganda to popularize European ideas and encourage closer cooperation between continental democracies are important and helpful. The monographic study presents the candidate as a researcher of modern history, demonstrating extremely high theoretical competence on a complex topic, able to clearly formulate scientific problems and logically justify and argue his conclusions. At the end of the monograph, independent summaries are described for the detailed, analyzed and meaningful history of the activity of "six governments that, on the continent that gave birth to the concept of sacred, inviolable and indivisible sovereignty, voluntarily laid the foundations of a community based on the principles and methods of supranational power" (p. 267) as a fundamental event in recent European and world history.

The themes of the historical perspective of the construction of Europe in political, economic and cultural terms after the Second World War, the clash of different ideologies and propaganda messages, the confrontation between the Western European democracies and the totalitarian regimes in the eastern part of the continent, the problems of supranational power, are in the center of Mr. Stoyanov's research interest and in other publications. All of them are relevant to the issues of the announced competition and again give an idea of a serious researcher who has reached maturity in his scientific pursuits, which positively affects his teaching efforts - such as erudition, breadth of topics, detailed and detailed knowledge of the subject, reasoned own position and, last but not least, an exposition of complex concepts, events, interrelationships and trends in understandable and even fascinating language within the framework of the search, establishment and interpretation of historical facts. Since the volume of an opinion is limited, I will note only a few of the scientific publications presented by the applicant. In his voluminous studio "Western Europe at the Crossroads. Problems and challenges facing European

integration in the 1980s" (In: Integration and disintegration in Europe in the 1980s (co-ed. Iskra Baeva). Sofia: UI "St. Kliment Ohridski", 2016 ), Mr. Stoyanov again shows his deep interest in the problems of European integration, this time in another historical period. The study also presents a skillful historiographical analysis dedicated to the events of the specified research period, as well as an arrangement by historical significance of the events in the process of European integration and the difficulties before the realization of their goals, the transformation of "Little Europe" into a significant supranational union with a very important presence in the international economic and political order. Mr. Stoyanov does not simply present facts, but specifically analyzes the radical change of the European supranational project and its social transformational functions. "The expansion of unity continues, which strengthens the pan-European identity of the Common Market and sets the stage for overcoming the social and economic differences between the North and the South" (Western Europe on...p.97). Mr. Stoyanov defends with scientific arguments his position for a united Europe as a project that brings historical advantages over those who perceive the Old Continent as a field of division and opposition. Here is the place to note the extremely high bibliographic awareness of the candidate in the field of history, economy, political process, interstate relations and national policies and leaders of European countries striving for integration. This applies not only to the specific study, but to the overall publication activity of the candidate.

### **III. Scientific contributions. Teaching work and personal impressions.**

First of all, here I want to note the attached citation reference, which shows the image of a researcher who is recognizable in the scientific and academic community of humanities and social knowledge, whose scientific research finds a significant echo in it by referring to his works and ideas. I accept the candidate's self-evaluation of scientific contributions (T. 14 Self-evaluation of original scientific contributions) as an objective statement of his research achievements. I would take the liberty of pointing out in them in the first place the striving for systematic and comprehensiveness through the study of the subjects of historical change in a decisive period of the history of the Old Continent. Certainly, in addition to enriching the theoretical knowledge of the historical period, this contribution is in the field of fundamental historical research. The candidate's effort to expand knowledge and give a reasoned interpretation of a wide range of political, economic and social actions revealing the historical logic of the European integration process after the Second World War, a process whose consequences have an impact on our present day, is also beneficial. Thirdly, I would unequivocally define as contributing the candidate's scientific efforts to work on issues of

conceptual importance through the analysis of historical facts - on concepts such as regional, national, supranational, nation, state, political integration, the meaning of the historical process and in general the "concept for history" to paraphrase Walter Benjamin. Fourthly, the contributions of Mr. Stoyanov in the field of education and teaching of history in secondary education are indisputable, where, based on his research and their results, he offers a new, well-argued and updated interpretation of historical reality, which plays an important role and in the formation of students' cognitive abilities in the field of modern history, but also has an important social significance for the formation of adequate historical awareness among young people in an EU member country. And last but not least - these are Mr. Stoyanov's proven skills as a lecturer in the field of historical knowledge through media and cultural appearances and events, which shape a new, objective and fact- and trend-based interpretation of historical events. Mr. Stoyanov is an erudite and experienced teacher in various specialties in the field of higher education, which is perhaps the most important argument for accepting his candidacy for the academic position he is applying for. Because he also teaches in a major that I have direct observations of and am familiar with the impressions of students and colleagues, I can state that he enjoys the authority of a preferred lecturer based on knowledge, arguments and the ability to communicate with students by provoking their interest in the disciplines it leads. I can personally attest to his engagement with students and colleagues, his activity as a researcher, teacher and erudite interlocutor with students, colleagues, researchers, his protected objective position on important topics in the field of historical reality that reflects in our time.

#### **IV. Conclusion.**

The review and analysis of the publication, research and teaching activities of Chief Assistant Boris Stoyanov, PhD which I carried out within the framework of this Opinion, gives me the opportunity to draw the conclusion that I have before me a candidate with indisputable contributions in the field of development and expansion of historical knowledge in the research field of modern history and European integration, a person with proven qualities for organizing the educational activity in the teaching of disciplines related to this important period, recognizable by his research approach, a scientist with an active position and various activities for the confirmation of the historical method in the understanding of the real contemporary social and political situation. I believe that the presented evidence of the full implementation of the criteria for habilitation of the Law and the Rules for its application to the SU by the candidate are indisputable both formally and in terms of content. I unequivocally accept that **the candidature of the Chief Assistant Boris Stoyanov, PhD, fully meets the requirements**

**for the academic position of "Associate Professor" in professional direction 2.2. History and Archaeology (Modern History: A History of European Integration) and give it my entirely positive opinion.**

20/11/2022 Prepared by:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'N. Mihailov', written in a cursive style.

Prof. Nikolai Mihailov, PhD