

# **REVIEW**

by Prof. Dr. Plamen Veselinov Kirov

Professor at the Faculty of Law of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"

in regard to the competition for the academic position of Professor

at the Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"

field of higher education 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences; professional field 3.6. Law  
(Constitutional Law)

## **1. Information about the competition**

The competition for the academic position of Professor at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", announced in State Gazette No 65 of 28.07.2023, is for the needs of the Faculty of Law of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", professional field 3.6. Law (Constitutional Law). I am a member of the scientific jury of the competition on the basis of Order of the Rector No. RD-38-487/08.08.2023. I have been assigned to write a review.

## **2. Information about the candidates**

There is only one candidate for the competition. This is Assoc. Prof. Dr. Martin Kirilov Belov. Martin Belov is an Associate Professor of Constitutional Law at the Faculty of Law of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski". He is the Vice Dean of the Faculty of Law of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" responsible for International Relations, Digitalization and Digital Sphere. He is the Head of the Master's Program "Protection of Fundamental Rights" and Erasmus Coordinator of the Faculty of Law.

The candidate Martin Belov has been a Visiting Professor at Roma Tre University, Rome, Italy (2019-2022), Reichman University, Herzliya, Israel (2021-2023), Jagiellonian University, Krakow, Poland (2022), Aristotle University, Thessaloniki, Greece (2022), European Law and Governance School, Athens, Greece (2020-2021 and 2017-2018), University of Paris II Panthéon Assas, France (2019), LUISS Guido Carli University, Rome, Italy (2019) Goethe-University, Frankfurt am Main, Germany (2019), University of Girona, Spain (2019), Pompeu Fabra University, Barcelona, Spain (2019), Europa-Universität Viadrina, Frankfurt am Main, Germany (2017 and 2018), Aldo Moro University, Bari, Italy (2018), Söderthorn University, Stockholm, Sweden (2017), Sant'Anna Superior School, University of Pisa, Italy (2016), State Academy of Saxony, Dresden/Bautzen, Germany (2016), University of Warsaw, Poland (2015), University of Lodz, Poland (2015), University of Lisbon, Portugal (2012), State University of Milan, Italy (2011) and University of Cologne, Germany (2007-2009).

Martin Belov was a project researcher at the Max-Planck-Institute for European Legal History, Frankfurt am Main, Germany (2010-2012) and a visiting researcher at the Institute of Federalism, Fribourg, Switzerland (2014). He has specialized at numerous foreign universities and institutes in Germany, France, the UK, Belgium, etc.

Martin Belov is a member of the European Public Law Group, the International Association of Legislation, the Supervisory Board of the Central and Eastern European Forum of Young Legal, Political and Social Theorists, the Union of Scientists in Bulgaria, etc.

The candidate has participated in 22 scientific projects: 21 international and 1 national. Martin Belov was the project leader of 2 international scientific projects. He has published 23 books (7 monographs, 2 textbooks and 14 edited volumes), among them 1 monograph, 1 textbook and 13 edited volumes are in English and have been published by leading international publishers. Assoc. Prof. Belov has also published 100 scientific articles, studies and book chapters. He is fluent in English, German, Russian and French. He teaches in Bulgarian, English and German.

### **3. Fulfillment of the requirements for the academic position**

On the basis of the documents provided by the candidate in the competition I can make the conclusion that Assoc. Prof. Dr. Martin Belov entirely meets the existing legal requirements for holding the academic position of Professor. He holds the required Master's and Doctor's degrees, holds the academic position of Associate Professor and has submitted a monograph. The evidence presented by the candidate

shows that the additional requirements of the University of St. Kliment Ohridski" are also fulfilled. More precisely, the candidate scores the following points under the indicators:

- Indicator A - 50 points;
- Indicator B - 100 points;
- Indicator D - 432.5 points;
- Indicator E - 610 points,
- Indicator F - 515 points.
- Total 1707.5 points.

#### **4. Evaluation of teaching and learning activities**

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Martin Belov teaches numerous courses at the Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" in Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral degrees in Bulgarian and English. Almost all of them are at the Faculty of Law, with a course at the Faculty of Philosophy. In front of students of law Assoc. Prof. Belov teaches the compulsory course "Constitutional Law of the Republic of Bulgaria" as well as the elective course "Comparative Constitutional Law". In front of International Relations students he teaches the compulsory course "Comparative Constitutional Law". Martin Belov teaches the compulsory course "European Constitutionalism" in the bachelor program "European Studies". He also teaches the course "Comparative Constitutionalism" at the PhD School of the Faculty of Law of the University of Sofia "St. Kliment Ohridski" and the courses "Human Rights - Historical and Comparative Aspects" and "Human Rights in the Technological Society" in the Master's program "Protection of Fundamental Rights", of which he is also the academic director. Assoc. Prof. Belov teaches in English to students of the Erasmus+ program the courses Comparative Constitutional Law and Supranational and European Constitutionalism.

Martin Belov lectures as a visiting professor at leading European and world universities mainly in Italy, Israel, France, Germany, Poland and Greece. He regularly gives public lectures at other European universities. Assoc. Prof. Martin Belov has more than 18 years of teaching experience. Teaching a wide range of courses in the field of constitutional law, as well as in related fields such as the theory, philosophy and sociology of state and law, EU constitutional law and comparative law, has ensured Martin Belov the

necessary teaching qualities for him to be elected as Professor of Constitutional Law. Assoc. Prof. Belov has also developed his own author courses in constitutional semiotics, comparative constitutionalism, supranational and European constitutionalism, and comparative constitutional law. In doing so, he contributes to the development of scholarship and teaching in constitutional law.

Assoc. Prof. Martin Belov is a scientific supervisor of 5 PhD students in Constitutional Law. Two of them have finished their PhD studies with the right to defend their PhD thesis and 3 are still PhD students. Martin Belov has been a scientific supervisor of numerous successfully defended Master's theses of students in the Master's program "Protection of Fundamental Rights". Martin Belov has also been a thesis supervisor at the Goethe-University and the European Academy of Legal Theory (Frankfurt am Main, FRG). He also participates in committees for Master thesis defense at the ELGS (Athens, Greece).

Assoc. Prof. Belov's lecturing activity, as well as his work as a supervisor of master's and doctoral theses, demonstrates the competence and suitability of the candidate to be elected to the academic position of "professor" in 3.6. Law (Constitutional Law). Clearly Prof. Belov is a well-established teacher, capable of giving lectures at a high academic level in Bulgarian, English and German language to different categories of students, at the University of Sofia "St. Kliment Ohridski" (mainly in the Faculty of Law, but also in the Faculty of Philosophy), as well as at leading foreign universities.

## **5. General characteristics of the presented scientific works/publications**

### **5.1. Main directions and scientific and/or scientific-applied results in the research activity**

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Martin Belov participates in the competition with a monograph, 18 studies and 5 articles. The publications were written and published in the period 2018-2022 and are in the field of the scientific knowledge relevant for the competition. The scientific publications submitted for participation in the competition are of excellent scientific quality. They represent significant achievement and significant innovation in the scientific field in which Assoc. Prof. Martin Belov works and in which he is applying for a professorship. They are indisputable proof of the candidate's suitability to be elected and to hold the academic position of "professor" in Constitutional Law.

Based on the publications submitted for participation in the competition one can conclude that they are related to several major scientific topics. These are the thematic areas of: constitutional semiotics, the

theory of constitutionalism and in particular supranational and comparative constitutionalism, the constitutional theory of time and the constitutional politics of memories, the constitutional theory of territory and territoriality, the role of courts in contemporary constitutionalism (especially judicial activism, judicial dialogue and the role of constitutional, international and supranational courts as legislators and political actors), constitutional justice, constitutional transitions, constitutional problems of the state of emergency, the role of national constitutions in the multi-level constitutionalism of the EU, the constitutional theory of the rule of law and democracy, human rights and human dignity, etc.

The publications of the candidate Assoc. Professor Belov have great theoretical significance. They are a contribution to the development of constitutional theory. Some of them, for example, those dedicated to the role of courts in modern societies, constitutional justice, etc., also have important practical significance.

## **5.2. Evaluation of the monograph ("Constitutional semiotics. Conceptual foundations of a theory and metatheory", Sofia, "St. Kliment Ohridski" University Press, 2022)**

The monograph "Constitutional semiotics. Conceptual foundations of a theory and metatheory", Sofia, "St. Kliment Ohridski" University Press, 2022, comprises 398 pages. The book was also published in English in 2022 by "Hart" publishing house, Oxford.

The monograph consists of an introduction and five chapters. The first chapter explores the constitutional signification of meaning through a semiotic approach. It presents constitutional semiotics as theory and metatheory. The influence of rational constitutionalism on the expression, signification and presentation of constitutional meaning is investigated. The second, third and fourth chapters are respectively devoted to textual constitutionalism, symbolic-imaginary constitutionalism and visual constitutionalism. The final fifth chapter examines constitutional geometry and constitutional algebra as semiotic paradigms for explaining and ordering constitutionalism, the constitution, and constitutional law.

Chapter I brings up for discussion conceptual and methodological issues of paradigmatic importance for the entire book. Chapters two, three and four examine and clarify aspects of representation constitutional and constitutionally relevant meaning. The author explores the signification of constitutional meaning through text and textuality, through linguistic forms, and through art, architecture, and behavior. Belov makes a well-founded and innovative distinction between textual, symbolic-imaginary, visual and performative constitutionalism. An essential novelty and contribution is the analysis of rational, normative-

institutional, emotional, quantum and cloud constitutionalism. Also innovative and contributing is the analysis of constitutional geometry and constitutional algebra as meta-theories applicable to structured constitutional imaginaries.

The theories and metatheories created and developed by Assoc. Prof. Belov are a contribution to the theory of constitutional law. They lay the foundations of an original theory of constitutional semiotics that successfully fits into the growing interest in the role of constitutional imagination and imaginaries, emotional constitutionalism and visual representations of constitutional content in scholarly debate. In this way, Martin Belov's book makes an original contribution to the visual, emotional and linguistic turns taking place in constitutional theory in Europe in recent years.

After this quick overview of the structure of the book, I will go into more detail about the individual chapters and their contributing points.

The first chapter is devoted to fundamental concepts. It presents the conceptual framework in which the book will further develop and raises a number of important methodological issues. The chapter explores the phenomenon of constitutional semiosis. In it, the author clarifies the general structure of this process and defines and presents the fundamental issues of signification, signifiers and signifieds in constitutionalism and constitutional law. The subject of signifiers and signifieds is fundamental to general semiotics. Martin Belov creates a constitutional matrix for signifying meaning arising from the constitution and constitutional law through constitutional signifiers and signifieds. Thus, he lays the foundations of constitutional semiotics as an independent part of legal semiotics and a phenomenon related to general semiotics.

The author explains the specifics of constitutional semiosis from the perspective of constitutionalism. The analysis is constitutional and goes beyond the methodological framework of general semiotics. The book critically reconsiders the over-rationalism in law and in particular in constitutional law. It is a reasoned appeal to open up the law to constitutional imaginaries, constitutional emotions, and different ways of representing constitutional meaning, transcending the dominant rationalist and textual discourse. In this way, the book is a successful intellectual provocation, prompting the reader to start rethinking the purely textual existence of constitutional law, locked in "rationalist trap of modernity" as defined by Belov.

Constitutional semiotics is defined by the author as an intellectual field of tension located on the border between textuality, normativity, visuality and performativity. It is seen as an intellectual paradigm with conceptual, methodological and pragmatic dimensions that connects the ideal, normative, factual, emotional and imaginative aspects of constitutionalism development. The theory of constitutional semiotics

constructed in this way significantly enriches the cognitive and conceptual apparatus of constitutionalism. It expands the analytical perimeter of the science of constitutional law and contributes to an innovative approach to constitutional phenomena.

The book constructs constitutional semiotics as a theory and meta-theory of constitutionalism and constitutional law. It is a theory composed of many theories and at the same time a theory about theories. The author indicates as theories that function and as meta-theories the theories of quantum constitutionalism, cloud constitutionalism, textual, visual, symbolic-imaginary, emotional, performative and normative-institutional constitutionalism and constitutional geometry. All these theories are substantial and original contributions to constitutionalism and constitutional theory. It is noteworthy that some of them are the subject of a lasting and systematic interest of the author, expressed in a series of scientific publications. This applies especially to the theory of constitutional geometry developed by Martin Belov over the years.

Belov pays particular attention to the rational entrapment of modernity and its effect on the one-sidedness of modern constitutionalism. Chapter I offers a critical analysis of textual, rational, and normative-institutional constitutionalism. The book is a call to rethink the place, role and meaning of the "shadow constitutionalisms" brought out by Martin Belov. These are symbolic-imaginary, emotional, visual and performative constitutionalism. According to the author, this is necessary for an adequate understanding of the symbolic and transcendental characteristics of constitutions and constitutional law. The book is an interesting and original experiment in conceptualizing constitutionalism as a multidiscursive phenomenon. It is a successful example of applying innovative semiotic approaches to the constitution, constitutionalism and constitutional law.

The second chapter of the book introduces us to the author's concept of textual constitutionalism and its role for constitutional semiotics. It is a contribution to the so-called "linguistic turn" in the social sciences and humanities and in particular in legal science. The notion of textual constitutionalism offered to us by the author is informative, interesting and original. It is fundamental to understanding the basic ways of signifying constitutional meaning. Constitutional communication is an object of lasting interest for Martin Belov, expressed in various publications (e.g. Constitutional communication in the modern Bulgarian constitutional model. - in: Kirov, Pl. (ed.) 130 years of Bulgarian constitutionalism - problems and trends. Second volume. "St. Kliment Ohridski" University Press, 2009 (pp. 145-175)). Here it is explored in a new perspective through the prism of constitutional semiotics and in the context of textual constitutionalism. The constitution is examined as a textual discursive semiotic project, structured around constitutional narratives, constitutional narrators, and a constitutional semiotic community. Chapter II introduces us to the constitutional text and constitutional textuality from a semiotic perspective. Deriving

the concept of authoritative constitutional text, authoritative constitutional narrators, and analyzing the role of open textuality for constitutional law are essential for enriching constitutional theory.

The third chapter is dedicated to Belov's concept of symbolic-imaginary constitutionalism. A theory and general typology of symbolic-imaginary constitutionalism is proposed and its main manifestations are explored. The author defines the concept of symbolic-imaginary constitutionalism. He explores constitutional semiosis through the methods and forms of symbolic-imaginary constitutionalism. The analysis of the role of the psychological categories of collective conscious, subconscious and unconscious in constitutionalism and constitutional law is interesting and original.

The general comparative typology of symbolic-imaginary constitutionalism is also successful and worthy of approval. The functions of symbolic-imaginary constitutionalism and the semiotic characteristics of constitutional codes, normative ideologies and normative ideas and their role for symbolic-imaginary constitutionalism and constitutional semiotics are investigated. The semiotic role of constitutional myths and mythologies is also analyzed. Each of these concepts is new to constitutional theory.

The phenomena brought to the reader's attention and analyzed have substantial epistemic potential. It was developed to a significant extent by Martin Belov. The author clearly and logically outlines the essence and main characteristics of the forms of symbolic-imaginary constitutionalism. The study of normative ideologies and ideas and constitutional myths and mythologies is particularly interesting and successful. Besides, these problems are of permanent interest to the author, who also examines them in his other publications (e.g. "Humanism and rationalism as fundamental normative ideologies of constitutionalism". - in: Novkirishka, M., M. Belov, D. Nachev (ed.) Scientific conference "Human rights - 70 years after the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Rights of man" ISBN 978-954-07-4779-8, pp. 69-90). Here, however, he pays special attention to them and presents them to us as semiotic phenomena.

Many interesting and original intellectual provocations are contained in the fourth chapter, which is devoted to visual constitutionalism. The chapter explores the phenomenon of formal visual semiotics. Visual constitutionalism is considered as a form of constitutionalism, which the author substantiates through the successful combined application of semiotic and socio-legal approaches. The analysis of digital constitutional semiotics is interesting and timely. The digitization of constitutional law, and hence the means of signifying, representing, and expressing constitutional meaning, is one of the truly newest and most pressing issues facing constitutionalism today. Belov presents us with the provocative and original concepts he defines as "iconification", "emojification" and "memefication" of constitutional law. Also of interest is the interdisciplinary study of visual constitutionalism in pop culture, pop art and architecture.



The fifth chapter is devoted to the theory of constitutional geometry, including the basics of the theory of constitutional algebra. As already noted, Martin Belov has an abiding research interest in constitutional geometry, expressed in previous publications on the subject (see e.g. *The Challenges to Westphalian Constitutional Geometry in the Age of Supranational Constitutionalism, Global Governance and Information Revolution*. In: Belov, M. (ed.) *Global Constitutionalism and Its Challenges to Westphalian Constitutional Law*. Oxford: Hart publ., 2018 ISBN 9781509914906, p. 13-55). In his monograph, however, he presents constitutional geometry as a semiotic paradigm and a tool for semiotic analysis. Belov shows us the possibilities of researching, explaining and organizing constitutional law and constitutionalism through the use of mathematical metaphors. The analysis of the phenomenon of structured constitutional imaginaries is interesting, as well as the author's original typology of the forms of constitutional geometry.

The necessary conclusion is that the monograph proposed by the candidate Assoc. Prof. Martin Belov entitled "Constitutional Semiotics. Conceptual Foundations of a Theory and Metatheory" is a substantial and original scholarly contribution to constitutional theory. With this book, the author successfully engages with some of the most recent and significant debates in contemporary constitutionalism related to the linguistic, emotional, and visual turn in the social sciences, law, and the humanities. The book is a contribution to the study of constitutional imaginaries and ways of representing constitutional meaning. It is a large-scale interdisciplinary study using combined legal, socio-legal, social-psychological, anthropological, semiotic and semantic approaches. It significantly expands the horizons of modern constitutional law science and contributes to its methodological enrichment. The range of literature used, the intellectual dialogue with the leading authors in the field, the systematic, bold and creative approach in its totality to a substantial contribution to constitutional theory. The book "Constitutional Semiotics" fully meets all the requirements for presenting a habilitation thesis for the academic position of "professor".

## **6. Evaluation of scientific and scientific-applied contributions**

The studies and articles presented by Associate Professor Martin Belov for participation in the competition for Professor of Constitutional Law, individually and in their unity, reveal the deep theoretical knowledge, original and independent thinking and excellent analytical abilities of the author. They are distinguished by a high scientific style and are indisputable achievements for constitutional theory. The list of publications, summaries of the publications and a reference to the original scientific contributions

attached by Prof. Martin Belov reflect his scientific achievements in detail, accurately and correctly. It is noteworthy that the studies and articles, as well as the English version of the monographic work, were published in leading Bulgarian and world publishing houses - Hart (Oxford), Routledge (Oxford), Edward Elgar (Oxford), Palgrave (London), Intersentia (Cambridge), Springer (Vienna), Kluwer (Deventer), etc. Six publications - three studies and three articles - are indexed in Scopus and Web of Science. The candidate is also the author of a number of prestigious international edited volumes, widely cited by Bulgarian and foreign authors, which is evident from the documents submitted by the candidate (table with minimum science metric requirements and reference for citations).

Here it is worth noting that the candidate Martin Belov collects 432.5 points from the group D indicators, i.e. from studies and articles. The same multiple exceeding of the required minimum is also observed in the indicators under group D, reflecting the citations of the candidate's scientific works. There he collects 610 points. All this speaks of great productivity of the author, combined with high quality evident from the prestige of the publications and their high citation rate. A significant part of the quotes is from foreign scientists and are in well-known international publications.

The candidate Assoc.Prof. Belov is also participant in 23 scientific projects 1 of which is national and 22 international. Martin Belov is also the principle investigator of 2 of the international projects. These are significant projects with high scientific and practical value. They are organized by prestigious national and international institutions and lead to interesting and important scientific and practical results. Here it is enough to mention projects under the Horizon 2030 program of the European Commission, projects of the European Research Council, as well as projects that are financed by the funds for excellence in Germany, Austria, Italy and Poland, to convince ourselves of the qualities of Assoc.Prof. Belov as an internationally recognized scientist, researcher and lecturer.

The contributions of the candidate for professor, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Martin Belov, can be systematized in several groups. Of course, first of all, the contributions concerning constitutional semiotics, developed mainly in the monographic work presented in the procedure, should be mentioned. They have already been discussed in detail earlier in this review, so I will not devote further attention to them here. It should be mentioned that the contributions concern both constitutional semiotics as a general scientific discipline and specific aspects related to rational, emotional, symbolic-imaginary, textual and visual constitutionalism.

Furthermore, the contributions related to the theory of Westphalian, post-Westphalian and neo-Westphalian constitutionalism should be indicated. This is a theory (or rather a system of theories) that Assoc. Prof. Belov develops in several of his publications. These are mainly the studies: 'The Challenges

to Westphalian Constitutional Geometry in the Age of Supranational Constitutionalism, Global Governance and Information Revolution'; 'Three Models for Ordering Constitutional Orders'; 'Constitutional Nationalism and Constitutional Globalism on the edge of Westphalian and Post-Westphalian Constitutionalism: the Bulgarian Case'; 'Constitutional Identity – Westphalian Reflection of the Constitutional Heritage of the Nation State or Post-Westphalian Alternative to Sovereignty in the Context of Supranational Constitutionalism?'; 'Judicial Dialogue - Westphalian or post-Westphalian Constitutional Phenomenon? и Global Rule of Law instead of Global Democracy? Legitimacy of Global Judicial Empire on the Edge between Westphalian and post-Westphalian Constitutionalism. Here Martin Belov develops arguments related to the essence of Westphalian, post-Westphalian and neo-Westphalian constitutionalism. He engaged in debates concerning constitutionalism beyond the borders of statehood. His studies of the role of the courts and administration in a post-Westphalian and neo-Westphalian context, the models for ordering constitutional orders, the importance of constitutional identity, judicial dialogue and technocracy in a postmodern and post-territorial context, etc., represent a significant scientific contribution.

Interesting are also the contributions related to the constitutional theory of time and the memory politics. They are developed in the article 'Constitutional memories: how do constitutions cope with constitutional past' and the monograph 'Constitutional semiotics. Conceptual Foundations of a Theory and Metatheory'. The study of constitutional memory and constitutional memories as part of the constitutional politics of the time and, in particular, of the constitutional politics of the past can be defined as a significant contribution to the constitutional science.

Assoc. Prof. Belov's contributions in the field of the constitutional theory of territory and territoriality also deserve attention. They are mainly contained in the study "Territory, Territoriality and Territorial Politics as Public Law Concepts" and can be systematized in several directions as follows: bringing out the constitutional aspects of the crisis of territoriality; study of territory and territoriality as signifiers in constitutional law; defining the essence and content of the territory, territoriality and territorial policy as public law concepts; the derivation of models of territoriality; analysis of the constitutional significance of territorial politics in the era of digitalization and globalization and the creation of a typology of constitutional territorial politics.

The contributions of the candidate Assoc. Prof. Belov, regarding judicial activism, judicial dialogue and the role of constitutional, international and supranational courts as legislators and political actors, have both theoretical and practical value. They are developed and contained in the studies: „The Constitutional Court of the Republic of Bulgaria as Law Maker“, „Judicial Dialogue - Westphalian or post-Westphalian Constitutional Phenomenon?“, „Mastering emergency situations: The activist role of the Bulgarian Constitutional Court in redefining the constitutional design of war, state of siege and state of

emergency “, „Global Rule of Law instead of Global Democracy? Legitimacy of Global Judicial Empire on the Edge between Westphalian and post-Westphalian Constitutionalism “, „Constitutional Courts as Ultimate Players in Multilevel Constituent Power Games: the Bulgarian Case” and „Structural Adjustments of the Bulgarian to the EU Constitutional Order: Between the Conditionality of Democracy in Transition and the Challenges of the Multilevel Constitutionalism of the EU “. The essence, meaning and role of these phenomena in the context of modern constitutionalism are clarified.

The contributions of candidate Martin Belov related to access to constitutional justice also have important practical value. They are developed in two studies. These are the studies "The Constitutional Court as a Court of Human Rights? State of the system for access to the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Bulgaria in connection with the protection of human rights and proposals for its reform", - in Valchev, D., M. Belov (eds.) *The Rule of Law in Bulgaria. Current issues in the field of constitutional justice and the judiciary*, Sofia, “St. Kliment Ohridski” University Press, 2021, ISBN 978-954-07-5206-8, pp. 56-99 and "The debate on the means of protection of human rights before the Constitutional Court in Bulgaria in the period 1989-2020" (co-authored with Maria Dimitrova), - in Valchev, D., M. Belov (eds.) *The Rule of Law in Bulgaria. Current issues in the field of constitutional justice and the judiciary*. Sofia, “St. Kliment Ohridski” University Press, 2021, ISBN 978-954-07-5206-8, pp. 17-56.

Constitutional transitions and transitional constitutionalism, along with constitutional polycrisis and emergency constitutionalism are also interestingly and successfully developed by the candidate. Of particular interest are the creation of the concepts of constitutional polycrisis, emergency constitutionalism and transitional constitutionalism. Very interesting, significant and useful is the systematization of the main aspects of the crisis of liberal representative constitutional democracy, as well as the development of constitutional politics of fear. The trends towards a global algorithmic technocracy and the forms of expert-technocratic governance are presented, which question constitutional democracy as the dominant model of governance in Western societies. These problems are mainly analyzed in the studies “Rule of Law and Democracy in Times of Transitory Constitutionalism, Constitutional Polycrisis and Emergency Constitutionalism: Towards a Global Algorithmic Technocracy?”, in: Belov, M. (ed.) *Rule of Law in Crisis: Constitutionalism in a State of Flux*, Routledge, 2023, ISBN 9781032393858, p 21-47, “The Role of Fear Politics in Global Constitutional ‘Ernstfall’: Images of Fear under COVID-19 Health Paternalism, in Belov, M. (ed.) *Populist Constitutionalism and Illiberal Democracies. Between Constitutional Imagination, Normative Entrenchment and Political Reality*”, Cambridge, Intersentia, 2021, ISBN 978-1839700606, p. 187-221 и “Mastering emergency situations: The activist role of the Bulgarian Constitutional Court in redefining the constitutional design of war, state of siege and state of emergency, in Belov, M (ed.) *Courts*

and Judicial Activism under Crisis Conditions: Policy Making in a Time of Illiberalism and Emergency Constitutionalism”, Routledge, 2021, ISBN 978-1032060828, p. 171-194.

Contributions concerning the role of national constitutions in the context of EU membership can also be highlighted. These are contributions that conceptualize the role of national constitutions in the multi-level constitutionalism of the EU and in the development of the so-called "constitutionalism beyond statehood". These contributions are mainly contained in the studies “Three Models for Ordering Constitutional Orders”, in *Pravni Zapisi*, Year XIII, Nr. 2 (2022), ISSN 2406-1387, p. 361-387, “Structural Adjustments of the Bulgarian to the EU Constitutional Order: Between the Conditionality of Democracy in Transition and the Challenges of the Multilevel Constitutionalism of the EU”, in: Griller, S., L. Papadopoulou and R. Puff (eds) *National Constitutions and the EU Integration*, Oxford, Hart, 2022, ISBN 9781509906741, p. 33-59, “Bulgaria: EMU Integration and the Bulgarian Constitution: 'Missing Constitution' or EU Friendliness and Open Statehood Masquerading Implicit Sovereignist Strategies in the Context of Multilevel Constitutional Games?”, in Griller, S., E. Lentsch (eds.) *EMU Integration and Member States' Constitutions*, Oxford, Hart, 2021, ISBN 9781509935789, c. 75-96, “Constitutional Courts as Ultimate Players in Multilevel Constituent Power Games: the Bulgarian Case”, in Belov, M. (ed.) *Courts, Politics and Constitutional Law. Judicialization of Politics and Politicization of the Judiciary*. Abingdon, Routledge, 2019, ISBN 9781032087214, c. 152-173 and “The Bulgarian Constitutional Order, Supranational Constitutionalism and European Governance”, in: Albi, A., S. Bardutzky (eds.) *National Constitutions in European and Global Governance: Democracy, Rights, the Rule of Law National Reports*, The Hague: TMC Asser Press, 2019 (co-authored with E. Tanchev) ISBN 978-94-6265-272-9, p. 1097-1139, as well as in the paper “Constitutional Identity – Westphalian Reflection of the Constitutional Heritage of the Nation State or Post-Westphalian Alternative to Sovereignty in the Context of Supranational Constitutionalism?”, in: Mercescu, A. (ed) *Constitutional Identities in Central and Eastern Europe*. Frankfurt am Main, Peter Lang, 2022, ISBN 978-3-631-80796-5, p. 73-91.

The candidate Assoc. Professor Belov has also made contributions in the fields of the constitutional theory of democracy, the rule of law in national and supranational constitutionalism, as well as in researching the impact of the information and technological revolution on constitutionalism, human rights, human dignity and humanism as a normative constitutional ideology. These contributions are contained in the studies “Global Rule of Law instead of Global Democracy? Legitimacy of Global Judicial Empire on the Edge between Westphalian and post-Westphalian Constitutionalism”, in Belov, M. (ed.) *The Role of Courts in Contemporary Legal Orders*, The Hague, Eleven, 2019, ISBN 978-9462369207, p. 99-133, “Post-human Constitutionalism? A Critical Defence of Anthropocentric and Humanist Traditions in Algorithmic Society”, in Belov, M. (ed.) *The IT Revolution and its Impact on State, Constitutionalism and Public Law*,

Oxford, Hart, 2021, ISBN 9781509940875, p. 15-41, “Rule of Law and Democracy in Times of Transitory Constitutionalism, Constitutional Polycrisis and Emergency Constitutionalism: Towards a Global Algorithmic Technocracy?”, in: Belov, M. (ed.) Rule of Law in Crisis: Constitutionalism in a State of Flux, Routledge, 2023, ISBN 9781032393858, p. 21-47, and “Constitutional Court as Human Rights Court? The System for Access to the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Bulgaria with Regard to Human Rights Defense and Suggestions for Its Reform” in Valchev, D., M. Belov (eds) Rule of Law in Bulgaria. Contemporary Issues of Constitutional Justice and the Judiciary. Sofia, University of Sofia ‘St. Kliment Ohridski’ Press, 2021 (p. 56-99) (in Bulgarian) as well as in the paper “Constitutional Foundations of Peace and Discontent”, in: Belov, M. (ed.) Peace, Discontent and Constitutional Law. Challenges to Constitutional Order and Democracy, Routledge, 2021, ISBN 978-0367539702, p. 15-30.

In conclusion, the evaluation of the scientific and practical contributions of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Martin Belov, which can be made on the basis of the scientific works submitted for participation in the competition, is very high. It concerns the multiple and complex contributions at different levels of constitutional theory, which reveal the high professional achievements and qualities of the candidate for professorship.

## **7. Critical remarks and recommendations**

Two recommendations to the candidate should be made. The first of them concerns the language used in the publications. In many of his works, Prof. Belov introduced a number of new and complex scientific concepts. I would recommend that he take more care to clarify and define them in further detail. This would contribute to the better understanding of the concepts he offers and would increase the readability of his scientific works.

The second recommendation is related to the first. I would suggest that the professor candidate in subsequent publications should further develop and flesh out some of the concepts and concepts he has proposed. It is mainly about the concepts of "constitutional code" and "constitutional utopia". I find these concepts interesting and further exploration of them will be beneficial to both the candidate and scholarly discussion in the field.

The recommendations and notes made do not cast doubt on the indisputable high qualities of the candidate. They do not detract from the overall excellent rating for his candidacy for Professor of Constitutional Law.

## **8. Conclusion**

The only candidate in the competition for Professor of Constitutional Law, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Martin Kirilov Belov, demonstrates indisputable research and teaching qualities. The above-mentioned conclusions about the scope and level of theoretical contributions, applied achievements and teaching qualities of Associate Professor Belov give me the reason to come to the justified conclusion that he fully meets the conditions of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in connection with the current competition. Therefore, with conviction, I recommend the respected scientific jury to elect and propose Assoc. Prof. Dr. Martin Belov for the academic position of "professor" that is object of the competition announced by the "University of Sofia "St. Kliment Ohridski" in professional field 3.6. Law (Constitutional Law), published in the State Gazette, no. 65 of 28.07.2023.

Prof. Dr. Plamen Kirov