

P E E R R E V I E W

**From: Professor Yordan Hristoskov, PhD, Plovdiv University “Paisii Hilendarski”,
Scientific specialty: “National Economy (incl. Regional Economy and History of National
Economy)”**

**Regarding: Competition for Ass. Professor at Plovdiv Univrsity “Paisii Hilendarski”, in
the Professional field 3.8 Economics - (Political Economy - Microeconomics and Labor
market)**

1. Information about the Procedure

The Procedure has been announced for the needs of the Department „Economic Sciences“, Faculty of Economic Social Sciences (FESS) at Plovdiv University „Paisii Hilendarski“, state newspaper №57/26.06.2020.

I participate as a member of the Scientific Jury for this Procedure according to Ordinance № P33-4132/26.06.2020 of the Rector of Plovdiv University “Paisii Hilendarski” . The only candidate applied under this procedure is Chief Assistant Stefan Atanasov Raychev, Ph.D. in the Department „Economic Sciences“ at FESS.

2. Information about the candidate

Chief Assistant Stefan Atanasov Raychev acquired Master’s degree (Human resources management) in Plovdiv University “Paisii Hilendarski” in 2009. From February 2008 to August 2012 he was employed as Product Manager in “Yavor” Ltd., Pazardzhik.

In the period 2013 -2016 Stefan Raychev was a doctoral student at the Department „Economic Sciences“ at FESS. He defended his thesis on “Effects of the labor market policies, stimulating economic growth and diminishing poverty and inequality (Present dimensions of the main economic choice between state influence and free choice)” and he was acquired the PhD in 2016. Doctor Raychev was appointed as Assistant on Economics at the Department „Economic Sciences“ in October 2016 and as Chief assistant on Political economy in 2017 till now.

As Assistant and Chief assistant Stefan Raychev conducts seminars and leads lectures in bachelor’s degree on Labor economics, Human resources management, Economics of the Public sector, Economics and The Globalization and social policies. Doctor Raychev is not only

a lecture, but he also has research experience in some university, national and international projects.

3. Fulfillment of requirements for occupation of the academic position Assistant professor

The information in the submitted quantitative card shows that the application of Chief assistant Doctor Stefan Raychev fully complies with the National Minimum Requirements under LADSRB (Art. 2b) and the Rules for its application (Art. 1a, para. 1). His quantitative assessment of 463.9 points exceeds the required threshold of 400 points. The Additional Requirements for the position Assistant professor (according to the decision of the Faculty Council) are also met - Doctor Raychev forms 208.3 points more. In that way he obtained total 672.2 points, both by mandatory and additional requirements. He also covered the additional requirements of the Regulation for the development of the academic staff in Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski" (article 58): coauthor of textbook; designed two curriculum programs on Economics and Economy of the public sector; lecturing Microeconomics and Labor Economics; participation in at least three research projects; participation in the competition for Assistant professor with monography, scientific articles, scientific reports, and book, published in referred editions.

4. Evaluation of teaching and research activities

The submitted documentation shows that Chief assistant Stefan Raychev has completed 1060 hours of lectures and seminars in the period 2016 -2020, as well as 295 hours more in teaching and pedagogical practice (semester exams, consultation and evaluation of the course works). He leads lectures and seminars in the bachelor's degree in the following disciplines: "Economy of Public sector", "Human Resources Management" and "Microeconomics", "Labor Economy" and "Economics". Doctor Raychev also participated as guest lecturer in the framework of Erasmus+ program in the Valladolid, Spain in 2019 and also as lecturer in the Erasmus+ program international student's mobility in Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski" in 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020.

Chief Assistant Stefan Raychev is an author of 2 curriculum programs: in bachelor's degree - on "Economics" (approved by the Department Council with Protocol N 109 of 07.11.2016) and on "Economy of the Public sector", (approved by the Department Council with Protocol N 116 of 12.06.2017). He has also developed 4 adapted courses for the Erasmus students on "Microeconomics", "Macroeconomics", "Labor economics" and "Human resources management". Doctor Raychev is coauthor of the textbook on Economics (Publishing house of

Plovdiv University “Paisii Hilendarski”, 2018, ISBN 978-619-202-3737) for bachelor’s degree students. Chief assistant Stefan Raychev works actively with students and PhD students in FESS as conference and round tables moderator, as assessor in the competition “Young Economist 2017” and as a conductor and reviewer of student’s course works.

It is seen that the teaching activity of Chief assistant Doctor Stefan Raychev is in accordance with the subject of the announced competition for the academic position “Assistant Professor” in the speciality Political Economy - Microeconomy and Labor market.

The scientific and applied activity of Chief assistant Doctor Stefan Raychev is represented by his participation as a team leader and expert in several scientific projects implemented within the Research Fund of the Plovdiv University and projects funded by OPHRD, crossborder cooperation programs IN TER REG, national program “Young scientists and postdoctorants 2019” and some others.

5. General overview of the submitted publications

For the purposes of this competition Doctor Stefan Raychev submitted for review 18 (eighteen) scientific publications and all of them are from the period after his PhD degree (2016) and after his competition for Chief assistant (2017). The presented publications include: 1 book based on the defended PhD thesis (this book is not subject of the present peer review, but is accounted in the table of the science-metric indicators); 2 collective monographs and 1 separated chapter in collective monography; 7 articles in scientific magazines (one of which is referred and indexed in SCOPUS); 6 scientific reports, published in peer-reviewed books; 1 textbook. In 4 articles and scientific reports Doctor Raychev is the only author and in 9 articles and scientific reports he is coauthor. Six of the publications are in English and another 6 has extended summary in English. Separation protocols for the collective publications are presented. If we take into account the individual publications of Doctor Raychev and his personal participation in the collective works the total volume of his publications is 781pages. All publications of Chief assistant Stefan Raychev are in the field of labor market and human resources, the European integration and social cohesion, micro- and macroeconomics.

The monography (Stoyanova, D., Raychev, S., Madzhurova, B. (2019). Social cohesion (National, regional and structural dimensions in the context of Bulgaria - EU - Western Balkans). Publishing house “Paisii Hilendarski”, Plovdiv, ISBN 978-619-202-442-0 is presented as habilitation work. According to the separation protocol Doctor Raychev has active participation in all parts of this publication, including in the developed and applied methodological instruments for evaluating the social cohesion. His personal contribution in this

work is: Part two - National and regional dimensions of the social cohesion (empirical economic analysis: EU - Bulgaria - regions in Bulgaria), pp. 46 - 164 and Part three - Structural dimensions of the social cohesion (empirical economic analysis: EU - Bulgaria - regions in Bulgaria) pp. 165 - 261. In Part two of the monography the social cohesion in the field of labor market and living standard at national and regional level in the period 2008 - 2016 are subject of graphic, correlation, regression and rank analysis. The final assessment, extracted by the summarized rank analysis, is that during its membership Bulgaria is not approaching to EU, especially due to the negative results in the last three years. In Part three of the book subject of the analysis (applying the same instruments) is the structural dimensions of the social cohesion in the axis EU - Bulgaria - regions in Bulgaria. The summarized rank analysis here shows different level of convergence for the separate demographic groups by gender, age and the level of education.

The contribution of this monography is the conclusion that the public policy is not in ability to help the convergence of Bulgaria to the EU at that stage and this is a signal for overthinking that policy. Something more, the membership of the Western Balkans in EU can bring to one more probable negative scenario for Bulgaria - to place it in one “second or third speed group”, together with other Balkan countries, within the framework of EU.

The monography work (Raychev, S., Stoyanova, D., Madzhurova, B. The influence of the globalization to the characteristics of the jobs and employment. 2020, Publishing house “Paisii Hilendarski”, Plovdiv, ISBN 978- 619-202-563-2) analyze the link between the globalization and labor market and changes in the job characteristics. The discovered influence of the globalization bring the needs to overthink the present practices and the necessities to apply policy and measures, in accordance with the new ages.

In the collective monography “Social cohesion in the sphere of education - the achieved level in Bulgaria, EU and Western Balkans. European integration today - some problems and possibilities” (Stefan Raychev is an author of Chapter two) the social cohesion is studied in the context of the educational connectivity. A methodological framework is elaborated to evaluate the achieved level of social cohesion in education in Western Balkan countries in comparison to EU. The study shows that the overthinking of the social cohesion in education is needed and bring to the conclusion that new methods for the evaluation of the cohesion policy should be applied in this field.

The rest publications of the candidate Doctor Raychev (7 scientific articles and 6 papers presented on the conferences) are also connected to the subject of the competition. They study the disproportions between labor productivity and the wages (publ. 4 in the list); discovered the specific problems of the inactive population in the young age and analyze the efficiency of the

expenditures in the public sector and in the labor market policy (publ.1, 3, 5 and 7); study the problem of the working poor people (publ. 6); assess the influence of the technological progress on the labor market (publ.13). Group of publications are dedicated to the tendencies and the future processes in EU in the context of the dichotomy Euro optimism - Euro skepticism (publ. 2); measured with specific instruments social cohesion in the axis EU - Bulgaria - Western Balkans (pub. 9); analyze the fiscal consolidation in the new member countries of EU (publ. 8); transferred on Bulgarian ground the European LLL policy (publ. 10 and 12); consider the problems and perspectives of the social entrepreneurship in the conditions of European integration (publ. 11).

The publications presented by Chief Assistant Stefan Raychev for the present competition do not include the scientific works, which are used for the purpose of the participation in the competition for Chief Assistant (2017) and for the defend of the PhD thesis (2016). The presented publications are his personal achievements, which is confirm in the applied declaration.

6. Evaluation of scientific and applied contributions

In general, the contributions of the candidate for academic position “ Assistant Professor” Chief Assistant Doctor Stefan Raychev can be qualified as systematization of existing knowledges, discovering the tendencies, relations and problems in the field of labor market, education, human resources and living standard on the basis of rich analyses of empirical data, practices and policy. These results are reached by him through one systematically applied specific scientific toolkit - graphic, descriptive, time, comparative, and rank analysis, as well as correlation and regression analysis for assessment of the dependences.

In particular, the following scientific and applied contribution in the publications of Chief Assistant Doctor Stefan Raychev can be pointed out:

- 1) Objectives and comparative estimates for the level of social cohesion on the axis EU - Bulgaria (national and regional level) - Western Balkans in the field of labor market, education and living standard are obtained. These estimates leads to more clear and more correct conclusions for the efficiency and effectiveness of the European, National and regional policy in these areas. (publ. 1, 3, 9, 10, 12)
- 2) A conclusion is derived, that one hasty accession of more countries from Western Balkans to the EU can bring to one more probable negative scenario for Bulgaria - to place the country in one “second or third speed group” or in the “periphery/outer circle” in one “new EU”. Apart from that, the cohesion and structural funds would be more

limited for Bulgaria. (publ. 1 and 3)

- 3) The influence of the globalization on the labor market and the character of the jobs in the context of demographic structures, as well as according to the main kind of employment in the different economic sectors. The necessity of overthinking the present practices and implementation of different programs and measures, in the correspondence with the requirements of the 4th industrial revolution - for example, introduction of new methods of management, digitalization and introduction of new ITC technologies, new knowledges and skills, flexible employment and distance jobs. (publ. 2 and 13)
- 4) The trends and structural changes of the labor market and its parameters like economic activity, employment, unemployment, the educational level of the work force, generally and by specific groups - long term unemployed, discourages people, young (with accent to NEETS) are studied. The influence of the negative dimensions of these parameters on the risk of poverty and material deprivation of the households is pointed out. (publ. 5, 6, 7)
- 5) The present status and the perspectives of the integration/disintegration process in EU are evaluated. The role and the significance of the universal human values is underlined and the opportunities for the implementation of the common European policy like sustainable development, intelligent and inclusive growth, innovations, fiscal consolidation, social cohesion, LLL, social entrepreneurship, and others in Bulgaria are studied as a counterpoint to the Euroscepticism. (publ. 1, 2, 4, 7, 9, 10, 11)
- 6) A package of tools for the valuation of the public sector activity is elaborated and the specifics of each of the suggested models is analyzed. Their advantages and reform, policy or project. (publ. 4)
- 7) Conclusions for the existing sectoral disproportions, as a prerequisite for the ineffective distribution of the resources in the national economy, are made on the base of the analysis of the trends and disproportions between labor productivity and wages. (publ. 7)

The contributions, contained in the academic works of Chief assistant Doctor Stefan Raychev enrich the existing scientific literature and research works in the field of labor market, European integration and social cohesion mostly by their actuality, systematics and comprehensiveness. This conclusion can be proved to some extent by discovered 6 citations of his publications in local and foreign books and magazines, as 2 of them are in

referred and indexed in data base.

The above cited facts confirm that Doctor Stefan Raychev has an established authority as a teacher and young researcher among the students and his colleagues. All these evidences prove it, that he is completely ready to occupy the academic position Assistant professor.

7. Critical notes and recommendations

From formal point of view the absence of individual monography as habitation work can be qualified as disadvantage for the candidate. However from substantive point of view, participation in the competition with comprehensive deep and logically completed collective work has some significant advantages. Apart from the pointed out dignity of the habilitation work and the contributions of Chief assistant Raychev in this monography, the ability to work in a team and every individual contribution to be recognized is also important.

I recommend Chief assistant Doctor Stefan Raychev to make a transition from more descriptive analysis to preliminary factor analysis, to conduct more deep analysis of policy and to be able to recommend new policy in the field of his scientific interests.

8. Conclusion

The pointed out in this peer review theoretical and scientifically-applied contributions, contained in evaluated original academic works, as well as presented data for educational, practical and public activity of the candidate, give me arguments for *positive opinion*, and to propose Chief assistant Doctor Stefan Atanasov Raychev for the academic position "Assistant Professor" in the Professional field 3.8 Economics - (Political Economy - Microeconomics and Labor market) in FISS at Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski".

Reviewer:

(Professor Yordan Hristoskov, PhD)