

OPINION

by **Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vanya Petrova Ivanova**, Department of Economic Sciences, FESS
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Scientific specialty "Political Economy (Microeconomics and Macroeconomics)"

Subject: Competition for "**Associate Professor**" in the professional field 3.8 Economics (Political Economy - Microeconomics and Labour Market) at the Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences at Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski".

1. Information about the competition

The competition was announced for the needs of the Department of Economic Sciences, Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences at Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski", according to a decision of the Faculty Council of FESS, protocol № 143 from 29.05.2020, the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulation for the organization and conduct of competitions for acquiring degrees and for occupation of academic positions in the PU "Paisii Hilendarski", and was published in SG, NUMBER 57 from 26.06.2020.

I participate in the composition of the scientific jury of the competition as an internal member according to Order № P33-4132 from 25.08.2020 of the Rector of PU.

One candidate participates in the competition. The assessment of the candidate for the academic position "associate professor" is prepared according to the fulfilment of the conditions under art. 53 and in accordance with the results of the inquiries under Art. 54, para. 1.

2. Brief information about the candidates in the competition

Stefan Raichev is a full graduate of FESS. He has a bachelor's degree from PU "P. Hilendarski" and master's degree, specialty "Human Resources Management". Since 2016 he is a doctor of economics. He has held the positions of Assistant Professor and since 2017 and so far Raichev is a chief assistant in the FESS of PU. The accumulated, although not very long, professional experience of the candidate as a lecturer and assistant at the University of Plovdiv is undoubtedly a proof of high professionalism, serious expertise and good achievements in research. In parallel with his academic career, Stefan Raichev has participated in numerous research projects, which presents him as a scientist.

3. Fulfilment of the requirements for holding the academic position

3.1. Compliance with the mandatory national minimum quantitative requirements for the academic position "Associate professor"

The candidate Stefan Raichev fully fulfils the mandatory conditions laid down in Art. 26 of LDACRB and art. 65 (1) of the Rules for DAS of PU, as:

- He has obtained an educational and scientific degree of doctor;

- He is the author of a significant number of scientific publications on the topic of the competition, incl. and co-author of a collective monograph reviewed by two scientific reviewers and has the required number of citations;
- Has held the academic position of Chief Assistant since October 2017.

Ch. Assistant Professor Dr. Stefan Raichev presents scientific products and documents that prove the formation of just over 460 points, according to the approved national minimum requirements for the academic position of "Associate Professor".

3.2. Fulfilment of the additional requirements of FESS for the academic position "Associate Professor"

Ch. Assistant Professor Dr. Stefan Raichev participates as a co-author in a published textbook on Economics, has participated in research projects with a published result, has prepared and delivered several courses of lectures. Publications in specialized scientific journals in which the candidate is a co-author are presented, as well as a collective publication in a SCOPUS indexed journal. All this meets the additional quantitative and qualitative requirements set by FESS and makes allowable the application of Ch. Assistant Professor Dr. Raichev in the announced competition.

4. Assessment of teaching activity

After winning a competition in 2017 in FESS, Ch. Assistant Professor Dr. Raichev actively teaches courses in Labour Economics, Human Resources Management, Public Sector Economics and Economics. His employment is mainly in the Bachelor's degree. The reference for the annual academic employment of Ch. Assistant Professor Raichev for the last 4 academic years shows classroom performance at the Bachelor's degree on average from 355 hours per year.

My personal impressions of the candidate in the disciplines "Economics" and "Microeconomics" are extremely positive. Stefan Raichev approaches responsibly and constantly tries to improve the learning content. He is a lecturer who covers a wide range of subjects related to Labour Economics and his responsible attitude and commitment to work with students deserve a very high praise.

Based on the above, it can be summarized that Chief Assistant Stefan Raichev is an established lecturer in the field of Labour Economics. The work experience of the candidate in PU speaks of purposeful preparation for the academic position of "associate professor" in 3.8 Economics (Political Economy - Microeconomics and Labour Market).

5. A brief description of the presented scientific papers / Publications

For participation in the competition Ch. Assistant Professor Dr. Raichev presents 16 publications in specialized scientific journals and publishing houses. 43% of them are in English. The majority of publications (75%) are collective.

The presented documents and publications give an idea of the research and teaching activities carried out in the years after he took the academic position "Ch. assistant" in 2017. His active research and consulting activities allowed him to make a significant number of publications during this period. All of them are original research, entirely author's analyses and are strongly focused on the topic of the competition - mostly the labour market.

The candidate participates in the competition with **16** publications, realized in specialized scientific journals. From them:

- 2 collective monographic editions, in each of which the author's text is over 100 pages;
- 7 articles and studies, incl. one in a journal indexed in SCOPUS;
- 6 scientific reports at conferences in the country.

In addition, evidence is presented for participation in research projects and participation and co-authorship in a study guide on Economics.

A book based on the candidate's PhD thesis is also presented, as well as a chapter " Cohesion in the field of education - level reached in Bulgaria, the EU and the Western Balkans. " (pp.106-127), in which the candidate participates as a co-author from the book "European integration today - some problems and opportunities". The latter will not be reviewed by me, as it completely repeats the content of the monograph " *Social Cohesion- National, regional and structural dimensions in the context of Bulgaria-EU-Western Balkans* " also presented for participation in the competition (pp. 291-310).

In summary, I can assess that the presented and proven quantitative and qualitative indicators of the candidate 's scientific output meet the established requirements for the academic position of "Associate Professor", according to LDACRB and the additional requirements for FESS. No evidence was found of copyright infringement by other researchers, by which I accept that the submitted and peer-reviewed materials are copyrighted, in accordance with the separation protocols provided in the collective publications.

In the candidate's work the most significant scientific field is related to the problems of the labour market and the economy of the public sector. Next are the publications related to the integration processes in Bulgaria, the convergence of the Bulgarian economy with that of the other EU countries, especially in the field of social cohesion, as well as the issues of youth unemployment.

In the presented scientific papers and publications, the candidate considers current and significant issues related to the tools for conducting macro-politics in the field of labour market, evaluation of its effectiveness and forecasting its results. They show a good knowledge of the theoretical foundations and development of problems, skills for reasoned analysis and derivation of possible solutions.

Assessment of the quality of scientific production can be made to a very large extent through citations. Attached is a reference are shown 6 citations, incl. 2 citations of publications in editions indexed in Scopus and WoS.

6. Synthesized evaluation of major scientific and applied scientific contributions

The results of the scientific and scientific-applied activity of the candidate are obtained as a consequence of the publication of 2 collective monographs, 7 articles in specialized journals, participation in 6 conferences in the country. The results largely overlap with the author's contributions and can be summarized as being mainly in the empirical analysis of the national, regional and structural dimensions of social cohesion, as well as in the analysis of the effectiveness of labour market regulation policies and overcoming social inequalities. The proposed measures to increase the efficiency of the public sector through the use of appropriate

tools for full and comprehensive evaluation of public activities, projects and policies also enriches social science and practice. Contributing elements can also be found in the recommendations for improving the effectiveness of active labour market policies as a tool for activating the young population, its inclusion in this market and overcoming youth unemployment. Through the prism of social cohesion, conclusions have been drawn about the need for public policy reforms, especially for at-risk groups.

7. Main critical remarks and recommendations

I have the following recommendations for the teaching and research activities of the candidate:

- To develop and present an independent monographic research, which clearly and categorically presents the scientific profile of Raichev as a researcher and scientist;
- To make publications in the field of microeconomic analysis, in order to fully cover the topic of the announced competition;
- To increase its participation in international scientific forums and its publications in foreign scientific specialized publications, in order to make more visible his achievements in the chosen scientific field;

8. Conclusion

The presented evidence and the evaluations of the scientific, teaching and research activity of the candidate prove that he meets the requirements of LDACRB and the criteria of FESS for holding the academic position of "associate professor". All this gives me reason to suggest to the honourable scientific jury to give a **positive assessment and to propose to the Faculty Council of FESS at PU "P. Hilendarski" to select and confirm Ch. Assistant Professor Dr. Stefan Atanasov Raichev for the academic position of "Associate Professor" in 3.8 "Economics" (Political Economy - Microeconomics and Labour Market).**

15.10. 2020

Signature:

/ Assoc. Prof. Vania Ivanova, PhD /