

# STATEMENT

by **Dr. Olga Milentieva Simova, Associate Professor in the Department of Philosophy, Faculty of Philosophy and History at the University of Plovdiv Paisii Hilendarski**

on the materials submitted for participation in the competition  
for the academic position of “**Associate Professor**”  
at the **University of Plovdiv Paisii Hilendarski**

Area of higher education: **3. Social, Economic and Law Sciences**

Professional field: **3.3. Political Science (Elections and Electoral Systems)**

In the competition for “Associate professor”, announced in the State Gazette, issue 40 of 14.05.2021 and on the website of University of Plovdiv Paisii Hilendarski for the needs of the Department of Political Science and National Security at the Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences, as a candidate participates Chief Asst. Prof. Dr. Daniela Dobрева Pastarmadzhieva of the Department of Political Science and National Security at the FESS at the University of Plovdiv Paisii Hilendarski.

## **1. General presentation of the procedure and the candidate**

By order № P33-3167 of 13.07.2021 of the Rector of the University of Plovdiv Paisii Hilendarski (UP) I have been appointed a member of the scientific jury in a competition for the academic position “Associate professor” at the UP in the area of higher education 3. Social, Economic and Law Sciences, professional Field 3.3 Political Science (Elections and Electoral Systems), announced for the needs of the Department of Political Science and National Security at the Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences (FESS).

Only one candidate submitted documents for participation in the announced competition:

Chief Asst. Prof. Dr. Daniela Dobрева Pastarmadzhieva from the Department of Political Science and National Security at the FESS at the University of Plovdiv Paisii Hilendarski.

The set of print materials presented by Dr. Daniela Pastarmadzhieva is in accordance with the Regulations for development of the academic staff of the UP (RDASUP), and consists of the following documents:

- application form to the Rector for admission to participate in the competition;
- CV in European format;
- diploma for acquired Master degree - notarized copy;
- diploma for educational and scientific degree “Doctor” - notarized copy;
- list of scientific works;
- reference for compliance with the minimum national and additional faculty requirements;
- annotations of the materials under Art. 65. of RDASUP, including self-assessment of the contributions;
- declaration of originality and authenticity of the attached documents;
- certificate of work experience;

- documents for educational work;
- documents for research work;
- documents according to the additional requirements of the FESS;
- other documents

The candidate meets the requirements of the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act and the additional requirements of the FESS for holding the academic position „Associate Professor“. She obtained the educational and scientific degree „Doctor“ in 2013 at the University of National and World Economy. On the basis of the dissertation there is a published book - Pastarmadzhieva, D. (2013) Political subcultures in Bulgaria in the process of transition to democracy (party and generational subcultures: comparative analysis), Sofia: Paradigma publishing house, ISBN 978-954-326-200- 7.

Since 2016, Dr. Pastarmadzhieva has been a Chief Assistant Professor at the Department of Political Science and National Security at FESS. She has prepared and conducted several courses of lectures in Political Science and other programs at FESS. She has published a textbook on the subject “Elections and Electoral Systems” (Pastarmadzhieva, D., 2020, Methods for calculating the election result, Fast Print Books Plovdiv, ISBN 978-619-236-179-2).

The candidate has participated in 10 scientific or educational projects, two of which are international. She is the coordinator of one of the national projects, which is directly related to the topic of the current competition.

The candidate Daniela Pastarmadzhieva participated in the competition with a total of 41 publications, 29 of which are in the field of political science: 1 monograph, 1 textbook, 3 studies and 24 articles and papers. 3 of these works are published in issues referenced and indexed in primary world-famous databases with scientific information (Scopus and Web of Science).

Although I do not know Dr. Pastarmadzhieva well personally, I must note her correctness in communicating on professional issues and her exceptional activity in organizing meetings of students and professors from the UP and other universities with foreign scientists with practical experience in the field of the election process and election campaigns.

## **2. General characteristics of the candidate's activity**

The habilitation work - the monograph: Pastarmadzhieva D. (2020), The Majority Electoral System and the Development of Societies, Publishing House of Knowledge Society Institute: Sofia, ISBN 978-619-7128-17-8, eISBN 978-619-7128-18-5 - is dedicated to the investigation of the association between electoral systems, with an emphasis on the majority-plurality systems, and the degree of social, economic and political development of the societies. The stated intention of the author is not only to contribute to the enrichment of scientific knowledge in the field of electoral systems and their political and social effects, but also to join the debate on the introduction of a majority system in Bulgaria, which resumes periodically after 1989. Referring to the research of many authors, she traces the impact of the electoral system on the party system, on political stability, representation of various social groups and economic development, noting the crucial role of the political and cultural context in „electoral engineering“. The Bulgarian debate on the introduction of a majority system after 1989 is examined in detail by highlighting the main positions in it and with many reasoned comments on these positions by the author. One of its merits

is that it has placed this debate in the context of electoral systems and their changes in many European countries, with a special focus on the Balkan countries.

The last chapter of the habilitation thesis proposes a model for assessing the development of societies, based on many internationally recognized indices. The study comprises 183 countries with different electoral systems (majority-plurality, proportional and mixed) and looked for a statistical association between the electoral system and the assessments of countries according to the selected indices, and in some cases according to the components of these indices. A great amount of work was performed in order to establish such associations and calculate their strength. According to some of the indicators (for example the income) a lack of a statistically significant association with the electoral system has been established. For the largest number of indices this association is weak, and for some of the components of individual indices - strong. The general conclusion of the analysis is that countries with a proportional system perform better than those with a majority-plurality or mixed systems according to the indices used and their individual components.

Several of the articles submitted for the current competition deal with political and entrepreneurial culture in Bulgaria and other Balkan countries. Most of the articles and papers can be considered as stages of the work on the habilitation monograph. They are dedicated to the electoral systems in the EU and the Balkans, to the debate on the introduction of a majority system in Bulgaria, to the study of the association between the electoral system on the one hand and the representation of minorities, the human development index, democracy on the other. Some of the presented articles and papers - on innovation, digitalization, and the Covid crisis - testify the broad interests and sensitivity of the candidate to the contemporary challenges to the social and political sciences.

Among the contributions of the scientific work of Dr. Pastarmadzhieva I would highlight the study with empirical methods of the association between electoral systems and various aspects of the development of societies, as well as the most detailed (as far as I know) presentation of electoral engineering in the Bulgarian scientific literature. As a scientific and applied contribution I would define the competent inclusion in the debate for the introduction of a majority system in Bulgaria by presenting a number of starting points that should be considered in assessing the suitability of this system in view of socio-economic and political development of the Bulgarian society.

### **3. Critical remarks and recommendations**

The approach implemented in the habilitation work - searching for associations between the electoral system and various aspects of the social, economic and political development of the societies - seems justified in view of the Bulgarian debate on the introduction of a majority system, because it is an answer, as the author herself points out (p. 109- 110), to some unsubstantiated allegations of its supporters. As for its more universal scientific value, I have some reservations. The presence of statistical association (even if it is strong) does not mean a significant influence of a factor (electoral system) on such a complex process as the development of a society in which many factors are involved, including random. The author realizes this and in many places in the monograph she makes the appropriate clarifications. The associations have very little explanatory power. The only explanation for the statistical association between the relatively weaker development of some countries and the use of a majority system, which is reached in the monograph, is the “artificially generated majorities providing stability” (p. 172), which allows the government to benefit from an artificial legitimacy without making much effort on various aspects

of social development. However, the same phenomenon can provide stability in the pursuit of completely different goals, such as the implementation of unpopular modernization programs which would improve some of the development indicators. Therefore, from the point of view of a social science aimed at understanding and explaining, another approach hinted at in the monograph seems more promising to me, namely the study of the relationship between social development and electoral systems in view of different historical and cultural contexts. The candidate has excellent prerequisites to implement such an approach, perhaps in future studies, as part of her research work is devoted to the problems of political culture.

### **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, I believe that Dr. Daniela Pastarmadzhieva fully meets the requirements for the academic position “Associate Professor” at FESS at the University of Plovdiv Paisii Hilendarski in the professional field of Political Science (Elections and Electoral Systems). I have not found any plagiarism. My assessment of her candidacy is positive and I recommend the Scientific Jury to prepare a report-proposal to the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences for the election of Daniela Dobрева Pastarmadzhieva to the academic position of Associate Professor at University of Plovdiv Paisii Hilendarski in professional field 3.3. Political science (Elections and Electoral Systems).

10.08.2021

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Assoc. Prof Olga Simova, PhD