

## **OPINION**

by Assoc. Prof. Evgeniya Blagoeva, Ph.D  
Department of Anthropology, New Bulgarian University  
on the materials submitted for participation in the competition for the academic  
position of "Associate Professor" at the Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski"  
3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences  
3.1. Sociology, Anthropology and Cultural Sciences  
(Methodology of Anthropological Research)

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

By order RD-22-433 of 18.02.2025 of the rector of Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski" I am appointed as a member of the scientific jury for the announced competition for the "Associate Professor" academic position in the field of higher education 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, 3.1. Sociology, Anthropology and Cultural Sciences (Methodology of Anthropological Research), announced in the State Gazette, issue 98/19.11. 2024 and on the website of the University of Plovdiv for the needs of the Department of Ethnology, Faculty of Philosophy and History. The only candidate in the competition is Senior Assistant Professor Stoyan Hristov Antonov, Ph.D from the Department of Ethnology. The set of materials submitted by the candidate is precisely prepared. It is in full compliance with the Development of the Academic Staff Regulations of the University of Plovdiv.

Stoyan Antonov holds a Master's degree in History with a specialization in Ethnology from Sofia University "St. Clement Ohridski". His dissertation, defended in 1999 at the Faculty of History of Sofia University, is the most cited in-depth study on the Tatar community in Bulgaria. For the past 21 years, he has been engaged in teaching and scholarly research at the University. The certificate of work experience provided (Appendix 12) shows that the candidate has 21 years of teaching experience as "chief assistant" and he acquired his Ph.D degree 25 years ago. Thus, he meets the national and institutional requirements for holding the academic position of "associate professor" according to the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ZRASRB) (Art. 24, para. 1: items 1 and 2a), the Regulations for the Implementation of ZRASRB (PPZRASRB) (Art. 53, para. 1: items 1 and 2a) and the corresponding Regulations of the University "Paisii Hilendarski" (PRASPU) (Art. 65, para. 1: items 2 and 3a). The scientific production, the professional qualification and the teaching experience of the candidate correspond to the minimum national requirements set out in PPZRASRB, as well as to the scientific specialty of the competition. I have known Stoyan Antonov for many years and I highly value his professional qualities as a prominent researcher and a talented University teacher.

### **General characteristics of the candidate's activities**



In the last 20 years, the candidate had a large number of bachelor's and master's courses (including with foreign students) dedicated to the theory and methodology of anthropological and ethnological studies, migration studies, ethnic communities and identities, and *cultural heritage*. He has been an Erasmus guest lecturer at universities in Turkey and France. He has been a supervisor of 12 bachelor's and 5 master's theses. That is why his teaching activities fully meet the formal requirements for the academic position of "associate professor". The scholarly production with which the candidate participates in the competition consists of a habilitation thesis, 13 articles and one study. The monograph "Synchronizations: Transitions and Transformations in the Bulgarian Village" is 143 pages long – it consists of an introduction and three chapters. They examine various cultural aspects of the village of Chereshovo as a "small place", through the prism of which the "big topic" of the village transformations as a whole is addressed. Of particular interest to me was the first chapter, dedicated to name giving practices. In it, the author makes a significant contribution to the topic of "traditional" naming practices and their contemporary transformations. Unlike all other authors in this field, he combines the topic of name choosing – with an emphasis mainly on family names – with genealogical research of the village, based on a valuable source base of registers. The second chapter "Memory and Stories" is no less significant. It emphasizes the role of the so-called "transforming personality" as a special type of social actor who takes over and dominates the symbolic struggle for creation of a legitimate history of the settlement – narrative and visual. The third chapter is dedicated to the so called Grandfather's Day – a unique holiday for the village. The author interprets it through the prism of the concept of the so-called "updated tradition". Here I would add that some of the actions performed with the grandfather – for example, his ostentatious washing – completely duplicate or imitate the actions performed with the midwife at the traditional women's holiday Babinden. In this context, the invention of the holiday as a "mirror" of Babinden is of interest - a fact that, as it becomes clear, was clearly realized by its creators. Among the candidate's articles (all written at a high professional level) the particularly useful text on teaching ethnology and anthropology, as well as the research on the Russian community in Plovdiv, stand out. The other texts also demonstrate the author's thoroughness, attention to detail and fieldwork competence.

No plagiarism was found in the texts submitted for the competition. The attached list of citations confirms the candidate's academic image as the author of valued and cited works in Bulgaria and abroad. The general conclusion is that the scholarly production of Senior Assistant Professor Stoyan Antonov, Ph.D meets in terms of quality and quantity the criteria for holding the "associate professor" academic position.

#### **Critical remarks and recommendations**

I would like to note as a comment that the problem of surnames among Bulgarians – their late establishment in time and the lack of constancy in their use – has yet to be studied in detail. The habilitation work illustrates some trends in this regard, such as practices registered in other places as well of two brothers having different surnames; only one having a surname derived from a matronym, etc. In this sense, it would be interesting to understand when the earliest surnames appeared in the studied registers and where did they first appear – in the church or the civil register. It is obvious that other, yet unexplored, factors also play a role in the choice and use of surnames. In this sense, the candidate's habilitation work confirms and enriches the existing scientific literature on the matter.

#### **CONCLUSION**

All materials with which Senior Assistant Professor Dr. Stoyan Hristov Antonov participated in the competition, meet the requirements of ZRASRB, PPZRASRB and PRASPU. He has presented a sufficient number of scientific works published after the defense of his dissertation and after taking up the academic position of "Senior Assistant". His texts contain original contributions that have been recognized by the academic and research community. His scientific and teaching qualifications are indisputable. In connection with all that has been said above, I express my positive opinion that Senior Assistant Professor Stoyan Antonov, Ph D be elected to the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, 3.1. Sociology, anthropology and cultural sciences (Methodology of anthropological research).

15.04.2025

Assoc. Prof. Evgenia Blagoeva, Ph.D