

OPINION

By Prof. D.Sc. Darina Peeva Zinovieva, Faculty of Law, University "P. Hilendarski"

concerning a competition

for the academic post of **PROFESSOR**

of the Faculty of Law at "P. Hilendarski" University,

area of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional field

3.6. law (constitutional law)

1. General data

Only one candidate took part in the competition: Associate Professor Hristo Yordanov Paunov Ph.D. from the Faculty of Law of the University " P. Hilendarski".

The documents submitted by the applicant shall comply with the requirements of the applicable legal acts. It is also clear from the scientific and metric data that the minimum national requirements under Article 2b of the ZRASRB have been met. Therefore, at the first meeting of the scientific jury, the candidate is admitted to participate. The publications with which Assoc. prof. Hristo Paunov participates in the competition.

2. Evaluation and Characteristics of Scientific Works

2.1. Associate Professor Paunov participated in the competition with a published monograph entitled 'Representative Democracy and Digitalisation'. The subject of the dissertation, of the habilitation work for the academic position of associate professor, is not identical to the subject of the monograph with which he participated in the competition for professorship.

It is clear from the published works that the interests of the candidate are mainly in the constitutional law.

2.2. Habilitation work is written on a very actual topic, in view of the increasing use of electronic computer systems and technologies in the management of our country. Works related to digitization in the doctrine of constitutional law are lacking with this view and as a comprehensive overview and analysis. My conclusion is that in itself, this indicator gives a contributing character to the book.

The systematization of the study is very good, as the author has divided the matter into 3 /three/ separate parts. In the first part, he skillfully introduces the matter of representative democracy and the matter of the concept of digitalization. The second part is the binding part of these two concepts, and the author makes a thorough analysis of the manifest forms of this binding. In the third part, he presents his views on prospects and challenges, focusing on possible problems and putting forward concrete proposals to avoid or solve them.

Throughout the work, the author analyzes the matter, summarizes with his conclusions and makes suggestions for optimizing the legislation.

The conclusions are systematic, summarizing every analysis and I definitely appreciate them as contributing. For example, for the first time in our doctrine the question of the manifestation of so-called "digital constitutionalism" in the implementation of the activity in the three authorities / legislative, executive and judicial. For example, in the part of the analyses on digitalisation in the executive power, the author very accurately and correctly analyzes the electronic procedural forms characteristic of the administrative process. Analyses of electronic voting in the electoral process are of significant importance, as well as analyses of digitalisation in the judicial system (e.g. on electronic court proceedings). It should be noted that the author does not merely mention the electronic technologies introduced in the different spheres, but links their role in a comprehensive concept for the development of representative democracy through digitization. I appreciate as a contributing element of the study the analysis of digitalization as a kind of "right" with its different manifest forms - the right to digital identity, digital self-determination and digital integrity.

The author also skillfully analyzes civic participation in the governance of the state through digital forms, such as e-petitions.

The reference made by the author of the case law of the European Courts on individual issues related to issues of digitalisation and protection of constitutional rights should be positively assessed.

In the final part, the author summarises the proposals for optimising our legislation – in the Electoral Code, in individual laws, where he believes there should be legal regulation, and in the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria. I find all de lege ferenda proposals relevant, well-founded and therefore also contributing.

2.3. Other publications submitted for the competition, outside the monograph work, show a purposeful and consistent interest in the field of constitutional law, as the author explores different areas of the industry - citizens' rights, issues of state property, etc.

Each of them contains a valuable analysis of the problem and has a contribution to the legal doctrine.

3. Critical remarks and recommendations:

In view of the qualities of Associate Professor Hristo Paunov, and in view of the development of digital technologies, I believe that Assoc.prof. Paunov to track, analyze and reflect in future scientific production specific parts of the theme of habilitation work, depending on the actuality and possible problems.

4. In summary, I believe that the scientific works of the candidate Associate Professor Hristo Paunov are of high research and applied scientific value. It shows the ability of the author to freely handle the matter of the relevant legal sciences, to combine and explore them.

The author's publications deserve high praise in view of the useful conclusions and suggestions for optimizing legislation and practice.

The candidate has citations from other authors, which shows that his publications and the conclusions made in them are used in the doctrine.

The pedagogical activity of the candidate should also be assessed positively, and I would like to highlight the high appreciation given by the audience for his teaching and his skills as a lecturer.

Associate Professor Hristo Paunov is also distinguished by a very strong organizational potential, operability in administration and a broad view of innovations in academic work. He has held various leadership positions, and in the long period of his presence in the academic community of the faculty and the university has shown ethical academic behavior, collegial mutual assistance, qualities that should be emphasized.

CONCLUSION:

In view of the above, I express my firm position that the candidate Associate Professor Hristo Yordanov Paunov meets the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for the Implementation of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria.

I vote **positively** and call on the scientific jury to vote **positively** and to propose to the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Law that Associate Professor Hristo Yordanov Paunov take up the academic position of **Professor** in professional field 3.6. Law (Constitutional Law) at P. Hilendarski University of Plovdiv.

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Prof. Darina Zinovieva