

OPINION

**by Dr. Radoslava Dimitrova Yankulova –
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for the materials,
presented for participation in a competition for the academic position of "Professor" in
the field of higher education: 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences;
professional field: 3.6 Law (Constitutional Law)
at the Faculty of Law of the Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski"

In the competition for "Professor", for the needs of the Faculty of Law, announced in the State Gazette, issue 96 of 11.11.2025, the only candidate participating is Hristo Yordanov Paunov.

1. General description of the procedure

By order No. RD-22-43/09.01.2026 of the Rector of the Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski" (PU), I have been appointed as a member of the scientific jury for a competition for the academic position of "Professor" at PU in the field of higher education 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, professional field 3.6. Law (Constitutional Law), announced for the needs of the Faculty of Law.

For participation in the announced competition, a single candidate has submitted documents: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Hristo Yordanov Paunov from the Faculty of Law of the Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski".

The set of materials submitted by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Hristo Yordanov Paunov in hard copy is in accordance with the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at the Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski". At its first meeting, the scientific jury decided that Assoc. Prof. Dr. Hristo Yordanov Paunov meets the minimum required points by groups of indicators, regulated in the Regulations for the Implementation of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, and on this basis is admitted to participate in the competition for the academic position of "Professor" in the professional field 3.6. Law (Constitutional Law).

2. Brief information about the candidate

The candidate completed his secondary and higher education in the city of Plovdiv. He successfully defended his dissertation in 2006 as a doctoral student at the Institute for Legal Sciences at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia, thereby acquiring the scientific degree "Doctor of Law". Since 1999, he has been working at the faculty, initially as an assistant, and later as a chief assistant, and since 2016 he has held the academic position of "Associate Professor". His successful career as a scientist and lecturer at the Department of Public Law Sciences of the Faculty of Law – PU, based on my direct personal impressions, is a consequence of his inquisitive nature, research curiosity, consistency, conscientiousness and diligence. Hristo Paunov is an attentive, responsive, responsible and correct colleague. The feedback on his teaching work from students and colleagues is very good. Special attention should also be paid to the candidate's activities in favor of socially significant social and humanitarian causes.

3. General characteristics of the candidate's publication activity

The subject of Assoc. Prof. Paunov's research are classic institutes of constitutional law (constituent power, revision of the Constitution, fundamental rights, principles of constitutional economic law), which are examined both in the context of contemporary socio-political processes and retrospectively through the prism of their regulation in the Tarnovo Constitution of 1879 and in the Constitutions of the People's Republic of Bulgaria of 1947 and 1971. The academic pursuits and contributions of the candidate are largely related to widely discussed by society and institutions issues of modern constitutionalism and dynamics in legislation. In his publication activity, Hristo Paunov is not satisfied with just highlighting a specific constitutional law problem, but also offers a working mechanism for its resolution. This activity of his in favor of the public interest deserves a high assessment.

The fruit of Hristo Paunov's scientific research is also his latest monographic study, dedicated to the almost uncommented in Bulgarian legal theory issue of the interaction between the processes of digitalization and the functioning of representative democracy in the modern constitutional order. In its volume, subject matter and in view of the presence of scientific reviewers (Prof. D.Sc. Georgi Dimitrov and Prof. Dr. Bogdan Yordanov), the work corresponds to the formal requirements for the scientific genre "monograph", regulated in § 1, item 10 of the additional provisions of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria.

The scientific contributions in the candidate's publication activity can be summarized as follows:

3.1. In the first place, I would put the first of its kind monographic study dedicated to the transformation of democratic processes and institutions under the influence of digital technologies. The author introduces the term "digital constitutionalism" into Bulgarian legal literature, through the prism of which the impact of modern technologies on the implementation of fundamental constitutional principles is analyzed. This approach allows the researched issues to leave the purely technological orbit and be placed in the context of the fundamental values of the constitutional legal order. The book provides a horizontal cross-section of the digitalization processes taking place in the three branches of state power, which allows for the identification of common trends, but also specific challenges for each of the three powers. The advocated thesis for raising to a constitutional level the regulation of the so-called "digital rights", which have their origin in classic rights, but according to the author acquire a new essence and content in the digital environment, is also of a contributory nature. The monographic study also offers a conceptual analysis of electronic remote voting, which is of a contributory nature for the future incorporation of technological achievements in the process of the decisive act of democratic will-formation, without sacrificing the personal and secret nature of the vote.

3.2. The group of publications related to the aggravated, complicated procedure for the revision of the Basic Law represent a natural continuation of the candidate's long-standing research interest in the topic. The dedication of analytical effort to the study of this issue ensures the observance of the requirements of the fundamental principle of the supremacy of the Constitution in the development of the democratic process of forming a parliamentary will for the adoption of amendments and additions to the Basic Law.

3.3. The group of publications dedicated to classic institutes of the so-called constitutional economic law (exclusive state property; free economic initiative; state monopoly) set the measure for a constitutionally compliant subsequent legislative detailing of the basic social relations related to the constitutional characteristics of the economic order.

All the listed contributions are the personal work of the candidate and represent a skillful and convincing demonstration with new means of essential new aspects of already existing problems, but also bring out new, unexplored problems, caused by the social and legislative dynamics.

4. Critical remarks and recommendations

My recommendations to the candidate are to deepen the legal-theoretical analysis and to expand the comparative-legal field of his scientific research. Placing the subject of scientific research on a broad comparative-legal basis would provide the work with a favorable cognitive environment for the study of working solutions in other countries, which could serve as a source of reception in the domestic legislation of the Republic of Bulgaria.

5. Conclusion

The documents and materials submitted by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Hristo Yordanov Paunov meet the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LDASRB), the Regulations for the Implementation of the LDASRB and the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of the Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski". The candidate in the competition has submitted a sufficient number of scientific works, published after the materials used when occupying the academic position of "Associate Professor", in which there are original scientific contributions. The scientific and teaching qualifications of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Hristo Paunov are **undoubted**. The results achieved by him in the educational and research activities correspond to the normative requirements.

After familiarizing myself with the materials and scientific works presented in the competition, analyzing their significance and the scientific, scientific-applied and applied contributions contained in them, I find it reasonable to give my positive assessment and to recommend to the Scientific Jury to prepare a report-proposal to the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Law for the election of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Hristo Yordanov Paunov to the academic position of "Professor" at the Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski" in the professional field 3.6. Law (Constitutional Law).

Prepared the opinion:

(Assoc. Prof. Dr. Radoslava Yankulova)

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