

## **REVIEW**

of the teaching and research  
of Chief Assistant Professor MILEN NIKOLAEV FILIPOV, PhD,  
submitted for participation in a competition for the academic position  
“ASSOCIATE ASSOCIATE” in professional field 3.5. Public communications  
and Information Sciences (Journalism and Public Relations -  
Strategic public relations and planned events)

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(In line with the order of the Rector of BFU UMO № 135 on 26.05.2021)

The competition was announced in the State Gazette, issue 25 of 26.05.2021  
Chief Assistant Professor Dr Milen Filipov is the only participant in the announced competition.

The documentation submitted by the candidate for participation in the competition,  
include the applicant’s research and teaching and meet the Law on the Development of the Academic  
Staff of the Republic Bulgaria criteria.

### **I. Summary information about the education and employment of the candidate**

The submitted documentation shows that the candidate defended his doctoral dissertation  
“Pseudo-event (media event) as a strategic tool in political public relations” in 2015. As a result, he was  
awarded the educational and scientific degree Doctor of Philosophy at the Faculty of Journalism and  
Mass Communication of Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” in a professional field 3.5 Social  
Communications and Information Sciences (Journalism - Public Relations).

To increase his research and teaching competence, Dr Filipov has undertaken and completed  
online training courses in 2020 in several US academic organizations: “Foundations of Excellence for  
Teaching Online” at Arizona State University’s ASUx Online Learning Initiative; “Instructional Design  
Models” in the USMx Online Learning Initiative of the University of Maryland; “How to Perform High-  
Quality Business / Economics Research and Become Published in Peer-Reviewed Journals” in an online  
seminar on research methods in the Journal of Eastern European and Central Asian Research of the  
Institute for Eastern Europe and Central Asia (IEECA); Qualitative Research Design at Coursera, Emory  
University; “Qualitative Research Methods: Conversational Interviewing” at the Massachusetts Institute  
of Technology’s (MIT) MITx Online Learning Initiative.

Dr Filipov has completed practical internships at M3 Communications Group, Ltd. (Sofia), Press  
Center of the Municipality of Burgas, Corporate Communications Department of McDonald’s (England),

Grayling (PR & Public Affairs Agency) (England), Virgin Media (England). In his work, he is fluent in various Google tools and ATLAS TI (software for qualitative research) and SPSS (software for quantitative research). The acquired education in the speciality and the striving for self-improvement are reliable bases for the candidate's academic achievements.

Chief Assistant Professor Dr Milen Filipov combines the qualities of a teacher and a researcher - a symbiosis, especially valued in national and international certifications of higher education. He is a longtime lecturer at the Burgas Free University (2007-2021), where he participated in teamwork on research projects such as The Bulgarian language in social media (2018/2021) and Ethnopsycholinguistic and sociolinguistic aspects of the language of newspapers in Bulgaria (2011). -2013), as well as in practical projects, such as European aspects and national practices of PR 2.0 (2013; 2014) and International Aspects and National Practices of PR 2.0 (cycle one and cycle 2), conducted jointly with the Polytechnic Institute of Portalegre, Portugal. He is also the research project leader Creating a model of effective communication with the school community (2016/2017).

Dr Filipov also works at the Kazakhstan Institute of Management, Economics and Forecasting - KIMEP (2017-2021), where he improves his intercultural competencies in multinational research teams. At this university, he leads the research activities of the Department of Media and Communications, and in 2017 he was the head of the international relations department of the College of Social Sciences.

He uses his academic skills in practice and with his activity in exPRts Communication Ltd. In addition, Dr Filipov applies his scientific competence as a member of the editorial board of the International Scientific journal *Central Asian Journal of Innovations on Tourism Management and Finance* and as a member of the scientific jury of the International Scientific Conference ERAZ (2021-2024). The solid academic presence of Dr Filipov in Bulgaria and abroad demonstrates a conscious choice and follows the vocation to establish university education and professionally improve the modern scientific environment.

## **II. Characteristics of the scientific and scientific-applied production of the candidate**

The publications presented in the competition are dedicated to current and vital issues, perspectives and terrains of the expert area for the candidate and prove the successful testing of his theses in renowned scientific journals. In the competition, Chief Assistant Professor Dr Filipov participates with:

- monograph: "(Pseudo) event: theory and practice."

- textbook "School Public Relations" (co-authored),
- an article published in a scientific journal, referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information,
- twenty-two articles and reports published in non-peer-reviewed peer-reviewed journals or in edited collective volumes (half of which have been published in English abroad and eight in co-authorship),
- two studies published in non-peer-reviewed journals with a scientific review or in edited collective volumes, one of which is co-authored in English;
- one published chapter of a collective monograph;
- one citation in collective volumes with a scientific review (in German abroad);
- ten citations in non-peer-reviewed peer-reviewed journals (eight of which were in English abroad).

The monograph "(Pseudo) event: theory and practice" (2020, 142 pages) reflects the author's continuous interest in socially significant topics in the field of communication power, which has been the subject of analysis in his dissertation. It analyzes the event as a social phenomenon, providing interactive, focused, emotionally charged and connecting individual and group experiences. In this context, he focuses his thoughts on the interconnectedness of the processes of mediatization and publicity - a serious challenge to professional standards in the communication environment.

Applying various research methods in discussing the pseudo-event as a phenomenon in the political environment in Bulgaria, Dr Filipov enriches his analysis with an analysis of significant cases from practice, which contributes not only to the theoretical but also to the practical and applied qualities of the text. Thus, the book results from meticulous research, clear professional reflection, and in-depth analyses of communication impacts make the research important for both the scientific field and practitioners.

In the textbook "School Public Relations" (published in co-authorship with Prof. Dr Maria Aleksieva and Assoc. Prof. Dr Diana Popova, 2017, 130 pages), Dr Filipov participates with "Introductory notes related to current projections of School Public Relations - Communication Realities (pp. 6-7) and Module 3: School Public Relations (pp. 81-126). In the development, he offers theoretical

models and practical-applied activities for the development and enrichment of the skills and competencies of the participants in the process of school PR as a communication technology.

The usefulness of this approach is essential for developing effective relationships both in the school community and in the social environment in which it exists. The essential modern approaches and models of work on the information offers, the selection of topics and events, their arrangement and agenda, their transformations into professional roles, and the participants' work in the communication process are summarized.

A positive impression is left by the fact that the article "Who Buys Amsterdam Dance Event?" (2019), published by the candidate while a lecturer at KIMEP University International Journal of Event Management, 23 (6), pp. 953-958, is referenced and indexed in the Web of Science and has two citations. It pioneers the multifaceted demographic characteristics, motivation and opportunities of visitors to the Amsterdam Dance Event (ADE).

Of the fourteen independent articles and reports presented, published in non-peer-reviewed journals with a scientific review or in edited collective volumes, half are in English, which gives greater visibility to Dr Filipov's scientific pursuits, especially in the field of public relations. It is noteworthy that from 2015 to 2020, the candidate has annually published independent texts in the Burgas Free University publications, which is a profound contribution to the university's scientific production. His articles have also been published in the publications of the Southwestern University "Neofit Rilski" (2021) and the University of Veliko Tarnovo "St. Cyril and Methodius" (2015). Among the publications in English, most are related to problems of public communication in Kazakhstan. The palette of topics covers research on PR practices in the school community and the influences of social media on branding and reputational communication in PR.

The candidate's activity is also manifested in the presented eight joint publications. The co-authorship with Kazakh researchers at KIMEP University in media in Kazakhstan is a testament to its successful integration into foreign and foreign language research environments. In co-authorship with several Bulgarian authors (Galya Hristozova, Diana Popova, Maria Aleksieva, Radina Ralcheva) from the Burgas Free University, Dr Filipov explores significant issues in the modern communication and cultural environment in our country.

The two studies, published in non-peer-reviewed peer-reviewed journals or edited collective volumes, testify to the candidate's abiding interest in effective communication in the educational process.

Dr Filipov, Maria Aleksieva, and Diana Popova explored communication practices of Bulgarian state educational institutions (kindergartens, primary schools, secondary schools, language and vocational high schools) to communicate with their educational communities in their study “Do Bulgarian Schools Effectively Communicate with Their School Communities”. It was published in English in the Journal of School Public Relations (2016, pp. 160-202).

In his independent study “Characteristics of the communication style of the Bulgarian University on Facebook”, published in the Yearbook of Burgas Free University (2019, pp. 66-102), based on a pilot study on the project “Bulgarian language in social media”, funded by the Research Fund, Dr Filipov interprets standard processes and phenomena and analyzes communication behaviour on the Facebook pages of three Bulgarian universities. Both studies are aimed at fundamental and topical issues for the PR strategies of educational institutions in our country.

In the author’s chapter “Communication approaches to promote the National Strategy for the Promotion and Enhancement of Literacy (2014-2020)”, published in the collective work “Synthesis of the arts in working with an artistic text to develop attention to reading” (2015), the main characteristics of the communication approach set out in the National Strategy are analyzed. The citations demonstrate the visibility of the candidate’s academic work at home and abroad. All attached publications are on the topic of this competition and are evidence of the consistent and complete development of the scientific interests of Ch. Assistant Professor Dr Filipov.

### **III. Teaching**

At Burgas Free University, Dr Filipov coordinated the master’s program Strategic Communications and Media Management. His teaching activity is highly valued and covers the following disciplines, studied in the MOODLE platform: Online communications and social networks, Event Management; Theory of Communications; Online PR and Social Networks; Event Management; Practicum in Public Relations Part I and II; Development of a diploma project.

For ten years (2007-2017), the candidate was a supervisor of the student PR agency PRACTA, which implements events and campaigns for both the University (Media World) and external clients, e.g. Municipality of Burgas (Burgas is the most smiling city) and others.

At KIMEP University, Dr Filipov works with students from Central Asia and South Korea. He is the head of the master's program in International Journalism with two majors, Media Management and Public Relations and Advertising, and the Department of Media and Communications research activities. In 2017, Dr Filipov was the head of the international relations department of the College of Social Sciences. Moreover, in this university, he develops significant teaching activities with his lecture courses in English: Persuasive Communication, PR campaigns, Media Relations, Research Internship, Special Event Management and Design, Advertising and Media Sales. Introduction to PR, Crisis Communication.

#### **IV. Main contributions in the scientific and scientific-applied activity of the candidate**

- Conducted comparative analyzes, in which a significant amount of information on the issues under consideration was reviewed in the scientific publications proposed for the competition;
- Processing and analysis of data from quantitative and qualitative research;
- Updating the theoretical and practical aspects of the public relations process according to the complex communication environment;
- Empirical approbation of the conclusions from the research;
- Research of the ethnopsycholinguistic and sociolinguistic aspects of the language of the social media newspapers in Bulgaria;
- Formulation of main problems and specifics of PR activities;
- Outlining significant scientific and applied effects, such as the use of strategic PR in solving practical problems of educational institutions and media; management of the student PR agency PRACTA and exPRts Communication Ltd.;
- Active teaching activity in Bulgarian and English.

#### **V. Notes and recommendations**

- The international visibility of the candidate's publishing activity is referenced and indexed in world-famous databases with scientific information that could be activated. This recommendation is desirable because Dr Filipov has the necessary qualities for further development in the field of public communication.

- It is advisable for publishing an original monograph dedicated to a significant, topical problem in the field of research of the candidate, other than the topic of his dissertation, is also desirable.

## **VI. Conclusion**

Based on the overall analysis of the research and teaching work of the candidate, correctly reflected in the submitted documentation and meeting the requirements of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, I vote positively for the academic position of “Associate Professor” in professional field 3.5. Public communications and Information Sciences (Journalism and Public Relations - Strategic Public Relations and Planned Events) by Ch. Assistant Professor Dr Milen Nikolaev Filipov and I recommend the esteemed members of the scientific jury to support his candidacy. His election as an associate professor will be a positive contribution to strengthening the academic staff of Burgas Free University.

Date: 20.07.2021

Member of the scientific jury: Professor Dr Liliya Raicheva