

## OPINION

**FROM:** *Prof. Sci Dr Milko Dimitrov Petrov, professional field 3.5. Public Communications and Information Sciences, Department of Communication and Audiovisual Production, FJMK at Sofia University “Kliment Ohridski”.*

**ON:** *competition for the academic position of associate professor professional field 3.5. “Public Communications and Information Sciences”, scientific speciality: Journalism and Public Relations: Strategic Communications and Planned Events, published in SG, issue 25/2021.*

**Grounds for participation in the scientific jury:** According to the BFU Rector’s Order

### 1. INFORMATION ABOUT THE COMPETITION

According to Article 4 of the Law for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, Article 62 of the Regulations for Implementation of the Development of the Scientific Council of Burgas Free University **decided** to announce a competition for holding the position of an **Associate Professor** in the professional field 3.5. Public communications and information sciences, scientific speciality: *Journalism and public relations: strategic communication and planned events.*

With an application to the Rector of BSU from 12.05.202, Dr Milen Nikolaev Filipov, Chief Assistant at the Center for the Humanities, expressed his will to be admitted to the competition for the academic position of “Associate Professor”, providing all the necessary documents following the Law on Academic Staff Development in the Republic of Bulgaria (LASD).

Chief Assistant Professor Dr Milen Nikolaev Filipov was admitted to the competition for the “Associate Professor” academic position, and he was the only candidate in this competition.

### 2. INFORMATION ABOUT THE CANDIDATE

Dr Milen Nikolaev Filipov is a researcher and lecturer in the following scientific fields: communication theory, advertising and public relations, event management, online communications and social networks, public communications and social psychology.

- **2007-2015:** A assistant at BFU, Center for Humanities
- **2012-2015:** A full-time doctoral student at FJMC at Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski.”

- **2015:** A **doctor**, professional field 3.5. Public communications and information sciences (Journalism and public relations) of FJMK at Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”, diploma № Sofia University 2015-65 / 30.04.2015.

- **2016:** A **Chief Assistant Professor Dr** at BFU, Center of Humanities. Research areas: communication theory, advertising and public relations.

- **2020:** specialized in the following universities: Emory University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Arizona State University, University of Maryland

Chief Assistant Professor Dr Milen Filipov has excellent interpersonal skills, including tact, diplomacy and respect for colleagues and students. He also has outstanding intercultural competencies based on his academic work at KIMEP University, Kazakhstan. In this capacity, Chief Assistant Dr. Milen Filipov has also worked with students from Central Asia, Europe and South Korea and colleagues from 49 countries.

### **3. DESCRIPTION OF SCIENTIFIC STUDIES**

For the participation in this competition as the main habilitation work, Chief Assistant Professor Dr Milen Filipov presented one scientific monograph on the topic: “(Pseudo) event. Theory and practice”. Gabrovo, published by EX-PRESS, 2021, editors: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Veselina Vateva and Prof. Galya Hristozova.

Chief Assistant Professor Dr Milen Filipov also presented 26 scientific studies, articles and scientific communications published in authoritative scientific journals and collections dedicated to *public relations, social networks, digital transformations, media and social inclusion, style of communication of the Bulgarian University in Facebook, style of communication and tone of the brand voice in social media, the press release as the main genre in PR, green CSR initiatives and features in their coverage in electronic media, personalized public relations and relationship building, ethnopsycholinguistic and sociolinguistic aspects of the language of the newspapers in Bulgaria and others*. Here are some of them:

- **Filipov, Milen (2020).** Teaching Public Speaking Online. Proceedings of VII International Scientific and Practical Conference, November 26-28, Washington, USA, pp.299-305, **ISBN 979-1-293-10109-3**.

- **Filipov, Milen (2020).** **Bulgarian Language in Social Media: Opinions of Burgas Journalists**, Proceedings of a scientific conference **The Bulgarian Literary Language in Social Media – Collisions and Influences**, 5-6 June 2020 г., Burgas: Burgas Free University, pp. 155-162. **ISBN 978-619-7126-93-8**

▪ **Filipov, Milen (2020).** Online personal brand in the Kazakhstani HR Context. *International Scientific-Analytical Journal of Public Administration and Public Service*, 2(73), pp. 36-42. ISSN 1994-2370.

▪ **Filipov, Milen (2020).** The Country Image of Kazakhstan in Two Western Media Articles. Proceedings of I International Scientific and Practical Conference, November 16-18, 2020, Kishinev, Moldova, pp. 280-287. ISBN 978-5-368-01372-5.

▪ **Filipov, Milen (2019).** Who Buys Amsterdam Dance Event? *International Journal of Event Management*, 23(6), pp. 953-958. ISSN1525-9951, <https://doi.org/10.3727/152599519X15506259856426>.

▪ **Filipov, Milen (2019) Features of the Communication Style of the Bulgarian University in Facebook**, Annual of Burgas Free University, vol. XL, pp. 66-102. ISSN: 1311-221X

**The reference for implementing the minimum national requirements** under Article 2b of the Law on Academic Staff Development in the Republic of Bulgaria (LASD) proves that according to indicators A, B, C, and D, Chief Assistant Dr Milen Filipov has 268.33 points, and in total 485.76 points. Therefore, it fully meets the requirements of this competition. Furthermore, Dr Milen Filipov has a scientific publication in the *International Journal of Event Management* with an impact factor.

#### **4. PARTICIPATIONS IN RESEARCH PROJECTS, TEACHING AND APPLIED ACHIEVEMENTS**

##### **A. Participation in research projects**

Chief Assistant Milen Filipov has presented, for this competition, participation in **6 research projects**:

**1. *Model of effective communication with the school community*** (2016-2017) is a research project funded by the intra-university research fund of BFU. **Scientific Project Manager.**

**2. *Bulgarian Language in Social Media*** (2018/2021) is a fundamental scientific research project financed by the Bulgarian Scientific Fund of the Ministry of Education and Science. **A Member and a research team.**

**3. *A model for educating attention to children's reading from preparatory groups for school and students' reading literacy in the initial stage of education through work with an artistic text*** – a scientific research project of the Veliko Tarnovo University “St Cyril and Methodius). A researcher.

**4. *International Aspects and National Practices of PR 2.0***, held in the Polytechnic Institute of Portalegre, Portugal (A co-coordinator and a researcher of the 2014 Applied Research Project);

**5. *International Aspects and National Practices of PR 2.0***, held in Burgas Free University, Bulgaria (Being the co-coordinator and a researcher of the 2013 Applied Research Project);

**6. *Ethnopsycholinguistic and sociolinguistic aspects of the language of newspapers in Bulgaria*** (2011-2013), a fundamental research project funded by the Research Fund of the Ministry of Education and Science. Member of the research team and researcher.

By subject and scientific organization, these research projects fully meet the theme and requirements of this competition.

### **B. Reports at national and international scientific forums**

Dr Milen Filipov has participated in several international and Bulgarian scientific conferences on public relations, communication style and tone of voice in social media, media communication as a significant genre in PR, Effective communication of state educational institutions with their communities, the new idea in education. Here are some of them: The Bulgarian language in social media: opinions of journalists from Burgas media, Proceedings of a scientific conference on Digital Transformations, Media and Public Inclusion, June 5-6, 2020; The Country Image of Kazakhstan in Two Western Media Articles. Proceedings of the I International Scientific and Practical Conference, November 16-18, 2020, Chisinau, Moldova; Challenges for Private Media. In Kazakhstan, VIII International Scientific and Practical Conference Science and Practice: Implementation to Modern Society, 26-28 December 2020; Personalized public relations and relationship building. Proceedings of a Scientific Conference with International Participation on Horizons in the Development of Human Resources and Knowledge, Volume 2. 12-14 June 2015, Burgas: Burgas Free University.

The scientific activity of Chief Assistant Dr Milen Filipov in various scientific forums makes him known and recognizable to the scientific community in our country. Furthermore, a number of his participations in prestigious scientific forums organized by scientific and cultural institutions are impressive, which is an excellent prerequisite for his development as a university lecturer.

### **C. Teaching**

**Dr Milen Filipov** has been a full-time lecturer at BSU since 2007. He teaches several disciplines, in Bachelor's and Master's degrees, in full-time, part-time and distance forms.

A report on academic employment, issued by BSU, shows that in the educational program "Journalism and Public Relations", Bachelor's degree, Chief Assist. Dr Milen Filipov teaches the following subjects, full-time and part-time: Communication Theory, Event Management, Online Communications and Social Networks, Public Relations Workshop, with 420 hours of classroom employment (lectures and exercises). In the distance learning master's program Public

Communications and Social Psychology, he teaches the disciplines Project in Public Communication and Social Psychology with 120 hours of classroom employment. Dr Filipov has a total of 540 hours of classroom employment. In the period 2015-2016, he was a member of the Academic Council of BFU.

A report on employment at KIMEP University, Kazakhstan, shows that in 2017-2021, the annual academic employment of Chief Assistant Professor Dr Milen Filipov is 1215 hours. He teaches the following subjects: Persuasive Communication, Public Relations Campaigns, Special Events Management and Design, Advertising and Media Sales, Introduction to PR, Crisis Communications, Writing for Advertising, Copywriting, PR Management and Strategies.

Chief Assistant Professor Dr Milen Filipov is the **Head of the Master's Program in International Journalism of the Media and Communications Department at KIMEP University**. In addition, he has served as **the Chair of the Department of Media and Communications for the Summer I semester**. Furthermore, since 2018 he is a **member of the Academic Council of KIMEP University**.

The teaching work of the Chief Assistant Professor, Dr Milen Filipov, at BFU and KIMEP University fully meets the legal requirements for holding the position of an Associate Professor.

#### **D. Creative achievements**

Chief Assistant Professor Dr Milen Filipov has the following creative achievements:

- ***Student PR agency Practa supervisor. Student PR agency PRACTA***, of which he is a supervisor, provides an opportunity for students in public relations at BSU to develop practical communication skills based on in-depth theoretical training. The agency has won prizes and awards in three consecutive years from *PR Priz* (an annual competition organized by the Bulgarian Society of Public Relations)

- ***Member of the editorial board***. Chief Assistant Professor Dr Milen Filipov is a member of the editorial board of the international scientific journal *Central Asian Journal of Innovations on Tourism Management and Finance* for 2020. He is also a member of the scientific jury of the *International Scientific Conference ERAZ* for (2021-2024).

#### **5. SCIENTIFIC CONTRIBUTIONS**

**Relevance and originality of the leading scientific monograph submitted for review by the scientific jury. The habilitation text: “(Pseudo) event: Theory and Practice “. Gabrovo, EX-**

PRESS Publishing House, 20201 editors: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Veselina Vateva and Prof. Galya Hristozova.

*Scientific significance and applicability of the habilitation work*

The scientific monograph: “**(Pseudo)event. Theory and practice**”. Gabrovo, pub. EX-PRESS, 2021, edited by Assoc. Prof. Dr Veselina Vateva and Prof. Sci Dr Galya Hristozova, is an original scientific study, which is dedicated to the planned special events, media events, events for the media events and pseudo-events.

First, the scientific monograph significantly contributes to the scientific analysis and coverage of media events as a social phenomenon. The author considers pseudo-events as a tool for controlling public emotions, behaviour and creating illusory communities. They are seen as a link between individual and group experiences. Pseudo-events bring new topics and emotions to the public communication environment, making them a necessary public authority element. The scientific analysis in the monograph is on the border between public relations, communication practices and social psychology. The author thoroughly and competently examines the development of social publicity, through the management of emotions and experiences of large groups of people, through the various events and the effects of manipulative strategies aimed at them. This complex analysis makes the scientific monograph very valuable, and it is the first of its kind in the national analysis of public relations and public image-building.

Second, the scientific monograph examines the phenomenology of the (pseudo) event and its emotional impact on target audiences. Individual media events are considered in the context of media propaganda, of the manipulations it produces, in the interest of certain social groups or individuals. The author analyzes the processes of mediatization and publicity that unfold in (pseudo) events - mainly in a political context. He applies research techniques and tools from mass communication theories, propaganda theory, black PR (public agenda engineering), image-making theory. According to him, the pseudo-event is entirely mediated. Its primary purpose is to provoke the emotions and actions of particular audiences, which most often “make up” with seemingly rational ideas, whose primary purpose is the general manipulation of public opinion.

Thirdly, the scientific monograph has an original contribution with the introduced interdisciplinary approach, realized through the descriptive survey, analysis of three cases from practice and critical discursive analysis. The survey was conducted among journalists and public relations experts, which provides an opportunity to analyze how a pseudo-event is created and identify three separate events that are an excellent illustration of pseudo-events. The monograph is based on

quantitative and qualitative techniques for empirical analysis of the pseudo-event, which allow the author to consider and analyze various (pseudo) events - their main agents, social causes, and possible consequences in depth.

Fourth, the scientific monograph reasonably concludes that each (pseudo) event takes place mainly with the help of the media, which are its central mediator. The political horizon of the pseudo-event inevitably provokes the media interest, and it gets the necessary sensationalism, which provides its emotional impact on the audience. The author believes that the global interest of the (pseudo) event is related to the branding of a particular personal image and its influence on public opinion. Through theoretical and practical-applied indicators, the scientific monograph thoroughly examines the creation of the pseudo-event as a false media reality, which diverts public attention from the real problems of society to the less serious ones, which refer only to some specific facts and individual persons. So, in essence, the real agenda of society is replaced.

#### **Adequacy of the used research methods**

The habilitation text uses an integrated methodology based on a holistic scientific approach to the problem of the pseudo-event, considered in a theoretical and practical-applied context. The pseudo-event and its principal adherents are studied in several possible contexts:

- through public communication and its communication effects, which daily build the public image of a social group or party;
- through the specific role of the media, which create visions, ideas and emotional attitudes towards certain events, processes and personalities. They exaggerate or downplay various events and political figures, most often in the interests of certain social groups or parties.
- by using pseudo-events to create a specific brand and personal image that manages and manipulates public opinion;

The scientific monograph has several significant merits - the analysis is based on various theoretical studies, media practices and media policies. In addition, it is very well structured, contains serious arguments and is written in a scientific language and style that is accessible to any educated reader.

The habilitation thesis shows the scientific knowledge and professional competence of the Chief Assistant. Dr Milen Filipov very well uses theoretical and practical-applied scientific methods to argue his main theses. The structure, content and methods used in the monograph fully correspond

to the research task. They allow the author to present the pseudo-event and its role in modern propaganda and image-building with the help and mediation of the media analytically.

### ***Scientific contributions***

**Research contribution** to the habilitation work is choosing an original topic and complex methodology of scientific research. The monograph examines a little-studied scientific problem in our country. It uses methods and indicators taken from various sciences - theory of mass communication, public relations, advertising, sociology of media, theory of propaganda, social psychology and others. This integrated methodology broadens the research perspective and allows for professional and exciting conclusions.

**Research contribution** to the habilitation work is the overall analysis of the (pseudo) event in a media, sociological and socio-psychological context. The author shows the unfolding of the pseudo-event - such as phenomenology, physiognomy and prognosis. He analyzes his theoretical framework, reveals his “media physiognomy”, and through numerous facts, argues the manipulative role and influence of pseudo-events on external audiences and the construction of public opinion about certain phenomena and personalities.

### **Recommendations**

My main recommendation to Chief Assistant Professor Dr Milen Filipov is to continue his research in the field of pseudo-events, focusing his scientific interest on fake news and pseudo-events that social networks generate daily. Soon, the online communication situation will be repeatedly complicated by the rapid penetration of robo-journalism and artificial intelligence as mediators between individual events and media audiences. The robotization of mass communication will problematize political propaganda and will most likely end some traditional media manipulations. Moreover, it will undoubtedly create new digital manipulations and on a vast scale.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

The presented scientific researches - main habilitation work, scientific studies and articles, participation in research projects, teaching work at home and abroad, indisputably show the professional presence and the scientific contribution of the Chief assistant Profesor Dr Milen Filipov in media research in our country, which has a theoretical and practical application. This scientific analysis is the first of its kind in Bulgarian media research, and it is a step forward in understanding, systematizing and practical consideration of this important research problem in a media, communicative, socio-political and propaganda context.



Based on the original nature of the habilitation work of Chief Assistant Dr Milen Filipov, his research in the field of media, public relations and public image building, his professional qualities as a university lecturer at home and abroad. Therefore, I strongly recommend the esteemed members of the scientific jury to award the Chief Assistant. Dr Milen Nikolaev Filipov the academic position “Associate Professor” in the field of science 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional field 3.5. Social Communications and Information Sciences, scientific speciality: Journalism and Public Relations and Planned Events, at the Center for Humanities of the Burgas Free University.

Sofia, 20 August 2021

**Member of the scientific jury**

Prof. Sci Dr Milko Petrov