

## OPINION

for a competition for the academic position of “Associate Professor” of Burgas Free University in the field of higher education “Social, Economic and Legal Sciences”, professional field 3.5 Public Communications and Information Sciences (Journalism and Public Relations - Strategic Public Relations and Planned Events ), State Gazette No. 25/26.03.2021

Applicant: Chief Assistant Professor Dr Milen Filipov, PhD

Author of the opinion: Professor Dr Yonka Baltadzhieva

### **1. Information about the competition**

The Burgas Free University (BFU) has announced this competition. The issued order for announcing the competition complies with the primary documents, according to the requirements of the Law on Academic Staff Development in the Republic of Bulgaria (LASD), the Regulations of the Implementation of the Law on Academic Staff Development in the Republic of Bulgaria (RILASD), and the Rules for the Terms and Conditions of Obtaining Scientific Degrees and Holding Academic Positions at the Burgas Free University. Therefore, there are no violations in the competition procedure.

I was included as a member of the competition scientific jury with the BFU Rector’s Order (UMO-135 from 26.05.2021). Furthermore, I was elected as the chairperson of the Committee at its first meeting on 06.07.2021. I was also an author of an opinion on the competition. One candidate participated in the competition – Chief Assistant Professor Dr Milen Filipov, a lecturer at Burgas Free University.

### **2. Information about the applicant**

Chief Assistant Professor Dr Milen Filipov graduated from the Bachelor’s program in Public Relations at BFU and has defended a master’s degree in English Philology, a master’s program in Linguistics and Translation at the University of Shumen *Bishop Konstantin Preslavski* (2006). Furthermore, in 2012-2015 he was a doctoral student at Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”, Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication and obtained the scientific and educational degree Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in 3.5 Public Communications and Information Sciences (Journalism - Public Relations). These educational qualifications have provided the candidate with the opportunity to gain continuous theoretical and research experience for more than fourteen years.

### **3. Teaching**

The professional path of Chief Assistant Professor Dr Milen Filipov involved teaching at the Burgas Free University (BFU). He held the academic positions of an assistant (2007-2015) and a Chief Assistant Professor Dr (2015-2021). The courses he taught are included in the curricula of bachelor's and master's programs in professional fields of Social Communications and Information Sciences (Journalism and Public Relations Magazine - Bachelor's degree, Master's programs in Public Communications and Social Psychology and Strategic Communications and media management); Psychology (Psychology - Bachelor's Degree). In addition, Dr Filipov taught Theory of Communication, Event Management, Online Communications and Social Networks, Project of Public Communications and Social Psychology. In addition, Dr Milen Filipov organized and managed the practical training of the students from the Public Relations program and developed the PR Practicum Part I and Part II curricula. The courses and the PR Practicum syllabi were developed as electronic courses on BFU's MOODLE platform. The quality of the teaching activity of Dr Filipov was evaluated with excellent grades by students (the grades were provided to the candidate from the Department of Quality Assurance at BFU and were obtained by summarizing the results of surveys among students, relating to the period 2014-2017).

The teaching of the candidate expands and is supplemented with participation in research projects. He was involved in various positions (project manager, researcher, coordinator, member of the development team) in intra-university, national and international projects - a total of 6. During 2007/2017, Dr Filipov actively worked with the student community, creating and managing the Student PR Agency "Practa". The average number of students who were members of Practa was 8 per academic year. Under his leadership, they implement comprehensive communication projects for BFU, the Centre of Humanities, and the Municipality of Burgas. The Student PR Agency also performed a supporting communication function of various BFU initiatives. Chief Assistant Professor Dr Filipov also supported the research activities of students in the field of Public Communications and Information Sciences (Journalism major, Public Relations major). Proof of this is the five papers presented by his students at the annual Student National Research Conference at BFU.

Since 2017, Dr M. Filipov teaches at KIMEP UNIVERSITY, Kazakhstan. He teaches students in 8 disciplines: PR Campaigns, Special Event Management and Design, Introduction to Public Relations, Advertising and Media Sales, Research Internship, Persuasive Communication, Media Relations, Crisis

Communications. Chief Assistant Professor Dr Milen Filipov's rich and diverse teaching and research activities are an excellent prerequisite for his scientific development and habilitation.

#### **4. Description of the scientific works of the candidate in compliance with the minimum national requirements for holding the academic position of "Associate Professor."**

The scientific publications described in the candidate's documents are 41 in total. They include one monograph, presented as a habilitation work; participation in author groups of two monographs, different from the habilitation work; two studies - one is co-authored. In addition, he provided 23 articles, of which 11 articles in Bulgarian editions, 12 articles in international editions. Fifteen are individual, and eight are co-authored. The percentage of personal participation of the candidate is presented. One textbook is also presented. In addition, 22 of the articles were published in non-peer-reviewed journals with a scientific review or in edited collective volumes.

The monograph *The (Pseudo)Event: Theory and Practice* (2020, 142 pages) corresponds with the thematic area of the announced competition. The article "Who Buys Amsterdam Dance Event?", published in 2019 in the scientific journal *International Journal of Event Management*, ISSN 1525-9951, 23(6), 953-958, is evaluated with a high impact factor for the same year (0,34). The publication is referenced and indexed in world-famous databases of scientific information (Scopus Q2). The reports Dr M. Filipov has participated in national and international conferences are 12, of which nine are individual, and three are co-authored.

Dr Filipov has 13 citations of his scientific publications. The following are indicated:

- 1 citation in monographs and collective volumes with scientific review – Citation in: Lenk, H. E. H. (Ed.) (2016). *Persuasionsstile in Europa II: Kommentartexte in den Medienlandschaften europäischer Länder*. (Germanistische Linguistik; No. 229-231). Georg Olms Verlag. ISBN 978-3-487-15408-4.;
- 12 citations in non-referred journals with scientific review;

The scientific publications and works of Chief Assistant Professor Dr Milen Filipov are meet the number, scientific genres, issues and contributions of the Minimum Required Points by Groups of Indicators for the Academic Position of "Associate Professor" in higher education "3. Social, economic and legal sciences", professional field 3.5. Public Communications and Information Sciences (the LASD Republic of Bulgaria, RILASD Republic of Bulgaria).

In terms of indicators, the scientific production looks like this:

- "A", indicator 1 (defended dissertation) - 50 points (required 50 points);
- "B", indicator 3 (presented habilitation work) - 100 points (required 100 points);
- "D", the sum of indicators from 4 to 10 (published studies, articles, reports) - 254.40 points (required 200 points);
- "E", the sum of indicators from 11 to 13 (citations of author's publications) - 70 points (required 50 points).

It gave me grounds to acknowledge that Chief Assistant Professor Dr Milen Filipov has formally fulfilled the Law on Academic Staff Development requirements in the Republic of Bulgaria for holding the academic position of "Associate Professor".

All additional requirements of the Center of Humanities for holding the academic position "Associate Professor" were met. Dr Filipov's publications were published after he was awarded his scientific and educational degree Doctor of Philosophy. More than half of the publications were published outside the principal place of work of the applicant.

## **5. Research**

Chief Assistant Dr Milen Filipov pointed out that the scientific publications he presented can be grouped and attributed to two main areas of scientific knowledge and practice - strategic public relations and planned events. Furthermore, he highlighted ten theoretical and practical contributions in his research. I will point out some of them based on the applicant's information in the documents for the competition (Author's reference).

## **6. Theoretical contributions**

- Classification and characterization of planned events, including conceptualization of the pseudo-event as a communication construct bordering a stratagem;
- Defining communication challenges that educational institutions (kindergartens and schools) face;
- Defining the style of communication of universities, the term brand tone of voice was introduced in the scientific literature examining the strategic communications of the Bulgarian university;
- A theoretical model of the inverted pyramid for online publication has been developed from the nonlinear way of creating news;
- Outlining the nature and factors that influence personalization as an approach in strategic public relations;

- Description and analysis of strategic crisis communications and their impact on corporate reputation viewed through the prism of sociology;

## **7. Applied Contributions**

- Description of the characteristics of the planned event, which is derived from the quantitative study of the Amsterdam Dance Event;

- Application of strategic communications in publicity as a part of the public relations, with primary emphasis on the press release;

- Problematization of the involvement approach as part of public relations arsenal as a management approach;

- Empirical substantiation of the importance of school relations with the public as a strategic tool for positioning the educational institution in the primary and secondary stage as a centre of the school community;

- Implementation of strategic public relations for solving practical problems of the school and the university;

- Teaching strategic communications through the collaborative teaching approach;

- Enriching the empirical knowledge of the Bulgarian language in social media with the opinion of regional media representatives;

All data indicated in item 2, item 3, item 4 and item 5 of the opinion are extracted from the applicant's documents submitted for his participation in the competition.

## **8. Conclusion**

The scientific production presented by Chief Assistant Professor Dr Milen Filipov shows full compliance with the minimum national requirements for scientific and teaching activities of candidates for the academic position of “Associate Professor”. Therefore, I confidently vote for awarding the academic position of “Associate Professor” to Chief Assistant Professor Dr Milen Filipov in the field of higher education 3.5. Public Communications and Information Sciences (Journalism and Public Relations - Strategic Public Relations and Planned Events).

Date: 14.08.202, Burgas

Professor Dr Yonka Baltadzhieva \_\_\_\_\_