

## **OPINION**

**Regarding the competition for the occupation of the academic position of "Professor", specialty 2.3. Philosophy, for the needs of the section "Social theories, strategies and forecasts" announced in the State Gazette, issue 89 of 12. XI. 2019 and Minutes 27 of 10.12.2019 of the Scientific Council of the Institute for Philosophy and Sociology**

**by Assoc. Prof. Hristina Georgieva Ambareva, Member of the Scientific Jury pursuant to Order No. RD - 09 - 773 of December 18, 2019.**

### **General description of the presented materials**

Assoc. Prof. D.Sc. Borislav Nikolov Gradinarov is the only candidate in the competition. He participates with two monographs, 4 studios and 29 articles.

The monograph "Media Law" is a text discussing legal matters, but the questions raised in it are considered and understood with philosophical attention to the general picture, constructed of concepts, facts and history. The book was published in 2016, with a volume of 263 pages, and consists of 12 chapters that cover twelve important issues of media law. As such, the author has selected 1) the nature and principles of media law, 2) media regulation, 3-5) subjects, basic concepts and regulation of radio and television activity, 6) commercial communications, 7) digital media, 8) internet, 9) freedom of expression issues, 10) access to information, 11) copyright, and 12) media security.

The second monograph, "Risk and Anti-Risk Strategies", is proposed as a habilitation work, published in 2020, with a volume of 303 pages. It is a philosophical book in which the analysis is based on references to classical philosophical authors and concepts and to authoritative contemporary researchers and risk analysts.

The four chapters of the monograph present the author's theory of risk, which consistently examines available interpretations of risk, presents a sound theory of the nature of risk, as well as an author's analysis of individual and collective risk strategies. The book concludes with an assessment of forecasting capabilities as an anti-risk strategy.

The studies and articles (written in the period 2007-2019) submitted for the competition cover a wide range of topics that show interests and competences in the field of social philosophy, economics and political economy, law and philosophy of politics, etc. Some of these topics are: unconditional basic income, the problem of property and the common goods, poverty, problems of social development in the context of neoliberal capitalism, the processes of separation in the EU, ethical problems in law, etc.

The reference documents provided by the applicant indicate that the publications presented for the contest do not repeat the publications for Associate Professor and PhD. The applicant meets and exceeds the minimum requirements for occupying the position of "Professor".

## **General characteristics of the applicant's scientific, applied and pedagogical activity**

Assoc. Prof. D.Sc. B. Gradinarov holds two Master degrees - in Philosophy and in Law. They interact in his research, expert and teaching work. There are interconnections between the analysis of philosophical, political and legal issues in his scientific work, which together outline a tendency to think in the direction of practically important issues - without going too far in philosophical abstraction and without limiting the analysis to the letter of the law, always picking up a significant social problem. This is an important quality for any researcher, which in this case also demonstrates the advantages of the interdisciplinary approach.

There is a pronounced balance between the scientific and pedagogical activities of Assoc. Prof. D.Sc. B. Gradinarov. Along with his scientific activity, since 1996 he has been teaching to students in the fields of Political Science, Law, Journalism, Public Relations, Economics, and others, from Slavic University, Veliko Turnovo University, UNWE and Bourgas Free University. The courses he led are in a wide range of disciplines that demonstrate competences in scientific fields, that are of interest for the work of the section: Introduction to Political Science, Methodology of Political Analysis, Local Government and Governance, Legal Ethics, Media Law, Philosophy, Philosophy and Sociology of the digital society.

Assoc. Prof. D.Sc. Gradinarov has been the scientific supervisor of two PhD students (in 2009 and 2015) as well as the supervisor of four Master students in political economy (2016)

Assoc. Prof. D.Sc. B. Gradinarov is the author of two reviews and three opinions in contests for academic degrees and positions. He is the author of six scientific collections, being also the editor of four of them. His "Media Law" monograph is suitable for use as a teaching book. An important part of the applicant's scientific and applied work is his expert activity in the period 2001-2003 and 2007-2010 when he worked as a legal consultant to the Electronic Media Council. In the period 2008 – 2013 he was a member of the Managing council of BAS.

## **An analysis of the applicant's scientific achievements**

The theoretical interest in the field of media and the applicant's competence in law studies have been successfully combined in the monograph "Media Law". Here, in an accessible and clear language, various aspects of media regulation are addressed. It is noteworthy the author's good practice to start the analyses suggesting at first precise definitions of the basic concepts. The book itself begins with a definition of the concept of media regulation, which is the author's contribution to the field as well.

The practice of approaching the issues with a clear definition of the basic concepts leads to another significant contribution of the book, which is an in-depth look at the concept of digitalization, the Internet as a digital media environment and, above all, a well explained distinction between the Internet as a large-scale infrastructure - "digital communication environment or platform" - from media such as the World Wide Web, in which all technology for creating, transmitting, storing and processing messages is presented to the user as meaningful information.

The author clarifies well the specifics related to the regulation of the Internet at institutional and non-institutional level, as well as the self/regulation of the World Wide Web.

Since the creation of the Internet, there are three major issues surrounding the use of the World Wide Web, and these are the protection of privacy, copyright and freedom of expression. In the book, they are also examined along with the contradictions they give rise to and the factors that influence them.

The habilitation work "Risk and Anti-Risk Strategies" offers a comprehensive concept of risk that covers questions such as: who creates the risk and what is the nature of risk?; what is a successful anti-risk strategy ?; what happens when social institutes start to produce instability?; etc. The work itself has been put into dialogue with a previous work - "The Power of the System Factor", 2019. Unlike the system factor, which has the power of "objective conditions" independent of the individual, the risk is presented as a relational property and attitude to future events that may jeopardize individual values - which is why it is inseparable from the question "who is at risk?"

Among the author's scientific contributions is the original classification scheme of risks according to two principles - distributiveness and transitivity. They respectively express the possibility of the risk to be distributed and its burden reduced (ex. social and health insurance), or the adverse effects to be borne by another (insurance). Systemic (institutional) risk, when institutions do not meet the expectations of the citizen, is defined as a form of distributive risk. The author's decision to explain insurance and social and health insurance systems as anti-risk strategies is interesting and is justified in the conceptual framework of the book. It is also an original and fruitful idea to think of social capital as an anti-risk strategy and a positive systemic factor

Considering the membership in EU through the lens of a collective anti-risk strategy creates a perspective for understanding pro-European policy, which is inextricably linked to the security issue. The author extends the idea of an anti-risk strategy from an individual to a collective level with relevant questions about the price being paid for being more secure. He draws attention to specific risks such as loss of sovereignty, problems of EU unity, and risks of creating a visa-free space.

The presentation of the book concept is well organized, systematic and is supported by a review of a large amount of discussions, perspectives, analysis of problems and contradictions existing in the field. The book not only has high educational value but is also responsive to topical issues in the political and social life. Also important is the systemic perspective of thinking about security - from the point of view of the individual, to the collective, national and international levels.

The systemic factor, according to the author, generates a future in which risks can be reduced by another risk-taking strategy - forecasting. The answer given by Assoc. Prof. D.Sc. B. Gradinarov focuses comprehensively on the possibilities and limitations of the statistical approach, the deterministic predictability, the role of the autonomous social action of the subject. A common feature of the in-depth analysis is the healthy skepticism with which he acknowledges the existence of serious "cognitive deficits about the future" (p.250).

## **Citations**

The candidate's studies generate interest, as evidenced by citations. They fully cover the required number for the position of "Professor", showing scientific interest in the topics of security, media law, social problems and processes in Bulgaria.

## **Critical notes**

In the book "Media Law", Assoc. Prof. D.Sc. B.Gradinarov writes about the regulation of intellectual property in the conditions of digitalization and about copyright. My question to him is: is there a place and what it is for the open source licenses in media law and what is the reason for not including the topic in the book?

I have a comment on the cited definition of virtual reality on page 142 ("Media Law") as a reality that does not exist but is like real and is a product of human mind. The definition causes some disagreement. Can't be a case instead, virtual reality to be considered as alternative reality, which is quite real (at least as much as money), because otherwise there will be no need for its regulation?

## **Personal impressions about the applicant**

I know Assoc. Prof. D.Sc. B. Gradinarov from his work in the section "Social Theories, Strategies and Forecasts" since 2010. He has proven to be a constructive and critical participant in discussions, a person with attention to the detail and a serious attitude towards work.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the active scientific, expert and teaching activity of Assoc. Prof. D.Sc. B. Gradinarov, I strongly support his election to the academic position of "Professor" in the scientific field of 3.2. Philosophy, to the section "Social Theories, Strategies and Forecasts" of the IPhS-BAS. In view of the applicant's scientific contributions, I suggest to the respectable members of the Scientific Jury to vote also in the affirmative.

**Assoc. Prof. Hristina Ambareva**

.....

February 27, 2020

Sofia