

## OPINION

of

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"Security and Defense", professional direction 9.1. "National Security"

on

the scientific works for participation in a competition for the academic position of  
"associate professor", professional direction 9.1. "National security", announced in the  
State Gazette (SG) number 84 from 21.10.2022, presented by the candidate chief assistant  
Dr. Michael Minev Dimitrov

### **I. Assessment of compliance with the minimum national requirements and the requirements of the New Bulgarian University**

From the report on the implementation of the minimum national requirements under Art. 2b, para. 2 and 3 of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LDASRB) it is clear that the scientific production presented by the candidate for this competition corresponds to both the requirements of the LDASRB and the requirements of the Ordinance on the Development of the Academic Staff of the NBU. The candidate exceeds the minimum requirements of LDASRB in terms of indicators.

### **II. Research activity and results**

#### 1. Monographic work

The candidate participates in the competition with the monograph "The Western Balkans in the Battle for Romeland", and the monograph was printed. The paper is well presented, with a clear structure and concept. It consists of an introduction, four chapters and a conclusion. Checking the monograph with plagiarism software shows that the work is original and belongs to the applicant.

In the first chapter, entitled "The Chessboard of the Western Balkans", the author outlines the geographical framework of his work by emphasizing events and processes important for the political development of the countries of the region. In the presentation, the candidate emphasizes key issues for the region, both domestically and internationally, analyzing key issues related to the relations Sofia - Skopje and Belgrade - Pristina, as well as the challenges along the Sarajevo - Banja Luka (Belgrade) axis.

In the second chapter, entitled "Geoenergy War and Cold Peace", the candidate introduces the functional vector of the study – the resource, and more specifically energy, security of Europe in perspective and from the point of view of Russia.

The third chapter, entitled "Raumsinn: between *"Divide et impera"* and *"In varietate concordia"*", focuses on how the functional vector affects the field of the geographical frame. This chapter also presents the Three Seas initiative in more detail.

The fourth chapter, "Formalized representation of the competitive space in the Western Balkans" has a central role. Using the specialized software MACTOR, the

candidate analyzes the correlations between stakeholders and makes suggestions for the direction of development of the relations between the participants. This chapter contributes the most to the originality of the study and its significance.

The four chapters of the monographic work are organized according to the logic of the study – to provide the necessary elements for building a formalized image of the competitive space of the Western Balkans. This goal was achieved through a thorough comprehensive analysis of the state of processes in the Western Balkans region with appropriate historical depth characterizing the analyzed process.

The monograph is distinguished by a wonderful academic style.

## 2. Other attached publications

The candidate participates in the competition with a published book based on a defended PhD thesis for the award of an educational and scientific degree "doctor" with the title "Methodological issues for the analysis of regional security: a scenario space for the development of the situation in Central Europe" and with twenty papers, published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals and in edited collective volumes. Two of them are co-authored. Four are in English, and two are published in international publications from Southeast Europe. Three other scientific papers are also presented.

The publications address various aspects of the monograph's problematics. The research in them has played a basic role in the writing of the monographic work, without necessarily repeating parts of it. They are evidence of the candidate's lasting interest in the field of energy policy and geopolitics.

## 3. Citations

From the submitted reference it is clear that the candidate has indicated citations from other authors within 80 points of the minimum required 50 points.

### **III. Educational and teaching activities**

Chief Assistant Doctor Michael Dimitrov develops a number of lecture courses, which he teaches with success. He provides the trainings and participates in the educational process of the students of the department during the time he is a teacher, without interruption, he also uses the electronic training module MOODLE - NBU in his work.

He is an Erasmus coordinator in the Department of National and International Security (DNIS), NBU. He is actively involved in the initiatives of the department, and in 2022 he played an important role in organizing the annual international scientific conference of the DNIS and the subsequent publication of a collection of papers. He contributed to the conclusion of a cooperation agreement between the Main Directorate "Execution of Punishments", the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Bulgaria (MDEP) and the NBU, which is the basis for the implementation of student internships. In his teaching activity, he meets the requirements for classroom and non-auditory employment, as well as work in the electronic training module "MOODLE - NBU". Feedback in student surveys is positive.

#### **IV. Administrative and public activity**

The candidate is a member of the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Basic Education, NBU. He was a program consultant at DNIS, NBU. He is the chairman of the association "Bulgarian Hub for United Balkans".

#### **V. Personal impressions about the applicant**

Knowing the candidate from the time when he was a bachelor student, then a master's student, and then a doctoral student, and after completing his doctoral studies he won a competition and worked as a teacher at DNCS, NBU, I believe that his habilitation as an associate professor is natural development of his teaching career and a stepping stone to further academic development.

#### **Conclusion**

In view of everything presented here, I state my positive assessment. I believe that the monographic work and the presented articles meet the requirements of LDASRB for winning the competition for the academic position "associate professor" in professional direction 9.1. "National and International Security, announced in SG No. 84 of 21.10.2022. I recommend the scientific jury to propose to the Academic Council of the NBU to elect chief assistant Dr. Michael Minev Dimitrov as an "associate professor".

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Prof. Nikolay Radulov, Dr.Sci.