



STATEMENT

by **prof. ScD Vera Boneva** –

University of Library Studies and Information Technologies,

on the occasion of the

selection procedure for the position of **associate professor**, advertised in the State Gazette №23 of 19.03.2024 in the professional field 3.9. Tourism (Cultural and historical heritage); candidate – chef assistant PhD Vidin Stoyanov Sucarev

Overview of the candidate's professional biography

Chef assistant PhD Vidin Stoyanov Sucarev is the only candidate in this selection procedure for a full-time associate professor position at the Faculty of Economics (Department of Tourism) of the Agrarian University in Plovdiv. All required documents have been made available, and the file demonstrating compliance with the minimum requirements confirms that the candidate by far exceeds the minimum points required. Having familiarized myself with the documents and the course of the procedure up to now, I declare that I have not found any non-observances of the legal framework or academic ethics. There are no circumstances available that would put me in a conflict of interest in the current procedure.

Vidin Sukarev obtained a master's degree in History at Saints Cyril and Methodius Veliko Tarnovo University in 2000. In 2009, he defended his doctoral thesis in History of Bulgaria after studying at the Department of "Social Sciences and Tourism" of the Agrarian University in Plovdiv. He holds the position of chief assistant at the Agricultural University (half-time) and at the Regional History Museum - Plovdiv (full-time). He has pedagogical experience as a teacher and 11 years of academic experience. At both the museum and the university, the

candidate has demonstrated significant academic effort in the fields of history, tourism, and cultural heritage. His participation in scientific conferences and other forums is systematic and outstanding.

**Assessment of the scholarly and practical outcomes and contributions
of the academic work submitted for the selection procedure**

The candidate has submitted two author monographs, one collective monograph, 18 articles for participation in the competition. A general list of publications is also available, which describes a further 32 titles. In the competition publications, I assume that there is one monograph that fulfills the role of habilitation work, since the two separate books are variations of one main text, and they are technically identical. I do not include in the scope of the review the article "The Representation of the Mentality Image of the Bulgarians during 15th – 17th Century in Bulgarian Historiography", which is in the problematic of the dissertation work and was partially evaluated in another procedure. The article under No. 19 in the list is similar; it also refers to the folk psychology in the early centuries of the Ottoman Empire.

The main thematic areas of the scientific texts presented are the following: History of Plovdiv during the era of state socialism; Tourism; Cultural-historical heritage; Museology. This identification and ranking differ slightly from the one made by Dr. Sukarev in the self-reference of the contributions, which, however, I accept as adequate. From the auto-reference, I do not accept only the statement of the existence of 300 points of citations, because apart from the eight citations mentioned, there is no evidentiary material for other such.

The thematic field related to *the history of Plovdiv* during the period of socialism is most widely represented in the candidate's works. It is present both in the habilitation thesis and in several of Dr. Sugarev's articles. The author's claim to have produced a genuine academic work on the subject is well founded. He has

developed his theses on the basis of more than 300 historiographical sources and in-depth work with primary archival documents. Correct to the historical reality are the reconstructions of the activities of the local administrative bodies, the development of the city infrastructure, as well as the elements of the economic life of Plovdiv, which he traced. The paragraphs devoted to the creation and management of the reserve in the Old Town, as well as the parallels with the development of the cultural infrastructure in other historical settlements, are useful. The scientific apparatus, illustrations and all other metacomponents of the habilitation monograph are precise and skillfully linked to the main text.

The thematic field of Tourism is included in the monograph - habilitation work as an essential part. It is the independent subject of analysis in all four candidate papers. Dr. Sukarev highlights the peculiarities in the development of the tourist infrastructure of Plovdiv, traces the relationship between tourism and the cultural industry, and emphasizes other regional aspects of the sector. Some of the texts highlight the role of the International Fair for the development of the city. The changes in the tourism industry following the Covid crisis are well outlined. The candidate has excellent knowledge of the structure of the tourism sector and has useful ideas for its future development.

The issues in the complex scientific field of *Cultural and Historical Heritage* are again mainly linked to Plovdiv. The candidate's observations about the way in which the 100th anniversary of the Unification of the Principality of Bulgaria and Eastern Rumelia was celebrated are valuable. Main moments of the development of the historical and architectural reserve of Ancient Plovdiv are indicated on archival data. The article on street names in a regional city, created in an interdisciplinary context, outlines curious parameters of local cultural memory. To this group of studies, I add the candidate's singular but useful observations on the everyday life of the large regional city in the second half of the last century.

Dr. Vidin Sukarev is the author of a cycle of articles on *Museology*, which is logical in connection with his long-term commitment to expert work at the Regional History Museum - Plovdiv. The group of materials submitted for review includes texts dedicated to the fund work of museums, their staffing, and the role of digital technologies in the enrichment of museum practices. Some of the mentioned studies are based on personal experience and, as a result, are loaded with some subjective assessments. In general, however, the candidate demonstrates high professionalism in the field of theoretical and applied Museology.

Critical notes and recommendations

Regarding research on the history of Plovdiv during state socialism, my main note to the author is related to the uncritical perception of some of the official terms of that era - for example, "socialist construction". The topic related to tourism is not always comprehensive enough in terms of resources and structures. Less attention is paid to the natural resources, personnel, and recreational forms of this important industry. The approach to the cultural and historical heritage in some of the articles is also not analytical enough. In general, the candidate's conclusions are oriented to the local perspective and the specific social plot. It is advisable to look for more theoretical concepts to work with in the field of social sciences, in which field Dr. Sukarev claims to develop during the next stage of his career.

The submitted documentation and texts do not provide sufficient information about the candidate's teaching work and project activity. The summaries of the articles and monographs are partly in Bulgarian, partly in English and do not always accurately reflect the content of the texts. I recommend that Dr. Sukarev expand the scope of his research activities in the fields of cultural heritage and tourism, which form the profile of the "docent" position he is applying for.

Regarding the issues of Museology, I find his studies on fund work very productive and promising and I expect him to continue his in-depth theoretical and practical work in this important segment of the preservation of movable cultural heritage.

Conclusion

The presented facts, assessments and notes give me reason to assume that the main assistant, Dr. Vidin Sukarev, meets the scientific criteria for acquiring the position of "associate professor". With his scientific production, his teaching work, and his museum practice, he fits into the standards for habilitation in the field of social sciences. In connection with this, I give a positive assessment and vote FOR the election of Dr. Vidin Sukarev as associate professor in the professional field 3.9. Tourism (Cultural and historical heritage).

Prof. ScD Vera Boneva

Sofia,
09 July 2024

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