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НАЦИОНАЛЕН ВОЕНЕН УНИВЕРСИТЕТ "ВАСИЛ ЛЕВСКИ"

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СТАНОВИЩЕ

от полковник доц. д-р Николай Пенчев Стефанов

Заместник-декан на Факултет „Логистика и технологии“
при Национален военен университет „Васил Левски“
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на научните трудове, представени за участие в конкурс за заемане на академичната длъжност „доцент“, обявен със заповед № РД-02-1274/05.12.2024 г. на началника на НВУ „Васил Левски“, обявен в Държавен вестник, бр. 107 от 20 декември 2024 г., за свободна длъжност „доцент“ за граждански служител в секция „Научноизследователска дейност“ на Институт „Научноизследователска и иновационна дейност“ на Национален военен университет „Васил Левски“, в област на висше образование 9. „Сигурност и отбрана“, професионално направление 9.1. „Национална сигурност“.

В конкурса за „доцент“, обявен в Държавен вестник, бр. 107 от 20.12.2024 г. и в интернет-страница на НВУ „Васил Левски“ за нуждите на секция „Научноизследователска дейност“ на Институт „Научноизследователска и иновационна дейност“, като кандидат участва доктор на науките Пламен Атанасов Атанасов.

Велико Търново
2025 г.

1. Обща характеристика на научноизследователската и научно-приложната дейност на кандидата.

С решение съгласно протокол рег. № 981 от 21.02.2025 г. от заседанието на Комисията за проверка на документите и допускане до участие в конкурс за заемане на академична длъжност „доцент“ в НВУ „Васил Левски“ по област на висше образование 9. „Сигурност и отбрана“, професионално направление 9.1. „Национална сигурност“, обявен за нуждите на секция „Научноизследователска дейност“ на Институт „Научноизследователска и иновационна дейност“, **доктор на науките Пламен Атанасов Атанасов** - единствен кандидат, е допуснат до участие в конкурса.

Биографичните данни предоставени от кандидата **доктор на науките Пламен Атанасов Атанасов**, отразяват неговият явен стремеж към обогатяване на образователно и научно ниво.

Същият придобива образователна и научна степен „доктор“ през 2017 г. в област на висшето образование 3. „Социални, стопански и правни науки“, професионално направление 3.5. „Обществени комуникации и информационни науки“, докторска програма „Журналистика-Кризисен публик рилейшънс“, от Софийски университет „Св. Климент Охридски“. През 2020 г. придобива допълнителна специализация „Еволюционна психология и психиатрия“ от Медицински университет – Пловдив. През 2023 г. придобива научна степен „доктор на науките“ по професионално направление 9.1. „Национална сигурност“ и научна специалност „Стратегии и политики на сигурност“ от Нов български университет.

Представеният от д.н. Пламен Атанасов комплект материали на хартиен и електронен носител е в съответствие със Закона за развитие на академичния състав в Република България (ЗРАСРБ), Правилника за прилагане на ЗРАСРБ, както и изискванията на Правилника за подбор и развитие на академичния състав в НВУ „Васил Левски“.

Според представените документи, той е участвал в два проекта, както следва:

✓ проект, финансиран целево от държавния бюджет: "Управление на репутационни кризи" – колективна монография (учебно помагало). Р-л: проф. д-р Чавдар Асенов Христов. СУ „Св. Кл. Охридски“, дог. № 80-10-222/24.04.2017 г.

✓ проект, финансиран от Асоциацията за психично здраве на Югоизточна Европа: Стигмата на психичните заболявания сред студентите

по медицина в пет страни от Югоизточна Европа. Асоциацията за психично здраве на Югоизточна Европа, 2015-2022 г., с национални координатори на проекта: гл. експерт д-р Владимир Наков, отдел „Психично здраве“, „Национален център по общественото здраве и анализи“ и професор д-р Калоян Стойчев, Медицински университет – Плевен, „Национален център по общественото здраве и анализи“.

2. Оценка на педагогическата подготовка и дейност на кандидата.

От представените документи по конкурса от кандидата е ясно, че не е заемал академични длъжности, но същият притежава известен опит като научен сътрудник, а също и като преподавател. Кандидатът д.н. Пламен Атанасов е представил доказателства, че е подготвил и изнесъл/провел: 15 ч. аудиторен курс „Институционален трансмедиялен имидж и бранд“ и 30 ч. упражнения по дисциплината „Убеждаваща комуникация“ във Факултета по журналистика и масова комуникация на Софийски университет „Св. Климент Охридски“; 6 ч. лекции на тема „Публичността на 21-ви век – лекарят като комуникатор“ и 4 ч. лекции на тема „Лекар и общество пред предизвикателствата на 21-ви век. Мислене за сигурност в контекста на общественото здраве“ в Медицински университет – Плевен.

Кандидатът д.н. Пламен Атанасов е разработил и участвал в разработването на 4 учебни програми в областите на информационната сигурност, информационно-аналитичната дейност, киберзащита и трансмедиялния имидж. Те са предназначени за обучение в бакалавърски и магистърски програми, и са разпределени както следва: 1 – във Факултета по журналистика и масова комуникация на Софийски университет „Св. Климент Охридски“ и 3 – във Военна академия „Г. С. Раковски“.

Изложените материали доказват, че д.н. Пламен Атанасов, работи активно в учебния процес, чрез който успява да популяризира научно-изследователската си работа.

3. Количествена характеристика на научната продукция на кандидата.

Кандидатът д.н. Пламен Атанасов е приложил общо 20 научни труда, с общ обем от 634 страници, които са публикувани след придобиването на ОНС „доктор“ и НС „доктор на науките“ и включват: 1 монография (хабилитационен труд (1.1.), с обем от 230 стр.), 1 монография, която не е

представяна като основен хабилитационен труд по предходна или текуща процедура (1.2.) с обем от 219 стр.) и 18 научноизследователски разработки (научни доклади/статии (2.1.1, 2.2.1 до 2.2.17.) с общ обем от 185 стр.). Приемам за рецензиране всички научни трудове, тъй като съответстват на предметната област на обявения конкурс. Разпределението на научните трудове по съответни рубрики, в страната и в чужбина, е както следва: 18 бр. научни публикации са в страната, а 2 бр. – в чужбина, като едната от тях е публикувана в научно издание, реферирано и индексирано в Scopus. При крайната оценка се отчитат също 1 учебник с обем от 138 стр., 1 учебно пособие разработено в съавторство с обем от 305 стр. (авторски са 31 стр.).

Публикациите са в специализирани научни издания, стилът на кандидата е академичен, задълбочен, разбираем и достъпен, придържащ се към академичните стандарти.

Научните интереси и публикации на кандидата са пряко ориентирани към предметната област на конкурса и нуждите на секция „Научноизследователска дейност“ на Институт „Научноизследователска и иновационна дейност“.

В представената от кандидата справка-декларация за изпълнение на минимални национални изисквания за академична длъжност „доцент“ в област на висше образование 9. „Сигурност и отбрана“, професионално направление 9.1. „Национална сигурност“, по групи са, както следва:

- група показатели А – 150 т.
- група показатели В – 100 т.
- група показатели Г – 290 т.
- група показатели Д – 80 т.

В заключение може да се отбележи, че кандидатът е изпълнил минималните национални изисквания по обявения конкурс в значително висока степен, като за дадената академична длъжност се изискват 400 т., а той е постигал резултат от 620 т.

Количеството на представените за рецензиране публикации е представително и оценявам като достатъчно за участие в конкурс за академична длъжност „доцент“ в НВУ „Васил Левски“.

4. Основни научни и научно-приложни приноси.

Приемам авторската справка за оригиналните научни приноси и ги систематизирам по следния начин:

4.1. Научни приноси.

4.1.1. Извършено е обхватно и актуално изследване в научната литература у нас и по света, след което теоретичното знание в полето на сигурността е дообогатено, чрез обвързване на понятието сигурност с естественото усложняване на социалните системи (вкл. обществото), което води до усложняване на комуникацията вътре в тях и между тях (вкл. и публичната дипломация). На тази основа критично са преосмислени базови теории и схващания и е развита оригинална гледна точка, според която сигурността е диверсифицирана като идеална, търсена и постигната. (1.1.1; 2.2.15; 2.2.16)

4.1.2. След систематизиране на влиятелни концепции полето на комуникацията и социалната психология, теорията е обогатена с концепция за връзката между сигурността и комуникацията като е дефинирана категорията, наречена „говорители“ и е доказана определящата ѝ роля в публичната комуникация, развивана по отношение на сигурността в държавата и обществото (2.2.14; 2.2.16)

4.1.3. В контекста на сигурността в държавата и обществото са изследвани комуникационни теории и случаи, и на тази база са изведени авторски дефиниции за хакери и тролове. (1.2.1; 2.2.1)

4.2. Научно-приложни приноси.

4.2.1. На базата на пространно теоретично изследване е създаден Модел, на основата на Теорията на Никлас Луман за комуникацията и съвременните, социално ориентирани теории за сигурността, в който са представени повтарящи се зависимости, разкриващи връзката между сигурността и комуникацията, в частност – между сигурността, цензурата, пропагандата и информационното воюване, както и между националната сигурност и публичната дипломация. (2.2.11; 2.2.14; 2.2.15; 2.2.17)

4.2.2. Запълнена е празнота в съществуващата теория, като публичната дипломация (вкл. новата публична дипломация и дигиталната дипломация) са доказани в качеството на съществен инструментариум за елиминиране на негативни ефекти при изграждането и развиването на нациите и при прокарването на интереси във външнополитическите отношения. Комуникацията в киберпространството е доказана като удачен и перспективен инструмент за публична дипломация, информационно и хибридно воюване. (1.1.1; 2.2.17)

4.2.3. Изведени са оригинални алгоритми за въздействие върху публичната комуникация и от там върху публичната дипломация, което

въздействие упражняват в контекста на сигурността хакери, тролове и фалшиви новини, както и някои приложения на изкуствения интелект (например микротаргетиране). Изведена е необходимостта от разработване на стандарти за комплексен подход за предпазване от натрапване на интереси през киберпространството. (2.2.1; 2.2.2; 2.2.4; 2.2.6; 2.2.7; 2.2.10; 2.2.13; 2.2.15)

4.2.4. В отговор на все по-сложното преплитане в международните отношения на интереси и стратегически комуникатори, е разработена методика за анализ на интереси за потребностите на сигурността, която методика използва открити източници и служи за идентифициране на ансамбъла от участници и тяхната роля в ситуации на разногласия, възникнали в международните отношения. (2.2.17)

4.2.5. Представените трудове внасят попълнение в развиващата се гранична област между сигурността, комуникацията и международните отношения, като допълват научната литература и преподаването на стратегическите комуникации в посока на предпазването от интервенции върху обществото и в контекста на националната сигурност, регионалната сигурност, международната сигурност и информационното воюване. (1.1.1; 1.2.1; 2.2.14; 2.2.15; 2.2.17)

Представените за участие в конкурса материали съдържат значими научни и научно-приложни приноси, които допринасят развитието на науката в областта на професионално направление „Национална сигурност“. Изследванията засягат ключови аспекти, свързани с връзката между сигурността и комуникацията, както и международната сигурност и информационното воюване.

5. До каква степен представените трудове и приноси в тях са лично дело на кандидата.

Резултатите от работата на д.н. Пламен Атанасов са представени в авторитетни научни издания. Всички посочени публикации са видими в различни научно-метрични и научни сайтове.

Приемам научноизследователската дейност и посочените приноси, като считам, че са лично, авторско дело на участника в конкурса, което говори за неговите възможности и позволява в бъдещата му дейност той да ги доразвие и обогати. Доказателства за тяхната значимост са цитиранията на научни публикации на кандидата в други научни трудове. В приложената справка се посочват: 8 цитирания на 4 публикации в монографии и колективни томове с научно рецензиране.

Към момента на рецензиране не ми е известно да е получен неанонимен и мотивиран писмен сигнал за установяване на плагиатство в публикациите на кандидата.

6. Критични бележки и препоръки.

Нямам критични бележки по представените ми научни трудове. Препоръчвам на кандидата да насочи своите усилия за продължаване на научната работа и публикуване на материали в чуждестранни издания, които намират отражение в реферирани вторични бази данни – Web of Science и Scopus с цел популяризиране на своите изследвания.

7. Заключение.

От представената богата и разнообразна научна продукция, научните приноси и приложните аспекти на изследванията на кандидата е видно, че са покрити и в количествено и в качествено отношение нормативните изисквания на Закона за развитие на академичния състав в Република България, Правилника за прилагане на ЗРАСРБ и Правилника за подбор и развитие на академичния състав в НВУ „Васил Левски” и може да заеме обявената академична длъжността „доцент“ по конкурса. Теоретичните му разработки имат практическа приложимост, като всички са пряко ориентирани към научната област и професионалното направление на обявения конкурс.

8. Оценка на кандидата.

Оценката ми за научните трудове на **д.н. Пламен Атанасов Атанасов**, единствен участник в конкурса за академична длъжност „доцент“, цивилен служител, за нуждите първично звено секция „Научноизследователска дейност” на приемащо структурно звено институт „Научноизследователска и иновационна дейност” в НВУ „Васил Левски”, в област на висшето образование 9. „Сигурност и отбрана“, професионално направление 9.1. „Национална сигурност“ е **положителна**.

Предлагам на уважаемото научно жури по конкурса **д.н. Пламен Атанасов Атанасов** да бъде избран и предложен да заеме академична длъжност „доцент“ в секция „Научноизследователска дейност” на приемащо структурно звено институт „Научноизследователска и иновационна дейност” в НВУ „Васил Левски”.

12.03.2025 г.

Изготвил становището:

гр. Велико Търново
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О P I N I O N

by **Colonel Assoc. Prof. Nikolay Penchev Stefanov, PhD**,
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of the scientific papers submitted for participation in a competition for the academic position of "associate professor", announced by order No. RD-02-1274/05.12.2024 of the head of the National Military University "Vasil Levski", announced in the State Gazette, issue 107 of December 20, 2024, for the vacant position of "associate professor" for a civilian employee in the "Research and Innovation" section of the Institute of "Research and Innovation" of the National Military University "Vasil Levski", in the field of higher education 9. "Security and Defense", professional direction 9.1. "National Security".

In the competition for "associate professor", announced in the State Gazette, issue 107 of December 20, 2024 and on the website of the National University of Science and Technology "Vasil Levski" for the needs of the "Research and Innovation" section of the Institute of Research and Innovation, with Dr. Plamen Atanasov Atanasov as the candidate.

Veliko Tarnovo
2025

1. General characteristics of the candidate's research and applied scientific activities.

By decision according to the protocol reg. No. 981 of 21.02.2025 of the meeting of the Commission for verification of documents and admission to participation in a competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" at the National University of Higher Education "Vasil Levski" in the field of higher education 9. "Security and Defense", professional direction 9.1. "National Security", announced for the needs of the "Research and Development" section of the Institute of "Research and Innovation", Doctor of Sciences Plamen Atanasov Atanasov - the only candidate, is admitted to participate in the competition.

The biographical data provided by the candidate Doctor of Sciences Plamen Atanasov Atanasov, reflect his clear aspiration to enrich his educational and scientific level.

He acquired the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in 2017. in the field of higher education 3. "Social, Economic and Legal Sciences", professional field 3.5. "Public Communications and Information Sciences", doctoral program "Journalism-Crisis Public Relations", from Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski". In 2020, he acquired an additional specialization "Evolutionary Psychology and Psychiatry" from the Medical University - Plovdiv. In 2023, he acquired the scientific degree "Doctor of Sciences" in the professional field 9.1. "National Security" and the scientific specialty "Strategies and Policies of Security" from the New Bulgarian University.

The set of materials on paper and electronic media presented by Dr. Plamen Atanasov is in accordance with the Act on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ZRASRB), the Regulations for the Implementation of ZRASRB, as well as the requirements of the Regulations for the Selection and Development of the Academic Staff at the Vasil Levski National University.

According to the submitted documents, he has participated in two projects, as follows:

✓ A project specifically funded by the state budget: "Management of Reputational Crises" - collective monograph (textbook). Director: Prof. Dr. Chavdar Asenov Hristov. Sofia University "St. Kl. Ohridski", contract No. 80-10-222/24.04.2017

✓ A project funded by the Southeast European Mental Health Association: The Stigma of Mental Illnesses among Medical Students in Five Countries of Southeast Europe. Southeast European Mental Health Association, 2015-2022, with national project coordinators: Chief Expert Dr. Vladimir Nakov, Department of Mental Health, "National Center for Public Health and Analyses" and Professor Dr. Kaloyan Stoychev, Medical University - Pleven, "National Center for Public Health and Analyses".

2. Assessment of the candidate's pedagogical training and activities.

From the documents submitted by the candidate for the competition, it is clear that he has not held academic positions, but he has some experience as a research assistant and also as a lecturer. The candidate, Ph.D. Plamen Atanasov, has presented evidence that he has prepared and delivered/conducted: 15 hours of classroom course "Institutional Transmedia Image and Brand" and 30 hours of exercises in the discipline "Persuasive Communication" at the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"; 6 hours of lectures on the topic "The Publicity of the 21st Century - the Doctor as a Communicator" and 4 hours of lectures on the topic "Doctor and Society Facing the Challenges of the 21st Century. Thinking about Security in the Context of Public Health" at the Medical University - Pleven.

The candidate, Ph.D. Plamen Atanasov has developed and participated in the development of 4 curricula in the fields of information security, information-analytical activity, cyber defense and transmedia image. They are intended for training in bachelor's and master's programs, and are distributed as follows: 1 - at the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" and 3 - at the Military Academy "G. S. Rakovski".

The materials presented prove that Dr. Plamen Atanasov works actively in the educational process, through which he manages to popularize his scientific and research work.

3. Quantitative characteristics of the candidate's scientific output.

The candidate dr. Plamen Atanasov has submitted a total of 20 scientific papers, with a total volume of 634 pages, which were published after the acquisition of the ONS "Doctor" and the NS "Doctor of Sciences" and include: 1 monograph (habilitation paper (1.1.), with a volume of 230 pages), 1 monograph that was not presented as the main habilitation paper under a previous or current procedure (1.2.) with a volume of 219 pages) and 18 scientific research papers (scientific reports/articles (2.1.1, 2.2.1 to 2.2.17.) with a total volume of 185 pages). I accept all scientific papers for review, as they correspond to the subject area of the announced competition. The distribution of scientific works by relevant headings, in the country and abroad, is as follows: 18 scientific

publications are in the country, and 2 are abroad, one of which is published in a scientific publication, referenced and indexed in Scopus. The final assessment also takes into account 1 textbook with a volume of 138 pages, 1 teaching aid developed in co-authorship with a volume of 305 pages (31 pages are author's).

The publications are in specialized scientific publications, the candidate's style is academic, in-depth, understandable and accessible, adhering to academic standards.

The candidate's scientific interests and publications are directly oriented to the subject area of the competition and the needs of the "Research Activity" section of the "Research and Innovation Activity" Institute.

In the reference-declaration submitted by the candidate for the fulfillment of minimum national requirements for the academic position of "associate professor" in the field of higher education 9. "Security and Defense", professional field 9.1. "National Security", by groups are as follows:

- indicator group A – 150 points
- indicator group B – 100 points
- Indicator group D – 290 points
- Indicator group E – 80 points

In conclusion, it can be noted that the candidate has fulfilled the minimum national requirements for the announced competition to a significantly high degree, as the given academic position requires 400 points, and he achieved a result of 620 points.

The number of publications submitted for review is representative and I assess it as sufficient for participation in a competition for the academic position of "associate professor" at the Vasil Levski National University of Economics.

4. Main scientific and applied scientific contributions.

I accept the author's reference for the original scientific contributions and systematize them in the following way:

4.1. Scientific contributions.

4.1.1. A comprehensive and up-to-date study has been carried out in the scientific literature in our country and around the world, after which theoretical knowledge in the field of security has been enriched by linking the concept of security with the natural complication of social systems (including society), which leads to the complication of communication within them and between them (including public diplomacy). On this basis, basic theories and concepts have been critically reconsidered and an original point of view has been developed, according to which security is diversified as ideal, sought and achieved. (1.1.1; 2.2.15; 2.2.16)

4.1.2. After systematizing influential concepts in the field of communication and social psychology, the theory has been enriched with a

concept of the relationship between security and communication, defining the category called "speakers" and proving its decisive role in public communication developed in relation to security in the state and society (2.2.14; 2.2.16)

4.1.3. In the context of security in the state and society, communication theories and cases have been studied, and on this basis, author's definitions of hackers and trolls have been derived. (1.2.1; 2.2.1)

4.2. Scientific and applied contributions.

4.2.1. Based on extensive theoretical research, a Model has been created, based on Niklas Luhmann's Theory of Communication and modern, socially oriented theories of security, in which recurring dependencies are presented, revealing the relationship between security and communication, in particular - between security, censorship, propaganda and information warfare, as well as between national security and public diplomacy. (2.2.11; 2.2.14; 2.2.15; 2.2.17)

4.2.2. A gap in the existing theory has been filled, as public diplomacy (including new public diplomacy and digital diplomacy) has been proven as an essential tool for eliminating negative effects in the building and development of nations and in the promotion of interests in foreign policy relations. Communication in cyberspace has been proven to be a successful and promising tool for public diplomacy, information and hybrid warfare. (1.1.1; 2.2.17)

4.2.3. Original algorithms for influencing public communication and from there on public diplomacy have been derived, which influence hackers, trolls and fake news exert in the context of security, as well as some applications of artificial intelligence (e.g. microtargeting). The need to develop standards for a comprehensive approach to protecting against the imposition of interests through cyberspace has been derived. (2.2.1; 2.2.2; 2.2.4; 2.2.6; 2.2.7; 2.2.10; 2.2.13; 2.2.15)

4.2.4. In response to the increasingly complex interweaving of interests and strategic communicators in international relations, a methodology for analyzing interests for security needs has been developed, which methodology uses open sources and serves to identify the ensemble of participants and their role in situations of disagreement that have arisen in international relations. (2.2.17)

4.2.5. The presented works contribute to the developing border area between security, communication and international relations, by supplementing the scientific literature and teaching of strategic communications in the direction of preventing interventions on society and in the context of national security, regional security, international security and information warfare. (1.1.1; 1.2.1; 2.2.14; 2.2.15; 2.2.17)

The materials submitted for participation in the competition contain significant scientific and applied scientific contributions that contribute to the

development of science in the field of the professional field of "National Security". The research addresses key aspects related to the relationship between security and communication, as well as international security and information warfare.

5. To what extent are the presented works and contributions in them the personal work of the candidate.

The results of the work of Dr. Plamen Atanasov are presented in authoritative scientific publications. All the mentioned publications are visible on various scientific-metric and scientific websites.

I accept the scientific research activity and the mentioned contributions, considering them to be the personal, authorial work of the participant in the competition, which speaks of his capabilities and allows him to further develop and enrich them in his future work. Evidence of their significance is the citations of the candidate's scientific publications in other scientific works. The attached reference indicates: 8 citations of 4 publications in monographs and collective volumes with scientific review.

At the time of review, I am not aware of any non-anonymous and motivated written signal for the establishment of plagiarism in the candidate's publications having been received.

6. Critical remarks and recommendations.

I have no critical remarks on the scientific works submitted to me. I recommend that the candidate direct his efforts to continue his scientific work and publish materials in foreign publications, which are reflected in refereed secondary databases - Web of Science and Scopus in order to popularize his research.

7. Conclusion.

From the presented rich and diverse scientific production, scientific contributions and applied aspects of the candidate's research, it is evident that the normative requirements of the Act on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for the Implementation of the Act on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for the Selection and Development of the Academic Staff at the Vasil Levski National University of Higher Education are met in both quantitative and qualitative terms, and he can occupy the announced academic position of "associate professor" under the competition. His theoretical

developments have practical applicability, as all of them are directly oriented to the scientific field and the professional direction of the announced competition.

8. Evaluation of the candidate.

My evaluation of the scientific works of Dr. Plamen Atanasov Atanasov, the sole participant in the competition for the academic position of "associate professor", a civilian employee, for the needs of the primary unit "Research and Innovation" section of the receiving structural unit "Research and Innovation" institute at the National Higher Education University "Vasil Levski", in the field of higher education 9. "Security and Defense", professional direction 9.1. "National Security" is positive.

I propose to the esteemed scientific jury of the competition that Dr. Plamen Atanasov Atanasov be selected and proposed to occupy the academic position of "associate professor" in the "Research and Innovation" section of the receiving structural unit "Research and Innovation" institute at the National Higher Education University "Vasil Levski".

12.03.2025
Veliko Tarnovo

Prepared the opinion:
Col. Assoc. Prof., PhD

Nikolay Stefanov

O P I N I O N

by **Colonel Assoc. Prof. Nikolay Penchev Stefanov, PhD**,
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of the scientific papers submitted for participation in a competition for the academic position of "associate professor", announced by order No. RD-02-1274/05.12.2024 of the head of the National Military University "Vasil Levski", announced in the State Gazette, issue 107 of December 20, 2024, for the vacant position of "associate professor" for a civilian employee in the "Research and Innovation" section of the Institute of "Research and Innovation" of the National Military University "Vasil Levski", in the field of higher education 9. "Security and Defense", professional direction 9.1. "National Security".

In the competition for "associate professor", announced in the State Gazette, issue 107 of December 20, 2024 and on the website of the National University of Science and Technology "Vasil Levski" for the needs of the "Research and Innovation" section of the Institute of Research and Innovation, with Dr. Plamen Atanasov Atanasov as the candidate.

Veliko Tarnovo
2025

1. General characteristics of the candidate's research and applied scientific activities.

By decision according to the protocol reg. No. 981 of 21.02.2025 of the meeting of the Commission for verification of documents and admission to participation in a competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" at the National University of Higher Education "Vasil Levski" in the field of higher education 9. "Security and Defense", professional direction 9.1. "National Security", announced for the needs of the "Research and Development" section of the Institute of "Research and Innovation", Doctor of Sciences Plamen Atanasov Atanasov - the only candidate, is admitted to participate in the competition.

The biographical data provided by the candidate Doctor of Sciences Plamen Atanasov Atanasov, reflect his clear aspiration to enrich his educational and scientific level.

He acquired the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in 2017. in the field of higher education 3. "Social, Economic and Legal Sciences", professional field 3.5. "Public Communications and Information Sciences", doctoral program "Journalism-Crisis Public Relations", from Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski". In 2020, he acquired an additional specialization "Evolutionary Psychology and Psychiatry" from the Medical University - Plovdiv. In 2023, he acquired the scientific degree "Doctor of Sciences" in the professional field 9.1. "National Security" and the scientific specialty "Strategies and Policies of Security" from the New Bulgarian University.

The set of materials on paper and electronic media presented by Dr. Plamen Atanasov is in accordance with the Act on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ZRASRB), the Regulations for the Implementation of ZRASRB, as well as the requirements of the Regulations for the Selection and Development of the Academic Staff at the Vasil Levski National University.

According to the submitted documents, he has participated in two projects, as follows:

- ✓ A project specifically funded by the state budget: "Management of Reputational Crises" - collective monograph (textbook). Director: Prof. Dr. Chavdar Asenov Hristov. Sofia University "St. Kl. Ohridski", contract No. 80-10-222/24.04.2017
- ✓ A project funded by the Southeast European Mental Health Association: The Stigma of Mental Illnesses among Medical Students in Five Countries of Southeast Europe. Southeast European Mental Health Association, 2015-2022, with national project coordinators: Chief Expert Dr. Vladimir Nakov, Department of Mental Health, "National Center for Public

Health and Analyses" and Professor Dr. Kaloyan Stoychev, Medical University - Pleven, "National Center for Public Health and Analyses".

2. Assessment of the candidate's pedagogical training and activities.

From the documents submitted by the candidate for the competition, it is clear that he has not held academic positions, but he has some experience as a research assistant and also as a lecturer. The candidate, Ph.D. Plamen Atanasov, has presented evidence that he has prepared and delivered/conducted: 15 hours of classroom course "Institutional Transmedia Image and Brand" and 30 hours of exercises in the discipline "Persuasive Communication" at the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"; 6 hours of lectures on the topic "The Publicity of the 21st Century - the Doctor as a Communicator" and 4 hours of lectures on the topic "Doctor and Society Facing the Challenges of the 21st Century. Thinking about Security in the Context of Public Health" at the Medical University - Pleven.

The candidate, Ph.D. Plamen Atanasov has developed and participated in the development of 4 curricula in the fields of information security, information-analytical activity, cyber defense and transmedia image. They are intended for training in bachelor's and master's programs, and are distributed as follows: 1 - at the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" and 3 - at the Military Academy "G. S. Rakovski".

The materials presented prove that Dr. Plamen Atanasov works actively in the educational process, through which he manages to popularize his scientific and research work.

3. Quantitative characteristics of the candidate's scientific output.

The candidate dr. Plamen Atanasov has submitted a total of 20 scientific papers, with a total volume of 634 pages, which were published after the acquisition of the ONS "Doctor" and the NS "Doctor of Sciences" and include: 1 monograph (habilitation paper (1.1.), with a volume of 230 pages), 1 monograph that was not presented as the main habilitation paper under a previous or current procedure (1.2.) with a volume of 219 pages) and 18 scientific research papers (scientific reports/articles (2.1.1, 2.2.1 to 2.2.17.) with a total volume of 185 pages). I accept all scientific papers for review, as they correspond to the subject area of the announced competition. The distribution of scientific works by relevant headings, in the country and abroad, is as follows: 18 scientific publications are in the country, and 2 are abroad, one of which is published in a scientific publication, referenced and indexed in Scopus. The final assessment also takes into account 1 textbook with a volume of 138 pages, 1 teaching aid developed in co-authorship with a volume of 305 pages (31 pages are author's).

The publications are in specialized scientific publications, the candidate's style is academic, in-depth, understandable and accessible, adhering to academic standards.

The candidate's scientific interests and publications are directly oriented to the subject area of the competition and the needs of the "Research Activity" section of the "Research and Innovation Activity" Institute.

In the reference-declaration submitted by the candidate for the fulfillment of minimum national requirements for the academic position of "associate professor" in the field of higher education 9. "Security and Defense", professional field 9.1. "National Security", by groups are as follows:

- indicator group A – 150 points
- indicator group B – 100 points
- Indicator group D – 290 points
- Indicator group E – 80 points

In conclusion, it can be noted that the candidate has fulfilled the minimum national requirements for the announced competition to a significantly high degree, as the given academic position requires 400 points, and he achieved a result of 620 points.

The number of publications submitted for review is representative and I assess it as sufficient for participation in a competition for the academic position of "associate professor" at the Vasil Levski National University of Economics.

4. Main scientific and applied scientific contributions.

I accept the author's reference for the original scientific contributions and systematize them in the following way:

4.1. Scientific contributions.

4.1.1. A comprehensive and up-to-date study has been carried out in the scientific literature in our country and around the world, after which theoretical knowledge in the field of security has been enriched by linking the concept of security with the natural complication of social systems (including society), which leads to the complication of communication within them and between them (including public diplomacy). On this basis, basic theories and concepts have been critically reconsidered and an original point of view has been developed, according to which security is diversified as ideal, sought and achieved. (1.1.1; 2.2.15; 2.2.16)

4.1.2. After systematizing influential concepts in the field of communication and social psychology, the theory has been enriched with a concept of the relationship between security and communication, defining the category called "speakers" and proving its decisive role in public communication developed in relation to security in the state and society (2.2.14; 2.2.16)

4.1.3. In the context of security in the state and society, communication theories and cases have been studied, and on this basis, author's definitions of hackers and trolls have been derived. (1.2.1; 2.2.1)

4.2. Scientific and applied contributions.

4.2.1. Based on extensive theoretical research, a Model has been created, based on Niklas Luhmann's Theory of Communication and modern, socially oriented theories of security, in which recurring dependencies are presented, revealing the relationship between security and communication, in particular - between security, censorship, propaganda and information warfare, as well as between national security and public diplomacy. (2.2.11; 2.2.14; 2.2.15; 2.2.17)

4.2.2. A gap in the existing theory has been filled, as public diplomacy (including new public diplomacy and digital diplomacy) has been proven as an essential tool for eliminating negative effects in the building and development of nations and in the promotion of interests in foreign policy relations. Communication in cyberspace has been proven to be a successful and promising tool for public diplomacy, information and hybrid warfare. (1.1.1; 2.2.17)

4.2.3. Original algorithms for influencing public communication and from there on public diplomacy have been derived, which influence hackers, trolls and fake news exert in the context of security, as well as some applications of artificial intelligence (e.g. microtargeting). The need to develop standards for a comprehensive approach to protecting against the imposition of interests through cyberspace has been derived. (2.2.1; 2.2.2; 2.2.4; 2.2.6; 2.2.7; 2.2.10; 2.2.13; 2.2.15)

4.2.4. In response to the increasingly complex interweaving of interests and strategic communicators in international relations, a methodology for analyzing interests for security needs has been developed, which methodology uses open sources and serves to identify the ensemble of participants and their role in situations of disagreement that have arisen in international relations. (2.2.17)

4.2.5. The presented works contribute to the developing border area between security, communication and international relations, by supplementing the scientific literature and teaching of strategic communications in the direction of preventing interventions on society and in the context of national security, regional security, international security and information warfare. (1.1.1; 1.2.1; 2.2.14; 2.2.15; 2.2.17)

The materials submitted for participation in the competition contain significant scientific and applied scientific contributions that contribute to the development of science in the field of the professional field of "National Security". The research addresses key aspects related to the relationship between security and communication, as well as international security and information warfare.

5. To what extent are the presented works and contributions in them the personal work of the candidate.

The results of the work of Dr. Plamen Atanasov are presented in authoritative scientific publications. All the mentioned publications are visible on various scientific-metric and scientific websites.

I accept the scientific research activity and the mentioned contributions, considering them to be the personal, authorial work of the participant in the competition, which speaks of his capabilities and allows him to further develop and enrich them in his future work. Evidence of their significance is the citations of the candidate's scientific publications in other scientific works. The attached reference indicates: 8 citations of 4 publications in monographs and collective volumes with scientific review.

At the time of review, I am not aware of any non-anonymous and motivated written signal for the establishment of plagiarism in the candidate's publications having been received.

6. Critical remarks and recommendations.

I have no critical remarks on the scientific works submitted to me. I recommend that the candidate direct his efforts to continue his scientific work and publish materials in foreign publications, which are reflected in refereed secondary databases - Web of Science and Scopus in order to popularize his research.

7. Conclusion.

From the presented rich and diverse scientific production, scientific contributions and applied aspects of the candidate's research, it is evident that the normative requirements of the Act on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for the Implementation of the Act on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for the Selection and Development of the Academic Staff at the Vasil Levski National University of Higher Education are met in both quantitative and qualitative terms, and he can occupy the announced academic position of "associate professor" under the competition. His theoretical developments have practical applicability, as all of them are directly oriented to the scientific field and the professional direction of the announced competition.

8. Evaluation of the candidate.

My evaluation of the scientific works of Dr. Plamen Atanasov Atanasov, the sole participant in the competition for the academic position of "associate professor", a civilian employee, for the needs of the primary unit "Research and Innovation" section of the receiving structural unit "Research and Innovation" institute at the National Higher Education University "Vasil Levski", in the field of higher education 9. "Security and Defense", professional direction 9.1. "National Security" is positive.

I propose to the esteemed scientific jury of the competition that Dr. Plamen Atanasov Atanasov be selected and proposed to occupy the academic position of "associate professor" in the "Research and Innovation" section of the receiving structural unit "Research and Innovation" institute at the National Higher Education University "Vasil Levski".

12.03.2025
Veliko Tarnovo

Prepared the opinion:
Col. Assoc. Prof., PhD

Nikolay Stefanov