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OPINION

by Assoc. Prof. Spas Tashev, D.Sc., Institute for Population and Human Studies – BAS

Subject:

Competition for the academic position **"Associate Professor"**
in the field of higher education **3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences**,
professional field **3.1. Sociology, Anthropology and Cultural Studies**,
scientific area *"Socio-demographic imbalances and inequalities, methodology of sociological research"*
for the needs of the **research unit "Sociology and Social Demography"**,
Department of Demography, Institute for Population and Human Studies – BAS

I. General information about the candidate

One candidate has been admitted to the duly announced competition – **Senior Assistant Professor Lubomir Ivov Stoytchev, PhD**, a researcher with long-standing experience in the fields of social demography, sociology of inequalities, and ethnic relations. The candidate has been working at the Institute for Population and Human Studies (IPHS) of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences since 2009, having advanced through all academic ranks – research associate, assistant, and senior assistant professor. He obtained the educational and scientific degree **"Doctor of Sociology"** with a dissertation entitled *"Juvenile Delinquency in Bulgaria after 1990 – Dynamics, Conditions and Factors"* (2016), defended at IPHS – BAS.

II. Research activity

Dr. Stoytchev's scholarly output submitted for the habilitation procedure is impressive in both volume and thematic scope. It includes a monograph, studies, articles, and conference papers published in national and international scientific editions, several of which are indexed in **Scopus** and other international databases.
The main habilitation work – the monograph *"Measures to Overcome the Demographic Crisis in the Republic of Bulgaria. Vol. V: Demographic Imbalances and Social Inequalities among the Major Ethnic Groups in Bulgaria"* (co-authored with Prof. Ilona Tomova and M. Ivanov, 2020) – represents an in-depth study of the socio-demographic disparities among ethnic groups in the country. The work stands out with its methodological precision, rigorous statistical analysis, and original contribution to the understanding of the relationship between demographic and social inequalities.

The candidate is the author and co-author of **over 20 publications**, among which the study *"What's behind the Attitudes of the Ethnic Bulgarians in Reproductive Age towards Interethnic Marriages with Members of Bulgaria's Turkish Community?"* (*Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Studies*, 2024, Scopus Q1)

deserves special attention, as well as several papers published in *Papers of BAS. Humanities & Social Sciences* and *Nasselenie (Population)*. These studies demonstrate analytical maturity, strong statistical competence, and the ability to derive relevant social conclusions from demographic data. Of particular importance are his works devoted to **ethnic inequalities, migration, poverty, and social exclusion**, which display both thematic consistency and continuity in his scientific interests. The candidate is also co-author of the **""Thematic report on Roma: Key social inclusion and fundamental rights indicators in Bulgaria"** (National Statistical Institute, 2022) – an institutionally significant publication comprising seven analytical chapters addressing social indicators in education, employment, poverty, and health.

Dr. Stoytchev actively participates in **international and national research projects**, serving as an expert for the **European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)**, the **World Bank**, and **UNICEF**, as well as within research programs funded by the BAS and the Ministry of Education and Science. He has proven contributions in the development of methodological frameworks, statistical models, and sociological tools for the study of hard-to-reach social groups.

III. Teaching, expert, and organizational activity

Although his primary occupation is research, the candidate has accumulated experience in conducting **trainings and academic seminars** within IPHS projects, as well as lectures at doctoral schools and practical workshops. He demonstrates a high level of methodological competence, is proficient in statistical software packages (**R, SPSS, STATA, EVIEWS**), and actively shares expertise with young researchers.
His organizational activity includes participation in the preparation and implementation of scientific conferences, editorial work for the journal *Nasselenie (Population)*, and technical editing of various academic publications.

IV. Scientific contributions

The main contributions of Dr. Lubomir Stoytchev can be summarized as follows:

1. **Methodological contribution** – development of integrated approaches combining sociological and demographic methods for the study of social inequalities.
2. **Empirical contribution** – creation and analysis of unique databases on socially vulnerable groups and migrants in Bulgaria.
3. **Theoretical contribution** – deepening the understanding of the interrelation between social capital, ethnic identity, and social mobility.
4. **Applied contribution** – participation in the preparation of national strategies and reports of direct relevance to Bulgaria's social and demographic policies.

V. Conclusion

Based on the submitted materials, publications, and evidence of research and expert activity, it can be conclusively stated that **Senior Assistant Professor Lubomir Ivov Stoytchev, PhD** meets all the requirements of the **Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria** and

the internal regulations of IPHS – BAS for holding the academic position **"Associate Professor"**. He has established himself as a mature scholar with a clearly defined research profile, substantial scientific contributions, and an active civic stance on socially significant issues.

I fully support the candidacy of Chief Assistant Professor Lubomir Ivov Stoytchev, PhD, for the academic position of "Associate Professor" at the Institute for Population and Human Studies – Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.

Assoc. Prof. Spas Tashev, D.Sc.