OPINION

of Assoc. Prof. Nadya Dimitrova Filipova, PhD
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for the academic appointment of an Associate Professor in Higher education 2. Humanitarian Sciences, Professional line 2.2 History and Archeology (Legislation in the Field of Migration Policy between the Two World Wars), announced by the Institute for Population and Human Studies at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Department "Demography", Section "Historical Demography" (Darzhaven vestnik, issue 92/ October 31, 2025)

Senior Assistant Professor Dr. Boris Plamenov Boev is the sole candidate for the competition for the above mentioned appointment of an Associate Professor. Boris Boev participates in the competition with a habilitation monograph that meets all legislative requirements. Additionally, Boris Boev presents a monograph and 12 scientific publications that meet the profile of the announced competition. The publications, as well as citations, meet and exceed the national minimum requirements for holding the position of an Associate Professor and the requirements for occupying academic positions at the Institute for Population and Human Studies. The candidate has held the position of "Senion Assistant Professor" for six years and five months at the Institute for Population and Human Studies, thus meeting the requirements in this area. He has participated in four national projects and programmes. He has received two BAS rewards for outstanding young scientist, which is an excellent proof of the merits of his scientific work.

The monograph "Migration Policy in Bulgarian Legislation between the Two World Wars (1919 – 1939)" takes an important place in research on the role of the state regarding dynamics of the demographic processes in Bulgaria. Its contribution could be measured also by the creation of an additional documentary and analytical basis for multidimensional comparative analyses concerning not only the years between the two world wars, but also the period of the communist rule of the country. This study provides an opportunity for academic comparison of both the policies and the results of legal regulation and application of these norms in practice.

The Introduction outlines the subject, purpose, and objectives of the study. Boris Boev explicitly emphasizes that during the period under study, the enacted laws were related solely to the movement (internal and external) of the Bulgarian population, regardless the fact that during the period 1919 – 1939, Turks and Greeks were leaving the country, as well as Russians,

Armenians were settling in the country (p. 10). In this context, future studies could conduct in-depth research in this direction. The published academic research on migration in the interwar period is analyzed with a view to clarifying the tasks set by the author, and this approach makes it possible to highlight the contributions of the monograph in terms of legislative measures and instruments. These tasks are examined using the methods of contextualisation, as well as systematic and comparative analysis. On this basis, the monograph is logically developed into three chapters, studying state policies on the main types of migration.

The first chapter focuses on the legal regulation of the refugee issue. Numerous normative documents from the period 1920 – 1937 are analyzed, with an emphasis on the motives for their drafting and the parliamentary debates. The author links the development of Alexander Stamboliiski's government's concept and its framework implementation by subsequent Bulgarian governments to the exceptional nature of the circumstances regarding the large waves of immigration during the wars, as well as with the need to adopt comprehensive regulatory documents to demonstrate the state's commitment and define its responsibilities for "providing permanent residence and livelihood for refugees" (p. 26). The institutional framework for the implementation of regulatory documents is reconstructed in the monograph, as well as the use of national, humanitarian, and economic motives are exposed in the context of party visions and rivalries in the formulation of responsibilities. Special attention is paid to the viwes expressed in parliamentary debates that issues concerning refugees in Bulgaria should be discussed at the international level, specifically with a view to seeking opportunities for the return of refugees of Bulgarian origin to their places of origin. The conclusion that "refugees should be viewed as a population settling in the country permanently and all actions in this direction should be aimed at the smooth implementation of this process" (p. 36) is logically justified.

In this context, the key role of state policy is also emphasized, in which the initial concept specifically regarding the financing of measures to support refugees has been modified by imposing the vision of using external loans with the corresponding conditions. The specific measures and instruments for implementing state policy are clarified, highlighting the special attention of all Bulgarian governments and the search for solutions in favor of refugee farmers in the context of financial and economic difficulties, political polarization in Bulgaria, and its foreign policy isolation. Of interest are also the analyzed statements made by members of the Parliament who link some of the conditions for the exercise of rights by Bulgarian refugees to the League of Nations' attempt to free itself from the delicate issue of guaranteeing the rights of Bulgarian minorities abroad (p. 79).

The second chapter is devoted to emigration policy in Bulgarian legislation for the period 1919 – 1939. The author outlines "the main groups of Bulgarians who emigrated (permanently or temporarily) during the interwar period", clarifying "the relationship between their migration behavior and the regulations introduced in Bulgarian legislation" (p. 100). The author links the introduction of government control over emigration, with a focus on North and South America, to social, economic, and demographic motives and appropriately seeks its roots in the pre-war period. In this context, it is useful to clarify the specific criticisms of the restriction of emigration rights.

In order to establish a ground for comparative analysis with the practices of the interwar period, the author presents the measures and instruments for implementing state policy at the beginning of the 20th century, outlined within the framework of administrative, organizational, financial, and punitive measures. Developing the basic logic of state policy on emigration, it is explicitly emphasized that in 1927 it was required that Bulgarians who emigrated outside Europe had to prove guaranteed employment at their final destination, thus confirming the different approach to emigration within the European continent and the state's desire to limit overseas migration, with a focus on the United States. At the same time, the author pays special attention to the state policy of encouraging emigration for education and return to the country in order to support the "development and modernization" of Bulgaria, as well as the temporary emigration of gardeners to Europe. The analysis of the parliamentary debates and decisions in 1931 on the issue of granting full or partial amnesty to political emigrants accused of crimes against the state is particularly valuable. Boris Boev concludes that "a moderate and pragmatic conceptual approach is applied" (p. 131).

Following the chosen systematic approach, the third chapter examines internal migration and urbanization policy in the context of Bulgarian legislation. Boris Boev successfully proves his thesis that during the interwar period, "the Bulgarian state attempted to develop a concept...related to two main internal migration issues: first, the resettlement of people living in flood-prone, low-yield, mountainous, or densely populated areas of the country, and second, housing in large cities" (p. 136). The author proves that in the 1920s, there was a lack of comprehensive and holistic legislative texts on the issue of migration (p. 137). Boris Boev attributes the development of a more systematic policy on this issue to the activities of the country's governments from the mid-1930s onwards. The author explains the motives for the intensification of activity at the end of the same decade with the need to respond to the threat of natural and social cataclysms caused by human activity, as well as the lack of means of livelihood (p. 142). The evolution of state policy, measures, and instruments for implementing

this policy on urbanization issues are examined in two consecutive paragraphs. Through an analysis of parliamentary debates and the concept developed, the author demonstrates that the main issue addressed is that of "housing needs," resulting from internal migration, poverty, and waves of refugees to Bulgaria.

The conclusion reflects the main contributions of the monograph. To expand on the analysis, the available academic research in the paragraphs of the chapters of the book could be used to greater extent.

Boris Boev applies for the competition for occupying the position of an Associate Rrofessor another published monograph and 12 articles. Their contribution is in two main areas. First, they examine student activism and the actions of student organizations in Bulgaria in the 1930s. The comparative analysis is based on rich documentary fund, with the studies (including the second mentioned monograph) placed in the broad historical context of Bulgaria's domestic political development as well as external intervention and influences.

The studies examining legal regulations concerning the migration of Bulgarians in the period between the two World Wars are thematically separated. This is a logical approach given that the author's research interests has been developing in the field of migration studies. This demonstrates Boris Boev's ambition to expand his academic pursuits. Five of these publications examine the legal regulation of the settlement and support of Bulgarian refugees from third countries. Another article analyzes the legislative measures developed by the Bulgarian state with regard to Bulgarian citizens who had left (or wished to leave) the country, also contributing to the study of the Bulgarian state policy regarding migration issues.

Conclusion: The publications, citations, and proofs of other scientific activities presented by Senior Assistant Professor Boris Boev justify that his candidacy meets all regulatory requirements for the occupation of the academic position of "Associate Professor." This, as well as the contributions of the publications reviewed in this opinion, give me, as a member of the Scientific Jury, grounds to vote "POSITIVELY" for a decision Boris Boev to be appointed to the position of an "Associate Professor" in Higher education 2. Humanitarian Sciences, Professional line 2.2 History and Archeology (Legislation in the Field of Migration Policy between the Two World Wars), at the Institute for Population and Human Studies (Bulgarian Academy of Sciences), Department "Demography", Section "Historical Demography".

February 6, 2026

Assoc. Prof. Nadya Filipova