

OPINION

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Regarding the materials presented by Ch. Assist. Prof. Sofroni Georgiev Varbev, Ph.D.

for participation in a competition for borrowing the academic

"Associated Professor" position at the New Bulgarian University, Sofia,

by field of higher education 8. Arts,

professional direction 8.2 Fine art

(design of print advertising, book publications, and web products),

for the needs of the "Design" department of the New Bulgarian University

In the current competition, it was announced on 09.06.2023 in no. 50 of the "State Gazette," there is one candidate for the academic position of "Associate Professor," namely - Ch. Assist. Prof. Sofroni Georgiev Varbev, full-time lecturer at New Bulgarian University. As a participant in the competition and following the scientometric indicators laid down in the ZRASRB, Varbev presents a complete set of documents supported by evidentiary material for scientific, creative, and teaching activities. Based on a table (Appendix 2) completed by Varbev himself with the minimum required points by a group of indicators for the various scientific and academic positions in professional fields, following DASRBA and the requirements of the New Bulgarian University, it can be confirmed the fact that the candidate collects 2105 points, i.e., with 1535 more than the minimally required 570. Because of this finding, it can be summarized that Ch. Assist. Prof. Sofroni Varbev repeatedly meets 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 and those of the NBU for participation in

the announced competition for the academic position of "Associated Professor," having submitted - correctly and on time - the necessary evidentiary materials for the purpose.

Sofroni Varbev completed all levels of art education in Bulgaria: in 1979, Secondary Art School - Kazanlak; in 1986, he defended his master's thesis with honors in the specialty "Industrial Forms," Applied Faculty of the National Academy of Sciences - Sofia; in 1995 he defended a bachelor's degree for pedagogical competence at the National Academy of Arts, and in 2013 he successfully defended a doctoral dissertation on the topic "Corporate Identity in the Interior" in professional direction 8.2. "Fine Art" at NBU.

The candidate is actively involved in the nation's artistic life, participating in several collective and solo exhibitions. He is a member of the professional organizations the Association of Interior Designers in Bulgaria (AIDB) and the Society of Plovdiv Artists (DPH). Over the years, he participated in international and national competitions and won the following awards: awards from the International Caricature Competition in Yomiuri, Osaka, Japan for 1997 and 1999; second place in the logo contest of the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works, 2006; won a logo contest for the State Commission for Energy and Water Regulation (now EWRC/KEVR) in 2007.

Ch. Assist. Prof. Sofroni Varbev, Ph.D. deploys a wide range of professional skills of a teacher, related both to the development of his scientific and educational and teaching activities, as well as to his administrative commitment to the planning and organization of the educational process at the university, where since 2013. has been appointed as a full-time lecturer in the programs "Interior Design," "Web Design and Graphic Advertising," "Spatial Design," and "Spatial and Product Design for Interiors." He has several publications in scientific publications and five participations in scientific conferences; he has accumulated significant administrative experience in preparing and updating various curricula. In 2019, he was appointed program director of the "Design" department of New Bulgarian University.

The habilitation thesis of Ch. Assist. Prof. Sofroni Varbev, Ph.D. presents an extended summary of "Advertising Vision of National Autumn Exhibitions in Plovdiv." The well-written and structured text is combined with rich illustrative material, complementing the artistic issues comprehensively examined by the candidate. Regarding content, the habilitation thesis consists of five parts: introduction, objects, work plan, project methodology, and a detailed chronological presentation of the creative result. The total volume of the work is 93 pages, of which 38 are text and 55 are illustrative). A good impression is made by the

straightforward structure and design of the summary and the high quality of the displayed graphic output.

In the habilitation work, one can trace Varbev's contribution regarding creating the conceptual graphic concept and designing all printed materials for 2014-2022 of the NATIONAL AUTUMN EXHIBITIONS - PLOVDIV. The main focus that Varbev sets for himself as the author of the design is to achieve not only a distinctive graphic identity of the event but also to establish a characteristic aesthetic framework by imposing a unified style in the graphic appearance of the cultural forum. For this purpose, Varbev chooses to stop not only on media of the same format, technology, and materials, which are well represented in his extended summary, but also to choose a typeface from the Egyptian family, which will become a main stylistic element in graphic design.

In summary, Varbev points out five main benchmarks that are the basis of the graphic identity of the Exhibitions: high modern style; memorable visual identity; the appearance of the specific vision for each year should be characteristic and surprising; equal presentation of the best of the exhibiting artists; the quality of the design project to contribute to the advertising vision becoming an additional artistic participant in the event. Because of the examples shown, it can be confirmed that the goals set over the years have been followed inextricably by their author, and this was, to a large extent, decisive for the compositional and semantic unity of the finished artistic and advertising product that Varbev created as a designer.

Conclusion:

After familiarizing myself with the submitted materials for the current competition, I believe Sofroni Varbev's candidacy follows the current competition's nature and the specific requirements for occupying the academic position of "Associate Professor" in Higher Education 8. Arts, professional direction 8.2. Fine art (print advertising design, book publications, and web products) for the needs of the "Design" Department of the New Bulgarian University, published in the "State Gazette," no. 50 of June 9, 2023. The in-depth scientific and creative activities that Varbev declares through his presentation in the competition convinced me to think that in him, the New Bulgarian University will meet a worthy teacher, scientist, creator, and esthete who is not only able to upgrade the knowledge of students in the field of graphic design and advertising but will also be able to usefully support the development of the learning process in the Design Department.

I give a positive assessment and recommend the Scientific Jury to support the candidacy of Sofroni Georgiev Varbev.

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/ Assoc Prof. Alexander Gyoshev, Ph.D./