

## STATEMENT

By Assoc. Prof. Victoria Boykova Sotirova, PhD,  
PF 3.4. Social activities, South-West University “Neofit Rilski”,  
For participation in a competition to obtain the academic position of “Associate Professor”,  
Professional field 3.4. Social activities,  
Announced by New Bulgarian University, department of “Healthcare and Social Work”, SG  
no 97/13.11.2020r., with candidate Ch. Assist. Prof. Rumen Goranov Petrov, PhD

### I. Assessment for compliance with the minimal national requirements and the requirements of New Bulgarian University

The works presented by Ch. Assist. Prof. Rumen Petrov PhD, sole competitor to obtain the academic position “Associate Professor” in PF 3.4. Social activities in department “Healthcare and Social Work”, comply with all requirements, written in the Act on Development of the Academic Staff in The Republic of Bulgaria and in the Ordinance for the Development of the Academic Staff of New Bulgarian University.

The applied works are a result from the achieved in 1993 higher education in HMI, Sofia, followed by thesis on “Psychodrama-therapist” - 1997 and specialization in Psychiatry department, MU Sofia – 1998 – majoring in “Psychiatry”. As well gaining a substantial teaching experience in the Medical University Sofia; Burgas Free University; Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”; “Paisii Hilendarski” University of Plovdiv, deservedly awarded with academic positions – “Assistant” in 1998 and “Assistant Professor” since 2014 in NBU, department “Healthcare and Social Work”. In 2011 R. Petrov, PhD, gains his PhD in the Centre for Psycho-Social Studies, University of West England, Bristol, United Kingdom.

In the competition to obtain the academic position of “Associate Professor” in PF 3.4. Social activities, Rument Petrov, PhD has presented publication that cover the minimal scientometric indicators, which are as follows: one monograph; one “book based on a defended dissertation”; two articles “in referenced and indexed publications”; nine “publications in unrefereed journals with scientific review”; published chapters in five collective monographies. Ten out of the eighteen publications, reflected in the reference with scientific indicators, are independent. Rumen Petrov, PhD is a second author in one scientific work, fourth in two publications. In the collective monographs, he is part of the author's teams, occupying a different sequence.

### II. Scientific (artistic) work and results

Significant for the theory and practice are the derived moments of contribution, that are embedded deep in the essence of the monograph “Confused in Pain. Social trauma and Social Responsibility”. This “is a part of one possible project” that has a “scientific” and “educational” character (pg. 350), in which emphasis is being placed on “philosophy” and “history” of social work; “social work and penal institutions”; “social work and conflict”; “social work and anti-social behaviour”; “social work, disabilities and disablement”; “humanities and social work”; “social policies”; “psychology and psychodynamic theory and practice”; “human rights and social work”.

The scientific research and reasoning of Petrov R. PhD, in the years of tireless research, educational and project activity manifest in the “rehabilitation” of “social work as universal work on respect and preservation of humanness, understood as sociality” (pg. 28) “in much broader context” (pg. 27) seen through:

- the prism of “pain” and realization of “work on the social connection with suffering” (pg.35), by providing “respect” “to suffering” or better yet, for the lack of “respect to that suffering and certain consequences from it” (pg. 347-348);
- ”social trauma” as “a peculiar ethical problem (pg. 30) “and its consequences for society” (pg. 350);
- ” social silence” of “social violence and exclusions” (pg. 35) and ”neglecting” “the fate of some “classically” socially traumatized minorities”, “eluding certain social sufferings in Bulgarian society” (pg. 36);
- last but not least “social responsibility” and the possibility to look at “social injustice in much broader context” (pg. 38).

The creative production of Ch. Assist. Prof. Rumen Petrov, PhD is improving the multidimensional nature of social work and is a premise to develop the theory and practice of helping professions of psychosocial connections and dependencies when working with different groups and individuals. The presented results, in the years of scientific research of the candidate, show the need of unification of the interdisciplinary knowledge on matters about “poverty”, “totalitarianism”, “nationalism” and the consequences from them, which, when presented with critical thinking will increase the effectiveness, as well as the personal and professional growth of social workers. Contribution with a significant practical character is the used and widely included in the works R. Petrov’s, PhD “autobiography as a psycho-social method of study” (Petrov, 2009). The obtained results enrich the multidimensional and conditioned nature of social work. The presented “subjective point of view” of the author for the “hospitality of the social environment in Bulgaria to the values and practices of restorative (conciliatory) justice” (Петров, 2016:244; 2018:344) is “the basis for the organizing social work” with emphasis “on social connection as fundamental task of society”, making it, according to the author in “much more achievable, understandable and better controlled” (Петров, 2018:345).

The published works of Rumen Petrov, PhD in Bulgarian, English and French are a prerequisite for national and international recognition, manifested in thirty two citation in: “scientific publications, indexed and referenced in world-wide date bases with scientific information” – four citations; “monographs and collective works with scientific review” – nineteen citations; “unreferred publications with scientific review” – nine citations.

Evidence for scientific professionalism and academic erudition are the participation in twenty-one projects: eight national and thirteen international. The participation of Rumen Petrov, PhD, as a member of the organizational committee and authorship of a seminar (2019), stands out. As well as four presentation (2019-2020), two of which end with publications in international conferences. A reference for participation in "management of an international scientific or educational project" is presented: „2015 - 2016: Justice and Reconciliation Society, project: Mediation and reconciliation in Bulgarian society and in the program for Fund for Bilateral Relations at National Level under the EEA FM and NFM 2009-2014.

Significant for the theory and practice is the participation in “research program – “Social trauma and social responsibility”.

### III. Scientific and teaching activity

The scientific work of R. Petrov, PhD is effectively combined with the teaching activity, in which a palette of skills is revealed – to develop and teach lecture courses in Bulgarian and English, publishing “teaching materials in “Moodle NBU”, author team (2018) and “Handbook With Good Models for Mental Healthcare” (2009, for a project, led by Rumen Petrov, PhD). As well as for active work with students on project and review of “master's theses” in “Clinical Social Work”. Evidence for the good teacher-student collaboration are the very good scores,

given by the students for their mentor.

#### IV. Administrative and public activity

The scientific and teaching activities R. Petrov, PhD combines with ease and finesse, with active administrative (member of the program committee of department “Healthcare and Social Work, NBU) and public activities, manifested in the fulfilment of obligations and commitments regulated by memberships in: International Association for Group Psychotherapy and Group Processes (IAGP); Organisation for Promoting Understanding of Society (OPUS, London); Bulgarian Association of Psychotherapy; Bulgarian Psychiatric Association; European Forum for Restorative Justice; Justice and Reconciliation Society, in which he is a board member; Council for Restorative Justice at the MJ (2014-2016); Marginalia Human Rights Association; member of the editorial staff (associate editor) of *Voluntaristics Review* magazine, Brill.

The activity of the candidate in the mentioned administrative, scientific and professional organisations is a prerequisite for “active participation in the creation and starting, in 2018-2019 of Master’s program “Psychosocial Interventions with Children and Families”, updating the “programs in department “Healthcare and Social Work” and developing courses for them”. Participation in international project (AWARE: Multi-agency training for working with prisoners and former prisoners with mental health needs – leading organization – Ministry of Justice of the Province of Bremen, Germany), on project framework Erasmus+ KA2 Strategic Partnerships - (2018-2021), attracts “external funds” for NBU.

#### V. Opinions, suggestions and notes on the activities and achievement of the candidate

The scientific research and critical thoughts of Rumen Petrov, PhD in the area of social (in)justice in helping professions, particularly social work, seen through the prism of “social sensitivity” towards the needs of disadvantaged persons, families and communities can find a logical continuation with starting scientific, applied, academic and project activity, that will combine and join together the research and views of “specialists from different academic (and not only)” fields, which “can meet, assist and enhance their own daily work by interdisciplinary cooperation” (Петров, 2018: 349). The results of their cooperative work will improve the theoretical and practical aspects of the work of helping specialists and the education of future social workers.

#### VI. Conclusion

The presented research, teaching and administrative activities, realized in the years of tireless search for psychosocial identity and the interdisciplinary nature of social work, reveal Rumen Petrov, PhD as a valuable and significant theorist and practitioner both nationally and internationally, with relentless potential for development.

The presented and considered quantitative, qualitative, significant and last but not least up-to-date production are a prerequisite and a reason to give my positive assessment and I confidently recommend to the members of the Scientific Jury to admit Ch. Assistant Professor Rumen Goranov Petrov, PhD to election by the Academic Council to hold the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the professional field 3.4. Social activities.

Date:  
22.02.2021

Member of the academic jury:  
Assoc. Prof V. Sotirova, PhD