

REVIEW

BY: PROF. DR. VESSELINA JORDANOVA VALKANOVA

Sofia University „St. Kliment Ohridski“,

Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication

Member of scientific jury, appointed by the Rector of SU „St. Kliment Ohridski“,

Order № RD-38-212/27.4.2023

REGARDING: COMPETITION FOR AWARDING THE ACADEMIC POSITION
„ASSOCIATED PROFESSOR“ IN PROFESSIONAL FIELD 3.5. PUBLIC
COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SCIENCES – INTEGRATED MARKETING
COMMUNICATIONS – FACULTY OF JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATION

In the competition takes part a sole candidate –

ASSOC. PROF. DR. ALEXANDER TRAIKOV HRISTOV

1. COMPETITION INFORMATION

The competition for the academic position Associated Professor in the high education field 3. Social, Economics and Legal Studies and in the professional field 3.5. Public Communication and Information Sciences – Integrated marketing communications, is announced with a decision of the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication of SU “St. Kliment Ohridski” from 9th February, 2023 – Protocol № 5, after a proposal by the “Communication, Public Relations And Advertising” Department (Protocol № 10) from 6th February, 2023 and after a decision from the

Academic Council of Sofia University from 22nd February, 2023 in accordance with Art. 86, para. 2 of the Rules on the Terms and Conditions for Acquisition of Academic Degrees and Occupation of Academic Positions at Sofia University „St. Kliment Ohridski” and Art. 29 „a” of the Academic Staff Development Act of the Republic of Bulgaria. The competition has been announced in no. 24 of the State Gazette of March 24, 2023.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Alexander Hristov is the only candidate in the competition. His participation at the competition has been approved by the Commission of selection in consistence with the Regulations for Earning of Academic Degrees and Gaining Academic Positions at SU “St. Kliment Ohridski”, Art. 119, para. 2.

The academic jury checked at its meeting on 29th May, 2023 whether the publications and activities of the candidate were congruent with the minimal national requirements and the additional requirements of SU “St. Kliment Ohridski”. The academic jury has decided Assoc. Prof. Hristov to be allowed to participate in the competition.

2. GENERAL ASSESSMENT OF THE CANDIDATE

Mr. Alexander Traikov Hristov holds a Master’s Degree in International Economic Relations from the University for National and World Economy and a Doctor of Philosophy Degree on 05.04.10 Journalism (advertising) of FJMC (diploma № 33158 from 11th May, 2009 from the High Attestation Committee). He was habilitated at the UNWE in 2018 after he was consistently being appointed for an Assistant Professor and for a Chief Assistant Professor.

Assoc. Prof. Hristov combines his teaching and scientific activity with a professional activity where he has considerable experience – he consistently

has been a managing partner of the Paragraph 42 communication agency, he has been an account director of the CIVITAS Bulgaria communication agency, a Marketing and Advertising Director of the Corporate Commercial Bank, a Public Relations Director of the Corporate Commercial Bank. He has worked as a marketing and PR specialist, journalist, marketing and advertising specialist in various institutions, media and organizations.

Assoc. Prof. Hristov has a 22-years' experience in the scientific researches and in teaching – initially as an Assistant Professor and as a Chief Assistant Professor at the UNWE and afterwards as a part-time lecturer at Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”.

The colleague has participated in dozens of international scientific forums on the problems of marketing, media and PR in Bulgaria, Germany, Greece, Poland, Cyprus, Estonia, Hungary, and Slovenia. Assoc. Prof. Hristov has a rich experience as a lecturer in specialized seminars and trainings on marketing, public relations, business communication. He is a member of the leading professional organization in Bulgaria BDVO and BAAK (Bulgarian Academic Association on Communications).

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Alexander Hristov is an acknowledged specialist on public communication, PR, advertising, marketing communications, corporate marketing, digital marketing communications. The observations and the analysis on the academic activity of Assoc. Prof. Hristov show a teaching aspiration towards high educational standards and creative development of the students.

3. TEACHING ACTIVITIES

The colleagues in his professional biography has a longtime teaching experience linked to the UNWE and to Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” in Bachelor, Master and Doctoral Programs.

Assoc. Prof. Hristov has developed a number of courses for Bachelor and Master Degree. Among the courses led by Assoc. Prof. Hristov are: Marketing, Corporate Web Site and Blogs, Marketing in Social Networks and Optimization of Searching Machines, Social Media in the International Business, Digital Marketing, International Marketing, Influencer Marketing, Marketing in Social Media and Online Shop Management, and Marketing Management.

In his academic practice Assoc. Prof. Hristov uses modern forms of teaching and interactive teaching methods as part of the educational process.

Assoc. Prof. Hristov has been an academic tutor of 160 students who has successfully defended their Master theses in the “International Economic Relations and Business Communications” Department at the UNWE.

4. ACADEMIC WORKS, ACHIEVEMENTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE CANDIDATE

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Alexander Hristov is the author of 5 monographs, 2 collective monographs in English, he has 62 articles in scientific journals, of which 4 articles and reports that are published in scientific journals, which are indexed in world famous data bases of scientific information.

The topics in the scientific publications of Assoc. Prof. Hristov are linked to the problems of the integrated marketing communications and of the digital communications, of the PR practices, of the self-regulations in marketing communication, of corporate communications.

The large number of citations in scientific journals testify to the academic and scientific achievements of Assoc. Prof. Hristov. They are an evidence to the resonance of his researches and to the assessment of the results of his scientific work.

Assoc. Prof. Hristov has submitted for the present competition: 1 monography; 2 works in collective monographies in English; 3 articles that are published in scientific journals, which are indexed in world famous data bases of scientific information; 11 articles and reports, published in scientific journals, in scientific collections of articles and in continuing journals.

Here should be marked the scientific goodwill and the excellent impression made by the clear differentiation of the publications for participation in the present competition from the general publication archive of the candidate. All publications are on the topic of the present competition and are an evidence for the sequentially and full-bodied development of the scientific field by Assoc. Prof. Hristov.

The main work deposited for participation in the present competition – “Integrated marketing communications and digitalization” (Sofia, AMG Publishing, 2023), reviews the integrated marketing communication through the lens of the digitalization of communications and the radically changed social and cultural context in the last decades. The monography puts an emphasis on the theoretical bases of IMC and on the analysis of the synergy of the marketing communications and the self-regulation not only as an integral part of the professional medium but as a fundamental prerequisite for creation and development of effective and full-bodied communication campaigns.

Without a doubt, contributory to the research are the summaries and analyses of the processes of digitalization of marketing communications and

of the practices of national and international organizations, along with the tendencies that are brought out in this topical field. Beyond any doubt, the digital transformations are changing significantly the communication practices, and the online communication in perspective would constitute a bigger and bigger part of the contemporary corporate communications and of the communications as a whole.

The scope of the analysis of the advantages of the digitalization for the integrated marketing communications should be distinguished. Here it is brought out the thesis that the digital medium could create possibilities for effective integration of communications, and the author develops the key aspects of the digitalized IMC: internal coordination and flexibility; homogeneity of the messages; refinement of the content; integration of the creativity and a global perspective.

It must definitely be acknowledged as contributory the approach of the integrated marketing communications to be analyzed through their efficiency. The author puts a special attention on the synergy and on the types of efficiency – with an applied value for the improvement of the practices in communications.

The problem of the achievement of communication efficiency, reviewed also by the prism of professionalism and professional ethics, is again posed in the context of the digital transformations and of the medium for full-bodied development of the integrated marketing communications. The marketing ethics, the professional approaches in the gathering and analysis of data, as well as the research on the importance of the structure and change in the users' reactions give important points of view and topical perspective to the research.

With its actuality and innovativeness; with the serious research on a wide range of specialized scientific literature linked to the analyzed topics; with the multifaceted analysis of difficult social phenomena and processes – the monography is an important achievement of the author.

THE STUDIES AND ARTICLES of Assoc. Prof. Hristov in scientific collections and specialized journals are dedicated to current and important problems, points of view, terrains of the zone he specializes in – marketing communications, efficiency of communications, misinformation, fake news, corporate communications, and information medium. Without a doubt, the articles of Assoc. Prof. Hristov contribute to the researches on the theory and analyses of mass communication. They bring out trends, they work on the bases of significant observations and empirical data. The researches and systematizations summarize topical problems, they outline professional lacks, positive and negative phenomena in the construction of the corporate publicity.

Beyond any doubt, both the main habilitation work of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Alexander Hristov, and his articles on the topic contribute not only to the communication researches but also have practical value for the communication practices and policies.

Reviewed in general and with an emphasis on the main habilitation work, the scientific work of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Alexander Hristov demonstrate:

- an elevated scientific culture, a capacity for scientific writing and interpretation level;
- broad knowledge of the researched problems;

- serious research of significant masses of specialized scientific sources linked to the analyzed problems;
- a multifaceted quality analysis of empirical masses.

With all of this and with the already outlined contributions, the monography and the scientific articles that are presented for participation in the competition are a step ahead in the Bulgarian communication science.

5. ACTIVITIES AS AN EXPERT, PROJECT ACTIVITY, PARTICIPATION IN SCIENTIFIC AND PROFESSIONAL NETWORKS

In 2015 and 2016 Assoc. Prof. Dr. Alexander Hristov has been a coordinator of a project entitled “Ethical Rules and Self-Regulation in the Marketing Communications: European Practices and Development in Bulgaria”. He is currently the coordinator of a scientific team in a project entitled “Changes in the Consumption after 2020 and the Role of Marketing Communications” under contract № NID NI-11/2021 from 2021 to 2023.

Assoc. Prof. Hristov has affirmed himself as a respected and valued lecturer in the field of marketing communications. One of the most remarkable aspects in the scientific works, in the practice and in the expert activity of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Alexander Traikov Hristov is his ability to combine the theoretical approach with the practical applicability. He has a reach experience in the development of new practical models of corporate communication, which are used in real situations and give actual results.

At the moment, the colleague is a chairman of the Bulgarian Association of PR Agencies (BAPRA), he has been a chairman and a member of the Governing Board of the Bulgarian Association for Public Relations (BDVO), as

well as a chairman of the Ethical Commission of the Bulgarian Association for Public Relations (BDVO). The positions taken by Dr. Hristov in the leading professional organizations on public relations in Bulgaria testify to the high authority of the colleague and are a recognition of his qualities and achievements in the field of PR and public communication.

6. CONCLUSION

On the basis of the complete analysis of the teaching and mostly of the scientific activity and achievements of Assoc. Prof. Hristov – the only candidate in the competition for the academic position “Associated Professor” of “Integrated marketing communications” in professional field 3.5. Public Communications and Information Sciences, announced by Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”, I am completely confident that ASSOC. PROF. ALEXANDER TRAIKOV Hristov has entirely fulfilled the requirements of the Law of the Development of the Academic Staff of the Republic of Bulgaria.

The colleague has clearly defined contributions in the enrichment of the scientific terrain of the mass communication science, in the researches and in the teaching activities in the field of public communications and information sciences. With his teaching work with students from the Bachelor, Master and Doctoral Programs at several high education institutions in Bulgaria, among which is also Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”, with the training of graduating students Assoc. Prof. Hristov has significantly contributed to the quality professional and narrowly profiled training of mass media and communications specialists in the field in which he expertizes.

The valuable results from the research and teaching activities of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Alexander Hristov have been solid ground for my decision to support

his candidacy and strongly to recommend the respected academic jury to award to him the academic position of "Associated Professor" in professional field 3.5. Public Communications and Information Sciences – Integrated Marketing Communications.



Reviewer:

Prof. Dr. Vesselina Valkanova

24th July, 2023