**STATEMENT**

**By Prof. Dr Stefka Hristova Petkova, a member of the scientific jury for the competition for the academic position of Associate Professor in the professional field 2.2. History and Archaeology (Archival and Documentary Studies), announced in Darjaven vestnik, No. 55 of 28.06.2024.**

The competition procedure for the academic position of Associate Professor in the Department of History and Methodology of History Education of the Faculty of History at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" has been adhered to in all stages and conforms to the law. The resulting documentation is complete, accurate, and available in electronic format.

The only candidate in the competition is senior assistant Dr Ralitsa Simeonova Todorova. I am familiar with her development as a scholar since her study at the Faculty of History of the Sofia University “Sv. Kliment Ohridski” and, particularly, her specialization in archival science (1995-2000). An excellent student, Todorova graduated with a thesis on the work of Maria Kuzmanova/ Mateeva. She continued to work on her speciality’s topics as an archivist and research assistant at the Scientific Archives of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and the Bulgarian Historical Archives at the National Library “St. Cyril and Methodius.” Ralitsa Simeonova returned to the field of science as a full-time PhD student at the Department of “Archival Studies and Supporting Historical Disciplines.” Since 2012, she has been active as an assistant and later, a senior assistant. She has taught several independent study courses in various specialities of the Faculty of History – at the bachelor’s and master’s degree levels. In 2012 Dr Todorova published a monograph based on her dissertation, “History and Organization of Access to Archives,” for which I wrote an extensive positive review in “Izvestia na darjavnite archivi” (vol. 103-104, Sofia, 2012, pp. 418-431).

Successful teachers and researchers at the level of "associate professor" do not appear overnight in any scientific field. During her time as an assistant professor, Ralitsa Todorova has accumulated considerable experience as a lecturer and researcher in archival studies. Her next step – taking the academic position of associate professor – is well deserved.

The most recent and central for the current competition is her monograph “Preserving the State Security Archive as a Source for Microhistory and the "Swamp of Communism" (Sofia, 2024, AlphaStar Publishing, 213 pp.). The topic is significant and shows in its development all the good qualities of Dr Todorova as a researcher – systematic, coherent, and comprehensive presentation of sources as well as clarity and high exposition style. Some minor additions could be made to the attached bibliography, but I will mention only one - *Buzhashka, Boryana*. Public Archives and Classified Information. A study aid. UNIBIT, Sofia, 2017, 91 p.

A flaw I see in the submission that I don't want to overlook is the author's display of (in my opinion) unnecessary political correctness. He should also have pointed out the damage from the very creation of the Archive to the "Dossier Commission" (not using its long official name). I will not tire of repeating that the creation of this Archive flagrantly violated the basic principle of modern archival science – that of the unity and indestructibility of archival holdings and their complexes. Ever since the time of Napoleon Bonaparte (and even before him), it has been known how harmful it is to move archival documents from repository to repository physically. In our country, it would have been sufficient to organize a reading room for the members of the "Commission", where they could receive inventories, inventory indexes, subject catalogues, and similar reference books on the documents, instead of transporting the funds themselves, their parts and even individual archival units to the repositories in the city of Bankia, to be available to the "Commission" there. The archivists working in the Bulgarian historical archives are highly educated and responsible civil servants and would have coped perfectly with the political task at hand.

By the way, the transfer of this archive (in 2013) to the state archives system as foreseen in the Law, has not been implemented yet. Silence about this is being maintained, although the use of the documents in the reading room on ul. Vrabcha 1 in Sofia, intended for citizens, is getting more and more difficult. Admission has been increasingly formalised, and no reference books are being provided to visitors interested in the documents for research purposes. The selection of the requested documents, carried out by the staff of the "Commission," is extremely unsatisfactory in quality. What is needed is not found, even if available, and the 'noise' is enormous.

Apart from this omission, Dr Todorova is very consistent in terms of the topics of her research – they all relate to access to our national archival resources and their effective use. She has even compiled a model instruction on access to documents with personal data in Bulgarian archives, included in her report on "Methods for ensuring access to archives – a prerequisite for the real use of documentary resources" (in: Society, Memory, Education (History and Public Attitudes), 2017).

Via several works, Dr Todorova has directly contributed to the disclosure of the content of documents available in our archives (for example, by describing them in the series "Obzori" of the BIA at the NBKM, or through her participation in the compilation of the inventory of the huge personal archival collection of Prof. Todor Borov). Her contributions to local history are the works dedicated to the towns of Troyan and Teteven: “Documents on the history of the town of Troyan,” kept in the Bulgarian Historical archive at the National Library “St. Cyril and Methodius” and "Images from the past of Teteven,” preserved in the Portraits and Photographs Collection of the National Library “St. Cyril and Methodius”.

In recent years, Dr Todorova has been actively involved in projects (being the initiator and leader of some) to identify and popularize sources that have been little studied or have not been in scientific circulation at all – such as the "Archive of the Bulgarian Polar Explorers".

The archival collegium knows Dr Todorova's studies in the field of higher archival education in our country, which are dedicated to the pioneers Todor Borov and Maria Kuzmanova/Mateeva. Through some of her research, Todorova contributes to clarifying the overall history of our archival work (e.g., On the Shumen Branch of the National Library in Sofia and Turkish Antiquities in Bulgaria (1947 - 1950).

A high number of merits of Dr Todorova as a researcher, lecturer, organizer of scientific activities, and more recently as an editor in the prestigious professional journal "Archiven Pregled" could be additionally pointed out. Still, I will conclude with the fact that she fulfils both quantitatively and qualitatively all the national requirements and the mandatory criteria of the Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" regarding the holding the academic position of "Associate Professor." In detail, as shown in the respective references, 150 points have been obtained in criteria groups A and B, and the monograph is within the field of the competition. In terms of Group D indicators, a book outside the central habilitation thesis is presented, as well as publications with reference in world scientific databases, studies, articles and reports with scientific peer review or editing (220 points in total). The citations noted by the author earn her an additional 125 points, which is above the minimum national requirements. It is her own output, being original and of high scientific quality.

The foregoing exposition gives me reason to support with complete conviction the candidature of Dr Ralitsa Simeonova Todorova for the academic position of Associate Professor in the professional field 2.2. History and Archaeology (Archival Science and Documentary Studies) in the Department of Archival Science and Methodology of History Teaching at the Faculty of History at Sofia University “St. Климент Охридски.”

Sofia, 09.10.2024 Prof. Dr Stefka Petkova