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Opinion

by Assoc. Prof. Tsvetana Dimitrova, Institute for Bulgarian Language "Prof. Lyubomir Andreychin", Bulgarian Academy of Sciences,

within the competition at the Cyrillo-Methodian Research Centre (CMRC) of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (BAS) for the academic position of

Associate Professor in professional field 2.1. Philology, for the needs of the Department of Cyrillo-Methodian Literary Heritage

I hereby submit this opinion as a member of the scientific jury for the competition, pursuant to Order No. 63-1 RD-16 / 04.09.2026 and the decision of the same scientific jury on the procedure, adopted at its meeting on 08.09.2026. My opinion has been prepared in accordance with the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LDASRB), the Regulations for the Implementation of the LDASRB, and the regulations governing the conditions and procedure for acquiring academic degrees and holding academic positions at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and the Cyrillo-Methodian Research Centre at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.

The competition was announced in the State Gazette, issue 61 of 03.07.2026. Only one candidate has applied: Ivan Ivanov Iliev, PhD.

1. General description of the submitted materials

As a member of the Scientific Jury for the competition, I received the following documents: letter of application; a CV; a diploma for the educational and scientific degree of Doctor (PhD); a Bachelor's degree diploma (in Classical Philology); a Master's degree diploma (in Bulgarian Philology – Old Church Slavonic Studies); documentation confirming the successful completion of a Humboldt scholarship; a certificate of professional experience in the field; a list of publications (in Bulgarian and English); abstracts of the publications (in Bulgarian and English); the author's statement of research contributions; a citation report; a report on the indicators demonstrating compliance with the minimum national requirements under the LDASRB; a medical certificate; a criminal record certificate; a certificate of English language proficiency; and copies of the candidate's publications (monographs, articles and studies) submitted for the competition.

Under Article 24(1) of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act (LDASRB), the Regulations for its Implementation, and the regulations governing the conditions and procedure for acquiring academic degrees and holding academic positions at the BAS and the CMRC, candidates for the academic position of Associate Professor must meet the following requirements:

1. They have acquired the educational and scientific degree of Doctor (PhD).

2. They have held the academic position of Assistant or Chief Assistant Professor for at least two years and have at least five years of professional experience in the relevant field.

3. They have published a (habilitation) monograph that does not duplicate the work submitted for the educational and scientific degree of Doctor (PhD).

4. They meet the minimum national requirements.

5. No plagiarism or unreliability of the research data are detected in the publications submitted in accordance with the legally prescribed procedure.

4. They have at least 10 scholarly publications after taking up the position of Chief Assistant Professor; these must not duplicate the publications submitted for the educational and scientific degree of Doctor (PhD) and must be equivalent to 220 points under the Regulations for the Implementation of the LDASRB and the regulations governing academic degrees and positions at the BAS and the CMRC.

5. They have participated in at least three research projects.

6. They have participated in at least five scientific forums after taking up the position of Chief Assistant Professor.

5. They have documented citations or reviews in scholarly publications equivalent to 60 points.

According to the submitted documents, Ivan Ivanov Iliev meets (and exceeds) all these requirements: he has held the educational and scientific degree of Doctor (PhD) since 2016, having defended his dissertation at the Institute of Literature of the BAS; he has held the academic position of Chief Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Theology of Sofia University since 2015 (for more than 10 years); and he submits three monographs (one of which is his published doctoral dissertation and another the first edition of his habilitation work) and 20 publications which, according to the submitted report, are equivalent to 675 points. The submitted citation list includes 97 citing sources (excluding self-citations and citations in general literature reviews and reports), far exceeding the required 60 points.

He has edited three scholarly publications, authored dozens of encyclopedia entries (prepared within the framework of two projects in which he participated), and three specialised translations (published by the *Bulgarian History* Publishing House and the St Kliment Ohridski University Press).

Ivan Iliev has participated in eight projects and held a scholarship from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation for the period 2020 – 2022. He received the EABS Young Scholar grant in 2017. In 2015, he completed a research stay under the Ernst Mach Grant in Vienna, Austria. Since 2024, he has served as Chair of the Association for the Development of University Classical Education (ARUKO).

According to the records in Sofia University's "Avtorite" ("Authors") system, Dr Iliev has presented research papers at more than 30 academic conferences since 2016.

Based on the submitted materials, I conclude that Dr Ivan Ivanov Iliev meets all the criteria for appointment to the academic position of Associate Professor.

2. General overview of the candidate's research activity and contributions

For the competition, Dr Ivan Iliev submits a monograph (two editions, the second revised and expanded) and twenty publications in scholarly outlets, comprising seven studies and thirteen articles. Four publications are co-authored: one each with Dr Ekaterina Tomova and Prof. Achim Rabus, and two with Prof. Anissava Miltenova. Thirteen publications are in English, one in German, and the remaining ones in Bulgarian.

Dr Iliev has accurately and appropriately described his research contributions relating to Old Church Slavonic translations, the reception of Byzantine works in the Slavic literary tradition, and the history of translations from OCS into Latin. A few of his publications focus on translations of works by St Hippolytus of Rome, the "Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Daniel" (also the subject of the

candidate's doctoral dissertation), and the "Discourse on the Antichrist". New manuscript witnesses have been discovered, introduced into scholarly circulation, and analysed; the manuscript tradition, the linguistic features of the translations, and their influence on Slavic historical-apocalyptic literature have been traced, as well.

An important task undertaken by Dr Iliev is the compilation of OCS-Greek and Greek-OCS indices, based on comparison between the translations and their Byzantine originals. These provide valuable data both for historical lexicology and for the study of translation techniques and language correspondences.

Dr Iliev's habilitation monograph, Lives of Bulgarian Saints in the Latin Tradition (second, expanded edition, 2026), is an expanded and improved edition of the author's book of the same title published in 2020. The work consists of two sections. The first is devoted to the Life of St Petka of Tarnovo in a Latin translation produced in the seventeenth century by the Croatian educator and missionary Rafael Levaković (1597 – 1649); the second examines the Life of St Ivan of Rila in a Latin translation made two centuries later by the Russian Jesuit Ivan Martynov (1821 – 1894). Both lives, translated from early printed books, were published in Latin by the Bollandist Society in its Acta Sanctorum series. The translation of the Life of St Petka of Tarnovo is based on the text of the Vuković early printed edition (16th century), whereas the translation of the Life of St Ivan of Rila is based on a Russian early printed book (17th century). The history of the first edition is traced separately in the monograph, which also includes little-known facts about its circulation and copies held in Bulgarian libraries. The study of the language and style of the two Latin translations, the interpretation of the Slavic text, the editions of the translations and the corresponding indices is undertaken for the first time in Bulgaria; the work also offers important observations on Slavic paleotypography from the 16th to the 17th century. The varied reasons and circumstances behind the translations are discussed, along with the historical context of Roman Catholic proselytising on the Balkans in the Late Middle Ages, and the role of the Bollandist Society is emphasised. The lives and works of the Russian Jesuits Ivan Gagarin and Ivan Martynov are discussed, along with their contributions to Slavic literary studies, and their role in maintaining the cultural relations between Catholic Europe and the Orthodox East. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of the reception of Bulgarian literary heritage in Western Europe from the 17th to the 19th centuries.

The candidate's publications cover a range of topics, yet they reveal Dr Iliev's sustained and consistently pursued interest in translation, including translations made in the Cyrillo-Methodian period and the subsequent tradition, as well as translation in a contemporary context (see the co-authored publication with Dr Tomova), and in the fate of texts across different centuries and cultural settings.

I have found no indications of plagiarism or unreliable data in the publications of Dr Ivan Ivanov Iliev.

4. The impact of the candidate's results on the work of other authors

The total number of citations identified for Dr Ivan Iliev's publications is 97 (excluding direct and indirect self-citations and citations in general reviews and reports). These include reviews of his monographs, including the first edition of his habilitation work (according to the submitted report), which is good practice in competitions. The number of identified citations greatly exceeds the requirements for the appointment to the academic position of Associate Professor.

5. Conclusion

Based on all the facts cited above and in accordance with the requirements of the relevant legislation and regulations, I give a positive assessment of Dr Ivan Ivanov Iliev's candidacy for the academic position of Associate Professor. The candidate has submitted all the required documents, which fully satisfy and, in fact, exceed all the requirements of the LDASRB and the other applicable regulations. The publications make indisputable contributions and are of exceptionally high quality, and they are in accordance with the subject of the competition. Dr Ivan Iliev is an established scholar who demonstrates a prominent level of professionalism and enjoys respectable standing within the academic community.

Because of all these facts, I confidently recommend that the respected jury propose to the competent authority to appoint Dr Ivan Ivanov Iliev to the position of Associate Professor at the CMRC in professional field 2.1. Philology.

Date: 21 October 2026

Prepared by:

(Assoc. Prof. Tsvetana Dimitrova, PhD)