

**ACADEMIC AUTONOMY – CAUSE AND ACHIEVEMENT
OF THE HIGHER SCHOOL OF COMMERCE - VARNA (1920–1945)**

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Abstract

The study investigates the evolution of the Higher School of Commerce - Varna in its struggle to obtain formal state regulation and greater academic autonomy. The first step was taken with the drawing up, discussion and adoption of the regulations and the syllabus of the School, approved on 28 September 1920 by order of the Ministry of Trade. A new turning point in the development of the educational institution was the Law on Public Education of 1924, which - for the first time in the history of Bulgarian legislation - regulated the existence of higher economic education – the legal basis for the operation of HSC - Varna, by virtue of which the latter passed from the administration of the Ministry of Trade into the administration of the Ministry of Public Education. Based on the new Law there were drawn up and adopted the Regulations of 1925. On the following year – 1926 – there began the efforts to enact a Bill on the HSC, which took its teaching staff many years and strenuous intellectual labour. The model followed was that of Sofia State University, and the legal grounds - the passed laws on the higher economic educational institutions that emerged later on. Since the end of 1936, in the drafted laws in Varna there were methodically and consistently included several new and very significant demands: to change the name and expand the educational profile, to open new departments, to introduce a departmental structure, etc. Eventually, the reform was achieved, after the Rector Prof. Stancho Cholakov became Minister of Education. The nationalization and the introduction of the new structure of the Academy of Varna was conclusively accomplished with the "Decree" promulgated on 4 August 1945. At last the long pursued reform was a fact and it opened a new period in the development of the educational institution.

Key words: *academic autonomy, Higher School of Commerce – Varna, higher economic education, interwar period (1920s – 1940s)*