



UNIVERSITY OF NATIONAL AND WORLD ECONOMY

STATEMENT OF OPINION

By: **Prof. Dr. Elenita Kirilova Velikova**
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Regarding: Competition for holding the academic position of associate professor in professional direction 3.8 Economics in "Economics of Tourism" at the "Regional and Sectoral Economy" section at the Institute for Economic Studies of the BAS.

Grounds for participation in the scientific jury: Order No. 367/ 18.07.2023 of the Director of the Institute of Science and Technology at the BAS.

1. Information about the competition

On the basis of Art. 4 of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LDASRB), Art. 81 of the Regulations for the acquisition of scientific degrees and the occupation of academic positions at the Institute for Economic Research (IER) of the BAS and according to the decision of the Scientific Council of the IER of the BAS - protocol 7/12.07.2023, the competition was announced for the needs of the "Regional and Sectoral economy" section, at the Institute for Economic Research of the BAS, State Gazette no. 44 of 19.05.2023. It is in professional direction 3.8 Economics in "Economics of Tourism".

2. Brief information about the candidate in the competition

The only candidate in the competition is Dr. Silvena Dencheva Yordanova. She was born in 1977, having successively completed the specializations "Marketing and Management" at the University of Economics "Bachelor" and "Business Management" as a "Master" at the University of Economics - Varna. In 2005, she successfully defended her doctoral dissertation on the topic: "Management of relations with users in the conditions of electronic commerce" in the scientific specialty 05.02.20 Social management. In 2006, she started working as an assistant at the International College - Albena, Dobrich. From 2008 to 2011, she was deputy editor of European Journal of Tourism Research. Since 2015, she has been the main organizer and editor of the VUM-Varna Yearbook. In 2016, she qualified as an associate professor in 3.7. Administration and Management.

3. Fulfillment of the requirements for occupying the academic position

It is clear from the "Reference Naukometria" for the occupation of the academic position of "associate professor" at the IER of the BAS that the only candidate in the procedure, Dr. Silvena Yordanova, exceeds the required number of points of 450. In fulfillment of the National minimum requirements according to the LDASRB (art. 2b) and the Regulations for its application (art. 1a, paragraph 1) and art. 81 of the Regulations of the IER at the BAS, the following can be summarized:

A total of 19 scientific publications and 2 textbooks were submitted for participation in the competition, of which: 1 habilitation monograph and 3 book chapters; 2 publications in Scopus

(one in press) and 13 articles and reports published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or published in edited collective volumes.

Dr. Yordanova's scientific output has 15 citations, 1 of which is in an indexed journal in international databases. The candidate has obtained the scientific degree of doctor, has the required lecturing experience, participates in various projects and research initiatives.

There is no proven plagiarism in scientific works according to the law.

There is no actual non-compliance.

The opinion received from the Commission on preliminary assessment is positive.

4. Brief description of the presented scientific works/publications

A monograph for habilitation is presented, which does not repeat the scientific production for obtaining the educational and scientific degree "doctor". It is on the topic "Perspectives and opportunities for digitization in tourism", with reviewers: Prof. Karolova-Chromi Zhigalova and Assoc. Prof. Boyukliev, in a volume of 135 pages. It is dedicated to a current and significant problem. Undoubtedly, the most valuable part of it is the presented author's model for digitalization of an organization in the field of tourism and hospitality. An author's methodology is also proposed, which includes the sequence of steps for the application of digitalization in organizations from the field of tourism and hospitality.

The issues of digitization are also touched upon in other publications provided by the author, and problems in the field of its application in education have been investigated. A significant part of the publications is devoted to leadership, with an emphasis on both theoretical and practical issues in its research. The candidate's scientific output is up-to-date, in-depth, which shows his qualities as a scientist and researcher with potential for development.

The scientific level of the scientific production submitted for review can be qualified as very good. The publications deal with current problems of tourism theory and practice and are directly related to the current competition. They are sufficient in quantity to participate in a competition for associate professor, and what is more important in terms of quality, they have been developed at a good scientific level and treat significant problems of tourism.

The specific review of the candidate's publications provides grounds for identifying the following main directions in his research activity:

- Digitization in tourism;
- Digitization in education;
- Leadership issues.

The main scientific and applied scientific results of the candidate for associate professor, Dr. Yordanova, can be considered both in relation to the subject of the competition for associate professor and in relation to other publications. It can be said that it enriches the scientific knowledge with the analyses, conclusions and prescriptions regarding digitalization in tourism.

The topicality of the researched issues, its economic significance, its practical applicability to tourist enterprises give reason to conclude that the reviewed scientific production of the associate professor candidate meets the requirements for holding the academic position.

The analysis of the scientific production shows that there is analyticalness, logic, scientific correctness and constructiveness in the scientific research activity of Dr. Yordanova. It shows her abiding interest in researching the problems of digitization. Silvena Yordanova demonstrates the ability and skills to systematize and critically interpret theories and methodological approaches in the researched scientific areas, to define problems and formulate guidelines for solving them.

It is impressive that she has a good literary awareness and that her publications are in recent years. Apparently, she knows the literature on the researched problems (including the most recent), has mastered and successfully uses the main modern research approaches, shows the ability and skills to systematize and critically interpret classic and new theories, to formulate and defend them well their theses.

5. Synthesized evaluation of the main scientific and scientific-applied contributions

The following points of contribution stand out in the publications proposed for review:

1. Knowledge about digitization in tourism, digitization in education and leadership has been studied, evaluated and systematized. Their features, scope, goals, the benefits of their application are generated and their role for the effective development of tourism is outlined.

2. An author's model for the digitization of the organization in the field of tourism, an author's methodology for the digitalization of the organization in the field of tourism and a methodology for measuring the corporate identity of a university have been developed. Important connections and dependencies between digitization and tourism have been established and proven.

In the scientific production of Dr. Silvena Yordanova provided for review, other scientific and applied contributions can be identified, which enrich the science of tourism in a theoretical and methodological way. The presented contributions present in a synthesized form the most important scientific achievements of the candidate and are specifically related to the competition for associate professor. The citation report provided shows that the applicant's scientific publications have received public recognition and are used by the scientific community. I also accept the contribution report made by the candidate, despite its excessive detail. I think her self-assessment is correct.

6. Main criticisms and recommendations

The scientific production of Dr. Yordanova submitted for analysis was developed at a good scientific level and no serious weaknesses and/or misstatements can be found in. I recommend the candidate to continue her active research activity in her future work.

7. Conclusion

The inspection of the documents and the publications on the competition give me reason to conclude that there were no violations in the procedure. Dr. Yordanova's candidacy complies with the LDASRB, the rules for its implementation and the Internal Rules of the Institute for Economic Research (IER) of the BAS. This, as well as the considerations presented in the opinion regarding the candidate's scientific research activity, give me reason to positively evaluate the participant in the competition. In view of what has been said, I recommend to the respected members of the scientific jury to give their positive vote for the election of Dr. Silvena Dencheva Yordanova to the academic position of "associate professor" in professional direction 3.8. "Economics" in "Economics of Tourism" at the "Regional and Sectoral Economy" section at the Institute for Economic Studies of the BAS.

09/17/2023
Sofia

Signature:
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