

To:

Prof. Dr. Irena Zareva

Director of the ERI - BAS

OPINION

Subject:

Competition for a **position of associate professor** in the field of higher education 3. "Social, economic and legal sciences", professional direction 3.8. "Economics of the tourism" economics specialty, announced in the State Gazette No. 44 of 19.05.2023 for the needs of the "Regional and Sectoral Economics" Department at the Economic Research Institute at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (ERI-BAS), according to the Decision of the Scientific council at the ERI-BAS, Protocol No. 7/12.07.2023.

Prepared by:

Prof. Rossitsa Dobрева Chobanova, Ph.D.,D.Sc. (ERI-BAS), area of higher education 3. "Social, economic and legal sciences", professional direction: 3.8. ECONOMICS, Scientific specialties: National Economy (including regional economy and history of the national economy), Economy and Management (by branches), Political Economy.

Basis for preparation:

- Order No. 267 dated 18.07.2023 of the Director of ERI - BAS for the approval of a scientific jury, based on the decision of the Scientific council at ERI – BAS.
- Decision of the scientific jury from 27.07. 2023, Protocol 7/12.07.2023.

1. BRIEF REFERENCE FOR THE CANDIDATE

One candidate - Dr. Silvena Dencheva Yordanova - has submitted documents for the competition for the academic position of "associate professor" at the ERI-BAS. She was born in Varna in 1977. There she has graduated from a natural and mathematical high school and studied in Varna economic university. Then she has obtained MA degree and has defended a scientific degree - Ph.D. (Economics), as a student and full-time and doctoral student at the UNWE - Sofia. The topic of the dissertation was "Customer relationships management in e-commerce settings". (scientific specialty "Social Management"). In 2016, she held the academic position of "associate professor"

at the Higher School of Management (VUM), professional direction 3.7. Administration and Management, with a habilitation thesis "Virtual Communities in Tourism". Candidate Yordanova is fluent in English and Russian. She attended short-term training courses in France, Great Britain, Norway, Tajikistan, Finland, Bulgaria - Varna University. Her personal commitment to improving the level of scientific research and higher education in the country is expressed in her membership in the Union of Scientists in Bulgaria, in taking active role in organization of scientific forums, her editorial work, her work for the regional center of the BAS in Dobrich etc.

2. COMPLIANCE OF THE CANDIDATE'S SUBMITTED DOCUMENTS AND MATERIALS WITH THE REQUIREMENTS ACCORDING TO THE REGULATIONS FOR THE ACQUISITION OF EDUCATIONAL AND SCIENTIFIC DEGREES AND HOLDING OF ACADEMIC POSITIONS IN ERI-BAS FOR "ASSOCIANT PROFESSOR"

2.1. FULFILLMENT OF QUANTITATIVE REQUIREMENTS

Dr. Silvena Yordanova meets all the requirements for occupying the academic position of "ASSOCIANT PROFESSOR", according to Art. 81 (1) of the Regulations for the Acquisition of Scientific Degrees and the Occupancy of Academic Positions at the ERI-BAS:

- has a doctoral degree ;
- has long time teaching experience in Bulgarian and English at the Higher School of Management - Varna;
- has presented a habilitation thesis - monograph and other 18 publications in the field of the competition;
- there is no any proven plagiarism according to the law, so I accept her achievements as a personal matter;
- there is a reference to the novelty.

2.2. FULFILLMENT OF QUALITY REQUIREMENTS

2.2.1. The content of the presented materials is as follows:

- reference to the publications - 18 issues presented, of which two issues are in refereed and indexed issues in SCOPUS and Web of Science; the reference also includes 2 teaching manuals;
- reference to citations, incl. 2 items in refereed and indexed publications in SCOPUS and Web of Science.

2.2.2. I highly appreciate the work of the Commission for admitting the candidate to participate in an announced competition for "Associate Professor", appointed by Order No. 340 of 04.07.2023. I accept its Decision (according to the Minutes of 26.07.2023) Dr. Silvana Yordanova to be awarded to take part in the competition for the position "Associate Professor" at the ERI-BAS, according to Art. 84 (1) of the Regulations for the acquisition of scientific degrees and the occupation of academic positions in the ERI - BAS.

2.2.3. I agree the requirements under Art. 81 in accordance with the results of the inquiries under Art. 82 are fulfilled. I strongly **recommend**, according to the latter, that Dr. Yordanova presents in writing the content of the original scientific contributions (novelty), to which the relevant arguments should be applied.

3. EVALUATION OF THE EDUCATIONAL AND TEACHING ACTIVITY

Dr. Yordanova has a significant - over 15 years of teaching experience, of which 8 years as an associate professor. From 2006 until now, Dr. Yordanova leads 9 disciplines in Bulgarian and English at the Higher School of Management - Varna. She is the author of 2 teaching manuals. She has also developed practical-applied case studies for organizations in the "Introduction to Business Administration" teaching manual, as well as case studies and game approaches in promoting creativity in the workplace. In terms of content, these activities correspond to the requirements for occupying the academic position of "Associate professor" at ERI – BAS.

4. BRIEF CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCIENTIFIC PAPERS PRESENTED

Dr. Yordanova participated in the current competition with a habilitation thesis and has submitted 20 publications.

Dr. Yordanova has presented an independent habilitation thesis on a contemporary problem in the field of the competition. The title is: "PERSPECTIVES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR DIGITALIZATION OF TOURISM". The thesis does not repeat the works presented for the acquisition of the Educational and scientific degree "Ph.D.", as well as for the acquisition of academic position "Associate Professor" in professional direction 3.7. "Administration and management".

The presented habilitation thesis contains 3 chapters and used literature. The first chapter is dedicated to clarifying the content of digitalization, new concepts reflecting new processes and phenomena in tourism as a result of digitalization - communities in tourism, virtual reality, blogs, social networks, artificial intelligence and process automation. The second chapter presents a wide palette of problems in the application of digitization in tourism. After a brief overview of the development of digital technologies, an extensive overview of successful examples in tourism and hospitality, the state of tourism and hospitality in the EU, as well as social networks and their

influence in tourism and hospitality is given. The third chapter is dedicated to a model for digitization in tourism and to a methodology for digitalization of the organization in the field of tourism and hospitality.

In addition to her habilitation work - a monograph, Dr. Yordanova has also presented other original scientific works in a wide range of issues. Assessed as a whole, according to Art. 81 of the above Regulations, they meet the requirements for occupying the academic position of associate professor in the field of higher education 3. "Social, economic and legal sciences", professional direction 3.8. ECONOMICS, scientific specialty "Economics of Tourism". There are also 2 publications in journals, referenced and indexed in Web of Sciences and SCOPUS, which also cover the additional minimum requirements of the ERI - BAS for occupying the academic position of "Associate Professor". The conducted scientific research activity and the achieved results are approved by the publications made, and the presented citations of scientific articles and studies at home and abroad in refereed and indexed scientific publications, especially in WoS and Scopus, and in journals with Impact Factor.

1 monograph, which is not a habilitation thesis, is presented. 1 book based on a defended dissertation, 13 articles and reports published in non-refereed editions with scientific review or published in edited volumes with scientific review and 3 chapters in collective monographs are presented.

23 citations of 10 of the attached publications are presented. Most often - 6 times, Dr. Yordanova's 2020 article on the use of artificial intelligence in education, published in English in the VFU yearbook, is cited. A publication on workplace bullying (2022) was cited 5 times. The habilitation thesis from 2023 was cited 1 time.

It can be summarized that the conducted scientific research activity and the achieved results are protected by the published publications and presented citations of scientific articles and studies at home and abroad, incl. refereed and indexed scientific publications, as well as those included in journals with an Impact Factor.

The scientometric analysis carried out shows coverage of the quality requirements relevant for the country at the moment and the additional ones introduced by ERI-BAS.

5. SYNTHESIZED ASSESSMENT OF THE MAIN SCIENTIFIC AND SCIENTIFIC-APPLIED CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE CANDIDATE:

- The candidate's scientific output contains results representing scientific and scientific-applied contributions.
- The presented works contribute to a better definition of new terms and concepts.
- Characterized and offered science-based solutions of essential economic problems at the sector's and firm's level.

6. QUESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

Question 1: To present the trends in world cultural and historical tourism for the destination of Europe and for Bulgaria as a part of it.

Question 2: As a candidate for the academic post of Associate Professor in Economics of tourism, to formulate guidelines for the digitalization policy in order to increase the demand and supply of nationally based tourism services.

Recommendation: Submit a written supplement to the Reference for Scientific Contributions as suggested above.

7. CRITICAL NOTE

There are quite a few technical errors. For example, in the habilitation thesis - in the content - in chapter 1., item 1.2 - the word "as" is superfluous. On page 77, instead of «before 1989», «1999» is written. There is no any introduction to the habilitation thesis. In studies under print for the journal “Economic Studies”, instead of Dobrich Bulgaria is mentioned, etc.

8. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, it can be summarized that based on the indicators under Article 2b, Paragraph 2 of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, of the Regulations for its Application, Dr Yordanova meets the requirements of the Regulations on Conditions and the procedure for acquiring scientific and educational and scientific degrees and occupying academic positions at the BAS, exceeding some of the minimum levels according to individual indicators.

Summarizing the overall activity of Dr. Silvena Yordanova, it can be concluded that she is an active creative person with realizations in various fields:

- research and publication activity (published monographs, books, studies and articles);
- teaching and learning work (developed and approved lecture courses and training programs for exercises);
- pioneering activity (participation in organizing scientific forums, etc.)

I do not know the candidate personally, but considering the above I vote in the Scientific Jury with

"YES"

and I propose to the members of the scientific council of the Economic Research Institute at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences that Assoc. Dr. Silvena Dencheva Yordanova be elected to the academic position of "associate professor" in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional direction 3.8. ECONOMICS, tourism economics major, announced for the needs of the "Regional and Sectoral Economics" section at the ERI-BAS.

Signature:

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Prof. Rossitsa Chobanova, DSc, PhD

ECONOMIC RESEARCH INSTITUTE AT THE BULGARIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCE

The review was forwarded to: date