

OPINION

by prof. Virginia Ivanova Zhelyazkova. Ph.D., DSc
from VUZF University - Sofia

of the documents and materials in connection with the procedure for occupying the academic position of "associate professor" in the Higher Education Area 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, Professional Field 3.8. Economics of transportation (water and air) at the Economic Research Institute of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, announced in State Gazette no. 44/19.05.2023

1. General description of the procedure and the presented materials

By order No. 365 of 18.07.2023 of the Director of the Institute for Economic Research (EIR) of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (BAS), Prof. Irena Zareva-Zafirova, Ph.D., I have been appointed as a member of the scientific jury for ensuring the procedure for occupying the academic position "associate professor" in the Higher Education Area 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, Professional Field 3.8. Economics of transportation (water and air). The only candidate under the procedure is chief assistant professor Petia Delcheva Koralova-Nozharova, Ph.D., from EIR - BAS.

The materials handed over by Dr. Koralova-Nozharova include the following documents:

- curriculum vitae;
- a list of the candidate's scientific publications and their full-text copies;
- specific protocols, which make clear the candidate's contribution to the development of her joint scientific publications;
- certificate of fulfillment of the national minimum requirements for the occupation of the academic position of "associate professor" under PF3.8 Economics according to the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LDASRB), the Regulations for its implementation and the specific requirements for the occupation of the position at the BAS;
- a list of the candidate's scientific contributions;
- reference to the citation of the applicant's works.

For the purposes of this procedure, the applicant has attached:

- 1 monograph – main habilitation work;
- a book based on her dissertation for awarding the educational and scientific degree Ph.D.;

- 2 autonomously developed articles published in journals, refereed and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information;
- 14 scientific papers, of which 8 autonomously developed, published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals/in edited collective volumes;
- 1 study in a journal referenced in world-renown databases with scientific information and
- 1 study in a non-refereed peer-reviewed scientific journal.

The documents are presented correctly and in good condition. The scientific publications and citations of the candidate's works submitted for review are sufficient in number and type to fulfill the national minimum requirements of the LDASRB, the Regulations for its implementation and the specific requirements for occupying the academic position of "associate professor" at the BAS in PF 3.8 Economics. At the time of preparing the review, there is no information that would give grounds to doubt the authenticity of Dr. Koralova-Nozharova works.

2. Characteristics and evaluation of the candidate's publications

The scientific publications of candidate Dr. Koralova-Nozharova deal with an important, but deserving of more research in the Bulgarian scientific literature, area - the problems of air and water transport for our country. The habilitation work of the candidate is dedicated to the effective forms of competition protection and regulation of the business environment of maritime transport in Bulgaria. The book, based on the dissertation work for the award of Ph.D. complements the contributions in the main, habilitation work, by examining the inland water transport of Bulgaria and the multimodal transport network and their integration and development prospects. It makes a very good impression that in her individual publications, Dr. Koralova-Nozharova examines various, and very topical, aspects of the issues that are the subject of her work. Thus, in one of her articles, she analyzes the effects of digitalization on the labor market in the field of transport in the period after the pandemic of COVID-19. In another of her articles, she explores how the digitization of transport services along the Danube river affects the forestry-based industries.

In general, in her publications, Dr. Koralova-Nozharova demonstrates outstanding abilities for interdisciplinary research, connecting the issues of transport - water and air - with modern phenomena, such as digitalization (which has already been mentioned), the pursuit of corporate social responsibility of companies, the financial impact of these phenomena on transport, green policies as a result of the Green Deal of the European Union, including policies towards a circular economy, the management of human resources in the transport sector and others. This shows that she is an inquisitive, dynamic young scientist who has a comprehensive view of the complex issues of the transport sector. Scientists with such expertise are needed, because they have the knowledge and depth to understand the problems from all their sides and to identify the cause-and-effect relationships in them, so as to offer solutions that actually work, taking into account the complexity of the situations.

4. Contributions and significance of the development for science and practice

The scientific production of Dr. Kolarova-Nozharova is undoubtedly distinguished by a number of scientific contributions of both theoretical and practical-applied nature. I believe that four theoretical and three applied contributions could be outlined in the candidate's publications.

I accept with conviction that the contributions of a theoretical nature are the following:

- Defining the competitiveness of Bulgarian maritime transport and motivating specific forms of competition, so as to improve non-governmental market positions;
- The assessment of the readiness of individual types of transport (water, air, land) for the implementation of corporate social responsibility;
- The model for assessing the extent to which it is possible to integrate inland water transport in Bulgaria to the multimodal transport network of Europe and
- Analysis of the relationship by means of an econometric model between the financial situation of passenger air operators and their main activity.

The scientific-applied contributions are of a diverse thematic nature, treat separate aspects of transport problems and can be summarized as follows:

- A comparative analysis of the EU member states was carried out and, based on the results, conclusions were drawn about the competitiveness of seaports in Bulgaria;
- The relationship between digitization and human resources management in the field of managing infrastructure objects in transport has been identified;
- The opportunities and challenges facing the transport sector as a result of the Green Deal and the National Recovery and Resilience Plan are analysed.

5. Critical remarks and recommendations

I would recommend Dr. Koralova-Nozharova to publish more in English language in order to achieve greater recognition which is well-deserved by her.

CONCLUSION

The documents and materials presented for the purposes of the current procedure by the sole candidate, Dr. Koralova-Nozharova, contain scientific, scientific-applied and applied results that meet the requirements of LDASRB, the Rules for its implementation and the specific requirements of the BAS for the occupation of the academic position "associate professor" in PF 3.8 Economics.

Dr. Koralova-Nozharova's scientific publications are an attestation that the candidate has in-depth theoretical knowledge and professional skills in PF 3. 8. Economics.

Due to the above, I confidently give my positive assessment of the scientific publications, achieved results and contributions, and I vote "FOR" the occupation of the academic position of "associate professor" in the Higher Education Area 3. Social, economic and legal sciences; Professional Field 3.8 Economics of financing and development of public services at the Institute for Economic

Research of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences by chief assistant professor Petia Delcheva
Koralova-Nozharova, Ph.D.

September 10, 2023

Reviewer:

(Prof. Virginia Zhelyazkova, Ph.D., DSc)