

## PEER REVIEW

by **Prof. Dr.Econ.Sc. Zhelio Vladimirov**, Faculty of Economic at Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridsk”, professional field 3.7 “Administration and Management”, member of Scientific Jury in the competition for academic position “PROFESSOR”, approved by a decision of the Scientific Council minutes No 4 on 10.04.2019, and by an order of the Director No 122 on 12.04.2019, announced by Economic Research Institute at Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, SG, issue 13 on 12.02.2019

Candidate: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Radostina Telerig Bakardjieva

### *I. Short biography of the candidate*

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Radostina Bakardjieva has graduated Higher Institute of Economics “Karl Marx” (UNWE) in “Political Economy”, profile “Sociology” in 1981. In 1988 she has defended scientific and educational degree “Doctor” in Economics from Sofia University “Kliment Ohridski”. Since 1989 she is a research fellow at ERI-BAS, consecutively III, II and I degree. In 2007 she is habilitated as Associate Professor at the same institute. She has been part-time lecturer at VTU “St. St. Kiril and Metodii” (2004-2017); expert at the National Coordinating Council on Corporate Social Responsibility at MLSP (2014-2018). Since 2013, Assoc. Prof. Bakardjieva is a Representative of ERI-BAS at the Bulgarian Institute for Standardization, member of the Round Table on CSR at the Balkan Institute of Labor.

She is an external member of the editorial board of Business Directions journal (published by BFU) and an external member of the editorial board of New Knowledge journal (published by UARD – Plovdiv). She has participated in scientific committees at two international scientific conferences. She is a member of the editorial boards of the journals *Journal of Innovations and Sustainability* and *New Knowledge Journal of Science* (2014-2017). She is fluent in Russian, German and English. She has received honorary awards from the Union of Economists of Bulgaria, the Academy of Innovation and Sustainability, and the “Trans Defi” Association for her contributions to promoting CSR in Bulgaria.

### *II. General characteristics of the scientific and applied work of the candidate*

#### *1. General description of the submitted materials (monographs, textbooks, articles, reports, projects, etc.) by research fields*

For her participation in the competition, Assoc. Prof. Bakardjieva has presented 36 publications with a total volume of 820 pages. These publications are as follows:

- Habilitation work (equivalent publication) – 1 individual monograph in volume of 130 pages;
- Published monograph not presented as main habilitation work (equivalent publication) – 1 individual monograph in volume of 200 pages;
- Articles in referenced publication – 1 article in a journal indexed in Scopus – 9 pages;
- Articles and reports published in non-referenced scientific peer-reviewed journals or in edited collective volumes – 10 articles, 7 of which are individual and 3 are in co-

authorship, in volumes respectively: 9, 8, 18, 15, 2.5, 43, 14, 7, 7.5 and 3 pages (127 pages in total); 10 reports published in proceedings from international conferences, 9 of which are individual and 1 is co-authored, in volume as follows: 8, 10, 11, 8, 13, 9, 17, 16, 15, 10 and 10.5 pages (113 pages total); 8 reports published in proceedings from national conferences and national conferences with international participation in volume, respectively: 10, 8, 8, 12, 12, 9, 11 and 10 pages (80 pages in total). Total volume of these publications – 320 pages;

- Studies published in scientific journals, referenced and indexed in world-famous databases with scientific information (SCOPUS and Web of Science) – 1 study in volume of 31 pages;
- Studies published in non-referenced scientific peer-reviewed journals or in edited collective volumes – 1 study in volume of 25 pages;
- published chapters of collected monographs – 3 items with author’s text in volume of respectively 60, 31 and 23 pages (total for these publications – 114 pages).

Of the 36 publications presented by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Radostina Bakardjieva for participation in the competition, 7 are in English (4 articles, 1 study and 2 reports) and the others are in Bulgarian. The works presented by the candidate do not repeat the publications used to obtain scientific and educational degree “Doctor” and to occupy academic position “Associate Professor”. Division protocols are attached to all collective publications.

## *2. General characteristics of the candidate’s scientific, applied and teaching activities*

The main focus in the publications of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Radostina Bakardjieva is on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in its various dimensions (economic, social and environmental). CSR is analyzed in close relation with corporate governance, non-financial reporting and sustainable development. Revealed is the state of CSR in the Bulgarian companies – SMEs, TNC subsidiaries, as well as public companies. The application of CSR standards in the Bulgarian companies, as well as the non-financial reporting of the enterprises as the strongest manifestation of CSR, are leading in these studies.

The scientific-teaching activity of Assoc. Prof. Bakardjieva is expressed in the courses she teaches in “Financial Administration” (120 hours), “State and Business Administration” (120 hours) at VTU “St. St. Kiril and Metodii” (2009-2015), “Corporate Social Responsibility” at VUZF – 2015 (25 hours), UNWE – 2015-2019 (20 hours), and VTU “St. St. Kiril and Metodii” – 2016 and 2017 (120 hours each). She is scientific advisor of two postgraduate students in the European Operational Program “Student Practices”; author of 4 reviews of Ph.D. defenses; 3 reports for habilitation; 1 review and 1 report for professor. She is a reviewer of publications in Economic Studies journal, Economic Thought journal, other journals, proceedings and monographs.

For the period 2007-2017, the candidate has participated in 7 research and 2 educational projects. 2 of the projects are individual and in the others she is a member of the project teams; 3 of the projects are international and 1 of the educational projects is of the European Commission.

### ***III. Quantitative characteristics of the candidate's scientific work***

The information for meeting the minimum requirements of ERI-BAS for academic position "Professor" in professional field 3.8 Economy by Assoc. Prof. Bakardjieva shows that with a minimum number of 650 points, she reports a total of 1282.5 points, as follows:

A1. Dissertation work for awarding educational and scientific degree "Doctor": **50 points**

C3. Habilitation work – 1 monograph: **100 points**

D4. Published monograph not presented as main habilitation work – 1 monograph: **100 points**

D6. Articles in referenced publication – 1 article: 30 points

D7. Articles and reports in non-referenced publication – total 257.5 points

*D7.1. Articles* – 7 articles with 10 points each; 2 articles with 5 points each; 1 item 2.5 points each – total 82.5 points

*D7.2. Reports published in proceedings of international conferences* – 9 articles with 10 points each; 1 article with 5 points – total 95 points

*D7.3. Report published in proceedings of national conferences and national conferences with international participation* – 8 reports with 10 points each – total 80 points

D8. Study in referenced publication – 45 points

D9. Study in non-referenced publication – 15 points

D10. Chapter of a collective monograph – 3 publications with 20 points each – total 60 points

**Total for D – 507.50 points**

E11. Citations or reviews in scientific journals, referenced and indexed in world-famous databases with scientific information or in monographs and collective volumes – 1 citation: 15 points

E12. Citations in monographs and collected volumes with scientific review – 29 citations with 10 points each: total 290 points

E13. Citations or reviews in non-referenced journals with scientific review – 21 citations with 5 points each: total 105 points

**Total for E – 410 points**

F16. Participation in national scientific or educational project – 5 projects: 75 points

F17. Participation in international scientific or educational project – 4 projects: 80 points

**Total for F – 155 points**

**Total – 1322.50 points**

These data show that the candidate for academic position "Professor" participates in the competition with production that exceeds twice the requirements specified in Art. 91, para. 4 of the Regulations for acquisition of academic degrees and occupation of academic positions at ERI-BAS.

### ***IV. Evaluation of the results and scientific contribution of the candidate***

The scientific publications of Assoc. Prof. R. Bakardjieva can be divided into four thematic groups: (1) *Theoretical and methodological problems of CSR* (№ C1, D4, D7.1-1, D7.1-4,

D7.1-6 , D7.2-1, D7.2-2, D7.2-5, D7.3-2, D7.3-3, D7.3-4, D8-1, D9-1, D10-1, D10 -2, D10-3,); (2) *Nature, requirements and application of CSR international standards in the Bulgarian companies* (№ C1, D7.1-2, D7.2-6, D7.3-5, D7.3-6, D7.3-7); (3) *CSR as important part of corporate governance* (№ D4, D7.1-3, D7.1-5, D7.1-7, D7.1-9, D7.1-10, D7.2-3, D7.2-9, D.6.1); (4) *Assessment of CSR in the Bulgarian companies* (D4, D6.1, D7.2-4, D7.2-7, D7.2-8, D7.2-10, D8-1, D9-1, D10. 2, D10-3). Since publication D7.1-8 presents reports presented at a scientific conference, and publication D7.3-1 is not directly related to CSR topics, they are excluded from the evaluation.

*1. Theoretical and methodological problems of CSR* (№ C1, D4, D7.1-1, D7.1-4, D7.1-6, D7.2-1, D7.2-2, D7.2-5, D8 -1, D.9-1, D10-1, D10-2, D10-3, D7.3-2, D7.3-3, D7.3-4).

In this area the author's main achievements are in the two monographs "*Corporate Responsibility through the Application of International Social Standards in the Bulgarian Companies – Challenges and European Dimensions*" (C1) and "*Corporate Social Responsibility of the Bulgarian Companies – Contemporary Trends and European Perspectives*" (D4). Here are systematized key economic theories of social responsibility; outlined are basic definitions for "CSR", "management of CSR", "responsible supply chain" and "corporate social reporting"; revealed is the impact of CSR on legitimizing the companies in the society, reducing non-financial risk, increasing the degree of caring for the stakeholders' interests and more fully complying with the criteria of the universal international standards.

CSR is outlined as an instrument of the corporate sustainability at firm level and of the sustainable development in a broader context (D7.1-1, D7.1-6, D9-1). Determined is that the basis for non-financial corporate reporting is the system of indicators of corporate sustainability (C1). The developed scheme for comparing social reports of CSR and the sustainable development reports shows that they are almost identical but with different scope (D8-1). The European concept of integrated reporting is outlined in publication D7.3-3.

Revealed are the key characteristics of the European CSR model, the convergence processes of the European and Anglo-Saxon CSR models, and the priorities of the new European CSR strategy until 2019 (D7.3-4, D7.2-2, D7.2-1). The author reasons the expanded scope of CSR with the transition from a three- to five-dimensional model that covers the companies' responsibility for the people, the planet, prosperity, peace and cooperation (D7.1-1, D7.2-5, D9-1, D10-3).

Outlined are the main factors that predetermine the significance of CSR in the current conditions, as well as the main dimensions of the social reporting (D10-1). Made is a comparative analysis between CSR and social responsible investing (D10-3) and is studied the firm experience with CSR in small, medium-sized and large enterprises (D10-2). Outlined is the important role of CSR for the suppliers and customers through the prism of the supply chain (D7.1-4), emphasizing that building a sustainable responsible supply chain is on the agenda for the European future of the Bulgarian companies.

Made is a thorough analysis between the social responsibility of the corporate entities and the social enterprises and are revealed the good practices in the functioning of European social enterprises (D4, D7.3-2).

*2. Nature, requirements and application of the international standards for CSR in the Bulgarian companies (№ C1, D4, D7.1-2, D7.2-6, D7.3-5, D7.3-6, D7.3-7, D10-1).*

In this area, the author concludes that the international CSR standards are a key instrument for social control by the public institutions. They are an optional but necessary stage in the development of the non-financial reporting (C1, D4, D7.2-6, D7.3-7, D10-1).

It is consecutively proven that the socially responsible norms are implemented in the companies through the “soft law” instrument. The optional international social standards transpose universal principles, norms and values of responsible business behavior, creating premises for complementing the national legislation (C1, D4, D7.3-7).

Based on data from a nationally representative survey on the application of the international CSR standards in the Bulgarian companies, the author concludes that the large enterprises are leaders in this regard, while the use of these standards as the core of CSR in the Bulgarian companies is at a basic level (C1).

Systematized are the requirements and main criteria of key international social standards in their current version – ISO 9001:2015, OHSAS 18001:2007, ISO 45001:2018, ISO 14001:2015, EMAS, SA 8000, OECD Principles for Multinational Companies: 2011. The comparative analysis of the old and new formats of international standards (2004, 2008 and 2015) shows that, despite the similarities, the criteria of the individual standards differ significantly. However, they all contribute to the formation of the indicators of non-financial reporting (C1, D7.1-2, D7.2-6, D7.3-7, D10-1).

Based on the characteristics of ISO 9001 standard, the author concludes that its application leads to enhancement of the sustainable nature of the corporate social responsibility. Studied is the application of ISO 9001 depending on the size (number of employees) and profit of the enterprise (D7.2-6).

Analyzed are the requirements of the international standard OHSAS 18001:2007 as one of the key social standards targeting the personnel as a main internal stakeholder. Identified is the contribution of ISO 14001:2015 to the internalization of the negative external factors, which contribute to the violators being forced to repair the damages to the environmental. It is concluded that the new ISO 45001:2018 standard orients the strategic and operational management on the change management with a focus on commitment in health and safety (D7.1-2).

Studied is the potential of ISO 26 000:2010 as the newest international standard with a focus on social responsibility. It is concluded that this standard is a methodological reference point and guidelines for the management of the social responsibility in the organizations, regardless of their legal form or size. In this regard, ISO 26 000 is identified as a reliable platform for integrated management and self-assessment of the social responsibility of the companies (D7.3-5, D7.3-6, D4).

The author presents individually developed instrument for self-assessment of the organizations in accordance with the requirements of the international standard ISO 26 000. It is taken into account that the application of the requirements of ISO 26 000 is directly related to the non-financial reporting (D7.3-6).

### 3. *CSR as important part of corporate governance* (№ D4, D7.1-3, D7.1-5, D7.1-7, D7.1-9, D7.1-10, D7.2-3, D7. 2-9, D7.3-8, D6-1, D10-1)

In this area, the author proves the thesis that the corporate social responsibility is a mandatory component of the corporate governance. Identified are the basic principles of corporate governance and CSR (D7.1-5), as well as the current trends in their development (D7.1-10). Developed is a scheme for the general and specific characteristics of the corporate governance and CSR and is made a thorough comparative analysis to reveal the symmetric relation between them (D10-1, D4, D7.1-3, D.7.2-3).

Based on the institutional approach, CSR is considered not only as a set of functioning institutions but also as a set of formal/informal norms, values, standards (D6-1). Outlined is the importance of CSR for the institutional legitimation of the business, as well as the institutional subjects – engines of the CSR processes (D7.1-3).

Systematized are the requirements of G20-OECD “Corporate Governance Principles” (2015) and OECD Guidelines for Multinational Companies (2011). It is shown that these requirements are similar for both corporate governance and CSR levers. They are an international benchmark for responsible business behavior and the most detailed CSR monitoring format aiming to assess the contribution of TNCs to the sustainable development (D6-1, D10-1).

Revealed are the reasons that turn CSR into a factor for competitiveness. Outlined is the importance of the corporate boards, in particular of CEOs, in determining the strategic CSR goals. Presented are the main components of the social reporting in three main blocks – economic, social and environmental (D7.1-7, D7.2-9 and D7.3-8).

The author defends the concept that CSR is a model of corporate governance containing *based on trust* obligations to all stakeholders. It is shown that in the business model of Bulgarian companies are laid the foundations of CSR; the internal CSR, targeting the personnel of the companies, outweighs the external one; the basics of the non-financial reporting of Bulgarian companies are laid, but much work remains to be done in this area (D4).

Analyzed is the social security system in Germany in the field of illness and maternity. Presented is the normative basis of all social payments for unemployment, as well as statistical information on the social payments. Formulated are recommendations aiming at the Bulgarian social security practice (D7.1-9).

### 4. *Assessment of CSR in the Bulgarian companies* (№ C1, D4, D6-1, D7.2-4, D7.2-7, D7.2-8, D7.2-10, D.8-1, D9-1, D10-1, D10-2, D10-3)

Based on a rich empirical information, an assessment of the application of the international social standards in the Bulgarian companies is made. The obtained results reveal the positive effects of various corporate practices (programs for career development, vocational training and qualifications, safe working and health conditions, guaranteeing a daily ration, company transportation, providing rest and recreation, medical care) on the corporate loyalty and work motivation of the workers. It is shown that many of the studied enterprises in Bulgaria have developed environmental programs for the purpose of protection the environment. It is concluded that the internal corporate social responsibility has more weight than the external one. Based on an evaluation scoreboard, outlined is the achieved compliance between CSR of Bulgarian companies and the requirements of the Global Contract. Reported is that the

implementation of the international standards by Bulgarian public companies is at a basic level (C1, D4, D6-1, D10-1, D10-2, D10-3).

A large empirical database on the application of CSR in the enterprises is systematized in study D8-1 and in publication D7.2-8. Large enterprises in Bulgaria and TNC subsidiaries are shown to be CSR leaders in terms of internal and external/environmental dimension. Mining industry and pharmaceuticals are identified as leading socially responsible industries (D7.2-4, D10-1, D10-3). Despite the limited financial resources, it is shown that some SMEs also implement socially responsible practices (D10-2).

It is concluded that the initial stage of awareness by the managers of the significance of CSR in the public companies has passed. The companies on the Bulgarian Stock Exchange strive for socially responsible behavior and implement instruments like a code of ethics, a code of corporate governance, and share positive experiences through the social media (D6-1, D7.2-10).

Analyzed are the attitudes of managers of Bulgarian companies to socially responsible projects. Shown are in details the forms of the external CSR manifestation (reporting of emissions of noxious gases, protection of natural territories, recycling of waste, efficient use of electricity and water resources, production of goods and services safe for health, definition of environmental requirements to suppliers and customers) (D9-1).

Studied is the mechanism of CSR impact for overcoming the differences in the firm culture between Bulgaria and the EU countries. According to the results, the managers of 29% of Bulgarian companies confirm that they apply the schemes of supplementary pension insurance of the companies' employees, and 23% provide supplementary health insurance. A comparative analysis is made between financial and non-financial reporting (D7.2-7).

The mentioned publications are reflected in the Bulgarian and foreign literature. Assoc. Prof. Bakardjieva has 1 citation in a journal indexed in Scopus; 29 citations in monographs and collective volumes with scientific review; 21 citations in non-referenced journals. A total of 43 citations of the candidate's publications are in Bulgarian, 7 are in English and 1 is in German.

The obtained results are significant to both future research and practice. Particularly important is the systematization of the *competitive advantages* generated by socially responsible companies and responsible supply chain by economic, social and environmental dimension. It is essential for the company managers to realize that CSR is an instrument of the corporate sustainability at firm level and of the sustainable development. The criteria for the international CSR standards are embodied in economic indicators that allow to measure the impact of the companies on the society (D7.1-7). Formulated are recommendations for the companies to internalize positive external factors as a result from the introduction of new technologies with environmental use.

## **V. Assessment of the originality of the presented works and the reliability of the presented scientific data**

The publications of Assoc. Prof. Bakardjieva are dedicated to extremely important issues related to the corporate social responsibility of the business. This responsibility does not exclude the pursuit of economic goals, but requires also more – sensitivity to the development of the human capital and care for the future of the planet. All these issues are analyzed thoroughly at both theoretical and empirical level.

By a self-signed declaration, the candidate in the competition for academic position “Professor” declares that there is no legally proven plagiarism in her scientific works. I also believe that the provided publications are the own work of the author, they are original and do not contain cases of plagiarism.

#### ***VI. Critical notes and recommendations***

I have no critical notes, but I would recommend the author a slightly more *critical reading* of the publications and reports on CSR. This recommendation is based on some studies that show that there are cases when CSR is a disguised form of “corporate social irresponsibility” or that such practices conceal other goals. Only in publication D7.2-4 the author reports that “in the case of unsatisfactory financial results, the social expenditures are deliberately increased to mask the ineffective actions/inactions of the managers”, and in publication D7.2-3 she states that “the lack of compliance in the quantitative and qualitative information provided by the firms makes it particularly difficult to make a comparative analysis”. In my opinion, these practices deserve a more detailed analysis, especially in countries where CSR is viewed more formally.

My second recommendation is for a more active publishing in international indexed and referenced journals in order to increase the popularity of the obtained results.

#### ***VII. Conclusion***

The achieved scientific and applied results and the scientific contributions of the scientific works provided by Assoc. Prof. Radostina Bakardjieva, their originality and reliability, her active teaching and expert activity, give me reason to consider that she fully meets the requirements for occupying academic position “Professor”, regulated by LDAS, RILDAS, the Regulations for the conditions and the order for acquiring scientific degrees and the occupation of academic positions at BAS and the Regulations of ERI-BAS. I can confidently recommend to the Scientific Jury to propose to the Scientific Council of ERI-BAS to elect Assoc. Prof. Dr. Radostina Telerig Bakardjieva on **academic position “Professor” in professional field 3.8 Economy “Corporate Social Responsibility”**.

Date:

Member of jury: .....