

ATTITUDE OF REVIEWER

by **Prof. Dr. Iskra Spasova Beleva**, member of Scientific Jury in the competition for academic position “PROFESSOR”, approved by a decision of the Scientific Council minutes No 3 on 20.03.2019, and by an order of the Director No 78 on 25.03.2019, announced by Economic Research Institute at Bulgarian Academy of Sciences in SG, issue 8 on 25/01/2019

Candidate: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Irena Kirilova Zareva-Zafirova

I. General evaluation of the candidate regarding her research activity

The research activity of Assoc. Prof. Irena Zareva-Zafirova for participation in this competition is presented in 21 publications. These publications include monographs (equivalent publication) – 4 items; articles and reports published in non-referenced scientific peer-reviewed journals or in collective volumes – 2 items; studies published in referenced and indexed scientific publications – 4 items; studies published in non-referenced scientific peer-reviewed journals or in edited collective volumes – 6 individual ones and 1 co-authored; published chapter of a collective monograph – 5 items. I accept all 21 publications for review.

The scientific production is focused in the field of human capital and in particular – participation and realization on the labor market, human capital in education, and migration and human capital.

As a member of department “Macroeconomics”, I know the candidate’s research work since her joining ERI-BAS in 1988, from discussions at department meetings and from working together on projects beyond the ones presented here for review, and I can state that she shows consistency and deepening analyticity in her research work. Over the years, her research interests have expanded, and the used scientific tools have enriched, reflecting her development as a researcher and analyst of economic and social problems. Irena Zareva is able to work in a team, respects the opinion and ideas of her colleagues, and also manages to keep and defend her scientific positions with arguments.

II. Quantitative assessment of meeting the minimum science-metric national requirements and the requirements of the Regulations of ERI-BAS

The information presented by the candidate for meeting the minimum requirements of ERI-BAS for the academic position “Professor” shows that the minimum number of points (650) is many times exceeded (1722.5) with the presented scientific works for participation in the competition. The information correctly reflects the real achievements and allows to conclude that by these criteria the candidate meets the requirements of the institution for occupying the position “Professor”.

III. Evaluation of the results and scientific contribution of the candidate

The scientific contributions of the candidate in the field of *enrichment of the existing knowledge* include:

1. **Evaluations:** of quantitative and qualitative parameters of the human capital in the country; of the state of the higher education system, including staff; of the national legal framework in the field of education in terms of integration into European Research Area;

of the position of Bulgaria among SEE countries outlining the positive and negative characteristics; of the competitiveness of the higher education system in the country in terms of quality; of the access “to” and participation in higher education in the country; of the dynamics of the educational structures of the population in Bulgaria; of the financial ensuring of the higher education in Bulgaria in total and by sources of funding; of the institutional framework of higher education in the country; of the implemented policies in OPHRD 2007-2013; of the economic activity and employment of the population to outline the transition from school to work and from work to retirement; of the correspondence between the demand for and supply of work for young specialists with higher education; of the opportunities for labor realization of different specialties among the university graduates; of the impact of the migration policies on the migration attitudes of Bulgarians; of the policy for reintegration of emigrants in Bulgaria; of the regulatory framework for an educational policy of Bulgaria abroad; of the effects of the external migration on the labor market; of the impact of emigrants’ money transfers on the consumption in the country.

2. **Establishing dependencies and relations:** between the social-economic environment and the effectiveness of realizing the human potential; between the demand for and supply of pedagogical specialists; between the changes in the political, economic and international environment and the changes in the legal and institutional framework of the higher education in Bulgaria; the impact of demographic processes on the number of enrolled students and the early school leaving; between the development and adaptation of the education system and the demand for labor force; financing the education and competitiveness of the education system and the motivation of the staff; the impact of the migration policies on the decision to emigrate; between the social inequalities (quality of life) and the external migration; between the emigrants’ money transfers and the country’s potential for innovative development;
3. **Systematization and formulation of policies, development of concepts concerning:** improvement and development of the normative base of the education in Bulgaria; structuring the financial resources and the mechanism for distributing and directing the financial flows; improving the system of professional and career development of the teachers; systematization of the European and regional policies in Southeast Europe for development of the higher education; improving the institutional structure and developing the relations and interaction between the institutions; systematization of the factors determining imbalances between demand and supply of higher education labor and “export” of students from the country; improving the policies for absorption of funds under the operational programs in the field of education for achieving succession and sustainability of the implemented policies; for overcoming the gap between the participation of young people on the labor market and the older workforce for achieving solidarity between the generations in participating on the labor market; developed is a concept to build a system of policies to stimulate the return of the immigrants to the country, as well as to reduce the emigration of the workforce.

Scientific contributions of a nature of *novelty to science* are:

1. **Approbation of scientific hypotheses** for running processes in the formation and development of the human capital in new social-economic conditions and integration processes and formation of unified common European areas for education and free movement of people.

Formulated and tested is the thesis that, in methodological and research terms, the processes of formation, state and use of the human capital are unity of three phases in one cycle, each of the three phases being both a premise “for” and a “result” of the state and changes in the other

two phases (source 4). This approach leads to a deeper study of cause and effect relationships and formulation of logical conclusions about the processes of formation and use of human capital, and is developed by the author in his other studies in this field.

This approach determines a deeper study of the cause-effect relations and formulation of logical conclusions about the processes of formation and use of the human capital, and is developed by the author in her other studies in this field.

2. Enrichment of the scientific tools for studying the human capital and the environment where it is created, developed and implemented through the *development of methods for studying* the state of the secondary education in Bulgaria, including methods of collecting information, forming criteria for structuring the samples, conducting studies, analyses and generalizing the obtained data (source 4: Human capital in Bulgaria, guidelines for development, use, state, formation; source 1: Human capital in the education system; source 2: Higher education in Bulgaria – reality and perspectives; *questionnaire survey among teachers*, published in: Matev, M., Zareva I. 2010. Education and Science in Bulgaria through the View of Teachers, Students and Researchers. Sofia: Academic Publishing House “Prof. Marin Drinov”); research and comparative studies on the effects of higher education in Southeast Europe; development and realization of the human capital; evaluation of the migration attitudes and systematization of the views of the immigrants on the causes of emigration and the readiness to return to the country.

Significance of the contributions to science and practice

The significance of the obtained results from the research activity of the candidate and the stated contributions are important for enriching science and practice by supplementing the available knowledge with new ones related to running processes in a changing political and social-economic environment.

IV. Evaluation of the originality of the presented works and the reliability of the presented scientific data

The research is original because it examines contemporary processes, unknown in their nature till now due to the changing environment through transformation of social and economic structures and creation of new educational areas. The presented scientific production for participating in the competition is author's and I do not find any plagiarism.

V. Critical notes and recommendations (including an evaluation of their impact on the quality of the presented scientific and applied production)

I have no critical notes to the candidate. My recommendation is to be more active in disseminating and promoting the results of the research, which she has done and will continue to do, both to the general public and to the interested institutions, which can use the acquired knowledge in legislation and practice in the field of forming, using and developing the human potential of the country.

VI. Conclusion

The qualities of the candidate as a researcher scientist and the described above contributions in the scientific works presented for participation in the competition give me reason to

conclude that **Irena Zareva-Zafirova** meets the requirements for occupying the academic position **“Professor”**.

Date: 30.04.2019

Member of jury: