

## Opinion

by Prof. DSc Valentina Milenkova,

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Member of the Scientific Jury in the competition for the occupation of the academic position "Associate Professor" in the specialty Sociology, professional field 3.1. Sociology, anthropology and cultural sciences for the needs of the section "Public policies and social change", announced in the State Gazette No. 89 of November 12, 2019 by the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, BAS

### 1. General description of the materials submitted by the applicant

Assist. Prof. Dr. Veneta Krasteva is the only candidate in the competition; she was assistant professor at the IFS, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and participates with 35 publications specified in:

- two monographs, one of which is Habilitation and the other is on the basis of a dissertation thesis and has been published in English in Germany;
- 5 studies (3 of which are in English), published in peer-reviewed journals or in peer-reviewed collective volumes;
- 15 articles (2 of which are in English), published in peer-reviewed journals or in peer-reviewed collective volumes;
- 13 chapters in collective monographs (12 of which are in English).

The total number of the most important publications of the candidate so far includes: 54 publications, in the competition she participates with 35 publications.

Krasteva has a rich project activity, has participated as a researcher in 7 international and 5 national projects. She is the head of a project with funding under the Program for Assistance to Young Scientists and Doctoral Students of BAS for the period 2017-2019 and she received the BAS and MES Award for this project in 2019.

She participates in the Management Committees (MC) of two COST Actions.

The candidate has been participated with scientific papers in 19 national and international scientific forums.

Chief Assist. Veneta Krasteva exceeds almost double the points indicators presented as requirements established by the Rules of the National Council for academic positions at IFS - BAS; **for the required 430 points, she showed 789 points.**

### 2. General characteristics of the applicant's scientific and applied activities

The research fields in which the applicant's work is deployed are:

- Youth employment, youth policies, labor market, job insecurity;
- Social policies, vulnerability, poverty, social exclusion, education;

- Transformation risks and problems with the use of European funds;
- Sociology of religion and redefinition of religious statuses and values.

I place particular emphasis on tracing the comparative perspective, as well as reflecting on the European cross-section and the possibilities for a more efficient use of EU funds.

In terms of content, I would like to emphasize the desire to summarize and show systematization in Dr. Krasteva's publications, as well as to use a variety of empirical methods as a basis for enriching the analyzes.

### **3. The teaching activity**

Krusteva has significant teaching experience:

- She teaches the course "Economic Sociology" in the specialty "Sociology of Law, Economics and Innovation" at Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski" for the period 2010-2016.
- In 2016, she is the coordinator of memorandums for cooperation and internship training at the IFS with a Department of Sociology at Sofia University and a Department of Economic Sociology at UNWE. She is academic mentor of students from Sofia University, UNWE and Brown University, who have completed traineeships at the IFS under bilateral agreements and under the Student Practices - Phase 1 program, OP "Science and Education for Intelligent Growth" of the MES.

### **4. A thorough analysis of the applicant's scientific achievements, a clear description of the scientific contributions.**

I can summarize the contributions of Assist. Prof. Dr. V.Krasteva as follows:

#### **A. In the field of labor insecurity and the labor market:**

- On the basis of the concept of labor insecurity, a theoretical framework for the analysis of the labor market, employment of vulnerable young people, quality of work, etc. has been established. The factors that influence labor insecurity are systematized.
- The role of the various actors in the labor market - workers, employers, state institutions, non-governmental sector - is examined; the need for more active dialogue between them is justified.
- The consequences of labor insecurity and unemployment at the micro, meso and macro levels are outlined.
- The main weaknesses of the public labor and social policies are outlined.

#### **B. In the field of youth and youth research:**

- Basic concepts and paradigms for youth research have been systematized and analyzed and a sociological understanding of the emergence of the concept of youth as a separate life period is presented. The characteristics of young people as a social community are outlined.
- The fragmentation of the youth group, linked to the various opportunities for realization, as well as to unequal access to resources and increasing vulnerability in the labor market, is justified.

- The main ways in which young Bulgarians are trying to cope with the situation of unemployment and job insecurity have been explored; recommendations have been made to improve the situation of vulnerable young people in Bulgarian conditions.
- Comparisons of selected labor market programs and measures in nine European countries are outlined; the best practices among the youth programs and the factors of their success are outlined.
- Various problems related to the educational situation in Bulgarian context, related to normative documents and their influence on the qualities and intelligence of young people have been analytically identified.

#### C. In the Field of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church and Religious Values:

- It explores how the Bulgarian Orthodox Church functions in a situation of profound social change; the place of religious values in the lives of contemporary people is discussed.

### **5. Reflection of the scientific publications of the candidate in our and foreign literature**

The candidate presented 22 citations, 5 of which are in publications in Bulgarian and 17 of which are in publications in English.

### **6. Analysis of the publications**

I will focus on the main work with which Dr. Veneta Krasteva participated in the competition for academic position "Associate Professor" in Sociology.

#### **„Youth Employment and Uncertainty in Bulgaria ”, 2019, Sofia, Academic Publishing House“ Prof. M. Drinov ”**

The monograph is a synthesis of Krasteva's years of work on young people's job insecurity, based on a thorough reflection and analysis on different theoretical concepts and the development of author models on the topic of youth employment and its various manifestations, including empirical information from previous researches, statistics and data as well as her own in-depth interview study. The causes of job insecurity and the resulting risks for young people are examined. It is noted that the institutional framework itself also creates preconditions for uncertainty; active labor market policies and the lack of a clear vision in their implementation are critically understood.

I appreciate the specific measures in the book, including state-level recommendations, because in my view, addressing job insecurity is very much a function of the effectiveness of government-involved entities.

The monograph has been developed to a high standard and is a major achievement in the scientific field. I commend the expressed author's presence and the erudition shown.

In view of the future work of Dr. Krasteva, I propose to trace the role of the non-governmental sector as a hidden resource for dealing with labor insecurity.

In relation to publications targeting the Bulgarian Orthodox Church and Christian practices, I ask the following question to V. Krasteva: How do you evaluate the social commitment of the BOC compared to the Catholic Church?

### **7. Personal impressions**

I know Veneta Krasteva as a PhD student at the Institute of Sociology at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. My impressions are of an ambitious, persistent, purposeful researcher, with potential and critical reflection, with a serious and responsible attitude to work.

I believe that Dr. Veneta Krasteva possesses erudition and high professionalism, which define her as a well-established researcher in the field of sociology.

### **8. Conclusion**

Based on the research work of Assist. Prof. Dr. Veneta Krasteva and her contributions, taking into account her participation in conferences, projects, as well as her expert and teaching activity, I give a high positive assessment of her complex work and the results presented in her participation in the competition for academic position “Associate Professor”, by professional field 3.1. Sociology, Anthropology and Cultural Sciences (Sociology).

I am voting **for** the acquisition of the academic position “Associate Professor” by Dr. Veneta Krasteva.

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Sofia

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