

STATEMENT

From Prof. DSc Svetlana Saykova

for the materials submitted for participation in a competition for the academic position "Associate Professor" in the specialty "Sociology", professional field 3.1. Sociology, Anthropology and Cultural Sciences, announced for the needs of the "Public Policies and Social Changes Section" at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences

Assistant Professor Dr. Svetlana Stamenova submitted documents for participation in the competition for the associate professor position in the specialty "Sociology", published in SN no. 67 / 28.07.2020., and she is the only candidate.

General description of the presented materials

Svetlana Stamenova participates in the competition with 22 publications. They are presented in accordance with the requirements of the IFS Regulations and include: habitation thesis (monograph "Political and ethical influences on the national consciousness of the Bulgarian ethnic majority", 2019), another published book, 7 studies, 12 articles and 1 chapter in a collective monograph, some of which are published in English. The presented publications provide a quantitative assessment of the candidate's achievements, which is significantly higher than the minimum requirements for holding the position of "associate professor". This also applies to the individual indicators, which are included in the total number of points forming the minimum requirements. The presented publications are also different from the publications used to meet the minimum requirements for "doctor" and "assistant professor".

General characteristics of the scientific, applied and teaching activity

Scientific research clearly dominates the academic activity of Dr. St. Stamenova. The presented publications show that the above-mentioned quantitative indicators have been achieved through academic work of significant scale, intensity and depth of research.

Her research interests include: political support; nationalism; interethnic relations; Balkans; neoliberalism and globalization; empirical research and analyses.

Teaching activity of the candidate from the beginning of her career

In the period 1999-2001. Svetlana Stamenova has given lectures: "Theories and Concepts of Post-Communist Systemic Change", Department of Sociology and Department of Political Science, Sofia University "Kliment Ohridski"; "Theories and Concepts of Post-Communist Systemic Change" at Southwestern University in Blagoevgrad; "Theories and Concepts of Post-Communist Systemic Change" at the New Bulgarian University.

Analysis of the scientific achievements of the candidate, clear characteristics of the scientific contributions

The summary of scientific contributions presented by Dr. Svetlana Stamenova (19 theoretical and applied contributions) contains interesting and significant contributions which reflect the main part of the research work and the content of the presented publications.

I will note in advance, that I support the self-assessments of Svetlana Stamenova for the contributions and achievements of her research activity and publications. They are realistic and clearly presented.

I will not repeat all of them here. Instead, I will try to present the most significant ones in my personal opinion. Briefly, they can be summarized as the following:

First, based on data from empirical sociological surveys conducted in 1999, 2001 and 2011, a number of summary estimates were made. They trace different aspects of the dynamics - attitudes, opinions and sentiments in the Bulgarian society during the years of transition. For this purpose, generalized statistical indicators were used, such as: 1) respondents' satisfaction with the way democracy in our country functions; 2) degree of support for the government; 3) level of trust in the Parliament, Council of Ministers, Presidency, political parties, trade unions and others. The estimates are made in static and dynamic aspect. The conclusions that the author makes are reasonable, solid and convincing.

Second, there are important findings from the research of drivers related to the views of the respondents on the issues of national identity, tolerance towards ethnic groups, xenophobia towards immigrants in our country and others. The quantitative relationships between the variables in a representative survey (from 2011; sample size of 1000 persons) were explored and hypotheses about the determining factors were formulated and tested. This was done with the help of regression coefficients. The results obtained from this analysis shed some light on interesting aspects of the general social dynamics of public attitudes and relations in the Bulgarian society.

Third, there are important findings from a large number of conducted sociological surveys. They refer to the assessments of the important difference between some countries in transition (Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia and others) on important indicators characterizing the studied period.

Fourth, it is undoubtedly useful to discuss problems, such as the sale of Bulgarian land. The author deserves admiration for her position and views on this issue. They are not related to specific empirical assessments of the situation in our country. But they are no less important. The candidate highlights a global trend, policy and aspiration of other countries to buy and acquire the lands of poor countries. The main consequences of this are the ruin of local farmers and, more generally, the devastation of agriculture.

Fifth, there is also something that Svetlana Stamenova has forgotten to mention among her contributions, but which is extremely important for the present and the future of the world. She made a very useful systematization of the views of many leading world scientists in the social field who are criticizing seriously the neoliberal and globalist ideology and practice as well as the implemented policies. This systematization is useful mainly because: 1) until recently in our country it was “politically incorrect”| not only to criticize, but even to mention such topics. Courage is still needed to discuss them openly; 2) society must be informed about the policies of the supporters of the new world order and about the dangers that threaten humanity 3) due to the fact that from the beginning of the transition in our country the empowered political elite implements such policies.

Impact of the candidate's scientific publications in the academic literature

Dr. Svetlana Stamenova has presented 21 citations mainly in international peer-reviewed publications.

Comments on the submitted works

I have no comments, but I take this opportunity to share with the candidate some thoughts concerning her future research work.

First, the tendency in the interpretation of the results of empirical sociological research to confirm or reject the hypotheses in the research in a definite way does not seem convincing. There is a common view among scientists that when the evidence for a hypothesis is based on empirical data, we are not entitled to a final verdict ("pro or against"). We can only say that the survey data support or alternatively do not support the research hypothesis.

Second, it is inexplicable to me that in all 90 tables the t-test does not show any of the relationships as statistically significant (as evidenced by the zeros in the "Significance" column). This does not sound plausible in a sample of 1000 units studied. The possible

explanations might be: 1) unreliable primary information; 2) the multiple regression models which were used might be inadequate; 3) it is possible that the connections appear to be very weak and difficult to detect in the analysis; 4) errors in the electronic data processing program. This is an occasion for reflection and possible consultation with other specialists.

Conclusion

Given the volume and the quality of the research work of Dr. Svetlana Stamenova, her contributions, as well as my personal impressions of her, I strongly suggest to the respected members of the Scientific Jury to recommend to the Scientific Council of the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology at BAS that Assistant Professor Dr. Svetlana Stamenova should be appointed to the scientific position of "Associate Professor" in "Sociology", professional field 3.1. Sociology, anthropology and cultural sciences.

16. 11. 2020.

Sofia

Member of the scientific jury:

Prof. DSc Svetlana Saykova