

## OPINION

**of Professor Svetlana Seykova, DSc,  
regarding the materials submitted for the competition for the academic degree of  
Associate Professor, professional field 3.1. Sociology, Anthropology and Culture  
Sciences, announced for the needs of the Center for Empirical Social Research at the  
Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, BAS, announced in SG, issue 63/30.07.2021.**

The documents have been submitted by Senior Assistant Professor Petya Ivanova Ilieva-Trichkova, PhD, for the competition for the academic degree Associate Professor in Sociology announced in SG, issue 63/30.07.2021. She is the only candidate.

### **General description of the submitted materials**

The candidate P. Ilieva-Trichkova is participating in the competition with a total of 17 publications – of which she is the author or co-author. The publications have been presented in accordance with the requirements of the Statutes of the IPS. They include: a habilitation thesis (the monograph *Adult Education as Empowerment: Re-imagining Lifelong Learning through the Capability Approach, Recognition Theory and Common Goods Perspective*, 2021, written in co-authorship; a division protocol has been submitted by the candidate); 10 studies published in scientific editions, peer-reviewed and indexed in world-reknowned databases for scientific information; 6 studies published in non-peer-reviewed journals with academic reviewing or published in compiled collective volumes. Most of the publications are in English. In their entirety, the publications make it possible to make a quantitative and qualitative assessment of the candidate's achievements. In the case of this candidate, the evaluation result is considerably higher than the minimal requirements for holding the position of Associate Professor. I will add that, in the collective publications, the candidate's main ideas and texts are distinctly separated. They are also distinguished from publications already used in her competition for the scientific-educational degree of Doctor and the position of Senior Assistant Professor.

### **General description of the scientific and applied-scientific activity of the candidate**

Scientific research activity predominates in the general academic work of P. Ilieva-Trichkova II. The submitted scientific publications convincingly demonstrate that her contributions and achievements are based on large-scale theoretical and empirical

investigations. The conclusions and generalizations she has drawn are based on an enormous amount of information derived from Bulgarian and foreign sources. Her works have produced numerous concrete comparative quantitative indicators relevant to the topics under study. Some of these indicators are general and others are specific.

The candidate's area of research is focused mainly on the problem of life-long learning, its nature, functions, scientific challenges, and the search for relevant methodological solutions.

I unhesitatingly support the author's self-assessment of her achievements and contributions. Without dwelling on all of these in detail, I will point out the most important ones.

### **Analysis of the candidate's scientific achievements**

**First:** Achievements that enrich theoretical knowledge in the field. These include: 1) elaborated general and particular concepts related to various aspects and elements of the matter under study. The most important achievements are related to life-long learning, its nature and elements, and various classifications of these elements; 2) An integrated model for research on the participation of adults in life-long learning and specific models relevant to it. They are considered to serve as a basis on which scientific analyses of the topic under study may be conducted; 3) Analyzing and revealing the cognitive potential of a large share of the measures used; 4) The research results on donation to education and its two aspects: donation as a resource in support of education systems vs. the risks that democracy may face under certain circumstances (e.g., the donor may dictate conditions).

**Second:** contributions and achievements that enrich the methodology and tools of scientific research. Under this category, I would include: 1) Clarification of a large number of indicators used for quantitative measurements, the adaptation of these indicators to the specificity of the topic under study, its elements and characteristics that are valid for our country, interaction and other links; 2) Multi-sided analysis based on a considerable amount of information and the use of instruments adequate to the research tasks. The concrete quantitative indicators are in themselves a valuable means for describing the topic in general and in detail. They are also important as constituting factual material that may serve in future comparative studies in static and dynamic aspects; 3) The indicators for the study of significant correlations shed light on some of their interesting and important aspects.

Based on multi-sided empirical studies, well-grounded conclusions and generalizations have been drawn. A considerable number of the conclusions are valuable for governance practices. I would mention the models for two specific groups: 1) models of

activity aimed at establishing and conducting social communication with institutions and individuals; and 2) restrictive models (of passivity).

### **The candidate's scientific publications as reflected in academic literature**

Senior Assist. Prof. P. Ilieva-Trichkova has presented a total of 29 citations, of which 18 are from scientific publications that are peer-reviewed and indexed in world-renowned databases for scientific information or from monographs and collective volumes mostly published in international peer-reviewed editions, and 11 are from scientifically reviewed monographs and collective volumes.

### **Critical notes and recommendations**

I have no significant critical remarks to make. I will use this occasion to share with the candidate a suggestion for her future research work. A generally held view in the theory and methodology of creative thinking is the need to significantly enhance the innovative capacity of students and of the employed, the latter being the target group of the candidate's research. High innovative capacity requires mastery and practical application of specific knowledge and skills used to generate new useful ideas and transform these into innovations. The need for high innovative capacity of those occupied in scientific research but also of students and people working in other public sectors is an idea that I need to clarify here. Such knowledge and skills result from the intense development of the theory, methodology and tools of creative, innovative thinking, through which new and useful ideas are generated and quickly realized as innovations. I should note that discoveries, inventions and other innovations are related not only to technology, chemistry, physics, etc., but also to widely recognized social innovations. The latter may not necessarily consist in new discoveries and inventions yet, nevertheless, be highly effective. For instance, no additional innovations were required for the school textbook to be invented. Training methods and book printing had already been developed. But the creation of the school textbook brought about unprecedented revolutionary changes in education and made the education systems democratic and widely accessible. This in turn led to the elimination of illiteracy and to a rise of the education level and the level of cultures throughout the world. To raise the innovative capacity of pupils and others would represent a social innovation. If we succeed, in the next few years, in improving the knowledge and skill to generate new ideas even of 10-15 % of the people, this also would be a revolution of the greatest importance and largest scale in our country. As regards pupils and students, this objective is a task for the structures of the Ministry of Education and Science, and as regards adult learners, the task is for the structures responsible for life-long learning pertaining to science and to social practice. Today, innovative capacity is considered a

manageable and decisive factor for enhancing the process of innovation. The EU strategy has been adopted in view of broadly situated innovations. These have been an important priority for EU countries in the last almost twenty years.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the considerations presented above, as well as on my personal impressions of the candidate, it is with full conviction that I encourage the honorable members of the Scientific Jury to recommend to the Scientific Council of the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology at BAS that it award Senior Assistant Professor Petya Ilieva-Trichkova, PhD, with the academic degree of **Associate Professor in Sociology**, professional field 3.1. Sociology, Anthropology and Culture Sciences.

24. 11. 2021  
Sofia

Member of the Scientific Jury:  
Prof. S. Seykova, DSc