

## REVIEW

By Prof. Veselin Petrov Petrov, DSc

regarding the materials presented by Assoc. Prof. Rumiana Ruseva Zhelev, DSc, for her participation in a competition for the academic position “Professor” in professional area 3.1. Sociology, Anthropology and Culture Sciences (Sociology: Sociology of Inequalities and Sustainable Development. The Role of the European Union for Reducing Social-economic Inequalities) for the Department of Stratification, Inequalities and Mobility at IPS-BAS

By decision of the scientific jury (Protocol № 1/5.03.2024) regarding the competition for acquiring the academic position “professor” in professional area 3.1. Sociology, Anthropology and Culture Sciences (Sociology: Sociology of Inequalities and Sustainable Development. The Role of the European Union for Reducing Social-economic Inequalities), published in SG, issue 104/15.12.2023, for the needs of the Department of Stratification, Inequalities and Mobility at IPS-BAS, I was assigned to write an opinion on the participants in the competition. In accordance with Art. 46, par. (2) of the Statutes of IPS for implementation of the DASRBA, I will present my opinion in the following order:

**1. General description of the submitted materials:** Assoc. Prof. Rumiana Ruseva Zheleva, DSc, is the only candidate for the competition. The validity of her documents was verified by a technical commission designated by Order of the Director of IPS-BAS № ПД—09-49/21.02.2024. The candidate has a diploma of Doctor of Sciences № 001590/05.12.2023, and a certificate of Associate Professor № 000544/29.01.2014, which makes evident that she has more than seven years of service in the specialty in BAS, and is competing with the following scientific works: a habilitation thesis – published monograph: Zheleva, R. (2024). *Dimensions of Integration into the EU*. Prof. Marin Drinov Publishing House of BAS, ISBN

978-619-245-392-3 (print) ISBN 978-619-245-393-0 (e-book) (203 p.) which carries 100 points in the table for minimal requirements of NACID and of the IPS – BAS (where the required minimum is precisely 100 points); a published book based on a defended dissertation thesis for the academic degree “Doctor of Sciences”, Zheleva, R. (2024). *The Conditions for Sustainable Development*. Publishing House Informa Print, Burgas, ISBN: 978-619-7725-15-5 (161 p.); and 17 articles, studies and papers published in non-refereed journals with scientific review or in collective volumes, all of which carry a total of 222.43 points in the table of minimal requirements of NACID and IPS-BAS (the required minimum is 220 points); indicated and described citations in academic editions, which carry a total of 145 points in the table of minimal requirements of NACID and IPS-BAS (the required minimum is 120 points); as well as a description of data from the last group of the table of minimal requirements of NACID and IPS-BAS, which give her 230 points (the required minimum is 100 points). The tables of NACID related to “doctor of sciences” and “associated professor”, presented for the sake of comparison, make it evident that the publications with which Assoc. Prof. Zheleva is competing for the position “professor” are different from the publications submitted for “doctor of sciences and from those with which she competed for the academic position “associate professor”.

All this indicates that **the candidate fully meets the requirement of Art. 3, par 3 of DASRBA, and on these grounds, the works with which she is participating in the competition may be assessed per se (for their scientific qualities) by the scientific jury designated for the competition.**

**2. General characterization of the scientific, applied-scientific and teaching activity of the candidate; which of these is prevalent:** The submitted CV of Assoc. Prof. Zheleva shows that, essentially, all her activity, since she came to work in the Institute in 2005 *is*

*markedly in the scientific category.* This is all the more true with regard to her activity (especially her publications) carried out after she was appointed to the academic position of “associate professor” in 2014. This is understandable for a scientist working in a research institute of BAS. The same is true as regards her past and present expert and consulting activity. Of course, in general, the results of scientific publications and, especially, of scientific projects in which she has taken part and is taking part at the moment, as well as her expertise and consulting activity, can be and are applied in practice and are important for the development of the state if the latter knows how to use them. Moreover, the candidate, Assoc. Prof. Zheleva, pursues teaching activity as a supervisor of doctoral and master’s students, as well as teaching a course for doctoral students at the Training Center of BAS. Understandably, the prevalent field of her activity is scientific research.

**3. The candidate’s teaching activity since the start of her career: lectures, seminars, textbooks and study manuals, supervision of doctoral students, specializing students and graduate students:** Assoc. Prof. Zheleva is supervisor of two doctoral students; she was the reviewer of a master’s degree thesis and of post-doctoral project proposals, dissertations post-graduate and graduate students at SU, SWU, etc., in our country; she has given and is giving a lecture course at the TC of BAS on the topic of “Foreign Policy of the EU Facing New Challenges”. She has not written textbooks or study manuals, as this is not required according to her job description in IPS-BAS. As I indicated under the previous section, her publications can be, and should be, used in training doctoral, post-doctoral and specializing students in sociology – not only her own doctoral students but doctoral students of sociology in general.

**4. Content analysis of the candidate’s scientific achievements in the publications**

**with which she is competing for the academic position “professor”:**

As I pointed out, Assoc. Prof. Zheleva is competing with a habilitation work – a monograph, and with 17 scientific articles, studies and published papers. Being a philosopher, not a sociologist, my task is to point out the philosophical aspects of her contributions in these publications.

In this connection, I will point out in first place her monograph: Zheleva, R. (2024). *Dimensions of Integration into the EU*. Prof. Marin Drinov Publishing House of BAS, ISBN 978-619-245-392-3 (print) ISBN 978-619-245-393-0 (e-book) (203 p.). Its aim is to discuss some key concepts and current trends and future perspectives of European integration and differentiation. The task of this work is “to examine the contemporary turbulences faced by Europe, the EU and European citizens in correspondence with their causes, manifestations and consequences from a sociological viewpoint” (p. 18). In this connection, the author argues that “differentiation has proven to be an increasingly asserted principle of governance” (p. 9) and that “European integration is a term with many dimensions and interpretations”; she justifies her view by stating that “integration does not run in a linear course but is multi-directional and simultaneously concerns various contexts of social life”. She points out that, “the principle of differentiation will determine the future of the EU and also the future perspectives for the degree of integratedness of each EU country (whether member or simply associated)”. She also emphasizes that the EU “has very little need of mechanisms designed to strengthen integration processes”, which generally signifies “more measures for cohesion at supra-national level”. The monograph does not specify a temporal horizon for the processes in question, especially for the emphasized differentiation, or whether, in a more distant perspective, the prevalent and inevitable thing will prove to be, after all, integration in the course of the long-term perspectives of global processes which will continue to go on in the future as well – especially in a horizon of more than 100 years. But the author justifiably and

logically points out that “European integration and differentiation will continue to be dynamic processes, intertwined with challenges and opportunities” (p. 178), which creates “the need for a clearer communication strategy on the part of EU institutions” and “adopting more flexible approaches to integration (ibid.), because “integration does not run a linear course but is multi-directional” (p. 181) and this will inevitably leave a mark on the ways in which it is effectuated. The author has delineated the contribution of sociology to the theoretical grounding of these processes, which is in sync with a general philosophical view on the development of human civilization, including the long-term development of Europe.

Monograph: Zheleva, R. (2024). *The Conditions of Sustainable Development*.

Publishing House Informa Print – Burgas, ISBN: 978-619-7725-15-5 (161 p.) is based on her dissertation thesis “Sustainable Development in Times of Uncertainty”, but in some respects enlarges this dissertation: the new additions are found in parts of Chapter 1, paragraph 1.2 “Examples of regulation and codification of sustainability in the national and regional context”, as well as in Chapter 3, paragraph 3.1. “Expert assessments of the institutionalization of a Bulgarian sustainability code”. The concluding part of the monograph is also new. The monograph fulfills the following research tasks: 1. The factors of sustainability are delineated within the disciplinary framework of the sociology of sustainable development. 3. The concrete tools are studied that measure sustainability through institution analysis and review of documents; 3. Concrete practices for measuring sustainability in Bulgaria by Bulgarian companies are described and an empirical study is conducted for testing the possibility of reporting sustainability and introducing a Bulgarian framework for corporate reporting (code).

The articles and studies submitted for the competition can be thematically grouped into several categories:

- Publications that deal with aspects of the development of Europe and the European

Union in the globalizing world today, European integration and identity and the study of regions (these are №№ 3, 4, 9, 10);

- Publications with an emphasis on the connection between the external policy of the EU and the future of the EU and Europe (№ 5);

- Publications regarding migration in the EU (№ 6);

- Publications studying the labor market in Bulgaria, especially for elderly people (№№ 7, 8) and youths, in connection with their education (№№ 11, 12);

- Publications studying the problems of poverty in Bulgarian rural regions (№ 13);

- Publications studying the middle class in Bulgaria (№ 14).

All these publications complement, in a certain sense, the monographs presented above and contribute to the concrete set of problems that is the object of the publications.

#### **5. For collective publications: determining the candidate's contribution.**

There are two collective publications among those submitted for the competition: № 15: "From Europe to the Europeans and Beyond: A Study on European Identity through Biographical Methods". *Sociological Problems* 1 – 2 p. 171-191 Print ISSN: 0324-1572 Online ISSN: 2603-4131; and № 16: Draganova, M., **Jeleva**, R. , Pickard, D. and S. Karakusheva (2012). Farmers more and less Europeans. - In: Miller, R. & G. Day (eds.). *The Evolution of European Identities: Biographical Approaches*. Palgrave Macmillan Pp. 102-115. ISBN : 978-0-230-30256-3. Although Assoc. Prof. Zheleva has presented a brief annotation of the content of these two publications in her report-annotation on the attached publications for the competition, there is no report on division of contributions for each of the authors, so that I cannot judge what part of the two publications represent her own contributions and thus cannot give an assessment of these two publications.

## **6. Impact of the candidate's scientific publications on Bulgarian and foreign literature**

In her CV, she has pointed out 43 more important citations (the total number of citations is greater); and for the works submitted for the competition 12 citations, of which 4 are in world-famous databases and reputed scientific editions. These citations show the good visibility of the publications; in any case, in the NACID table, she obtains 145 points from them, which surpasses the minimum 120 points required by BAS. We should have in mind that the presented publications are mostly new, from the last few years, and they are yet to be cited in the databases.

## **7. Critical remarks on the submitted works, including on the candidate's knowledge of the literature**

I have no critical remarks to make on the content of the works submitted by Assoc. Prof. Zheleva. Judging by them and by the list of references, she evidently has a rich knowledge of the literature in the thematic areas of her research.

## **8. The reviewer's personal impressions of the candidate and other information not presented in the points above.**

I have known Assoc. Prof. Zheleva for approximately 10-12 years. My personal impression of her is that she is a responsible and helpful person, a very good organizer, always willing to help when necessary. She has excellent team-work skills, as demonstrated by her participation (in many cases as leader) in more than 20 scientific projects, most of which are international and include the participation of a number of foreign partners; as well as her role as the basic organizer of a number of conferences of the Institute held with the assistance of the Bulgarian branch of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation.

I have no joint publications with Assoc. Prof. Zheleva and am not in conflict of interest with her.

**Conclusion:** My analysis of the activity of Assoc. Prof. Zheleva in the above points delineates the candidate's exceptionally high scientific-theoretical and science-organizational achievements; her scores far surpass the minimum required by NACID and IPS-BAS. Assoc. Prof. Zheleva has become one of the leading scholars in the Institute in the field of sociology. All this logically leads to the conclusion that she fully deserves to be elected professor, which will give her the possibility of unfolding her creative and organizational potential even more, and of contributing to a greater degree to the achievements of the Institute and the successful development of sociology in our country. That is why I will vote with full conviction "yes" for electing Assoc. Prof. Zheleva to the academic position "professor" in professional area 3.1. Sociology, Anthropology and Culture Sciences. I urge the other members of the scientific jury to vote likewise.

Sofia

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28.03.2024