

## REVIEW

By Prof. Georgi Fotev Georgiev, DSc, honorary professor of NBU, senator, Director of the Center for the Study of European Values at NBU,

of the documents submitted by Assoc. Prof. Rumiana Ruseva Jeleva, DSc, for participation in the 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 needs of the Department of Stratification, Inequalities and Mobility at IPS-BAS.

All the procedures required by legislation related to science have been complied with in the case of this published competition, and the respective documentation is perfect. The only participant is Assoc. Prof. Rumiana Ruseva Jeleva, DSc. The lack of other participants is probably due to the indisputably strong competitive position of Assoc. Prof. Jeleva, evidenced by the amount and quality of her scientific publications and her position of authority in academic circles in our country and abroad.

In contemporary sociology, the thematic research field “sociology of inequalities and sustainable development; the role of the European Union for reducing social-economic inequalities” is extremely topical and significant. This field, in its first part, is in the focus of attention of world sociology and, in its entirety, in the focus of the main centers of European sociology. Our national sociology needs new impulses; in this respect, the works of the participant in the competition are outstanding. The brilliant public defense of her doctoral thesis took place not long ago. There, Assoc. Prof. Jeleva was

unanimously awarded the highest academic degree: “doctor of sciences”. The Department of Stratification, Inequalities and Mobility at IPS-BAS is in need of a member holding the academic position “professor”; satisfying this need will give a powerful impulse and perspective for the institution and for Bulgarian sociology in general. Today’s world is characterized by constant acceleration of social time, as made evident by the intensity of social change and the complicated relation between social time and the time immanent to the positive social sciences. I will shed additional light on this complexity further on in this review.

The participant in the competition has submitted her scientific works: a published monograph (habilitation thesis): Jeleva, R. (2024). *Dimensions of Integration into the EU*. Prof. Marin Drinov Publishing House of BAS (e-book 2024) (203 p.), which, according to the table for minimal requirements of NACID and the IPS-BAS, carries 100 points; a book published on the basis of a defended dissertation thesis for the scientific degree “doctor of sciences”: Jeleva, R. (2024). *The Conditions for Sustainable Development*. Publishing House Informa Print, Burgas (161 p.); and 17 articles, studies, reports, published in non-refereed journals with scientific peer-review or in collective volumes, which carry a total of 222.43 points on the table for minimal requirements of NACID and IPS-BAS; indicated and described citations in scientific publications, which carry a total of 145 points (surpassing the required minimum of 120 point); as well as data for the last group in this table of minimal requirements, which carry 230 points, nearly twice the minimal requirement. The publications with which Assoc. Prof. Jeleva is competing for the academic position “professor” are different from those submitted for the position “doctor of sciences” and also from the publications with which she competed for the academic position “associate professor”.

The candidate fully meets the requirements under Art. 3, par. (3) of DASRB and the works in question may be assessed per se by the scientific jury elected for this competition, including by me as an official reviewer.

There is documentary evidence that the activity of Rumiana Jeleva since the time of her appointment to the Institute in 2005 is of a markedly specialized, scientific nature. In the beginning of 2014, she was appointed to the academic position “associate professor”. She is an exemplary researcher in this institute of BAS. Her expert and consulting activity is assessed highly by her colleagues and the respective institutions. In the times of final science, practical results are a key indicator and criterion. Assoc. Prof. Jeleva is conducting teaching activity of high quality, consisting in supervision of doctoral and master’s degree students and teaching a course for doctoral students at the TC of BAS. Her teaching activity since the beginning of her scientific-research career has included: lectures, seminars, the writing of textbooks and study guides, supervision of doctoral students, specializing students and graduate students. Assoc. Prof. Jeleva is supervisor of two doctoral students; she was the reviewer of a master’s thesis and of post-doctoral project proposals, of PhD dissertations and of graduates from SU, SWU, etc. Over the years she has conducted and is still conducting a course at the TC of BAS, on the topic “External Policy of the EU Facing New Challenges”. The scientific publications of Assoc. Prof. R. Jeleva are used in the training of doctoral students, post-graduate students and specializing students in the field of sociology.

According to the established academic standard, the participant in the competition for the academic position “professor” has submitted her scientific works and her written author’s self-review. I will not comment on the established requirement of self-reviewing, which, as a reviewer, I find unnecessary, since I have read her works, and in any case consider it necessary that the submitted works be read carefully. And so they should be.

Of course, the participant in the competition has fulfilled quite properly the requirement in question. A basic theme, and one of the main sociological research fields, of Assoc. Prof. Rumiana Jeleva is *European integration*, which she examines with good reason primarily as a process and, in this perspective, as a number of states of the phenomenon in question. It is necessary to pay attention to the explicit delimitation and focus of attention on the integration of the unique political, social, cultural and economic formation that is the European Union, of which Bulgaria is a full member. In her basic work on this topic, Rumiana Jeleva views European integration as a *multi-dimensional phenomenon* – respectively, process and state, which is to be described and explicated through a relevant set of sociological conceptual tools. Here it is appropriate that I linger on one of the chief scientific contributions, which is not coincidentally first in order in the Self-report on scientific contributions. The main dimensions of European integration have been defined. We are talking about a scientific contribution here, because to define the separate dimensions and their connections and dependencies (which are the tissue of integration) are not something self-evident but are a key theoretical task. It is in this connection that the concept of integration is operationalized. This is very important.

Generations of sociologists who have been my students, assistants and colleagues with a serious attitude to sociology (which is a great science and, as I have stressed, one of the most complicated ones in the large ensemble of modern sciences) know how often I have reiterated that sociology is an empirical, i.e., a positive science. The sociological method, unlike, for instance, the philosophical, cannot get by without operationalization of the key concepts. I treat with disdain those new-comers to sociology who underestimate the question of operationalization.

The process of European integrations, as any other, I would say, normal type of social (in the sociological sense) integration, is linked to differentiation. Why is this

dependency so important, and why do I consider its treatment in Jeleva's works to be a significant contribution? Because, in the time of late modernity, integration may lead to homogenization – a very large and complex topic, which it would be impossible and unjustified to linger on here. In the horizon of European integration, the process of differentiation and, respectively, the indicated mutual dependence, are centers of values, as proclaimed in the motto of the EU, “unity in diversity”.

The sociological thematic field of integration and differentiation in the European Union is connected, and in a sense overlaps, with social and economic inequalities, respectively, with migration as a far from negligible factor that leads to complications that are difficult to manage. Assoc. Prof. Rumiana Jeleva has turned to empirical research on inequalities and management of migration. On this basis, she has attained a number of scientific achievements that are essentially empirical regularities and new significant empirical facts, which are particularly valuable for the formulation of effective social policies. One such regularity is the positive functional dependence of European integration on the elimination of unjustified (non-legitimate, unfair) social and economic inequalities as well as on the effective management of migration. The complex set of problems related to social and economic inequalities raises in every case the cardinal issue of making a grounded distinction between and definition of inequalities in terms of their legitimacy or non-legitimacy. The disregard for this issue engenders ideological prejudices that fuel disintegration in society. When I highlight the scientific contributions and achievements of the participant in the competition, I recommend continuity in her future research and teaching activity, because the new realities will become new challenges, which is a particularity of sociology and similar sciences.

The scientific contributions and achievements of Assoc. Prof. Rumiana Jeleva present her as a scholar whose scientific-institutional status is higher than that of an associate

professor. My observations and academic experience tell me that, in our country, there is in many cases a lack of clarity as to the difference in content between the level of associate professor and the jump to the higher level of professor. Associate professor means the ability to systematize competently the achievements in a certain field of science. The accumulation of scientific knowledge and a number of other circumstances make this task more complicated and difficult. A professor sets new standards and has an independent scientific profile. The reviewed works and general scientific activity of Assoc. Prof. Jeleva prove that she is a scholar who sets standards. I highly value the inner connection between her two research passions: for theoretical thought and understanding on the one hand, and for empirical social reality on the other. When Assoc. Prof. Jeleva treats of the questions of European integration and inequalities, she defines real problems of the transformation of the EU as a European society consisting of European national societies. The overall perspective does not replace the regional scope and, respectively, the local distinctness of the states and processes. A significant scientific contribution is the elucidation of the effect of dual training for regional development and reducing labor market imbalances. Assoc. Prof. R. Jeleva connects these generalized facts to sustainable economic and social development – her favorite problem field, in which she is an authoritative scholar.

The self-assessment of scientific achievements is refined. The contributions are real and original. The author has diligently pointed out in which reviewed works they are contained and methodically justified.

Assoc. Prof. Rumiana Jeleva is a well-established and authoritative scientist, with top achievements in the sociological problem fields with which her consistent and productive research, organizational and teaching activity are associated. I recommend that Assoc. Prof. Jeleva be unanimously awarded the academic position “professor” in

professional area 3.1. Sociology, Anthropology and Culture Sciences. This would be a fully merited recognition of the work of this gifted scholar possessing high professional and human qualities. I am convinced that this recognition will meet with the intellectual satisfaction of the academic community in our country and abroad.

Sofia

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