

REVIEW

by: Prof. Dr. Milen Ivanov Baltov,

member of the scientific jury on the basis of Order No RD-09-49 of 21.02.2024 of the Director of IFS at BAS and appointed as the author of an opinion, according to a decision of the Scientific Jury taken at the first meeting held on 15.03.2024 years for the candidate: Assoc. Prof. D.Sc. Romyana Ruseva Zheleva,

for participation in a competition for the academic position "Professor" in the professional field 3.1. Sociology, Anthropology and Cultural Sciences (Sociology – Sociology of Inequalities and Sustainable Development. Role of the European Union in reducing socio-economic inequalities) for the needs of the Section "Stratification, Inequalities and Mobility" at IFS-BAS, in the field of higher education: 3. "Social, Economic and Legal Sciences" announced in the State Gazette on 15.12.2023

Overall assessment of the procedure and of the applicant

Ass. Prof. Dr. Romyana Ruseva Zheleva works under a basic employment contract at IFS-BAS and has presented the required **full set of documents for participation in the competition for the academic position "Professor"**. On this basis, the candidate can be judged:

- The educational and scientific degree "Doctor" is in the same scientific field in which the competition was announced;
- There is a peer-reviewed monograph on the subject of the competition;
- She has presented 1-7 scientific publications outside the dissertation and monograph, 3 of which are in foreign editions that do not repeat the submitted for acquiring the educational and scientific degree "doctor", but none of which is indexed in world databases;
- 14 of the published articles and reports are self-contained;
- Availability of a published book on the basis of a defended dissertation for the award of the scientific degree "Doctor of Science";

- She has participated in many – 7 research and applied projects at national and international level, including 4 of them, as a leader of two projects.

It can be concluded that under the *minimum requirements and criteria and indicators of IFS to BAS for evaluation of academic and research work* the candidate significantly exceeds the requirements.

Group of indicators	Content	Requirement	Performance
But	Indicator 1. Dissertation for awarding educational and scientific degree "Doctor"	50	50
In the	Indicator 3. Habilitation work – monograph	100	100
Y	Sum of indicators from 4 to 10	200	222,83
E	Sum of indicators from 11 to 13	100	145
Is	Sum of indicators from 14 to the end	100	230
	Total	550	747,83

The scientific publications of the candidate are in authoritative scientific journals, including 4 of them in foreign editions, but none indexed in the databases of Scopus or Web science. In the reference for the citations are noted 14 citations of publications of the candidate, 4 of which are from authors in publications indexed in Scopus or Web science. The documents under this competition also certify that the applicant has participated in 7 research and applied projects, four of which have international and national organizations as a contracting authority, and 4 of which she is also the leader.

In addition to all of the above, in Bulgaria the candidate is manifested with her exact hits on scientific topics, as well as with their competent analysis and clear exposure to a high scientific language. He has undeniable organizational abilities, knows how to work highly effectively in a team. He is known as a **competent specialist who is distinguished by precision and scientific dignity**.

Qualitative assessment against the criteria and indicators for research

With regard to the monographic edition, there are mainly the themes of "Dimensions of EU integration" in their entire context. The two main tasks in the monograph are fulfilled, namely – a review of the dimensions of Europeanization in Bulgarian society, thus outlining the territorial, but above all cultural, socio-economic and political region of the southeastern periphery of the EU, on the one hand and on the other hand to outline the contribution of sociological science in the study of Europe, the EU and European integration, differentiation and disintegration. The contribution of sociology to the study of complex problems such as those facing Europe and the EU today may consist in the application of an innovative transdisciplinary "medium-range" research approach and should be applied to specific empirical data on specific social phenomena, allowing a reliable link between general theorisation and real observations/studies.

The published book on the basis of the dissertation for the scientific degree "Doctor of Science" of the candidate examines an extremely topical topic – the relationship between the sociology of sustainable development and business organizations is essential, as evidenced by the volume of strategic and program documents developed over the past 20 years and understanding the role of companies in the transition to a sustainable society. It proves the thesis that a medium-range theory as such has a specific contribution to the concepts in the field of social change management, as well as the management and activities of organizations (sociology of organizations). As part of society, business influences societal change and societal sustainable development.

In most of the published articles and reports Assoc. Prof. Zheleva examines the challenges facing the development of Europe and the European Union (EU) in today's globalized world. Geopolitical challenges are highlighted. The EU faces a range of security threats, terrorism and cyber threats, migration and refugees in Europe, and the issues these problems pose to borders, national identity and social cohesion. It highlights the importance of climate change and the EU's efforts to transition to a more sustainable economy. The rapidly changing digital landscape and the associated new opportunities and challenges in the areas of data protection and cybersecurity are discussed.

Through her numerous events, the candidate focuses the attention of the participants in these conferences on contemporary issues, issues and directions of European integration and the dynamics in development. She boldly and responsibly defends her opinion. It enters into areas that are particularly relevant such as sociological aspects and the relationship cohesion – the perception by society and some groups in it of the value of this. It examines the processes in sectors that are priority for the country and the Balkans, but underestimated by the scientific point of view. T.

Relevance to research contributions

The scientific and applied scientific contributions of the candidate are of a theoretical and practical nature. **The most recent contributions** are indisputable and highlighted in the following theoretical and applied guidelines. The author analyzes in comparative terms the dimensions of European integration, as well as the differentiation in the European Union. The developed overall theoretical model, including both operationalization of the concept of integration and differentiation, is more in empirical sociological research. It verifies the dimensions of integration and differentiation of the example of EU accession of the Western Balkan countries and establishes important associative links regarding the importance of the region, regionalism and regional development for the specific attitudes of Bulgarian citizens as an example of a country that is a member of the EU. It offers for practical application an innovative transdisciplinary sociological approach "medium-range" for the study of European integration within the broader theoretical interpretative framework of sustainable development. This allows us to draw important and significant conclusions about the long-term prospects for Bulgarian integration and cohesion in view of the potential of economic growth.

Practical and applied contributions are also available. I deduce two of them, namely that it has been empirically established that overcoming social and economic inequalities, as well as managing migration, are decisive for the integration of European societies, and that the author justifies a new integration level in the EU by highlighting the significant role of "locality" in and for the EU.

However, textbooks and publications of a teaching and methodical nature have not yet been developed to provide the educational process both for PhD students in the academy system and for students at different levels and for the formation of knowledge and skills in integration-related disciplines. The case study method, suitable for the training, is successfully applied by the candidate.

Notes and recommendations

Despite her serious international and national appearances so far, including in the work of the candidate, it is wishful thinking to be even more critical than to the Bulgarian practice of cohesion processes. I wish Assoc. Zheleva to work actively with young researchers and PhD students to pass on her accumulated scientific experience.

Certainly, the candidate should direct her publication activity to:

- Writing and publishing articles and reports for scientific journals, referenced and indexed in world-famous databases of scientific information;
- Publication of studies, incl. in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world-famous databases of scientific information;

- Publication of chapters part of a collective monograph with large and international teams of authors.

The critical remarks made are not of such a nature as to challenge the contributions of the candidate for the academic position of "professor".

CONCLUSION

Assoc. Prof. Romyana Ruseva Zheleva, DSc, in her capacity as a candidate for the academic position of "professor", meets the adopted national minimum and recommended by the procedural rules for the terms and conditions for acquiring scientific degrees at the IFS at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences scientific and scientific-metric requirements. The scientific output of the candidate contains results representing scientific and applied scientific contributions; it is aimed at improving theory and practice; contains summaries of results obtained through research.

I find sufficient grounds to propose that Assoc. Prof. Romyana Ruseva Zheleva, DSc be elected to the academic position of Professor in professional field 3.1. – Sociology, Anthropology and Cultural Sciences (Sociology – Sociology of Inequalities and Sustainable Development. Role of the European Union in reducing socio-economic inequalities), under the competition announced for the needs of IFS at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. I am convinced that the academic position of "professor" will be deserved and will give her good opportunities for future scientific creativity and appearances as a lecturer, and the Institute a quality staff with a contribution to its management and prosperity.

17.04.2024

Reviewer:

Burgas

/Prof. Dr. Milen Baltov/