

STATEMENT

Related to the competition for an academic position "Associate Professor" at NIGGG at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences,

in higher education area – 4. *Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Informatics*, professional field 4.4. Earth Sciences, proclaimed by NIGGG at BAS in State Gazette, no. 104 / 14.12.2018

by Assoc. Prof. Mariana Atanasova Assenova,

Department of Geography of Tourism, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", member of the scientific jury for the competition according to Order No. 01-32 / 18.02.2019 of the Director of NIGGG at BAS

1. Candidates admitted to the competition

On the announced by NIGGG at BAS competition for associate professor in the field of higher education - 4. Natural sciences, mathematics and informatics, professional field - 4.4. Earth Sciences, Scientific Major - Economic and Social Geography, proclaimed in State Gazette, 104 of 14.12.2018, documents for participation were submitted by one applicant:

- Assoc.Prof. Dessislava Georgieva Varadzhakova (born 27.04.1980, Bachelor and Master in Tourism at UNWE, Doctor of Economics and Management (Tourism) - code 05.02.18, associate professor at 3.9. Tourism.

The submitted documents for participation in the competition are ready and meet the requirements of Art. 52. (3) of the Regulations for the Implementation of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (DASRB) at the National Institute of Geophysics, Geodesy and Geography (NIGGG) at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.

Dr. Desislava Varadzhakova has presented 43 publications, which do not repeat the presentations for acquiring the educational and scientific degree "Doctor". These include 3 separate and one collective monographs, one textbook, 9 scientific articles, 24 published scientific papers, and 5 articles in the professional scientific magazine "Hotels & Restaurants Magazine". The papers presented for evaluation have a total volume of 913 pages, of which only 8 pages are in a scientifically popular journal (less than 1%). The independent publications of the candidate predominate and only two co-published scientific papers are presented in the list of presented, which determines the high share of the applicant's own contribution in the presented works (99.5%). A significant part of Dr. Varadzhakova's scientific output is in English - 10 publications (23%) and 67 pages (7%). Out of them, 5 articles and one report (14%) were published in a volume of 49 pages (5%). The average volume of the monographs is 169 pages. All

monographs presented are with 2 reviewers. The average volume of the articles is 6 pages, and the scientific papers – 7.5 pages.

2. Common eligibility criteria

The eligibility criteria according to Art. 24 of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, Art. 53 of the Regulations for the implementation of the ZRARSR, Art. 11 of the Regulations for the Terms and Procedure for Acquisition of Academic Degrees and for Occupation of Academic Personnel at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and Art. 52 of the PIRCHARP at NIGGG at BAS include:

2.1. Candidates have acquired an educational and scientific degree "Doctor"

The candidate admitted to the competition has the NSA "doctor" obtained in 2010 (Diploma of VAK № 34313 dated 05.07.2010) under the scientific specialty 05.02.18 "Economics and Management", after defense of dissertation thesis of theme: "Improving the organization of urban tourism".

2.2. Not less than 2 years, the candidates have held an academic post of "assistant", "chief assistant" or have been lecturers, including graduates, in the same or another higher school or scientific organization

Dr. Dessislava Varadzhakova has provided an independent Reference for an academic position, accompanied by a copy of the work book certifying the fulfillment of this criterion, namely:

a) At the University of Plovdiv "P. Hilendarski ", branch " L. Karavelov "- Kardzhali, Dr. Varadzhakova has held the academic position of " Chief Assistant "for **5 years and 2 months**.

б) In Veliko Tarnovo University "St. St. Cyril and Methodius "Dr. Varadzhakova holds the academic position" associate professor "from 01.09.2016 until now (**2 years and 5 months**).

2.3. Applicants have submitted published monographic work or equivalent publications in specialized scientific journals that do not duplicate those awarded for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree "doctor".

As already mentioned, Mrs. Varadzhakova has presented **a total of 38 scientific papers**, including **3 individual monographs** and **one collective monograph**, one textbook, 4 studies, 9 scientific articles and 24 scientific papers. One of the monographs was published on the basis of her thesis dissertation, which was defended by her for the award of the educational and scientific degree "doctor". The list for the competition **does not include** the publications submitted for acquisition of the ESD "doctor" (a total of 3 which are included in the list of publications for information only).

3. Compliance with the mandatory minimum national requirements under Art. 2b, para. 2 and 3, respectively under Art. 2b, para. 5 of the ZRASRB for the academic activity "associate professor"

Regarding the quantitative requirements for occupying the academic position "associate professor", higher requirements (compared to the minimum national requirements) introduced by Art. 2, point 4.3. of the Regulations for the conditions and order for acquiring academic degrees and for occupying academic positions in the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and Annex № 1 thereto.

In order to participate in the competition, the applicant has provided a signed List of the publications and copies thereof, a list of the citations with the signature of the candidate, as well as a report on the fulfillment of the minimum requirements for taking the academic position "associate professor" according to the normative documents mentioned above. The review of these documents allows the following findings to be made:

- 1) According to the Applicant's Report on Compliance with Minimum Requirements, their performance on the **Group A and Group B** Meetings is established. The Applicant has an ESD "Doctor" (Group A) for which she is awarded 50 points. For habilitation work - monograph (group C) is presented the book "Burel - Tourist potential", for which the candidate is awarded 100 points.
- 2) At the same time, out of all 43 publications submitted for the competition, only 11 (all stand-alone) are included in the **group D** compliance report, which reveals a candidate's reserve to exceed the required number of points. The monograph, published on the basis of the candidate's doctoral thesis, carries 30 points. This group also includes 9 publications in non-referenced journals with scientific review or in edited collective volumes and contributes 180 points (20 points each). Of these 4 are abroad, 3 are in the National Reference List (NRL) editions (current as of 08.04.2019) and the other 2 are in editions that are likely to be included in the list. In addition to this group, in particular to item 9 - A published chapter on collective monographs, there is an independent chapter, developed by the applicant in a volume of 26 pages, from the collective monograph "Recreation - Usage", which contributes 10 additional points. In this way, the minimum number of points required for group D is 220 points.
- 3) In Group D, citations are presented both in monographs and collective volumes with scientific reviews, as well as in non-referenced journals with scientific review. All 15 citations in monographs and collective volumes (with a total of 3 points, a total of 45 points) can be verified because 11 are in NIS, one is in a book from the National Library's e-catalog and 3 are in editions, which will probably be included in the NIS. Quotations in non-referenced journals with a

scientific review are 14 in total (2 points for each, 28 points in total) and include 2 quotes in NRL journals and 12 quotes in 2 Russian magazines - "Science Horizons" and "Science News" there is no evidence to provide a scientific review. In the self-reference quote, evidence of 35 citations of the applicant's publications is provided, which means that the disputed quotes can be compensated by others available in the report.

Compliance with the required points by group of indicators is presented in the following table, which shows that the candidate meets the minimum number of points by group and the total number of points exceeds the required minimum.

A group of indicators	Content	Required points for Associate Professor	Execution by the applicant
A	Indicator 1	50	50
B	Indicators 3 и 4	100	100
Г	Sum of indicators 5 to 9	220	220
Д	C Sum of indicators 10 to 12	60	73
Total		430	443

4. Additional requirements

The additional criteria according to Art. 27 (3) of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and Art. 57a (2) of the Rules for the Implementation of the same Act are in the following areas

4.1. Related to teaching activity

4.1.1. Audit and outsourcing classes, providing activities in a practical environment

Dr. Varadzhakova was a lecturer at the University of Forestry in the field of Tourism Resources. At the University of Plovdiv "P. Hilendarski", branch "L. Karavelov"-Kardzhali, as a chief expert, she has been practicing the courses "Cultural and Historical Tourism", "Tour guiding", "Hospitality and Restaurant Management", Communications and PR in Tourism, "Management in Tourism". In the same university as a chief assistant, she has been practicing the disciplines "Social Psychology and Tourism Behavior" and "Tourism Information Technologies" besides the above mentioned disciplines. During this period, the applicant organizes and **leads the practical training** of the students. As associate professor at Veliko Tarnovo University "St. St. Cyril i Mthodius" teaches **courses** "Urban and Rural Tourism", "Modern Tourism Types", "Hospitality", "Restaurants", "Tour Operators and Travel Agents", "International Tourism Fairs", "Quality and Certification in Tourism".

4.1.2. Published learning materials

Dr. Varadzhakova presented a **self-published textbook** - Cultural and Historical Tourism, in a volume of 146 pages.

4.1.3. Working with students and PhD students

Dr. Varadzhakova has led a total of **16 graduates**, 9 as assistant professor and 7 as associate professor. She also participated in the process of reviewing diploma works.

4.2. Related to research activity

4.2.2. Participation in research projects

Dr. Varadzhakova has participated in the European project "SUSTOUR" for training and assessment of sustainability in the tourism sector.

4.2.3. Membership in scientific and professional associations and organizations

Dr. Varadzhakova is an **expert** in the National Expert Group on Sustainable Tourism. She holds an IATA / UFTAA diploma, as well as an Amadeus GDS certificate.

5. Candidate's scientific contributions

In the report on contributions to scientific papers, Dr. Varadzhakova has rightly pointed out the main directions of her scientific contributions by excluding the monograph published on the basis of her dissertation work (Urban Tourism Organization) as well as scientifically popular publications. The outlined trends that highlight its scientific contributions on the basis of 37 of the presented publications are:

1) **Geography of Tourism** (17 publications)

- Analysis of tourist destinations (tourist resources, tourist demand and supply)

In this direction, the study of the physiographic unit Burel [1] is the main contribution. On the basis of the descriptive approach, the monograph reveals the available tourist resources - natural and anthropogenic, as well as the most important elements of the tourist supply. Tourism demand is not considered, with the exception of the SWOT analysis and methods for assessing and revealing the tourist potential. Another destination studied by the applicant is Veliko Tarnovo [6, 15] - also for cultural tourism.

Tourist demand is the subject of a study on the analysis of tourist flows to Bulgaria from neighboring countries [9], where their structure is revealed. The applicant has paid special attention to the security factor on the formation and direction of tourist flows [21].

- *Types of tourism and sectors in tourism*

A number of publications devoted to various types of tourism have been contributed to the conceptual apparatus and the content aspect of the types of tourism: modern tourism [7], golf tourism [8], slow food and creative tourism [17, 20], geotourism [23], cultural tourism [5] and the cultural route Via Diagonalis [35]. Special mention should be made of the contribution of the applicant in revealing the recreational potential in

the hospitality [4] to systemize the types of recreational hotels, the recreation activities in the hotel industry and the assessment of the recreational effect in the hotel industry.

- *Tourism Impact and Sustainable Development*

The applicant has systematized the approaches and benefits of introducing sustainable tourism development systems [11], as well as specific international programs for sustainable development certification and the possibilities for their implementation in Bulgaria [34] through comparative analysis. The essential role of the intermediary sector in achieving sustainable tourism development has been identified [28]. The cultural resilience of the destinations [16] and the relevant determinants were examined by analyzing the intercultural impact measurement models.

2) Revenue Management in Tourism (13 posts)

The main contribution in this direction is the monograph in Bulgarian, published for the first time in Bulgaria, dedicated to the management of revenue tourism [2]. The international experience is summarized and specific guidelines and best practices for the efficiency of the different sectors of tourism are presented: hotel management [2, 13, 14, 33, 36, 37, 38], passenger air transport [2, 25, 31, 38], spa tourism and restaurants [2, 38], etc. The risks involved in the implementation of revenue management in tourism [24] and their integration into e-commerce in tourism [30] are summarized and analyzed.

3) Tourism Management and Innovation (7 publications)

Managing and innovation in tourism has been surveyed by the applicant primarily at the corporate level. Types of innovations and business models, as well as the planning of strategies for their introduction into companies, are systematized [12,32]. Contributing is the presentation of innovative human resources management models borrowed from other sectors [26, 29] as well as the detection of shortages in the qualification of tourism professionals in online marketing [27]. The essence of technology transformation, digitization and virtual reality in tourism is clarified, and the relevant conceptual apparatus is summarized and elucidated [19, 22].

In conclusion, the candidate does not have a specialized education in the professional field and the scientific specialty, on which the competition was announced, but a significant part of his production is in the field of geography of tourism (46%) and / or is closely related to the economic and social aspect of this complex phenomenon.

6. Critical remarks and recommendations to the applicant

The critical remarks are set out in the relevant sections of the statement.

The applicant's recommendations are limited to:

1. The candidate should be oriented towards publications based on an empirical study conducted independently.
2. In scientific papers and reports, more attention should be devoted to the methodology, accompanied by a more serious review of literature sources.
3. When registering in the NACCIS Register, the reference for compliance with the minimum requirements for occupying the academic position "associate professor" with respect to the indicators from group D - quotes shall be updated and supplemented.

7. Conclusion

Taking into account the results of the review of the submitted documents and publications as well as the reports on the fulfillment of the minimum requirements and the original scientific contributions I express my opinion to the scientific jury in support of the candidacy of PhD Desislava Georgieva Varadzhakova for the academic position "Associate Professor" at the competition. I recommend to the scientific jury of this competition to choose the academic associate professor Desislava Georgieva Varadjakova and to submit a report in accordance with this decision to confirm her selection and appointment.

11.04.2019

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