

OPINION

By assoc. prof. Nadezhda Ilieva, Economic and Social Geography Section, Geography Department, National Institute of Geophysics, Geodesy and Geography at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (member of the Scientific Jury)

Higher Education Area - 4. Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Informatics

Professional Direction - 4.4. Earth Sciences (Geography of Tourism)

1. DATA FOR COMPETITION

The competition for academic position "associate professor" at the National Institute of Geophysics, Geodesy and Geography - BAS professional area 4.4. Earth Sciences, scientific specialty "Economic and Social Geography" (Tourism geography) was announced in the State Gazette - issue no. 104 of 14.12.2018. Documents for the competition were submitted by one candidate - assoc. prof. Dessislava Varadzhakova. In the review of the submitted documents, it is clear that the requirements of ZRASRB, the Rules for its application, the Regulations for the conditions and order for acquiring academic degrees and for taking academic positions in the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and the Regulations for the implementation of the Law for the Development of the academic staff at the National Institute of Geophysics, Geodesy and Geography - BAS.

2. SHORT BIOGRAPHIC DATA OF THE CANDIDATE

Desislava Varadzhakova was born on 27.04.1980. In 2002 she graduated from the University of National and World Economy, Bachelor's degree in Tourism. In 2004 she received a master's degree in Tourism at the University of National and World Economy and in 2005 she graduated master in Spanish philology at Sofia University „St. Clement Ohridski ". In 2005-2010 she is a full-time Ph.D. student at the Department of Tourism at the University of National and World Economy, code economy and management (tourism) where she obtains the Ph.D. degree in the subject of the dissertation "Improving the Organization of Urban Tourism". During the period 2002-2015 she worked as a travel agent, aviation sales manager, senior sales manager. In 2010-2011 she is a lecturer at the University of Forestry. In 2010-2011 she worked as a lecturer, chief expert at Plovdiv University "P. Hilendarski" - L. Karavelov branch, Kardzhali. In 2011-2016, she was appointed as Chief Assistant at the same affiliate. From 2016 till now she is an Associate Professor of Tourism at Veliko Tarnovo University "St. Cyril and Methodius".

3. EDUCATIONAL AND TEACHING ACTIVITIES

The presented report shows that Desislava Varadzhakova in her teaching activities in the last years covers a large number of disciplines: Urban and rural tourism; Modern types of tourism; Hospitality; Restaurant business; Tour operator and tourist agent activity; International tourist fairs; International tourism business; Quality and certification in tourism; Cultural and historical tourism; Tour guiding; Social psychology and tourist behavior; Communications and PR in tourism; Tourism management; Information technologies in tourism and others. In addition to teaching, the candidate takes an active part in leading a graduate students; conducting practical training, etc. A reference is made to a number of specializations and qualifications in the country and abroad. She participated in the European project „SUSTOUR - training and assessment of sustainability in the tourism sector“, as expert in the National Expert Group on Sustainable Tourism.

4. ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION OF THE RESEARCH AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE CANDIDATE

The research activity of Dr. Desislava Varadzhakova is characterized by an active publication, which is revealed by the publications, which are included in the documentation, which includes 3 independent monographs (including 1 on the topic of dissertation work), 1 chapter of a collective monograph, 1 textbook, 9 independent research articles, 5 of which in abroad, 22 independent scientific papers (1 in abroad) and 2 in co-authorship, as well as 5 independent articles in professional journals. In addition, three other independent publications are presented in the report, which are presented for PhD degree.

According to the report provided by Desislava Varadzhakova her publications have been cited 35 times in scientific monographs, dissertations and publications.

The educational and qualification training of the applicant and the focus of the submitted publications are fully in line with the announced competition for the appointment of an associate professor. All publications are written in high scientific style. They are distinguished by a clear and precise formulation of the problems under consideration and logically based conclusions. It is noteworthy that a very small part of the submitted publications is in co-authorship, which proves the candidate's capacity, confidence and competence in the scientific field where the competition was announced.

The Monograph Burel - Tourist Potential has a volume of 150 pages. It is a study of the tourist resources and the potential for development of internal and cross-border tourism in the historical and geographic area Burel, the opportunities for development of the tourism in the area, the strengths and weaknesses, the threats to its development, the assessment of the accommodation base and the main types of tourism, for which there are prerequisites for development in the area, some sample routes are proposed. It would be appropriate to include cartographic images in the monograph to visualize the different types of tourist resources in the area, as well as outline the proposed tourist routes.

The book "Revenue Management in Tourism" has a volume of 182 pages. The monograph clarifies the nature of revenue management, its origin, describes revenue management types, a general characteristic and implementation problems has been made as well. An analysis of the management of air transport, hospitality, restaurant business, golf industry has been made.

In the collection "The Recreation - Way of providing", the applicant participates with an independent chapter, with a volume of 25 pages, which presents the recreational potential of the hotel industry. Different types of recreational hotels are distinguished by different criteria, recreation and recreation needs in hotels, types of recreational activities in the hotel industry, recreation areas in tourism, factors determining the recreational potential in the hotel industry, the recreational effect and recreation index in the hotel industry, new recreational forms and technologies in hotel accommodation.

In the book "Cultural and Historical Tourism", with a volume of 146 pages, the essence and the main concepts in the cultural and historical tourism, the legal norms, the criteria and the indicators for the assessment of the sites of the World Heritage, the state of the cultural and historical tourism in Bulgaria are clarified, individual sites included in the UNESCO World Heritage List are considered, a SWOT analysis of the cultural and historical tourism in Bulgaria is made.

In the monograph "Organization of Urban Tourism", the theoretical foundations of improvement of the organization of urban tourism were analyzed, the analysis of existing shortcomings in the organization of urban tourism, development and implementation of methodology for improvement of the organization were analyzed and the main elements of the urban tourism product, the pricing of the work project, the commercial activities of the urban tourism, the realization of urban tourism by the tour operators, the analysis of the urban tourism organized by tour operators is made.

The rest of the publications are concerned with: hospitality management, modern types of tourism, opportunities for development of golf tourism in Bulgaria; the applications of the theory of constraints in the tourist destinations management; the concept of the process approach of implementing sustainable tourism management systems - the essence of the process approach in tourism, the specific features of introducing the system approach in tourism, the steps in implementing the process approach, the sustainable tourism management systems in tourism; the innovations in transport companies as a tool for overcoming the economic crisis; an assessment of the effect of the use of a mix of distribution channels on the optimization of hotel revenues was made - the importance of managing the distribution mix for the successful implementation of the revenue management; an analysis of the types of prices and the dynamic pricing in the hotel industry was made - as a result of the evolution of the information technologies, a classification of the hotel prices, formed on the basis of the application of the dynamic pricing - a new and flexible method for increasing the efficiency of the activity of tourist enterprises; the cultural sustainability of tourist destinations and the globalization processes in tourism; threats through ecotourism in Bulgaria; the digital reality in the tourism industry - its role in the tourism industry; the impact of security on the formation of tourist flows; technological innovations in the field of transport, hospitality, presentation of cultural heritage are at the core of increasing the competitiveness of tourism, the main trends related to the growing role of technologies in the tourism industry; an analysis of the state of geotourism in Bulgaria has been made, whose main goal is to maximize the profits from tourism to the local communities while minimizing the negative influences from it, the definition of the concept of geotourism, the basic principles of geotourism, the strategy for the development of geotourism, classification of geotourism destinations; modeling of risk management in applying revenue management in tourism; the possibilities for application of kanban and scrum instruments in the hotel operating management; online marketing and remarketing in tourism; the role of tour operators and travel agencies for the development of sustainable tourism; an analysis of trends in management development in the tourism industry was made; application of revenue management in e-commerce in tourism; a comparative analysis of good practices for responsible tourism has been made; Yield Management in Hospitality and more.

The overall scientific work of the candidate proves that PhD Desislava Varadzhakova knows very well the subject in the scientific field, where the competition was announced. The themes have been developed with the necessary scientific precision and we can reasonably note of contributions of a theoretical-methodological and scientific-applied character. The scientific contributions in Dr. Desislava Varadzhakova's work can be characterized by key words such as systematization, clarification of concepts, enrichment of methodology, comparative analysis, revealing trends and problems, offering solutions with practical orientation in the field of tourism. The contributions in the attached report are clearly formulated and I fully accept them. They are related to the analysis and evaluation of tourist destinations and types of tourism, tourism flows, impacts of tourism and sustainable development, revenue management in tourism and innovations in tourism. The contributions are supported by relevant publications.

5. CRITICAL NOTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Some of the works, or part of them, have an encyclopedic character, in which are presented common facts and facts. In this type of publication, the author's opinion does not stand out and analytical elements are missing. I would like to recommend PhD Desislava Varadzhakova in her future research to emphasize empirical regional research based on data collected by applying quantitative and qualitative methods of information gathering. The last can be achieved through the greater activity of the applicant in participating in projects. Most of the presented publications are from conference

proceedings. In this connection, it is recommended to increase the publications in refereed and indexed journals and academic editions.

6. CONCLUSION

PhD Desislava Varadzhakova participate in the competition with scientific production, which by its thematic focus, quality and quantity of theoretical and applied research contributions enrich the theoretical knowledge, methodological approaches and assists management practice in the field of tourism. This is evidenced by submitted by the applicant Information for meeting minimum requirements for academic positions "associate professor" according to which candidate prove the existence of 443 points. In conclusion, PhD Desislava Varadzhakova's research and scientific work meets the regulatory requirements for academic staff development and my overall assessment is **positive**. Considering the above and Chapter Three. Section III., Art. 24 of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in Bulgaria, I propose that the members of the Scientific Jury support Desislava Varadzhakova to take the Academic Position "Associate Professor" in the field of higher education - 4. Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Informatics; professional field - 4.4. Earth Sciences, Economic and Social Geography (Geography of Tourism) at the National Institute of Geophysics, Geodesy and Geography - BAS, Department of Geography, Department of Economic and Social Geography.

14.04.2019

Respectfully:

(Assoc. Prof. PhD Nadezhda Ilieva)