

OPINION

on a competition for an academic position "Associate professor" at the Department of Geography of the National Institute of Geophysics, Geodesy and Geography at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences in the specialty Economic and Social Geography (Tourism Geography), professional field 4.4. Earth Sciences, proclaimed by NIGGG at BAS in State Gazette, no. 104 / 14.12.2018

Reviewer: Prof. Maria Stamatova Vodenska from IBBS-Botevgrad, scientific specialty 01.08.14 Geography of recreation and tourism

The only candidate in the competition: Assoc. prof. PhD Desislava Georgieva Varadzhakova, Department of Tourism, VTU "St. Cyril and Methodius"

I. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCIENTIFIC AND SCIENTIFICALLY APPLICABLE PRODUCTION OF THE CANDIDATE IN THE COMPETITION

The only candidate in the announced competition for Assoc. Prof., Dr. Desislava Varadzhakova participated in it with scientific production consisting of 43 titles published after the award of the scientific-educational degree "doctor". The candidate's work presents result of research and has been published in specialized scientific publications. Among them are 2 independent monographs, 1 chapter of a collective monograph, 9 independent scientific papers, 5 of which abroad, 22 independent scientific papers (1 abroad) and 2 in co-authorship, 1 solo book and 5 articles in professional journals. There is also a list of the publications on the dissertation, which are 3 in number, all of them solitary. They are not the subject of this statement. It is worth mentioning the vast majority of the applicant's own scientific output.

I have no co-authored publications with D. Varadzhakova (Penkova), I know the subject at the same time, and this gives me grounds to give an impartial and objective evaluation of the materials submitted for review.

The publications presented may be classified in the following scientific areas:

1. Geography of tourism and types of tourism - 16 publications (Nos. 1, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 23, 34, 35, 40)
2. Economy and Management of Tourism - 16 publications (Nos. 2, 10, 11, 14, 22, 24, 25, 27, 29, 30, 31, 33, 36, 37, 38, 42)
3. Tourism industry (hotel and travel agencies) - 17 publications (4, 6, 12, 13, 14, 19, 26, 28, 32, 33, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 43)

The sum of the titles is greater than 43, as some of the publications (6 in number) can be assigned to 2 scientific fields (eg No 33 - Application of the revenue management in the pricing of hotels, can be referred to fields 2 and 3).

Dr D. Varadzhakova has participated in the research project SUSTOUR "Training and Evaluation of Sustainability in the Tourism Sector", which can also be referred to the third field.

II. ASSESSMENT OF SCIENTIFIC AND PRACTICAL RESULTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

II.1. Characteristics of the scientific papers and major contributions

The most important characteristic of the scientific production of the candidate for associate professor, according to the reviewer, is his ability to examine complex aspects in the development of tourism in a complex way, thus combining in the same publication elements of scientific research on different thematic directions. The results obtained through these complex studies have a considerable scientific and practical application.

1. A major part of the scientific publications of the author are focused on the geography of tourism and elucidating the nature, characteristics and specifics of various modern and alternative types of tourism. In the course of the research the applicant clarifies the conceptual apparatus and the content aspect of new and modern types of tourism (7, 17, 20, 23), he has analyzed and evaluated tourist destinations and tourist routes with application for spatial planning and modeling of tourism. Special attention should be paid to cultural and historical tourism (5, 15, 16, 35) and monographic work for a previously uncharted territory - the Burel tourist destination (1). Greater attention is paid to tourism flows, which is an important research area in the geography of tourism (9, 21). An analysis of models is made for measuring intercultural influences that determine the determinants of cultural resilience of tourist destinations (16).

2. Regarding the economy and management of tourism, the main attention of the candidate for associate professor is directed to revenue management in tourism (14, 25, 31, 32, 33, 37, 38), the main results and conclusions are being successfully organized and analyzed in an independent monograph by Dr. Varadzhakova (2). The risks, benefits and threats of applying the management of revenue tourism, the opportunities for its management, as well as its integration into online marketing and e-commerce are analyzed. Consideration is also given to tourism management systems, particularly in relation to its sustainable development (11).

Assoc. prof. Dr. Desislava Varadzhakova takes a strong look at the innovations in tourism management, namely: the potential of innovative management methods applied in the IT industry and the management of human resources in tourism (26, 29). The main types of innovation and business models, as well as the planning processes for strategies in the introduction of innovations in tourism (12, 24, 32) are presented. The conceptual apparatus and the essence of digitization, technological transformation and virtual reality in tourism (19, 22) are clarified.

3. Many of the above-mentioned studies and results have found a specific application in the applicant's works, related to the third field - hotels and travel agencies. In addition, it has analyzed the criteria for accredited certification of travel agents and tour operators (11, 28), as well as the standards which such undertakings must meet in order to ensure their responsible behavior and sustainable tourism management (28). A classification of recreational hotels was made and the factors determining the recreational potential of the hotel industry were revealed (4).

The main contributions of assoc. prof. Dessislava Varadzhakova can be summarized as follows:

1. Theoretical summaries were made with a critical analysis and own opinions contributing to the improvement in the theory of tourism geography. Methodologies have been developed through the development of methods and systems of indicators.

2. The mathematical efficiency of the management in a number of tourism activities - hotels, restaurants, golf and spa tourism, aviation and various functional spaces in tourism has been investigated and expressed in mathematical form.

3. Analyzes and summaries of experimental and research results were made in different destinations and by types of tourism. There are precise, detailed and theoretical summaries of the conceptual apparatus and the content aspect of the cultural and historical tourism.

The candidate in the contest, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Varadzakova, presented a summary of 35 cited citations, 34 of which are from Bulgarian authors (15 of the citations in which are quoted in foreign languages).

II.2. Critical remarks and recommendations

To the papers of assoc. prof. Dessislava Varadzhakova, it is difficult to make critical remarks after the above characteristics and main contributions. There are minor deficiencies in some of the publications, such as deviations from the topic, incorrect citation of authors, but generally, within the framework of its scientific interests, she conducted in good faith and thoroughly scientific research which results are published in an adequate form. It is therefore more appropriate to make recommendations for her future work. As a scientist, I would recommend it, above all, to try increasing its scientific output in the form of studies, articles and monographs by paying more attention to the theoretical and methodological aspects of tourism research (for the latter she has already made a serious scientific inquiry). Assoc. Prof. Dessislava Varadzhakova has wide perspectives to develop in the future as a scientist and researcher.

III. CANDIDATE TRAINING AND TEACHING ACTIVITIES

My impressions of the applicant's studies and teaching activities are mainly formed by the documents presented and the list of publications. Assistant Professor Dr. Varadzhakova has a total of 7.5 years of experience as a lecturer at Plovdiv University "P.Hilendarski", L.Karavelov Branch in the town of Kardzhali and in Veliko Tarnovo University "St. St. Cyril and Methodius". Successfully defended dissertation work in 2010.

It can not be argued that the candidate has exceptionally good and versatile studying and teaching grounds, which is evidenced by the large number and variety of courses, that she conducts. The main disciplines, which Dr. Varadzhakova taught at VTU, are 8, and 7 other disciplines taught at the University of Plovdiv.

Owner of IATA and Amadeus certificates

IV. CONCLUSION

The scientific achievements of Assoc. Prof. Dessislava Varadzhakova meet the requirements for obtaining the academic title "Associate Professor" in the scientific

specialty - Economic and Social Geography (Geography of Tourism). The research, conclusions, suggestions and contributions are a personal work of the author. All papers have been published or reported at national and international conferences and have become public domain. Contributions contained therein can be used in the practice of the country's tourism development.

In this sense, the Report on the fulfillment of the minimum requirements for occupying the academic position "Associate Professor", presented by the applicant, according to the Regulations on the conditions and order for acquiring academic degrees and occupying academic positions at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, respectively the requirements under Article 26, paragraph 5 of the ZRASRB. At required 430 points in the field 4. Natural sciences, mathematics and informatics, professional field 4.4. Earth Sciences, Assoc. prof. Dr. Varadzhakova, proves the presence of 443 points.

The high theoretical level of R & D, the results and contributions made in the field of geography of tourism, the opportunities and the development of traditional and new forms of tourism in tourist destinations, the revenue management and the innovation in the management of the tourism industry give me reason to express a **positive attitude** towards the candidature of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Desislava Varadzhakova for the academic degree "Associate Professor" under the specialty "Economic and Social Geography (Geography of tourism). "

Reviewer:
(Prof. DGS Maria Vodenska)

Sofia, 5.04.2019