

OPINION

by Assoc. Prof. Nadezhda Ilieva,

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(Chair of the Scientific Jury)

Area of higher education - 4. Natural sciences, mathematics and informatics

Professional field - 4.4. Earth Sciences (Socio-Economic Geography)

1. COMPETITION DATA

The competition for the occupation of the academic position "Associate Professor" at the National Institute of Geophysics, Geodesy and Geography - BAS, in Professional field 4.4. Earth Sciences, Academic discipline "Economic and Social Geography", was announced in the State Gazette - issue. 51 from 28 June 2019. One candidate - Dr. Poli Roukova - has submitted documents for the competition. When reviewing the submitted documents, it becomes clear that the requirements of the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act (DASRBA), Regulations on the Terms and Conditions for Acquiring of Academic Degrees and Occupation of Academic Positions at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and the Regulations for the implementation of the DASRBA at the National Institute of Geophysics, Geodesy and Geography – BAS have been met.

2. SUMMARY OF THE CANDIDATE'S BIOGRAPHY

Dr. Poli Roukova graduated with a Master's Degree in Economic Geography from Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" in 1982. Between 1983 and 2010 she worked at the Institute of Geography - BAS, Division of "Economic and Social Geography", as a geographer (1983-1990); as a research associate III-II degree (1991-1999); as a research associate Ist degree (1999-2010). Since 2010, Poli Roukova has continued her research activities at the newly established National Institute of Geophysics, Geodesy and Geography - BAS as an assistant professor at the Division of "Economic and Social Geography"-Department of Geography, NIGGG. In 2019 the candidate obtained a PhD degree in Economic and Social Geography, Professional field 4.4. Earth Sciences. Dr. Poli Roukova has undergone various specializations and trainings: in 1996 - at Lund University, Sweden, Department of Humanitarian Geography - a specialization in social geography and behavioral geography; in 2003 - at University College London, UK - a specialization in conservation of cultural heritage in a sustainable society; in 2010 and 2012 the applicant took courses in financial management of ESPON projects in Brussels, Belgium and Geneva, Switzerland; in 2011 - Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works - international training on the real and potential contribution of the ESDP to integrated policies; in 2012 – at the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and the International Labor Organization (ILO) - Geneva, Switzerland - as an expert on the Practical Dimensions of European and National Employment Policy; 2013 – a member of the scientific team for the Verification of the Health Education Impact Questionnaire (heiQ) in Bulgarian language (developed with the University of Deakin, Victoria, Australia); in 2014 - at Southampton University, UK; EUGENI (EU Generating and Engagement Networking Inclusion) Training Course, Personal Mapping and Community Analysis.

3. ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION OF THE RESEARCH ACTIVITIES AND THE SCIENTIFIC CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE CANDIDATE

Dr. Poli Roukova's research activity is characterized by active publication and participation in a number of international projects. The candidate is recognizable not only among the Bulgarian scientific circles, but also in the international ones, as evidenced by the high values of the H-index: 7 - as of October 2019. The candidate is the author and co-author of over 80 scientific works published in Bulgaria and abroad. A total of 29 publications were submitted for review (including 10 in Group C and 19 in Group D). It is noteworthy that nearly half of the submitted publications for review are in English (a total of 13 publications) and a large part of the scientific production has been published in reputable international editions indexed in WoS and SCOPUS, which confirms the high quality of the publications.

According to the reference provided by Poli Roukova, her publications have been cited 107 times in various scientific monographs and publications, mainly abroad.

The candidate's educational qualification and the focus of the submitted publications are fully in line with the announced competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor". All papers are written in high scientific style. They are distinguished by a clear and precise formulation of the problems under consideration and exhibit reasoned conclusions. Thematically, the submitted publications are in several thematic areas of socio-economic geography, namely:

- Light industry – in her publications the applicant addresses the challenges facing the European apparel industry, the future of the European industry in the context of the EU liberalization, globalization and enlargement; the importance of regional clusters in the production of clothing and the constraints faced by the new EU Member States (Publication 8, Group C); cross-border networks and regional competition in the Slovak and Ukrainian clothing industry in the context of trade liberalization, deallocation and inter-firm and inter-regional competition, changes in product specifics, existing production networks and forms of cross-border agreements (Publication 9, Group C); different practices and intra-marketing strategies in the clothing industry in Eastern and Central Europe are analyzed, the dynamic conditions in which the industry has been developing since the early 1990s - under the conditions of competitive pressure and the need to adapt to changing manufacturing conditions and trade networks following the EU accession of the countries of Eastern and Central Europe; the variety of organizational forms and production networks that emerged in the production of clothing in response to the changing patterns of competition and governance in the context of globalization are described, as well as the company strategies for the modernization of industry, trade policies and customs agreements for the expansion of European production networks and the internationalization of clothing production in Eastern and Central Europe; the importance of the clothing industry for national and regional economies, the various forms of market integration and product specificity (publication 6, group C); the nature, the development, the organizational forms, the territorial structure, the development factors, the significance and the place which the textile and apparel industry hold in the national economy (Publication 11, group D), as well as the production of leather, leather goods and footwear in Bulgaria (Publication 12, group D) are also analyzed; the process of regional transformation of the garment industry as a result of the increase in the number of small and medium-sized enterprises in terms of historically determined regional processes and the changing structure of the global garment industry and the dominant forms of production and export since the early 1990s; the place of the garment industry in global and regional commodity chains (Publication 16, Group D).

- Social and medical geography – the applicant traces the dynamics and the nature of personal support for people with type 2 diabetes through established social networks in terms of personal relationships, as the analysis makes reference to several pre-defined social support mechanisms so as to assess the extent of collective efficiency and social support, highlighting the similarities and differences between countries (Publication 2, Group C); as well as: the practices of management and self-management of patients with type 2 diabetes have been studied (Publication 3, group C); the social support and health status of patients with diabetes (Publication 4, group C); the health status of the population in the region of Burgas (Publication 6, group D); analysis of the health care system in Bulgaria in terms of treatment, rehabilitation and training in self-care of diabetic patients; an analysis of the strategies, legislation, regulations and programs that influence the formation of new policies in the management of chronic diseases (publication 1, group C); the social impacts on diabetes self-management, policies related to chronic disease management, health system management, and gaps in self-management support (Publication 7, group C); the impact of neoliberalism on the treatment of chronic diseases in Bulgaria and the UK (publication 10, group C).
- Urban development - the changes and perspectives in the demographic and socio-economic development of Sofia have been analyzed by the applicant, as well as the place of the city in the spatial structure of the country following the changes of the socio-economic system (Publication 2, group D).
- Labor market - the international division of labor in European countries and regions has been analyzed (publication 5, group C), as well as: the development of the labor market, the influence of the territorial distribution of the population, the demographic processes, the migration in the formation of the labor force at regional level (Southwest and South Central region), the dynamics in the labor force, changes in the structure of employment and unemployment (Publications 3 and 4 in group D); the unemployment problems at regional and local level (Publication 4, group D); the labor market, the trends in unemployment and the sectoral structure of employment in the Danube region of Bulgaria (Publication 8); the state of the labor market and the economic activity of the population in Bulgaria (Publication 12, group D).
- Regional development - an analysis of the risk factors in the regional development has been made, depending on the status and potential of the territorial community on the basis of a comprehensive assessment of the socio-economic and demographic situation in spatial context; suggestions for solving the problem are made through a typology of the territorial units according to the relevant features, based on the example of Burgas region (Publication 5, group D); the geographical aspects of the living environment risks (publication 14, group D) and the socio-economic aspects of the living environment in Burgas region (publication 7, group D) have also been analyzed, as well as the role of local self-initiative in solving environmental problems; the main challenges facing the country, the priority objectives of the new regional policy at the beginning of the 21st century are traced (Publication 17, Group D); environmental management issues in the region of Burgas are also taken into consideration (Publication 18, Group D).
- Tertiary sector of the economy - the nature, importance and place of the tertiary sector in the structure of the Bulgarian economy has been clarified, as well as the development factors and spatial distribution location of the tertiary sector, its structure, the forms of spatial organization of services, the problems and prospects in the development of the tertiary sector (Publications 9, 10, Group D).

The overall scientific production of the applicant proves that Dr. Poli Roukova has a profound knowledge in the scientific field in which the competition has been announced. The research works exhibit the

necessary scientific precision, while the scientific contributions are of theoretical, methodological and applied nature. The scientific contributions of Dr. Poli Roukova can be characterized by keywords such as systematization, refinement of concepts, enrichment of methodology, comparative analysis, detection of trends and problems, offering solutions with practical orientation in the field of economic and social geography. The contributions in the attached report are clearly stated and I fully accept them. The stated contributions are supported by the relevant publications of the applicant.

4. CRITICAL NOTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that in the future developments the applicant should increase the number of sole-author publications and that the results obtained should be systematized and published in a separate scientific monograph.

5. CONCLUSION

Dr. Poli Roukova participates in the competition with scientific production which by its thematic orientation, quantity and quality of theoretical and scientific-applied contributions, enriches the existing theoretical knowledge and methodological approaches, and supports the management practices in the field of economic and social geography. This is also evidenced by the provided report on the minimum requirements for occupation of the academic position of "associate professor" eligibility, according to which the applicant has obtained a total of 490.46 points (out of 400 points required). In conclusion, Dr. Poli Roukova's research and scientific-applied activities meet the regulatory requirements for the development of the academic staff, and therefore my overall assessment is positive. With regard to the foregoing, and also on the basis of Chapter 3, Section 3, Art. 24 of the DASRBA, I propose that the members of the Scientific Jury vote "in favour" of awarding Poli Nikolova Roukova the academic position of "Associate Professor" in Area of higher education 4. Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Informatics; Professional field - 4.4. Earth Sciences, Economic and Social Geography at the National Institute of Geophysics, Geodesy and Geography - BAS, Department of Geography, Division of "Economic and Social Geography".

14 Oct. 2019

Sofia

Sincerely:

(Assoc. Prof. Nadezhda Ilieva)