

OPINION

by Prof. Dr. Spartak Keremidchiev

Institute for Economic Research – Bulgarian Academy of Sciences,

member of the Scientific Jury in the competition for occupation of the academic position of "Associate Professor" in professional field 4.4 Earth Sciences, academic discipline - Social and Economic Geography, announced in the State Gazette issue 51 / 28 June 2019;

Candidate: Assistant Professor Poli Nikolova Roukova, PhD

This opinion has been prepared based on Order No. 01-276 / 27 Aug. 2019 and on the Resolution of the Scientific Jury meeting, Minutes No. 1 / 03 Sep. 2019. The opinion is in line with the requirements of the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act (DASRBA) and the Regulations for its implementation, 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 in the National Institute of Geophysics, Geodesy and Geography.

I. General assessment of the applicant's research activity.

Dr. Poli Roukova obtained a Master's degree in Economic Geography from Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" in 1981. Since 1983 she has been working at the Institute of Geography at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, (from 1991 on – as a research associate). Her whole working career is related to that scientific institution, which in 2010 became the Department of Geography of the National Institute of Geophysics, Geodesy and Geography at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.

I happen to know Assistant Professor Poli Roukova in person from participating in a major international project funded within the Sixth Framework Program of the European Commission, as well as from joint publications and participation in conferences. I therefore believe I am well aware of her work and achievements.

I have a high appreciation of the applicant's professionalism, ability to work, teamwork skills and tolerance.

II. Quantitative assessment of the compliance with the minimum scientometric national requirements and the requirements of the NIGGG Regulations.

By thoroughly familiarizing myself with the publications, references and documents submitted by the applicant, I can give the following assessment of the applicant's eligibility with regard to the minimum scientometric national requirements and the requirements of the NIGGG – BAS Regulations.

With respect to indicator Group A, a PhD degree has been obtained by the applicant after successfully defending a doctoral thesis on "Impact of the International Division of Labour on the Localisation of Apparel Industry in South Western and South Central Bulgaria". A confirmation note has been provided for the registration of the doctoral thesis in the National Centre for Information and Documentation (NCID).

Within the Group C indicators, 10 scientific publications have been submitted as an alternative to a habilitation thesis. The submitted publications are all peer-reviewed and indexed in the worldwide database - SCOPUS. The thematic publications cover three areas: regional development, problems of localization and global manufacturing networks in the textile and clothing industries, problems and social geography of health, incl. comparative analyses of health systems and social assistance in the treatment of diabetes and chronic diseases. All the publications in that group are related to the topic of the competition and in terms of quantity and quality are completely equivalent to a habilitation thesis. The total number of points obtained from the above-mentioned publications is 100.45 (required threshold - 100 points).

Regarding the group D indicators, the applicant has submitted 15 scientific publications in non-refereed, peer-reviewed journals, ones in edited collective volumes and 4 chapters in collective monographs. I accept the list provided with these publications. Thus, the points obtained from group indicators D are 220.01 (where a minimum of 220 points is required).

In regard with group E, Dr. Roukova has submitted three publications, which have been repeatedly cited in various editions listed in the SCOPUS world database, which provide her 120 points where the minimum threshold is 60 points.

The sum of all points obtained by the applicant from all groups of indicators is 490.46 points, while the minimum threshold is 430 points.

Thus, by individual groups of indicators, as well as by total sum of required points, Dr. Poli Roukova fully meets and exceeds the minimum scientometric national requirements and the requirements of the NIGGG – BAS Regulations.

III. Evaluation of the applicant's research results and scientific contributions.

The main contributions of the applicant can be summarized in the following scientific areas of research, which cover and systematize her scientific production:

- Regional problems of the economy in transition;
- Social geography of health;
- Environmental problems of local communities.

Regarding the first topic of research, the applicant's scientific contributions can be summarized as follows:

- The problems of national regional development policy have been studied in the context of the EU integration of Southeast European countries, and the use of specific tools such as the regions of targeted development and the regions of cross-border cooperation.
- The regional specifics of the economic activity of the population during the 1990-2000 decade have been identified.
- The specific features of the labor markets in the South Central and the Southwestern planning regions of Bulgaria have been revealed in the context of the country's accession to the EU.

- The local development problems of the municipalities of Burgas, Sofia and Kardzhali, as well as certain municipalities within Burgas district and Smolyan district have been analyzed, with an emphasis on economic restructuring, cross-border cooperation, living environment and labor markets.
- The need for a spatially differentiated approach to studying the environmental risk and to the identification of vulnerable social groups of the population has been justified.
- A comprehensive approach to assessing the restructuring of industries has been developed, and an evaluation of the impact which restructuring of industries has on regional development in transition economies has been made. Recommendations have been made to mitigate the effects of globalization on these industries.
- The competitive advantages of the labor-intensive industries in Bulgaria and other countries in transition have been identified, and policies for their development have been proposed.
- Special emphasis is placed on the importance of cross-border production networks with Greece and Turkey for the development of clothing production in the border areas of Bulgaria.

With regard to the second research topic of the applicant's research work, the following contributing points can be highlighted:

- The impact of social environment resources (apart from health services) on the ability of chronically ill people to manage their long-term lifestyle in Bulgaria has been evaluated.
- Systematic problems of health care in Bulgaria have been identified in terms of treatment, rehabilitation and self-care training of diabetic patients, and proposals for overcoming those problems have been developed.
- The positive and negative effects of the social environment on the self-management of the chronically ill in three model geographical regions of Bulgaria have been identified.
- The foundations of using social networks to support chronically ill patients with type 2 diabetes have been laid, in terms of nutrition and diet - key points of self-management of the illness - and overcoming the problems deriving from poor coordination between responsible actors in assisting diabetic patients.

The following scientific contributions of the applicant can be derived from the third research topic:

- Certain flaws of the institutional coordination and interaction have been identified in the process of solving environmental problems in the Municipality of Burgas, and solutions have been proposed so as to overcome the deficits on one hand, and activate the participation of local communities, on the other.
- An evaluation of the health status of the population in areas with environmental problems such as the city of Burgas has been made, and the links between environmental pollution and the population incidence rate by major groups of diseases have been revealed.

Dr. P. Roukova's research proves her capacity and professionalism in the field of the above-mentioned scientific areas. The applicant has demonstrated ability to use and adapt up-to-date and appropriate tools for producing original scientific results which are of both theoretical importance and of high practical

value. The presented scientific output reveals the abilities of Assist. Prof. P. Roukova to address important socio-economic problems and find reasoned scientific and management solutions for them.

IV. Assessment of the originality of the submitted publications and the reliability of the scientific data presented.

The scientific contributions made by Assist. Prof. P. Roukova are original and definitely novel, thus affirming and enriching the existing knowledge. Those are the result of independent and collective efforts with the active participation of Assist. Prof. P. Roukova. In order to obtain those results, a scientifically sound methodology from different branches of science has been developed and used, as well as reliable sources of information.

In the course of preparing this opinion, I have not received any reports of plagiarism. Knowing very well the moral qualities of Assist. Prof. P. Roukova, I completely exclude the possibility of such.

V. Critical notes and recommendations.

My recommendation to the applicant can be brought down to the following:

- The applicant should try to assemble her numerous publication into a monograph.

VI. Conclusion.

The scientific output presented by Assist. Prof. Poli Roukova in terms of volume, structure, quality of scientific results and scientific contributions, outlines the profile of a well-established and distinguished researcher in the research scope of this competition.

The applicant's research and publication work fully meet and exceed all the quantitative and qualitative requirements for occupying the academic position of "Assistant Professor" at the National Institute of Geophysics, Geodesy and Geography - BAS.

This gives me a solid reason to support the selection of Assist. Prof. Poli Roukova for the occupation of the academic position of "Associate Professor" in professional field 4.4. Earth Sciences, academic discipline - Social and Economic Geography, for the needs of the National Institute of Geophysics, Geodesy and Geography - BAS.

17 Oct. 2019

Sofia

Member of the Scientific Jury:

(Prof. Dr. Spartak Keremidchiev)