

## **OPINION**

by

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This opinion was prepared on the basis of Order № 01-266 of 29.12.2020. of the Director of the National Institute of Geophysics, Geodesy and Geography at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (NIGGG-BAS) and Decision of the meeting of the Scientific Jury of 05.01.2020. It complies with the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ADASRB), the Regulations for its application, as well as the Regulations for application of ADASRB in NIGGG-BAS.

### **I. Details about the competition**

The competition for the academic position of "professor" at the National Institute of Geophysics, Geodesy and Geography at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences in the professional field 4.4. Earth Science, scientific specialty "Economic and Social Geography" was announced in State Gazette, issue 93 of 30.10.2020. Only one candidate - Assoc. Prof. Boian Iordanov Koulov, Ph.D. has submitted his application documents. During the review of the submitted documents it was established that the requirements of the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ADASRB), the Regulations for its application, as well as the Regulations for application of ADASRB in National Institute of Geophysics, Geodesy and Geography at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (NIGGG-BAS) have been fulfilled.

### **II. Short biographic information about the candidate**

Assoc. Prof. Boian Koulov Ph.D. was born on September 8, 1957. The presented CV shows that in 1983 he graduated with distinction in Geography of Tourism at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski". In the period 1984-1987 he was a Ph.D. student at the Geographical Institute of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. In 1988, he defended his dissertation before the Higher Attestation Commission on the topic "Economic-geographical forecasting of the Burgas industrial territorial system" and acquired the degree of "Candidate of Geographical Sciences" (equivalent to a Ph.D.). From 1990 to 2007, he was a professor at a numerous prestigious American universities - George Washington University, Washington, DC; George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia; American University, Washington, DC; University of West Virginia, Morgantown, West Virginia. In 2008, he was awarded the scientific title "Senior Research Fellow - second degree" (equivalent to Associate Professor) by the Higher Attestation Commission in a competition announced by the Geographical Institute of Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. From 2010 to the present, Koulov works in the Section "Economic and Social Geography" of NIGGG-BAS. From 2010 to 2014, he was Scientific Secretary of the Institute.

### **III. Analysis of the scientific and research activity and the candidate's scientific contributions**

In the competition for the academic position "Professor", Assoc. Prof. Boyan Koulov Ph.D. has presented 19 publications required to meet the minimum national requirements under the respective regulations, as follows:

- a monograph in English without co-authors,
- one single author and 5 co-authored publications, all which are SCOPUS and WoS - indexed;
- 12 publications in non-refereed journals with scientific review or in edited collective volumes, 5 of which by single author.

The reference in the National Center for Information and Documentation (NACID) shows that the presented publications do not repeat those for obtaining the educational and scientific degree "Ph.D." and the "Associate Professor" title.

The presented publications can be summarized in two main thematic areas. The first one is related to the geospatial disparities and the sustainability of the regional development. The theoretical setting, tools and policies for overcoming the differences are discussed, and the publications adhere to the "horizontal disparity" concept. The second thematic area focuses on the application of the concept of ecosystem services, as well as the geographic information technologies for sustainable environmental management and regional development.

The main contributions in the publications presented in the competition are related to supporting geographical forecasting and socio-economic and territorial planning of the European regions at five scales - from continental to NUTS 3. A theory is proposed for one way of the formation of regions with relatively lower living standard, which introduces and justifies the effect of "peripheral overlap". It is a significant contribution and instrument for the identification of regions with special geographical characteristics - mountain, border, ethno-political, and others. In some of the co-authored publications, the candidate contributes to the process of introduction and definition of the concept of "dysergy" of ecosystem services' functioning, which furthers the development of the theory and practice of this type of assessment. His publications, related to the application of geographic information systems, contribute to the definition of the term "technological hazard" from a geographical point of view and to the formulation of the basic principles of a theoretical GIS model for hazards reduction, including its elements, structure, and essential functions.

The candidate has pointed out 28 citations of his publications. A total of 25 of them are in referenced and indexed in SCOPUS and WoS papers.

He has led 8 scientific projects (2 of them are international) and has been scientific advisor of one successful Ph.D. dissertation.

### **IV. Critical remarks and recommendations**

Assoc. Prof. Boian Koulov Ph.D. is undoubtedly one of the scientists in Bulgaria with extremely rich and invaluable teaching and research experience. Having that in mind, I would recommend that he increases his lecturing activity, in view of the priority of Bulgarian higher education to increase its quality.



## V. Conclusion

Taking into account the conditions of the Regulations for application of ADASRB in NIGGG-BAS for holding the academic position “professor”, after a thorough review of the documents and materials submitted by the candidate in the competition, it was found that he meets all requirements, including the minimum national requirements, as follows:

- In group A of indicators the candidate has the necessary 50 points that are required;
- In group V (B) a monograph is presented, and he receives the required 100 points;
- In group G (Г) the candidate obtained 233.3 points (minimum required – 220);
- In group D (Д) the candidate has 132 points, with a required 120;
- In group E he has 240 points (required – 150).

In view of the above, I propose that the members of the Scientific Jury support the candidacy of Assoc. Prof. Boian Koulov Ph.D. to take the academic position of “Professor” in a professional field 4.4. Earth Sciences, Economic and Social Geography at the National Institute of Geophysics, Geodesy and Geography of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.

12.01.2021

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