

## SCIENTIFIC OPINION

by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Desislava Varadzhakova,

National Institute of Geophysics, Geodesy and Geography at BAS,

Department of Geography, Section "Economic and Social Geography",

Field of higher education: 4. Natural sciences, mathematics and informatics

Professional field: 4.4. Earth Sciences, Scientific specialty: Economic and social geography  
(Geography of tourism)

The opinion was prepared on the basis of order № RD-01-265/12.11.2021 and Decision of the meeting of the scientific jury with minutes №1/17.12.2021. Its content is in accordance with the requirements of the Law for development of the academic staff in the Republic Bulgaria (LASRB) and the Regulations for its implementation and as well of the Regulations for implementation of LASRB in NIGGG-BAS.

### 1. DATA ON THE COMPETITION

The competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" at the National Institute of Geophysics, Geodesy and Geography at BAS, Department of Geography, Section "Economic and Social Geography", in the professional field 4.4. Earth Sciences (Social and Economic Geography) was announced in the State Gazette - issue 86 from 15.10.2021. Documents for the competition were submitted by one candidate – chief assistant Alexandra Lyubenova Ravnachka PhD. When reviewing the submitted documents, it becomes clear that the requirements of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for its implementation have been met.

### 2. BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF THE CANDIDATE

Chief assistant Alexandra Ravnachka PhD was born on December 16, 1977. In 2001 she graduated with a master's degree in Geography from Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski". In 2017 she obtained an educational and scientific degree "PhD" in "Economic and Social Geography" after successfully defending her dissertation at NIGGG-BAS on theme "Search and supply of labor in the Blagoevgrad region (2001-2011)".

The candidate uses French and English.

Chief assistant professor Alexandra Ravnachka PhD is a member of the Bulgarian Geographical Society.

### 3. ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION OF THE RESEARCH ACTIVITY AND THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE APPLICANT

In the competition for "Associate Professor" chief assistant Alexandra Ravnachka PhD has presented 22 publications, of which one independent monograph, two co-authored articles in journals

indexed in Scopus, 17 scientific publications in non-peer-reviewed journals or in edited collective volumes. 7 of them are in English. The candidate also presented two chapters from collective monographs. It is noteworthy that 14 of the publications of chief assistant Ravnachka PhD are co-authored, and 8 are independent, which is proof that she can work in a team. The presented publications do not repeat those for obtaining the educational and scientific degree "PhD".

The main thematic directions of the candidate's publications are in the field of economic-geographical and demographic research (9 publications - G7.2, G8.5, G8.6, G8.7, G8.10, G8.12, G8.15 G9. 1 and G9.2), the geographical features of the labor market (8 publications – B(V)3, G8.1, G8.3, G8.9, G8.11, G8.14, G8.16 and G8.17), ecosystem services (1 publication) and 4 researches dealing with general scientific problems of physical geography and the contribution of established Bulgarian geographers for the Bulgarian science.

According to the applicant's reference, the number of citations to her publications was 26.

The main contributions of the research of Chief Assistant Professor Alexandra Ravnachka PhD can be grouped in the following areas:

- Geodemography - the parameters of the demographic and socio-economic development of rural areas and municipalities in the mountainous territories of the country are determined; a classification of the municipalities in the mountainous territories of Bulgaria according to main demographic indicators has been proposed; the regional peculiarities of the demographic and socio-economic development of Blagoevgrad and Kyustendil regions have been studied and established; a methodology for measuring spatial segregation in its five dimensions in the Roma neighborhood of Harman Mahala in the city of Plovdiv has been adapted;

- Regional labor market research - a comparative analysis of regional labor markets in the South Central and Southwest planning region is made; a typology of the administrative-territorial units of LAU 1 level in Blagoevgrad and Kyustendil regions according to the demographic situation and the state of the labor market has been developed and regional and local changes in the economic activity of the population in these areas have been established;

- Application of the concept for ecosystem services - A model for assessment of ecosystem services through GIS-based mapping in a specific mountainous Bulgarian municipality has been tested. The tested model is one of the first at the local level in the country.

#### **4. CRITICAL NOTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The scientific production of Chief Assistant Professor Alexandra Ravnachka PhD does not give grounds for serious critical remarks. I would recommend the candidate in the future to increase her independent publishing activity in publications indexed in the databases Scopus and WoS, as well as to continue to develop the thematic areas in which she works.



## 5. CONCLUSION

Taking into account the conditions for holding the academic position of "Associate Professor" under Art. 53 of the Law for development of the academic staff in the Republic Bulgaria (LASRB) and the Regulations for its implementation and as well of the Regulations for implementation of LASRB in NIGGG-BAS after a thorough review of the documents and materials submitted by the candidate in the competition found that it meets all requirements, as shown below:

1. The candidates must have obtained a scientific and educational degree "PhD" - the candidate has submitted a copy of diploma № 000864 / 05.04.2017, issued by NIGGG-BAS for obtaining the educational and scientific degree "PhD";

2. Applicants must have held the academic position of "assistant" and / or "chief assistant" for at least two years - from 2010 to 2017 Ravnachka PhD held the position of "assistant", and from 2017 to date, she holds the position of "Chief Assistant" at NIGGG-BAS, according to the submitted CV;

3. The candidates must have submitted a published monograph - the candidate has submitted a published monograph on theme "Demographic situation and labor market in Blagoevgrad and Kyustendil region";

4. Applicants must meet the relevant minimum national requirements for the academic position of "Associate Professor" - the candidate meets the minimum national requirements as follows:

- in group A of indicators there are the necessary 50 points that are required;
- in group B she has presented a monography, due to which she receives the required 100 points;
- in group G (Г) there are 241.84 points, with a required 200 points to meet the national minimum requirements and 220 points according to the regulations for application of LASRB in NIGGG-BAS;
- in group D there are 71 points, with a required 50 points to meet the national minimum requirements and required 60 points according to the regulations for application of the LASRB in NIGGG;
- There are 40 points in group E, compared to the required 30 points (according to the rules for application of LASRB in NIGGG-BAS. According to LASRB no minimum number of points is required for this indicator to hold the academic position of "Associate Professor").

5. Applicants must have no legally proven plagiarism in scientific papers - no plagiarism has been found in candidates' scientific production.

In conclusion, the research and scientific-applied activity of chief assistant Alexandra Ravnachka PhD meets the regulatory requirements for the development of the academic staff and my overall assessment is **positive**.

In view of the above, I propose that the members of the scientific jury support the candidacy of chief assistant Alexandra Ravnachka PhD to take the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the field of higher education 4. Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Informatics; professional field 4.4. Earth Sciences, Economic and Social Geography at National Institute of Geophysics, Geodesy and Geography at Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.

15 January 2022

Opinion written by:  
/Assoc. Prof. D. Varadzhakova PhD/