

SCIENTIFIC REVIEW

By Prof. Galina Georgieva Kurteva, PhD. Bourgas Free University, HE Area “Social, Economic and Legal Sciences”, Professional Field 3.7. Administration and Management (Social Management)

on scientific publication for participation in a contest for the occupation of the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the professional field 3.7. Administration and Management (Management of Education and Culture), announced in State Gazette No. 83 / 22.10.2019, with candidate Chief Assist. Dr. Elena Atanasova Blagoeva

I. Assessment of Compliance with Minimum National Requirements and NBU Requirements

The contest for associate professor in the professional field 3.7 Administration and Management (Management of Education and Culture) was announced in accordance with the established legal order for the needs of the Administration and Management Department, Graduate School, New Bulgarian University. I participate in the scientific jury of the contest according to Order No. 3-PK-52 / 20.11.2019. of the Rector of NBU.

One candidate is participating in the announced competition - Chief Assist. Dr. Elena Atanasova Blagoeva. The submitted documentation for the competition meets the requirements of the Law for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (Article 2b) and the Rules for its implementation (Article 1a, paragraph 1), as well as the requirements of the NBU, set out in Appendix 2 of the NRAS at the University.

As it is evident from the self-assessment provided, the candidate Chief Assist. Dr. Elena Atanasova Blagoeva fully fulfills the minimum national and NBU requirements for occupying the position of Assistant Professor at NBU. The total score of the candidate (995 p.) in the evaluation indicators exceeds the required minimum (570 p.) significantly (75%).

II. Research Activities and Results

The candidate presents a monography manuscript titled „Internationalization of Higher Education in Europe. Development and Management of Internationalization processes in Europe as an Element of HE Management”, Sofia: NBU, 2013, 160 p. (monography, ISBN: 978-954-

535-795-4, Reviewers: Prof. A. Todorov, Prof. R. Nikolova, Prof. S. Alexandrova). The emphasis in monography is on the processes of internationalization as an element of higher education policy and governance in Europe. Applying the systematic approach, the author examines the individual elements of the internationalization process as part of an interconnected system by itself and as a whole connected to other elements that make up a larger system, such as the higher education system. The author thoroughly examines the theoretical framework that considers internationalization as part of higher education policy; regulations, mechanisms and institutions at supranational level that enable the development of internationalization; strategic management and organization of activities at supranational, national and institutional levels. The findings of the studies, as well as the analysis of the results achieved, allow the author to reasonably defend the main thesis in her research that a successful university of the future has as its characteristic a high degree of internationalization. The author's ability to present her views on the applicability of the results of her studies is worthy of appreciation. The proposed modification in the application of the methods and models for measuring the internationalization of higher education (the internationalization index and the Levin's model for the study of internationalization as an innovation process), as well as the defined by the author possible strategies for the development of internationalization can be evaluated as contributions with scientific and scientifically-applicable character. In this respect, the monography manuscript is useful for researchers and consultants in developing strategies for the internationalization of higher education at national and institutional levels. The information gathered and summarized by the author on programs, initiatives and instruments for enhancing the international dimension in higher education and supporting internationalization at institutional level (up to 2013) could be used as practical guidance in the preparation of projects and educational initiatives.

In summary, I accept the claims submitted by the candidate for the scientific contributions of the monography, which are formulated correctly and synthesized, and reflect the results and achievements of her applied research in the studied issues.

Another focus in the research work of the candidate is the implementation of European Union policies in the field of culture and education. The results of the study of the ways and approaches of policy-making in the field of education and culture at the pan-European level and the impact of these policies on the overall development of the sectors (EU-member states-institutions), Dr. Blagoeva presents in her book „European Dimension in Education and Culture –

Policies and Management”. Sofia: Avanguard_Prima, 2017, 253 p. (ISBN: 978-619-160-752-5, Reviewers: Prof. T. Stoitsova, Assoc. Prof. E. Bancheva). The content and structure of the book traces the integration of the fields of education and culture within the EU building process, examining changes in attitudes and decisions at the political level, legal framework, governance and administration mechanisms, financial instruments. The following results of the author's research may be evaluated as contributions of an applied nature: the emerging trends from the analysis of the most important strategic documents for education and cultural policies over the years; the analyzed legal regulation regarding the integration of cultural aspects into other policies; the summarized relevant information on education programs, initiatives and instruments at all levels, direct and indirect support for cultural cooperation and cultural aspects, cooperation in both areas with third countries, which can serve as a practical guidance in project preparation and cultural / educational initiatives. Besides survey results, analysis, argumentation of conclusions and recommendations, each topic of the three chapters of the book includes basic concepts, questions for discussion and tasks for independent work on research issues. This allows the book to be easily used for the further professional development of students studying or interested in EU education and cultural policies and programs.

For her participation in the contest for “Associate Professor”, Dr. Blagoeva has presented also the following publications: articles and scientific reports, published in scientific journals, referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information – 2; articles and scientific reports, published in non-refereed scientific peer-reviewed journals or in peer-reviewed collective volumes – 13; a published university textbook or textbook used in the school network – 1. These publications do not repeat ones presented for obtaining PhD degree. A large part of the publications of Chief Assist. Dr. Elena Blagoeva has been cited in other researchers' papers, which is a certificate of positive acceptance of the theses and the results of her research.

All of the candidate's publications are in thematic areas of the announced competition - Management of Education (with a focus on higher education) and culture. Chief Assist. Dr. Elena Blagoeva demonstrates good knowledge and skills in interpreting the theoretical formulations in the areas studied. Wherever it is possible, her scientific quests are supported by field research.

An overview of the scientific works and publications of the Chief Assist. Dr. Elena Blagoeva allows to evaluate highly their scientific content and their usefulness in practice in terms of the achieved results.

Chief Ass. Dr. Elena Blagoeva has participated in a range of international and national projects under Programs PHARE, Erasmus, Tempus, Ideas, OP SEIG, OP HRD. She has been an author and manager of the Jean Monnet project “The EU policy in education and culture in the period 2010-2013 (176673-LLP-1-2010-1-BG-AJM-MO). The results of her work on the projects show that the candidate is an established researcher with contributions to national and international development of knowledge and practice in the field of educational and cultural management.

In the implementation of some of her research projects Dr. Blagoeva includes students at NBU. In the NBU Theater initiative “Sledata (The Trace)” some senior students participated in the project “To make our ideas visible” (2015). During the period 2012-2015, 97 students from Public Administration Department were included in the survey “ The happy students of PA”. Dr. Blagoeva was an academic supervisor of 25 students in the frame of the national project “Students’ practice” from 2013 to 2015.

As a researcher, Dr. Elena Blagoeva plans in the future to continue her research in three areas - higher education, intercultural competences and project management. She envisages the development of a project aimed at measuring the internationalization of higher education in Bulgaria; the organization of practical training on ethical behavior and the development of intercultural competences for working in an international environment; additional trainings to overcome the most common problems in project management under OP 2014-2020.

The candidate's professional achievements receive high public recognition in practice. This is evidenced by the authoritative positions that she has occupied in different periods of her career development – Evaluation Expert to the European Commission for Erasmus-Mundus Programme (2009-2013); Local Consultant for the MLSP regarding the management of PHARE projects - “Social Inclusion” (BG0102.06) and “Profesional Education” (BG0004.03); Expert for the Anticorruption Commission (CM) in the project “Strengthening the Capacity of the Anticorruption Commission for Combating Corruption in Public Administration and Juridical System in Bulgaria”, Project manager in NGO projects, Institutional Erasmus Coordinator (2000-2010); management position in education – Director “International Relations” (1997-2012),

Director – Central University Administration (2000-2002), Director – Graduate School, NBU (1995-1997), etc.

In conclusion: My overall assessment of the research activities of Dr. Elena Blagoeva is positive. The candidate is credible in her scientific field, and the results of her research work meet university standards. Her active involvement in national and international projects and, in some cases, their leadership, the preparation of analyzes and opinions on the implementation of her research tasks, as well as her publications in authoritative publications show that the candidate is an established researcher with contributions to the development of knowledge and application in the management of education (in particular higher education) and culture.

III. Teaching Activities

As Chief Assistant in the Department of Administration and Management at NBU, Dr. Elena Blagoeva has developed 20 academic courses. For the Bachelor's, Master's and PhD programs, the courses developed by Dr. Elena Blagoeva are: Management Ethics; Administration of European Institutions; Intercultural Competences in Management; Project Management; EU Policies in Education and Culture; Integration Process and EU Policies; Business Ethics; Intercultural Competences for work in International Teams, International Funding for Research and Development in Public Administration, etc.

During the last two academic years, Dr. Blagoeva has led two courses in a foreign language – “Globalization and Sovereignty” and “Project Management”.

The candidate also actively participated in the development of joint international bachelor's and master's programs (BP „Business Communications”- DE; MP „International Communications”, MP „management in Tourism”)

Dr. Blagoeva has published one textbook for students - EU Policies in Education and Culture, Sofia: NBU, 2012. - 207 p., ISBN: 978-954-535-716-9. The fulfillment of requirements for publication of learning materials in the teaching modul “Moodle НБУ” (in accordance with the “Ordinance on the Employment of Full-time Teachers”) for the period of the appraisal is over 100%. For the period Dr. Blagoeva has been a scientific supervisor of 30 students, has prepared 36 scientific reviews and has participated in 126 examination committees (Resource: NBU Intranet System 2012-2019).

Her teaching activity is appreciated by the students. The average grade of students for the satisfaction with the courses of Dr. Elena Blagoeva is 4.52 out of 5 (according to the Certificate from the Center for Quality and Evaluation).

For improving and expanding his teaching skills and knowledge, Assoc. Dr. Elena Blagoeva is actively involved in the training program for the teaching and administrative staff of NBU. On the other hand, she has repeatedly been a trainer in various initiatives of the Training Resources Center and the International Relations Office at NBU. In 2014 at the invitation of the College of Education, Porto and the Second Chance Portuguese Association of Schools, she was a lecturer in the frame of the Forum „Creative Methods in Informal Education”.

All of this gives me reason to evaluate Chief Assist. Dr. Elena Blagoeva as an established, responsible and correct lecturer. Her teaching activities are strongly related to the subject of the contest, and the accumulated teaching experience is completely satisfactory for the occupation of the academic position "Assistant Professor" in the professional field 3.7. Administration and management (management of education and culture).

IV. Administration and Community Activities

The candidate is a member of several national and international organizations – Bulgarian Association for European Integration; Center LACTEA (member of the Board of LACTEA – Sofia); has been a member of European Association for International Education; Member of the Board of “Concepts-Bulgaria” Foundation.

From administrative point of view Dr. Blagoeva has been engaged in the work of a range of university committees in NBU – Recognition of Foreign Degrees Commission (2010-2012); HESP Stipends Commission (1999 – 2009); Erasmus Mobility Commission (2000 – 2009); Strategic Development Commission (2000 – 2006). She has been a Program Council Director (2015-2016) and Program Director in the department of Public Administration (2012-2013). She has actively participated in organization of scientific seminars, international conferences and round tables in NBU.

The applicant for the contest conscientiously fulfills her academic obligations (participates in regular meetings of departmental / program councils), observes admission time as a teacher and regularly conducts her academic classes.

In other words, with her administrative and social activity Chief Assist. Dr. Elena Blagoeva contributes to the development of good management practices at NBU, as well as to the improvement of the educational process in various master's and bachelor's programs at the University.

V. Personal Impressions (If any)

I don't have one.

VI. Opinions, Recommendations and Notes regarding the activities and achievements of the candidate

I do not have specific critical notes on the content of the scientific works of Dr. Elena Blagoeva. But it would be interesting to know her opinion on some questions: What are, in her view, successful tools for supporting internationalization at the institutional level in higher education? Which approaches are most commonly used by Bulgarian universities to implement the internationalization strategy? In view of the fact that universities create the cadres for the national economy, ie. education is a key factor in the social and economic development of the country, can shared responsibility be sought from the state in the process of internationalization of higher education?

CONCLUSION

Summarizing the statements so far, evaluating in aggregate, it can be confidently stated that the candidate meets the requirements for occupying the academic position of Associate Professor (Docent) in accordance with the Law on Development of the Academic Staff in Republic of Bulgaria, the Rules for its implementation, as well as the requirements of the NBU set out in Appendix 2 of the NBU Ordinance on the Development of the Academic Staff.

With complete conviction and responsibility I propose the candidate Chief Assist. Dr. Elena Atanasova Blagoeva to be elected to the post of Associate Professor in the professional area 3.7 Administration and Management (Management in Education and Culture) at NBU.

04.03.2020

Signature:

/Prof. Galina Kurteva, PhD/