

REVIEW

by Dr. Iskra Bogdanova Christova-Balkanska - Professor at the Economic Research Institute at BAS, of the materials submitted for the participation in the competition for the academic position "Associate Professor" at the University of Plovdiv (PA) "Paisii Hilendarski", in the sphere of higher education 3. Social economic and legal sciences, professional field 3.8. Economics, political economy - public sector economy and social policy.

By order № PD 81-.43 of 11.01. 2022 of the Rector of Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski" (PU) I was appointed as a Member of the Scientific Jury in a competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" and according to the decision of the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences (FESS) at Plovdiv University (PA) "Paisii Hilendarski", with Protocol № 162 / 17.12.2021 in the field of higher education 3. Social and legal sciences, professional field 3.8. Economics, Political economy, - Political economy, economy of the Public Sector and Social Policy announced for the needs of the Department of Economic Sciences at the FIS at the Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv.

In the competition for 'associate professor', announced in the State Gazette, issue 94, dated 12.11.2021 and on the website of the University of Plovdiv "Paisii Hilendarski", for the needs of the Department of Economic Sciences at the Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences (FESS), participate Ch. Assistant Professor Dr. Blaga Petrova Madzhurova as the only candidate.

1. General presentation of the received materials

Participating in the competition for "Associate Professor", Ch. Assistant Professor Blaga Petrova Madzhurova, PhD, presented a set of materials on paper, in accordance with the Regulations for the development of the academic staff of the University, and in particular the following documents: Application form of the Rector for admission to the competition; CV; Higher education diploma;

Diploma for educational and scientific degree "Doctor"; Information on compliance with the minimum national and additional faculty requirements; Schedule of scientific papers; Annotations of the materials under Art. 65 of PRASPU, including self-assessment of the contributions in Bulgarian and English; Declaration of originality and authenticity of the attached documents; Certificate of work experience; Documents for educational work; Research documents; Separation protocols; Other necessary documents.

For the purposes of this competition, Dr. Madzhurova has submitted a total of 13 publications, of which 1 personal habilitation research, participation in 3 collective monographs, participation with an independent chapter in 1 collective monograph, 7 articles and reports published in unrefereed journals with scientific review or published in edited collective volumes, 1 textbook (co-authored). The citations in referenced and indexed in world-famous databases are 2, the citations in monographs and collective volumes with scientific review are 5.

Out of the minimum required sum of points 400, according to the Information for fulfillment of national minimum requirements according to LDAS (art. 2b) and the Regulations for its application (art. 1a, para 1) e, the candidate has realized 528.9 points.

The publications for the competition for "Associate Professor" do not repeat the publications for the acquisition of ONS "Doctor" and for holding the academic position of "Chief Assistant". Dr. Madzhurova has published a book based on her dissertation.

Dr. Madzhurova has participated in 5 research projects. She is the author of textbooks, a co-authored textbook on social policy. A curriculum and a course in the following disciplines have been developed in a team: "Public Service Management", "Social Policy". The candidate gives lectures on public service management, social policy, microeconomics, economics.

2. Brief biographical data of the candidate

Dr. Madzhurova's professional path is multifaceted, judging by the biographical data. She specializes in public health, graduated from medical school and has a master's degree in health management. Dr. Madzhurova holds a PhD in Political Economy from the University of Plovdiv.

Acquires the qualification of an international mediator at the Ministry of Justice. She holds the position of junior expert in analysis and expertise of the problems of European integration, she is also a sales representative at PT Holding AD, organizes the presentation of the Republic of Bulgaria at international exhibitions, works as a senior expert at the Ministry of Economy and Energy. The acquired expertise finds application in the work of the candidate in the Council of Ministers, as a specialist in social policy.

After 2017, Dr. Madzhurova devoted herself to teaching and research at the Department of Economic Sciences at FESS, Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv. She has been a lecturer on the Erasmus program in Spain and Italy. She speaks 4 languages and has proven her ability to work in a team, judging by the publications.

3. General characteristics of the candidate's activity

The works submitted for the needs of this competition are in the following areas, namely socio-economic policy, social cohesion, social entrepreneurship, the working poor, issues related to EU policies towards young people, fiscal policy of the new EU member states, learning policies among the active population and the effects on young people, the impact of new technologies on the labor market, the global economic aspects of the impact on economic growth and employment.

The independent research paper "*Social Evil - Links with Macroeconomic Determinants and Policies to overcome them*" examines the impact of crises that have exacerbated macroeconomic imbalances and socio-economic problems in the EU and Bulgaria. An attempt is made to theoretically and empirically comprehend the links between economic growth, inequality and poverty. The

research is multidisciplinary, where the influence of external factors is intertwined with the inability of many governments to cope with growing debt and economic problems, which leads to inadequate and incapable decisions in the field of socio-economic policy. An attempt is being made to assess the convergence on social indicators between Bulgaria and the EU.

The changes brought about by globalization are exacerbating the contradictions between countries and regions and there is an increasing political and economic need for adequate social cohesion policies. The publication "*Social Cohesion National, Regional and Structural Changes in the Context of Bulgaria-EU-Western Balkans*" (co-authored) and "*Social Cohesion in Education - Achieved Level in Bulgaria, the EU and the Western Balkans*" from the book "*European Integration*" Today, some problems and opportunities" clarify the nature of social cohesion, manifestations and practices, not only in the EU countries, but also their impact on the countries of the Western Balkans, in the process of their preparation for EU membership. It was emphasized that education is a key element in achieving the goals of social cohesion within the EU policies. Social cohesion, assessed on the basis of indicators, showing the dynamics of the labor market, as well as EU policies, are also discussed in the article "*Social cohesion*" (Bulgaria-EU-Western Balkans) (co-author)

A serious economic and social problem is the presence of working poor, a phenomenon showing the mismatch between the implemented macroeconomic measures and policies and the effective results in the EU member states of Eastern Europe. ("*Macroeconomic measures on the phenomenon of working poverty. Cause effect analysis. Innovation and Modeling and Analytics*" (Co-author.)

Policies aimed at the inclusion of young people in active age, the promotion of lifelong learning practices, social inclusion, the implementation of permanent and sustainable policies in EU countries to achieve these key objectives are discussed in the articles "*Dimensions of young adult policies impact*" on a comparative principle at an European level (co-authored), "*LLL policies as an*

opportunity to promote growth and social inclusion" (co-authored), and "Cross case analysis of local regional networks in LLL policy making across Europe" (Co-authored)

The creation of a favorable environment by the State for the development of social entrepreneurship is an essential part of the state's social policy, and the countries of continental Europe have significant experience in implementing practices for inclusion and employment among the non-property strata and a prerequisite for employment growth, stabilizing the labor market and achieving sustainable economic growth. The article *"Social Entrepreneurship in Bulgaria as part of integration processes - problems and prospects for development" (co-authored)* reveals the role and importance of the social entrepreneurship for Bulgaria as an important element of the social economy.

Dr. Madzhurova's research interests include studies on the changing nature of the labor market, due to the impact of the dynamics of information and communication technologies (ICT), such as the articles: *"The impact of innovation and technological progress on the labor market" (Co-authored), "Innovations as a factor for Economic growth and Labor market development" (Co-authored).*

In the light of changes in international economic relations, especially in recent decades, globalization, which is reflected in FDI and international migration, is currently manifesting itself in various directions, influenced by external economic shocks and the dynamics of ICT. These geostrategic changes are reflected in the article *"Policies and innovations to promote economic growth and employment in the age of globalization" (Co-author)*. The emphasis is on clarifying the factors that determine the changes in the labor market and jobs, as one of the leading places, are the dynamic information technology changes and the different degree of adaptability of countries to the dynamics of the modern world. (*"The Impact of Globalization on the Nature of Jobs and Employment" (Co-author)*).

Dr. Madzhurova also examines the divergent fiscal policies of EU countries in the context of rising government spending caused by crises and the still pressing issue of fiscal consolidation in the EU. (*“Governance and Education ”*(Co-authored)

I emphasize the active work of Dr. Madzhurova as a teacher and lecturer, which is reflected in the publication of a series of teaching materials and a textbook.

4. Contributions (scientific, scientific-applied, applied)

Dignity of the candidate is the interest in the socio-economic sphere in combination with the effects caused by the external economic environment.

- In the personal monograph, an attempt is made to shed light on the interrelations between the macroeconomic development of the EU member states and Bulgaria in overcoming the imbalances in the economy and the possibilities of social policy in action. Of interest is the EU-Bulgaria empirical analysis of the social dimensions and the conclusions in this regard, which show the convergence of social indicators, with a deviation from the poverty rate. The comparative analysis between the EU and Bulgaria is complemented by policies to overcome social evils, emphasizing the benefits and effects for Bulgaria of them. The implementation of sound economic and social policies in the EU can contribute to the restructuring of socio-economic policy in the EU and respectively in Bulgaria.
- The study of the nature of social cohesion and the implementation of public policies helps to clarify one of the main problems of EU social policy, such as social and financial inclusion, which are an essential part of social cohesion. It is emphasized that, despite the different levels of economic development in the EU, the use of similar and adequate policies is likely to contribute to deepening economic integration within the Community.

Education, as an element of social cohesion, is an important factor in the cohesion and effectiveness of European policies.

- A contributing to the candidate's research is the problem of the working poor. This phenomenon is a sign of inefficient use of resources and the ability of the national economy to pursue appropriate policies to overcome it. Developed economies in the EU are also not very successful in overcoming this problem due to deindustrialization. Achieving sustainable economic growth is unthinkable without solving this problem in building a new industrial society.
- Also of interest are studies related to job restructuring, overcoming poverty and social exclusion of broad sections of the population through educational programs and retraining. The emphasis is on the education of young people and their realization on the labor market. Lifelong learning is a prerequisite for the adaptation of workers to any new economic reality in a country or region.
- The formulation of policies and their evaluation and perception within the EU, in particular in Bulgaria, and their dissemination in nearby countries in the Western Balkans region is also an important moment. Attempts to restructure the economy and the labor market, due to significant geostrategic economic influences, provide useful scientific and practical knowledge.
- The survey on social entrepreneurship in Bulgaria is an essential element of the inclusion of the socially excluded, in overcoming poverty and the inclusion of these people in the labor market. Significant attention is also being paid to this issue by the European Commission, whose projects support the deepening of social entrepreneurship as a form of overcoming poverty and unemployment.
- The teaching is complemented by research to improve the scientific level, depending on the economic capabilities of the State for the scientific

development performance. Scientific and educational advances are known to have a positive impact on economic growth. The publication of a textbook (co-authored) shows a thorough knowledge of the theory and practice of social economics and politics.

5. Assessment of the personal contribution of the candidate

The candidate has indicated her personal contribution for each of the publications and I am convinced that the publications submitted for review (the personal monograph, participation in books, articles and reports, as well as the textbook) are the candidate contribution.

6. Critical remarks and recommendations

Some recommendations can be addressed to the candidate's works, which do not violate the predominance of the contribution moments in the presented works.

The theoretical part of the personal monograph mentions a number of researchers who have contributed to the search for the relationship between economic growth and macroeconomic development of the country. For the sake of clarity, I believe that the study of the theory that could explain the complex links between economic development and the possibilities of overcoming inequalities in the economy and distribution processes should be deepened, to shed light on the role of the state in resolving the contradictions of labor and capital in the new conditions of high technological progress, overcoming extreme poverty and other related manifestations.

In this regard, I would like to see in particular the economists mentioned in the study to which economic currents they belong, what is their contribution to the justification of the links between economic growth, investment, the economy's ability to respond to external shocks and opportunities of sound social policy. The theoretical concepts presented in this way do not provide much clarity about their contribution in the general context of the theory explaining the processes in the social economy. Moreover, to some extent the theoretical part does not serve the

particularly interesting empirical and statistical material presented in the second and third chapters.

The problem is the understanding of the share of the candidate's participation in the two collective monographs.

I recommend to Dr. Madzhurova, in the future, to deepen independent research in the field of theory of social economy and politics.

7. Personal impressions

I do not know Dr. Madzhurova personally, but my impressions are entirely positive, when I get acquainted with her professional life path, her research and teaching activities.

CONCLUSION

The documents and materials presented by Ch. Assistant Professor Dr. Blaga Petrova Madzhurova meet all the requirements of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LDAS), the Regulations for the implementation of LDAS and the relevant Regulations of PU "Paisii Hilendarski". The candidate in the competition has submitted a sufficient number of scientific papers published after the ONS 'Doctor' and for the competition for Chief Assistant Professor.

There are original scientific and applied contributions in the works of the candidate, as some of the publications have been published in journals published by international academic publishers.

Theoretical and empirical research have practical applicability, and some of them are directly oriented to the educational work. The scientific and teaching qualification of Ch. Assistant Professor Dr. Blaga Petrova Madzhurova is not subject to any doubt. The achieved by Ch. Assistant Professor Dr. Blaga Petrova Madzhurova results in teaching and research activities fully comply with the specific requirements of the Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences (FESS),

adopted in connection with the Regulations of the University of Plovdiv for the implementation of LDAS.

After getting acquainted with the scientific papers and textbook presented for the needs of the competition and evaluating the significant contributing qualities, I find it reasonable to give my convincing positive assessment and recommend to the Esteemed Scientific Jury to prepare a Report-proposal to the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences to select Ch. Assistant Professor Dr. Blaga Petrova Madzhurova for the academic position of ‘Associate Professor’ at the University of Plovdiv “P. Hilendarski in the professional field 3.8.Economy, political economy, - Political economy - public sector economy and social policy.

01.03. 2022

Reviewer:

Prof. Dr. Iskra B. Christova-Balkanska