

## REVIEW

by Prof. D.Sc. Sonya Borisova Ilieva  
for Prof. Dr. Veselin Penchev Petkov

in connection with his participation in the "Konstantin Preslavski - University of Shumen" competition for the academic position of **PROFESSOR** in the field of higher education: 4. Natural sciences, mathematics and informatics, professional direction 4.4. Earth Sciences (Social Geography, Cultural Tourism and Regional Development) in the Department of "Geography, Regional Development and Tourism" at the Faculty of Natural Sciences

### 1. Brief information about the candidate

Associate Professor Dr. Veselin Petkov is the only candidate in the announced competition. He completed his secondary education at PGOHHT "prof. Dr. A. Zlatarov". He obtained a bachelor's and master's degree in the scientific field of the announced competition. In parallel, he completed various levels of courses in English, Russian and Turkish. In 2019, he defended the ONS "doctor". He worked as a teacher, lecturer in the Department of "Geography, Regional Development and Tourism". He currently holds the position of deputy. Dean of the Faculty of Natural Sciences. He has worked in various projects: 1 international, national and university, which should be reflected in paragraph 2 of this review.

### 2. Satisfying the minimum national requirements for holding the position of PROFESSOR

According to ZRASRB and PPZRASRB and the accepted minimum scientometric indicators in professional direction 4.4. Earth Sciences, the candidate exceeds the required 600 points by participating in the current competition with 819.64 points, which are distributed among the indicator groups as follows:

- according to indicator A: 50 points out of the required 50 points;
- according to indicator C: 100 items out of the required 100 items;
- by group of indicators D: 256.64 items out of the required 200 items;
- by group of indicators D: 163 items out of the required 100 items;
- by group of indicators E: 250 points out of the required 150 points.

### 3. Analysis of the candidate's publications presented in the competition

As a **habilitation thesis**, Assoc. Ph.D. Veselin Petkov presents his monograph "Cultural Geography". It gives a new look at geographical knowledge, with the aim of giving rise to a new vision of regional socio-cultural and demographic problems in the world and in Bulgaria. In it, he gets acquainted with the theoretical statements and concepts in cultural geography. Further on, civilizations are successively considered, as part of the main branch in this science, namely Geography of Civilizations. A modern view is also presented on current topics such as: geography of consumption, geography of conflicts, culinary geography, etc. These are topics related to society, corresponding to desires, habits and cultural differences. The author focuses on the fact that through this modern geography he hopes to build in the reader a new view of geographical knowledge.

At the same time, Prof. Dr. Veselin Petkov has published **textbooks and study aids**, some of them co-authored with Prof. Dr. Milen Penerliev.

In the "Compendium of study materials on Geography of Population and Settlements", which was developed according to the thematic sections, according to the current curriculum. A glossary of terms is placed at the end of the textbook, and the authors believe that a more successful study of the material of each topic will be positively mediated by prior acquaintance with the conceptual apparatus. The textbook contains tasks for independent work - these are the practical tasks that will consolidate knowledge, as well as lead to the acquisition of new skills, such as for working with geographic text, as well as for compiling geographic forecasts, analysis of statistical data. It is not known why in the summaries of this publication intended for the scientific jury there is a text that calls the jury to prepare for this study discipline: "Remember that successful preparation for a semester exam requires responsibility and persistence. Good luck!"

In the "Compendium of study materials on the geography of the population, settlements and regions in Bulgaria" an attempt is made to fill the gap of study aids in study disciplines in the field of Public Geography. Topics are strictly defined by volume. They contain both tasks for independent work and "cards" with additional text in order to diversify the scientific style of the publication. At the end of each topic there is a form for seminar classes. It, in addition to consolidating the basic knowledge of the topics, also aims to develop new ones with the help of independent work with scientific texts and statistical data.

The next collection, with which Associate Professor Dr. Veselin Petkov participated in the competition, is "Collection of study materials on Geography of Tourism in Bulgaria". It is aligned with is aligned with the curricula of the disciplines Geography of Tourism and Tourist Resources of Bulgaria. Here, in the summary of the publication, there are again references to the jury as to students, which leads to the conclusion that the summary is an exact copy of the introduction to the publication.

The other edition that enriches the scientific publications of the candidate is the series of two volumes "Compendium of educational materials for additional training in public geography" 1st and 2nd part:

In the first part, problems such as regionalization in a geographical aspect, planning regions in Bulgaria, the ethnographic features of the territories in Bulgaria, geoglobal problems such as the geography of conflicts and the geography of pandemics, and a number of current topics concerning public geography are touched upon.

In the second part, problems of practical application value have found a place, examining the study of the population and settlements in Bulgaria, the Bulgarian diasporas, the folklore differences of the territories, analyzing global crises with a reflection in society and others.

Assoc. Ph.D. Veselin Petkov presents in the competition for PROFESSOR the textbook "Sample Routes for Conducting Field Practices in Public Geography". It presents several options (routes) for field geographic practices in public geography, as well as methodological guidelines and options for conducting initial field research.

The candidate in co-authorship also offers a chapter from a collective collection on the topic " Geodemographic problems of Bulgaria. Number and

movement of the population. Population Structure'. In this chapter, the focus is placed on the fact that the quantitative and qualitative characteristics of the population determine the degree of socioeconomic development of each country.

Prof. Dr. Veselin Petkov also presents an impressive number of **articles and reports for the competition**:

In the first place among them, the articles should be placed **in a global database**. There are two of them and they are co-authored.

The first is "Modern characteristics of Bulgarian border territories ." /"Modern characteristics of Bulgarian border territories " / - in it the border territories are considered and characterized as part of the hierarchical structure of the national geographical space, the development of the settlements, the population and the specific border economy in them .

The second article "Social status and Gut Microbial Dysbiosis in adults and children with Autism Spectrum Disorders: a profound review of the available literature sources" literature sources"/ - in this article, autism is considered as a complex disorder without a specific diagnosis, and the review that is made in the article aims to provide basic information about definitions, historical data, diagnostic methods, behavioral etiology, gastrointestinal and social problems in adults and children with ASD.

Since Assoc. Ph.D. Veselin Petkov has presented a large volume of articles and reports, including in refereed and indexed editions, further on in the review only the topics they consider will be indicated, without describing their names:

- study of the geographical distribution of UNESCO-protected sites in the Balkan countries;
- for the development of culinary tourism as part of the culinary regional traditions of the territories;
- the classification of urban settlements in Bulgaria in a historical-geographical aspect, emphasizing the genesis and formation of today's urban network in the country;
- concepts and approaches to characterize the culinary differences in the given territories;
- major changes in the labor market since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic;
- phenomenon of fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) in the context of their production and trade; analysis of the positive impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on FMCG;
- survey research as one of the most frequently used field methods in research work;
- the article examines the main principles of sustainable tourism - an analogy is made with the application of these principles in the Shumen region, through an analysis of cultural and cognitive tourism and the opportunities for the development of wine tourism;
- a manifestation of cultural-cognitive tourism related to the attitude to food, also strengthening the tendency towards the tourist's interest in a given authentic "culinary place";
- in the last two years, however, contrary to the general trend of maintaining the negative indications for exiting the crisis, the tourism industry has seen growth. it is expressed in an increase in tourist arrivals after 2011 with an average of 4% on an annual basis;

- societal challenges related to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic;
- these processes are analyzed using the example of the coronavirus pandemic in the spring and summer of 2020;
- the product of religious tourism includes countless many religious attractions that can be grouped into several areas explained in detail in the article;
- presentation of culinary tourism as an independent branch with its own characteristics, resources and established destinations;
- presentation of a brief retrospective of his works on the works of Prof. Anastas Ishirkov on Dobruja;
- the purpose of the article is to present the lessons learned from Covid-19 and look positively to the future, when tourism will invariably experience its "reboot";
- the presentation of the Rhodopes as an ethno- demographic and cultural "bridge" in the Balkans;
- analyzing the current situation related to the Covid-19 pandemic. By basic indicators and a number of purely geographical aspects of this contagion;
- highlighting some important concepts, ideas and approaches that are, in purely geographical terms, part of theoretical science; those that are fully applicable in the training of tourist personnel in order to build a spatial image;
- highlighting the characteristics of slow tourism, the slow food movement and food tourism, clarifying their strong interconnection and their beneficial effect on rural areas in Bulgaria;
- clarification of the demographic situation in the municipality of Kirkovo in the period 2011-2022, which is mountainous, it is also a border territory.

#### 4. Critical notes and questions

As a reviewer, I believe that the overall scientific production of Assoc. Ph.D. Veselin Petkov corresponds to the theme of the competition /except for the article on autism/. It shows that he has in-depth knowledge, which he has successfully implemented in his work.

I have no questions for the candidate.

#### 5. Conclusion

Despite the "friendly fire" towards him, I confidently give my POSITIVE evaluation and propose to the scientific jury to propose to the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Natural Sciences, **Assoc. Ph.D. Veselin Petkov to occupy the academic position of PROFESSOR in the field of higher education: 4. Natural sciences, mathematics and informatics, professional direction 4.4. Earth Sciences (Social Geography, Cultural Tourism and Regional Development) in the Department of "Geography, Regional Development and Tourism".**

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Shumen

Reviewer:   
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