

OPINION

by Assoc. Prof. TODORKA KABAKCHIEVA Ph.D.
field of higher education 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences,
professional field 3.4. Social Activities (Social Communication)

Chairman of the Scientific Jury in a competition for the academic position of
PROFESSOR in the field of higher education 4. Natural Sciences, Mathematics and
Informatics, professional field 4.4. Earth Sciences (Social Geography, Cultural
Tourism and Regional Development)

This opinion has been prepared in accordance with the Order No. RD 16-144/28.07.2022 of the Rector of Konstantin Preslavsky University of Shumen, on the basis of the Decision of the Faculty of Natural Sciences (Minutes No. FD-02-12/15.07.2022) in accordance with Art. 1 and 2 of the Regulations for the Implementation of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LDASRB).

I. Contest Details

The contest was proposed by the "Geography, Regional Development and Tourism" department at the Faculty of Natural Sciences at the Konstantin Preslavsky University of Shumen and has passed through all legally provided structural levels of approval. Documents for participation were submitted by one candidate – Assoc. Prof. VESELIN PENCHEV PETKOV Ph.D.. The requirements of the LDASRB and the Regulations for its application, as well as the Regulations for the implementation of the LDASRB at Shumen University, have been met, and all legal grounds for conducting the procedure exist.

II. Brief biographical data of the candidate

From the presented autobiography it is clear that VESELIN PETKOV was born in 1990. He completed his secondary education at the Vocational High School for Clothing, Nutrition and Chemical Technologies "Prof. Asen Zlatarov" in the city of Shumen in 2008. He obtained a Bachelor's degree in "Geography and Biology" in 2014 at the Konstantin Preslavsky University of Shumen. He has two Master's degrees – in Cultural Tourism (2015) from the University of Veliko Tarnovo "St. St. Cyril and Methodius" and in "Geography and Interactive Education" (2016) from Shumen University. In 2019, he defended a dissertation work for obtaining the educational scientific degree "Doctor" on the topic "Socio-cultural aspects of cultural tourism in

the Shumen region" (field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional direction 3.4. Social activities - Organization and management outside the realm of material production). In 2016, he was appointed as a part-time lecturer in geography at Shumen University. From the end of 2016 to September 2020, he was an Assistant professor of Economic geography at the University, and from September 2020, he was an Associate professor at the Department of Geography, Regional Development and Tourism of the same institution.

Since the end of 2020, he has also been the Vice Dean of Candidate Student Activity, Accreditation and Maintaining the Quality of Education and Academic Staff of the Faculty of Natural Sciences.

III. Analysis of the scientific research activity and scientific contributions of the candidate

In the competition for the academic post PROFESSOR Assoc. Prof. VESELIN PENCHEV PETKOV Ph.D. submitted 32 publications necessary to meet the minimum national requirements according to the regulations, as follows:

- Group of indicators B. Indicator 3. Habilitation work - monograph - 1 pc. independent monograph;
- Group of indicators G. Indicator 7. Scientific publications in publications that are referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases with scientific information - 2 pcs. (in equal co-authorship, in English);
- Group of indicators G. Indicator 8. Scientific publications in non-refereed journals with scientific review or in edited collective volumes - 21 pcs. Of them 3 independent (in English) and 18 in equal co-authorship (including 5 in English);
- Group of indicators G. Indicator 9. Published chapter of a collective monograph - 2 pcs. (including 1 pc. in equal co-authorship).
- Group of indicators E. Indicator 20. Published university textbooks or textbooks that are used in the school network - 6 pcs. (including 3 in equal co-authorship).

The thematic distribution of the candidate's scientific works covers three main areas: (1) social, cultural and medical geography; (2) cultural tourism and (3) regional development (regional planning problems, demographic and socio-cultural problems at the regional and local level).

The synthesized contribution points in the publications presented in the competition are divided into the following groups:

- studies of cultural geography as a modern branch of social geography were deepened and its most current manifestations were examined;

- the theoretical connections and hierarchical structure between cultural, culinary and alternative tourism are clarified;
- territorial differences and disproportions in the spatial organization of the tourism industry in Bulgaria, as well as in the demographic and socio-economic development of individual "marginal" territories (border, rural, mountainous, etc.) have been tracked and analyzed;
- the geographical nature of the COVID-19 pandemic and the role of medical geography in such studies are highlighted (for the first time, the indicator "average density of morbidity" is applied, the relationship "migrations - infection" is studied, the different manifestation of the pandemic by direction is analyzed village - city, etc.);
- the profile of the tourist practicing cultural tourism for the Shumen region has been specified.

In Group of indicators D. Indicator 10. Citations or reviews in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world-famous databases with scientific information or in monographs and collective volumes, Assoc. Ph.D. VESELIN PENCHEV PETKOV indicated 2 citations of his publications, and Indicator 11. Citations in monographs and collective volumes with scientific review – 51.

In Group of indicators E. Indicator 15. Participation in a national scientific or educational project, the candidate notes his participation in 3 national projects, and according to Indicator 16. Participation in an international scientific or educational project - in 2.

IV. Analysis of the candidate's educational and teaching activities

At the Konstantin Preslavsky University of Shumen Assoc. Prof. VESELIN PENCHEV PETKOV Ph.D. leads lectures and exercises in the undergraduate majors "Geography and Biology", "History and Geography", "Geography and Regional Policy", "Tourism" and in the master's programs "Geography and Interactive Education", "Geography and GIS", "Regional Development and Tourism". All courses are provided with curricula developed by the candidate and are in tune with the field and professional direction of the announced competition. During his entire teaching experience at the University, Assoc. Prof. VESELIN PETKOV Ph.D. implemented the field geographical practices of the students, while also preparing them for participation in various scientific forums.

In the month of May, 2022, the candidate will carry out teaching mobility under the Erasmus+ program at the University of Porto, Portugal.

V. Critical Notes and Recommendations

I would recommend the candidate to further develop the thematic areas in which he works and to increase his independent publication activity. In addition, in the future he should pay more attention to linguistic problems and errors in his texts.

VI. Conclusion

After a thorough review of the documents and materials submitted by the candidate for participation in the competition, it was found that he meets all the legal requirements:

1. Possesses an educational and scientific degree "Doctor".
2. He holds the academic position of Associate professor at the Konstantin Preslavsky University of Shumen from 2020 to the present.
3. Presents an author's monographic work, which does not repeat the reviewed ones for obtaining the educational and scientific degree Doctor and for occupying the academic position Associate Professor (Petkov, V. (2022) Cultural geography. Shumen: Bishop Konstantin Preslavsky University Press, pp. 1 – 177, ISBN 987-619-201-612-8), as well as 31 more original research papers and publications, which are assessed in aggregate.
4. Meets the minimum national requirements from the Regulations for the implementation of the LDASRB for the field of higher education 4. Natural sciences, mathematics and informatics, professional direction 4.4. Earth Sciences. Out of a total of 600 points required, the candidate defends 819.64 points as follows:

Group of indicators	Indicator	Minimum Number points	Number of points of the candidate
Group A.	Indicator 1.	50	50
Group B.	Indicator 3.	100	100
Group G.	Indicator 7.		30
	Indicator 8.		211,64
	Indicator 9.		15
	Total points in the group	200	256,64
Group D.	Indicator 10.		10
	Indicator 11.		153
	Total points in the group	100	163
Group E.	Indicator 15.		30
	Indicator 16.		40
	Indicator 17.		180
	Total points in the group	150	250
Total points		600	819,64

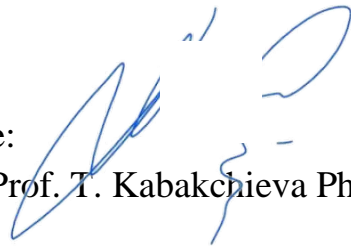
5. In the scientific works of the candidate, no plagiarism has been proven according to the law.

In conclusion, I propose that the members of the scientific jury support the candidacy of Associate Professor PETKOV 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) at Konstantin Preslavsky University of Shumen.

09.09.2022 г.

Signature:

Assoc. Prof. T. Kabakchieva Ph.D.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several loops and strokes, positioned above the printed name.