

REVIEW

by competition for the academic position of ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR
in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional direction 3.9. TOURISM
(Geography of tourism, regional economy and development),
announced in the State Gazette No. 49/06.06.2023
for the needs of the department "Biology", Faculty of Natural Sciences,
Konstantin Preslavski University of Shumen
with a single candidate Dr. SEVJAN F. SABRIEVA

REVIEWER

Prof. Dr. TODORKA KABAKCHIEVA,
field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional direction 3.9. Tourism
(Communication and Sociology of Tourism and Regional Development),
Konstantin Preslavsky University of Shumen

The review was prepared on the basis of Order RD-16-101/28.08.2023 of the Rector of Shumen University and Decision of the Scientific Jury dated 20.09.2023. Its content is in accordance with the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LDASRB), its Implementing regulations (IRLDASRB) and the Regulations for the development of the academic staff at Shumen University.

I. Personal characteristics of the candidate for the announced competition

On the basis of the attached professional curriculum vitae of the candidate Dr. SEVDZHAN SABRIEVA, I direct the attention of the scientific jury to the following more essential facts of her development and academic experience, which give grounds for admission and participation in the competition:

- graduated from higher education with a master's degree (specialty "Geography and Biology"), acquired at the Konstantin Preslavsky University of Shumen in 2002;
- began his career in 2003 as a teacher of geography and biology in Dimitar Minchev elementary school, Paskalevo village, Dobrich municipality;
- her academic internship at Shumen University is primarily related to teaching activities in PN 3.9. Tourism Began in 2006 - at first led seminars and practical exercises, then successively moved through the positions of "senior assistant" (2009 - 2011), "main assistant" (2011 - 2015), "assistant" (2015 - 2018), "Teacher" from 2018 to present;
- in 2018 he acquired the educational and scientific degree "doctor" in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional direction 3.8. Economics (Regional Economy and Administration) based on a dissertation defended at the UNSS - Sofia on the topic "Influence of Regional Policy in Tourism".

II. Assessment of compliance with the minimum national requirements and the requirements of Shumen University

The reviewer found full compliance of the candidate's research and teaching activities with the Implementing regulations of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria

(IRLDASRB) and the Regulations for the development of the academic staff at Shumen University based on the documents presented by Dr. SABRIEVA: a report on the fulfillment of the minimum national requirements under Art. 2b, paragraphs 2 and 3 of LDASRB with the relevant evidence, a list of noticed citations, a statement of credibility, a reference to the original scientific contributions, a reference to the additional indicators applicable to the relevant field under Art. 57 a, paragraph 2 of IRLDASRB.

III. Quantitative characterization and evaluation of the presented scientific publications

For participation in the competition, Dr. SEVJAN SABRIEVA states:

- as habilitation work **1 monograph** (co-authored);
- **1 article** published in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world-famous databases with scientific information (in equal co-authorship);
- **34 articles** published in non-refereed journals with scientific review or in edited collective volumes, of which **10 are independent** (27.8%), the rest - in equal co-authorship.

6 of the articles are in English.

The total number of publications is **36** with a volume for the author of **362** pages. (Table 1.)

№	Post type	Authorship		language		Number of posts	Author page count
		independent	co-authored	BG	EN		
1.	Monograph	-	1	1	-	1	165
2.	Articles	10	25	29	6	35	197
Total						36	362

Table 1. Publications presented by qualitative and quantitative characteristics

1. Assessment of habilitation work (Group C, Indicator 3.)

The monograph "Tourist infrastructure and superstructure" (2019) is presented for the candidate's habilitation work. The monograph was written in co-authorship, with 144 pages out of a total of 418 pages being declared as the independent work of S. SABRIEVA. (However, upon closer inspection and counting, it turns out that the author's pages are 165, not including the appendices.)

The candidate's authorship in the monograph under consideration is reflected in:

- Chapter 1. Theoretical foundations of the material base of tourism, point 1.7. Economic aspects of the material base of tourism (6 pages);
- Chapter 2. Types of tourist superstructure and infrastructure, point 2.7. Commercial sites (4 pages);
- Chapter 3. Infrastructure and superstructure of different types of tourism, points 3.3.6 Superstructure for recreational tourism, 3.3.7. Superstructure for cultural tourism and 3.3.8. Super structure for business tourism (total 15 pages);
- the entire Chapter 5. Infrastructure and superstructure of Bulgarian tourism (all 129 pages);

- Chapter 6. Contemporary trends and perspectives, point 6.1. Possibilities for the development of the tourist infrastructure and superstructure in Bulgaria (11 pages).

The monograph examines a problem that is extremely poorly represented in Bulgarian literature. For the first time, a regional overview of the country is made, as well as for the first time a relatively comprehensive description of the types of tourism infrastructure and superstructure is offered. The often underestimated spatial planning is also in the focus of attention. In Chapter 5, completely authored for the candidate, the specifics of the tourist infrastructure and superstructure in the 6 planning regions of Bulgaria are examined: places of accommodation, dining and entertainment establishments, transport infrastructure, tourist information centers, travel agencies, holiday villages, resorts, eco-trails, museums, etc. specific facilities and elements forming the product of different types of tourism for individual regions and built specifically to create suitable conditions for tourists.

The material base of Bulgarian tourism, analyzed by the author in Chapter 5., is a frequently discussed topic, but insufficiently and thoroughly studied and systematized. The text draws attention to the emergence, development and regulatory framework of this base as a structure-determining element of primary importance for the tourism sector of the country's economy. The income of this economic branch is directly dependent on the availability and quality of the material base - it can attract tourists, as well as redirect tourist flows.

Chapter 5. of the monograph problematizes this current topic in the management of modern tourism in the planning regions of Bulgaria and the territorial-tourism structures and resources at the local level. They fulfill the role of reference points for achieving sustainability in the development of tourism on a regional and national level. This determines the author's research focus, starting with an in-depth examination of the peculiarities of the tourist infrastructure and superstructure of individual regions.

In my capacity as a scientific editor of the monograph, familiar in depth with the research work, I have reason to point out the following main contributions relating to the candidate's independent creativity in the proposed text:

- in theoretical terms - the problem is considered, poorly represented in the Bulgarian scientific literature. For the first time, such a regional review is being made for the country, as well as for the first time a relatively comprehensive description of the types of tourist infrastructure and superstructure is offered. A significant contribution of the author is the personal research carried out on the provision and condition of the tourist material base in the 6 planning regions in Bulgaria;
- in a practical-applied plan - the guidelines and opportunities for future development of the tourist infrastructure and superstructure and the formation of this base of the country's tourism policy are of a contributing nature.

The part of the monograph, author's work of the candidate, has all the attributes of a thorough, independently conducted scientific research with contributions in theoretical and practical-applied terms. The obtained results, conclusions and recommendations also outline guidelines for subsequent research in the thematic area of labor.

2. Quantitative characteristics and evaluation of the other attached publications (Group D, Indicators 6. and 7.)

In addition to a monographic work, Dr. S. SABRIEVA submitted 35 articles for participation in the competition, 10 of which were independent, the rest were written in equal co-authorship. The indicated number speaks in favor of the candidate not only as a quantitative indicator, but also as a broad interdisciplinary thematic connection of research. Only one of the publications (in a collection indexed in Web of Science) falls into the column of Indicator D.6. Articles and reports published in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information. The remaining 34 are referred to Indicator D.7. Articles and

reports published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or published in edited collective volumes.

The proposed texts treat current problems from the theory of tourism, which the reviewer separates into the following 5 thematic groups:

1. Territorial specifics in the development and management of tourism (Indicator D.7.: 7.1., 7.2., 7.4., 7.7., 7.12., 7.19., 7.23., 7.29., 7.30. – 9 items)
2. Tourist resources (Indicator D.6.: 6.1. and Indicator D.7.: 7.5., 7.6., 7.8., 7.9., 7.11., 7.15., 7.20. – 8 items)
3. Specialized types of tourism (Indicator D.7.: 7.3., 7.10., 7.21., 7.22., 7.24., 7.31. – 6 items)
4. Tourist infrastructure and superstructure (Indicator D7: 7.13., 7.14., 7.16., 7.17., 7.18. – 5 items)
5. Hospitality (Indicator D.7.: 7.26., 7.27. – 2 items)
6. Training in the field of tourism (Indicator D7: 7.25., 7.32. – 2 items)
7. Others (Indicator D.7.: 7.28., 7.33. and 7.34.)

In the first thematic group, the publications that concern the peculiarities, problems and guidelines for the territorial development and management of tourism at the national, regional and local level are distinguished. The separate texts present an analysis of the situation in different municipalities, districts, planning regions and tourist areas of Bulgaria and bring out the main orientations and trends for the development of the sector in them. The group also includes articles that examine the uniqueness of tourism in foreign tourist spots (7.29.). This thematic area reflects the candidate's enduring research interest. It is first-rate, not only in terms of the number of publications (9 in total), but also in terms of its contribution to theory and the practical applicability of research results. The author's solo publications in this group are 3 (7.2., 7.7. and 7.12.)

Some of the publications are distinguished by a marked practical-applied character, but they are based on basic theoretical concepts and ideas from the theory of tourism. The texts offer an evaluative interpretation of the current state and prospects for the development of the industry by location, trace the differences in territorial development, highlight strengths and weaknesses, comment on risks and offer guidelines for action. Such are the works focused on the Varna Black Sea Coast (7.2. - independent publication), the Rila - Pirin tourist region (7.7. - independent publication), the South-West and North-Eastern planning regions (7.12. - independent publication and 7.23.), Montana region (7.30.). The advantages of the protected areas in the Stara Planina tourist area and the possibilities for their valorization are substantiated by using generally accepted criteria (7.1.). The analysis of the trips between Bulgaria and Turkey (7.19) is also included in the considered thematic troupe, as well as the problem of the management of human resources in tourism as particularly important and current (7.4.).

The candidate also proposes other regional developments, but these are assigned to the other thematic groups due to their more specific subject areas of research.

The second thematic group - Tourist resources - includes 8 publications that study the main types of natural and anthropogenic tourist resources in the country and in particular in individual tourist areas. Despite the fact that the candidate's independent publication in this group is only 1 (7.6.), their total number testifies to a serious commitment to the topic and a thorough research search.

Here, the text about the role of natural tourist resources in shaping Bulgaria's tourist reputation (6.1.), which was published in the scientometric database Web of Science, stands out. For the first time in the scientific literature, the possibilities, the effective exploitation and the realization of the potential of these tourist resources are problematized in direct connection with the establishment of a fruitful, active and consciously managed reputation of the tourist territory. The authors defend the thesis that the reputation of a territory is primarily based on the territorial individuality, which is composed of (1) the identifying characteristics of the place and (2) the totality of its distinctive features and resources, and the natural attractions, as an important component in this complex play an important role and can be a determining factor.

Some of the other publications from the group comment on the current trends in the utilization and use

of anthropogenic tourism resources in Bulgaria (7.9); the protection of natural tourist resources as a necessary condition for the sustainable development of Bulgarian tourism (7.20.) and make a regional review of the two main types of resources in the tourist regions Rila - Pirin (7.6. - independent development), Rhodopes (7.8.) and the Varna Black Sea region (7.11.). The cultural and natural heritage, included in the UNESCO List, also falls into the center of research attention as a tourist resource - in a comparative plan, the objects on this list in the individual Balkan countries and their influence on the tourism development of the region are analyzed (7.5.).

With a methodical contribution in this thematic group, the text presenting technology for studying tourist resources in the native village (7.15.) makes an impression. Aimed at students majoring in "Tourism" at Shumen University, such a methodology has educational functions and helps to develop the practical and intellectual abilities of the students. Creative activity and preliminary preparation make it possible to organize cognitive activities at different levels (research, analysis, comparison, generalization, prediction), requiring a detailed acquaintance with the genesis, forms, classification and functions of individual resources. To illustrate the derived algorithm, a brief description of the tourist resources in Varna has been made.

In the third thematic group - Specialized types of tourism - there are 6 publications (of which 2 are independent developments of the candidate), which discuss alternative forms of tourism as a "counterpoint" to the mass, territorially and temporally concentrated tourism of the 20th century. The research focus is on the state, problems and opportunities for application and improvement of these forms in places - in the Rhodope tourist region (7.3. - separate publication), in the South Central Planning Region (7.10. - separate publication), in the North Central Region (7.21.), in Dobrich region (7.22.), in Balchik municipality (7.24.), in Dolni Chiflik municipality (7.31.). The emphasis in the developments is on revealing the essential features of the various specialized types of tourism and transforming them into a tourist product.

The fourth thematic group - Tourist infrastructure and superstructure - covers the scientific publications (5 issues), which are the basis of the habilitation monographic work submitted in this competition. Of them, 2 are independent (7.13. and 7.14.), the rest are equal co-authorships (7.16., 7.17., 7.18.)

The fifth thematic direction - Hospitality - is represented by 2 publications that comment on the current state and mark the prospects in the development of the accommodation base in the North-Central and North-East planning regions (7.26, 7.27.). Personal studies have been made and guidelines for improving the condition of the base, the quality of services and increasing competitiveness in order to increase tourism revenues have been drawn up.

The last thematic group directly related to the competition - Education in the field of tourism - also includes 2 publications. The first examines the inter-subject connections in the university education in information technology, geography and tourism disciplines of students majoring in "Tourism" (7.25.). The second is an independent development of the candidate and thematizes the educational mobility of college students majoring in "Tourism". The carried out structural and comparative analysis of the study plans allows to note the possibilities for upgrading to the next educational and qualification degrees.

The texts separated in **the Other section** (7.28., 7.33. and 7.34.) are outside the thematic scope of the competition.

According to the reviewer, the contribution nature of the publications outside the main habilitation thesis can be linked to:

- the enrichment of scientific knowledge in the field of the geography of tourism with theoretically grounded and practically applicable studies of key aspects and main components of the tourism system such as territorial and production structure;
- the proposed methodological guidelines and the derivation of an algorithm for studying the complex nature and peculiarities of the natural and anthropogenic tourist resources available to the native village;
- the clarification of essential characteristics of some of the specialized types of tourism through

the prism of regional development.

In general, the presented scientific production of Dr. S. SABRIEVA is markedly focused, analytical and practical-applied and contains the following comparative advantages:

- a clearly expressed regional approach to individual topics, which gives utilitarian value to the studies;
- development of current problems from the management practice of the territorial development of tourism in Bulgaria at different spatial levels - testimony to the constructive nature of scientific production;
- a significant part of the texts are co-authored with established researchers in the field of tourism - proof both of the ability to work in a team and of quality accumulations in research activity through good schooling.

3. Noted citations

From the data presented in the competition, it is established that the candidate's publications are cited in 8 texts (Group D, Indicator 12. Citations in monographs and collective volumes with scientific review). Of the publications cited, 2 are independent.

IV. Quantitative characterization and evaluation of the candidate's educational, project and administrative-organizational activities (after obtaining the scientific degree "doctor")

In the period 2018 - 2023, as a teacher in the Department of Information, Qualification and Continuing Education (DIQCE) of the Shumen University in Varna and the Department of Geography, Regional Development and Tourism (previously the Department of Tourism) at the Faculty of Natural Sciences sciences Dr. S. SABRIEVA leads seminars and practical exercises for students in the specialties "Tourism", "Geography and Regional Policy", "Geography and Biology", "History and Geography", as well as courses for additional professional qualification "Teacher of Geography and economy'. Organizes and conducts the internships of students in Hospitality and Restaurant Management. He is the academic supervisor of successfully defended diplomas in the specialty "Tourism", OCS "bachelor" and a reviewer of diploma theses. Assists in conducting the state examination sessions for bachelors and masters in the "Tourism" specialty, is a member of the commission for awarding the 1st Professional Qualification Degree in DIQCE - Varna.

S. SABRIEVA creates 16 digital courses with accessible, high-quality online resources and practical tasks for students in the disciplines she leads in the university platform of the Shumen University for learning in an electronic environment.

He is the co-author of 1 textbook (Vasileva V., D. Kabakchieva, S. SABRIEVA, Anthropogenic tourist resources of Bulgaria, Shumen: Chimera, 2020.).

In 2018 and 2022, he participated in mobility under the Erasmus+ program at Klaipeda State University of Applied Sciences, Klaipeda, Lithuania and at Nevsehir Haci Bektas Veli University, Nevsehir, Turkey

For the considered period, S. SABRIEVA was involved in the development and implementation of a total of 7 research projects:

- 1 national (2022 - 2023 National program "Young scientists and postdoctoral students - 2" on the topic "Current state and opportunities for the development of alternative forms of tourism in Bulgaria");
- 6 universities, two of which he is the head of.

The projects are directly related to the theme of the competition and the publications displayed in it and have had an impact on the achievement of high quality of the candidate's research and teaching activities.

S. SABRIEVA participates in collective management bodies of the Shumen University and fulfills her academic obligations to them.

He is a member of the Bulgarian Geographical Society.

V. Personal impressions of the candidate

The reviewer's personal impressions of the candidate in the competition are based on long-term cooperation with him. In her teaching activity, Dr. S. SABRIEVA impeccably fulfills her duties, according to the study plans and schedules for each semester, demonstrating high criteria - both for her preparation and for the students' preparation. Her work is distinguished by the application of a wide arsenal of active forms and methods of teaching. She is a teacher who easily and with great effect uses modern techniques and technologies in the educational process. Her dedication and willingness to assist the students, her responsibility towards the assigned tasks and the diligence in their implementation are impressive. He enjoys a very good reputation among students and colleagues, because he possesses the necessary qualities for every university teacher - knowledge and awareness, competence and correctness in professional and personal relationships.

VI. Critical notes and recommendations

The reviewer has no substantive critical comments, but considers it appropriate to note the following:

1. In the materials for the competition, quite unspecified data presented by the candidate can be found, which is to the detriment of the candidate himself:

- once the authorship in the monograph, for example, is indicated as 144 pages (in the minimum requirements reference), a second time "162 author pages, of which 12 pages with appendices" are declared (in the summaries of the scientific publications). The correct figure ended up being 165 author pages without the appendices;
- the publications by thematic areas are carelessly summarized (in the reference to the original scientific contributions) and, accordingly, their contribution weight is unfocused;
- three of the articles (7.28, 7.33 and 7.34) have no connection with the theme of the competition.

2. In all the proposed materials, there is a neglect of punctuation, spelling, stylistic and technical layout. It is true that business records and statistics (which generally dominate the author's output) require more special arrangement and interpretation, but careful attention to style and language is a general rule, the neglect of which always leaves a bad impression.

Taking into account the content and subject matter of the scientific works proposed for review, the following recommendations to the candidate can be formulated:

- to develop and strengthen his position as a researcher of the problems of tourism and regional development, corresponding to modern trends in this field;
- in his future work, to focus on independent research and publications for which he has significant potential.

Conclusion

The inspection of the submitted materials for the competition did not reveal any violations in the procedure. The provisions of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LDASRB) and the Annex to Art. 1a (1) of IRLDASRB on the Minimum national requirements for the scientific, teaching and/or artistic or sports activities of candidates for the academic position of DOCTOR in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional direction 3.9 Tourism.

The documents requested by Dr. SEVDZHAN SABRIEVA and the evaluation of her publications give grounds for the following conclusions:

1. The candidate holds an educational and scientific degree "doctor". He works as a teacher at the

university that announced the competition. He is provided with the necessary classroom and non-auditory employment.

2. Applications in the competition with a sufficient amount of scientific production, which does not repeat the one presented for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree "doctor" and includes 36 works - 1 monograph (co-authored) and 35 articles - with a total volume of 362 pages.

3. As a whole, the peer-reviewed publications contain significant theoretical and methodological contributions and scientific and applied results in the field of tourism geography, regional economy and development.

4. A total of **444.98** points were declared for all required groups of indicators, with a minimum required of 400 points.

- Group A, Indicator 1. – **50** points with minimum national requirements: 50 points.
- Group B, Indicator 3. – **100** points at minimum national requirements: 100 points.
- Group D, Indicators 6. and 7. – **214.98** points with minimum national requirements: 200 points.
- Group D, Indicator 12. – **80** points with minimum national requirements: 50 points.

5. There is no evidence of plagiarism in scientific works according to the legally established procedure.

Based on the presented information and evaluations, the reviewer comes to the conclusion that Dr. SEVDZHAN FIKRI SABRIEVA fully meets the requirements according to the established quantitative and qualitative criteria, for occupying the academic position of ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional direction 3.9. Tourism (Geography of tourism, regional economy and development); gives his final positive assessment of the candidate and offers him for election to the above-mentioned academic position at the Konstantin Preslavsky University of Shumen.

Shumen
21.10.2023

Reviewer:
Prof. Dr.  Kabakchieva