

## OPINION

**By:** *Irena Vassileva, Prof., Dr. phil. habil., New Bulgarian University, Sofia*

**Regarding:** The application of the following candidate for the academic position of **ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR** according to the Bulgarian legislation at the American University in Bulgaria in Area of Higher Education 2. *Humanities* in Professional Field 2.1 *Philology*. The procedure has been announced in the State Gazette issue 73 dated 8 September 2017.

**Candidate:** *Dr. Diana Stantcheva*

I present the evaluation below in my capacity as a member of the Academic Jury for the procedure. This evaluation is based on the *Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act*, the Rules for its implementation, the internal AUBG rules, regulations, and policies, including the *Habilitation Procedure* and the advertisement on the AUBG website regarding the procedure.

### Evaluation of the Candidate

#### I. Basis for Evaluation

This evaluation is based on the following documents submitted by the candidate:

1. Cover letter;
2. Summary of scholarly contributions;
3. List and Abstracts of Publications;
4. Copies of 18 publications;
5. List of citations;
6. CV;
7. Teaching experience;
8. Student evaluation of teaching;
9. 2 peer reviews;
10. Last institutional evaluation

#### II. Eligibility

The candidate is fully eligible for the academic position of Associate Professor according to the **AUBG Academic Position Requirements** (see Enclosure 1).

### III. Areas of Scholarly Interests of the Candidate. Evaluation of the Contributions of the Candidate.

Diana Stantcheva's areas of research interest lie primarily in the fields of German and Bulgarian phraseology and lexicography, where she has employed various theoretical frameworks, including corpus-based and comparative and contrastive studies. Her position in the prestigious project "Kollokationen im Wörterbuch" ("Collocations in the German Language") at the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences, where we worked together, gave her a further impetus to look closer at the constituent structure of German idioms in order for them to be digitalized and thus made searchable in a large database. The resulting publications demonstrate profound knowledge of the semantic and structural characteristics of idioms and their various aspects, as well as an excellent ability of the candidate to work in an international multidisciplinary team (personal observations).

Another research project which was deservedly considered for financial support by two sponsorship bodies, namely the AUBG and the Friedrich Naumann Foundation, represents a comparative study of the terms and labelling of phraseological phenomena throughout a series of German dictionaries, starting with *The German Dictionary* by the Grimm brothers and, as the candidate duly states in her "Summary", the "results are of great interest and an innovative contribution to the historical study of German phraseology" (p. 6) and reveal her high competency in the field of historical linguistics.

The candidate's interest in lexicography is further demonstrated by her involvement with German-Bulgarian dictionaries where of special importance is the study on Geo Milev's *German-Bulgarian dictionary*, comparing its manuscript and the much later published version, which is a significant contribution to the history of lexicography in Bulgaria. Additional contributions to German-Bulgarian contrastive phraseology are the corpus- and dictionary based publications related to gender aspects of gender-specific phraseologisms in German and Bulgarian and the problems of their dictionary representation. Considering Stantcheva's enormous experience in the field of lexicography, one could really look forward to the publication of the German-Bulgarian phraseological dictionary she is working on at present.

Apart from her more theoretically oriented research (which, it should be noted, has also direct practical implementations), the candidate has constantly been drawing on her immediate teaching experience and has developed several projects stemming from that. For me especially stimulating for FL teachers is the joint international project "Globally Connected Courses" realized in cooperation with a colleague from a US university. Judging by its description, it seems extremely innovative in bringing through various online platforms classes from two continents together. This approach to teaching, in this case German as a foreign language, is in vein with the latest understanding in FLT that today's natural fascination of the young generation with the new technologies can be successfully exploited in the classroom, thus both raising students' (and teachers') awareness of the affordances of the medium in education and building bridges between cultures. Another project instigated by Stantcheva's teaching practice and financed by the DAAD is focused on *EU Terminology – German* and *Terminology for European and International Politics – German* – courses that prompted the candidate to expand her research in the field, which resulted in both theoretical publications and the development of teaching materials. Last but not least, one should mention the work in progress, namely the project "On the visualization of phrasemes in German as a foreign language classes",

which is envisioned to be a further step in the direction of unifying research and teaching, on the one hand, and the exploitation of the new technologies thereby, on the other.

The candidate is very active in presenting her research to the academic community through participation in numerous conferences in Bulgaria and abroad. Her publications, many of them in peer-reviewed journals and volumes, have been cited abundantly by Bulgarian and foreign scholars. She is member of several professional organizations, as well as an active and highly estimated translator.

The candidate's areas of research correspond fully to the **Additional Requirements** (Enclosure 2) of the current procedure.

#### **IV. Evaluation of the Candidate's teaching**

The candidate's teaching experience has been acquired at two recognized liberal arts institutions, namely the Humboldt University in Berlin, where she designed and taught courses in German phraseology, and AUBG, where she has been responsible for all German-language courses ever since 2005 when she was appointed assistant professor there. At AUBG Stantcheva has taught general German language courses at all possible levels to students of various cultural and subject-based backgrounds. It has to be pointed out here that German language and culture education at the university has considerably expanded mainly due to her constant efforts to offer and design new courses for specific target groups of students, e.g. *Modern Germany: Society, Politics, and Culture*, *Intermediate German: Perspectives on German-speaking Cultures*, *EU Terminology – German*, *Intermediate German Reading*. Undoubtedly, the most important contribution of the candidate to the further development of the curriculum at AUBG was the design and introduction of the new *Minor in Modern Languages and Cultures – German*, which has been successfully running since Fall 2015 as the first minor in languages at the university. As mentioned above, one of the courses is taught experimentally through various online platforms in cooperation with a US university. This allows students to receive hands-on experience in communicating in German with their peers. Besides, Stantcheva makes use of electronic corpora and dictionaries during her classes. To sum up, judging by the information presented by the candidate and the two peer reviews, the candidate employs the latest FLT methodologies in teaching and assessment.

She has also developed various teaching materials and more are in preparation. In several instances she has involved students in research, individually and in projects, some of them international. The student evaluations of teaching during the last five years demonstrate complete student satisfaction with the courses offered by the candidate and point once again to her high level of competence as a lecturer and the two peer reviews speak for commitment to a student-centered approach in the classroom.

The candidate also demonstrates a high degree of involvement in the university's extracurricular activities. She has initiated and organized a number of seminars, concerts, lectures, German Language and Cultural Days, German-language movie nights, and last but not least, introductory lectures elucidating grant opportunities for further studies at German universities. The latter have led to a number of students receiving grants to continue their education in Germany.

Dr. Stantcheva's teaching experience, as well as her extraordinary level of commitment to both the development of new courses and the promotion of the German language and culture among AUBG students correspond fully to the requirements of the current procedure and even go beyond them.

**V. Major critical notes and recommendations**

I would suggest to Dr. Stantcheva to widen her scope of research beyond the fields of lexicography and phraseology in the direction of cross-cultural issues ensuing from intercultural communication, as she has the best opportunities to do so, working at an English-medium university with international students.

**VI. Conclusion:**

In conclusion, the American University in Bulgaria can only profit from granting Dr. Diana Stantcheva the academic rank of "Associate Professor" and I therefore strongly propose to the members of the Academic Jury to vote "for" awarding the academic rank.

Signature and date: 01.01.2018 Irena Vassileva



---

By signing here I also declare that writing this review does not represent conflict of interest.



# American University in Bulgaria

---

ENCLOSURE 1

## AUBG Academic Position Requirements – Associate Professor

- X The Candidate has Ph.D;
- X The Candidate has served five years as Assistant Professor at a recognized academic institution;
- X The Candidate has published a monograph or publications of equal standing in specialized journals. These should not repeat publications based on which Ph. D. was granted;
- X The Candidate has experience from recognized academic liberal arts institution(s);
- X The Candidate has experience in student-centered teaching approach;
- X The Candidate has undergone at least one successful evaluation in teaching, research and service at a recognized academic liberal arts institution, including positive student evaluations of teaching.
- X The Candidate has experience in teaching in English at a higher education institution with instruction in English language.

Signature and date:

*I. Vassileva*

01.01.2018 Irena Vassileva

## **Additional Requirements**

### **For Associate Professor Academic Position in Professional Field**

#### **2.1 Philology**

Additional specifications: German as a foreign language, lexicology, phraseology, lexicography, terminology, language and gender.

#### **Research:**

The Candidate has conducted research in the following areas:

- X Phraseology;
- X Lexicography;
- X Terminology;
- X Corpus Linguistics;
- X Methodology of teaching German as a foreign language;
- X New forms of foreign language acquisition (synchronous and asynchronous digital pedagogy);
- X Language and gender.

#### **Teaching:**

The Candidate has teaching experience in the following areas:

- X German as a foreign language (oral and written communication);
- X German studies;
- X Political terminology, legal terminology, business terminology, and EU terminology – German; terminology resources;
- X Comparative grammar (German-English, German-Bulgarian, German-Russian);
- X German lexicology;
- X German phraseology;
- X Lexicography (monolingual and bilingual dictionaries; monolingual German corpora of written texts and parallel corpora of written texts with German);
- X Application of contemporary information and communication technologies in foreign language teaching and new forms of foreign language acquisition (synchronous and asynchronous digital pedagogy).

Signature and date: 01.01.2018 Irena Vassileva

