

OPINION

By: **Assoc. Prof. Nikolay Marin, PhD**
Faculty of Law and History, South-West University “Neofit Rilski” - Blagoevgrad

Regarding: The application of the following candidates for habilitation as **ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR** according to the Bulgarian legislation at the American University in Bulgaria in Area of Higher Education 3. *Social Science, Economic Science and Law* in Professional Field 3.3 *Political Science*. The procedure has been announced in the State Gazette issue dated September 9, 2016, issue 70.

Candidate 1: EMILIA ZANKINA
Provost at the American University in Bulgaria
Assistant Professor in Political Studies
Department of Political Science and European Studies, American University in Bulgaria

I present the evaluation below in my capacity of a member of the Habilitation Jury appointed for the above mentioned procedure by a letter of the AUBG President dated November 4, 2016 and according to a Decision of AUBG dated June 6, 2014. My 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 habilitation procedure advertisement on the AUBG website.

Evaluation of the Applicants

*The evaluation is carried out according to the **Primary Indicators** and **Additional Indicators** included in the document **Guidelines for the Habilitation Jury**.*

I. Basis for Evaluation

Please indicate on what information this evaluation is based - documents submitted by the Candidate, professional activities, publications

The only applicant has submitted all required documents which are very well arranged. I base my evaluation of the candidate which is given below on all of these documents, having thoroughly familiarized myself with them.

Emilia Zankina participates with ten publications in the habilitation procedure in Political Science at the AUBG. These include 6 articles in academic journals, 5 of which in peer-reviewed journals and four chapters in edited volumes, three of which peer-reviewed as mandated by the publisher.

Her research work is focused both on her key research areas and her teaching at the AUBG. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science, Communication and Rhetoric in the University of Pittsburg, USA. In 2010 she was awarded a PhD degree in International Affairs after the successful defense of her thesis entitled **“Transformation of the Bulgarian Political Elite in the Period of Transaction. Its impact on the Transition Process”** in the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs at the University of Pittsburgh under the supervision of Dr. Carolyn Ban and Dr. Ronald Linden.

Furthermore, Emilia Zankina has rich teaching experience.

All publications with which she applies to be habilitated to the rank of associate professor refer to the period after her dissertation defense and do not duplicate publications relevant to it.

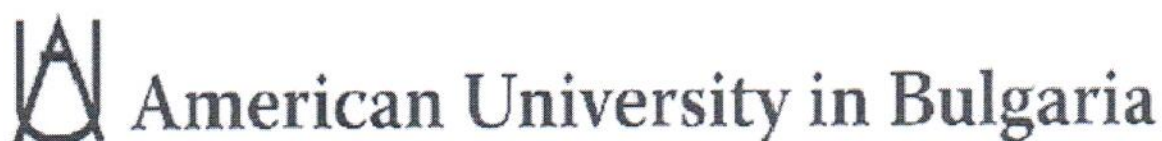
All publications as well as professional activities match the appointment and satisfy the additional requirements as stated by the procedure for habilitation to the rank of associate professor at the AUBG.

II. Eligibility

*1. Please fill it out the enclosed **Eligibility Checklist** (Enclosure 1) and submit together with your Opinion. It combines eligibility conditions set forth in the Law and the University regulations.*

2. Please state your opinion with regard to the Candidate's eligibility.

Emilia Zankina holds a PhD in International Affairs as well as a Certificate in Advanced East European Studies from the University of Pittsburgh. She meets the teaching criteria - Zankina's academic career at AUBG starts as early as 2010. In



the past, she has served as Associate Director of the Center for Russian and East European Studies at the University of Pittsburgh, Managing Editor of *East European Politics and Societies*, and Editor-in-Chief of the Newsletter of the Bulgarian Studies Association. Her work has appeared in *Problems of Post-communism*, *Representation*, *East European Politics*, as well as in several edited book volumes.

Emilia Zankina is applying with original research work. She satisfies not only the primary but also the additional requirements for the position of Associate Professor (as will be demonstrated in detail below).

It could, therefore, be concluded that the candidate fully satisfies the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act, the Rules for its implementation, the internal AUBG rules, regulations, and policies of the AUBG on habilitation to the rank of Associate Professor.

III. Area of Research of the Candidate. Evaluation of the Contributions of the Candidate.

1. Please describe the principal areas of the Candidate's research.

Dr. Zankina's research examines democratisation and elite transformation in Eastern Europe, populism, civil service reform, and gender political representation. One could consider these publications a continuation of her investigation on her PhD thesis which leads to the conclusion that Emilia Zankina is systematic and follows continuity in her research. Her publications show that she is perfectly knowledgeable in this field.

The link with Zankina's teaching commitment to the AUBG here is apparent: at the AUBG she teaches courses oriented to Comparative Politics, Public Policy Analysis, Bulgarian Government and Politics and Topic in Politics, elites, political parties, **populism**, using a pioneering approach that allows explaining the rise and fall of populist parties, which provides good grounds for using such a tool in research.

I should specially stress that all refereed publications are in credible and well established journals. Three of the submitted publications ("How Radical, How Much for Women? Examining the Gender Question in Radical Right Parties in Bulgaria", *West European Politics*, 2014; "Populism and Construction of Political Charisma: Post-transition Politics in Bulgaria", *Problems of Post-Communism*, 2015 Vol. 60 (1): 3-17;



“Backdoor Politics: Politicisation through Restructuring in the Bulgarian Civil Service”, *East European Politics*, forthcoming) are in peer-reviewed journals with strong impact factor.

Zankina's research is also dedicated to **gender and politics**. Dr. Zankina scrutinizes women's representation at all levels – legislative, executive and party level.

Another area of research of Dr. Zankina is the **civil service reform**. She has written and presented papers at the largest regional conference on public administration – Network of International Schools in Public Administration in Central and Eastern Europe.

In 2014 and 2015 Dr. Zankina received an Erasmus + Mobility for Teaching award and in 2016 – European Economic Area Research Mobility grant. She has delivered several guest lectures on populism at venues such as Charles University, Prague, University of Catania, the Balkanski-Panitza Institute for Advanced Studies, the American Research Center in Sofia, etc.

Emilia Zankina applies for the position of associate professor with 20 citations of her works by other authors indexed in Google Scholar, Research Gate, SCOPUS and Google Books.

Dr. Zankina is a peer-reviewer for a number of journals including *East European Politics*, *Party Politics*, *Politics and Gender*, *Problems of Post-Communism*, *Contemporary Southeastern Europe*, *Southeast Europe*, etc.

Emilia Zankina is a member of several prestigious professional organizations such as American Political Science Organization, International Political Science Organization, Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies as well as of Bulgarian Political Science Organization, Bulgarian studies Organization and Balkanski Panitza Institute for Advanced Studies.

IV. Evaluation of the Candidate's teaching

Emilia Zankina has taught at the American University in Bulgaria for around 7 years. She has prepared and taught a variety of courses within this period. Some key courses taught by her are: **Comparative Politics, Public Policy Analysis, Bulgarian Government and Politics and Topic in Politics**. In addition, she has developed two topic courses in the last three years – “Elites, Political Parties, Populism” and “Political Parties”. This variety of courses shows the candidate as a

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capable, innovative, responsible and rapidly evolving university professor.

All documentation attests to the fact that Dr. Zankina uses modern methods of teaching trying to improve her work continuously. She works actively with students and is committed to students. Thus, she is highly respected and valued by students (as indicated by her student evaluations).

She uses a variety of interactive teaching methods, which help to improve the understanding and retention of the presented material. Some of the approaches Dr. Zankina uses are the preparation and presentation of case studies, short video clips, frequent quizzes, country reports, team discussions and term papers, etc., all depending on the relevant course. Writing memos and stakeholder analysis are part of her courses the students seem to be greatly interested in.

In conclusion, Emilia Zankina has excellent theoretical and practical background which allows her to teach advanced courses in the field of Political Science. The list includes both basic courses as well as new, comparative ones. They would be of primary importance to students in Bulgaria, on the one hand, and in view of the overall political development, on the other. Without any doubt Dr. Zankina is an experienced professor with a serious foundation in university teaching.

V. Major critical notes and recommendations

What I would like to recommend to Dr. Zankina is to increase her publication activity in Bulgaria in English as well as in Bulgarian and continue her active work in implementing national and international research projects in the field of populism as well as other topical political issues.

VI. Conclusion

Considering all the above mentioned facts, I can infer that Emilia Zankina not only fulfills but also exceeds the legal requirements for the position of Associate Professor at the AUBG. The supplementary criteria that have been described in the position are satisfied as well. Therefore, it ensues that the AUBG has an accomplished and well prepared candidate for the position announced.

Signature and date:


Assoc. Prof. Nikolay Marin, PhD
January 13, 2017

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

American University in Bulgaria

AUBG Academic Position Requirements

Name of the Candidate: **Emilia Zankina**
Applying for: **Associate Professor**
In the Professional Field: **3.3 Political Science**

Check below what applies. Sign and submit together with your review or opinion.

- ☐ The Candidate has Ph.D; **Yes**
- ☐ The Candidate has served five years as (Senior) Assistant Professor (for applicants for Associate Professor) or six years as Associate Professor (for applicants to Full Professor) at a recognized academic institution; **Yes**
- ☐ The Candidate has published a monograph or publications of equal standing in specialized journals. These should not repeat publications based on which Ph. D., or Doctor of Science degree, or Associate Professor Rank was granted; **Yes**
- ☐ For applicants for Full Professor: The Candidate has other original research works, publications, and other theoretical or applied-theoretical works; **Yes**
- ☐ The Candidate has experience from recognized academic liberal arts institution(s); **Yes**
- ☐ The Candidate has experience in student-centered teaching approach; **Yes**
- ☐ 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. **Yes**
- ☐ The Candidate has experience in teaching in English at a higher education institution with instruction in English language. **Yes**
- ☐ AUBG can ensure teaching and research load according to its internal rules and regulations. **Yes**

▪ Signature and date:

Assoc. Prof. Nikolay Marin, PhD

January 13, 2017

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Additional Requirements

For Associate Professor Academic Position in Professional Field 3.3 Political Science

Additional specifications: democratic transitions, public policy, political elites, comparative politics, East European politics, political parties, gender and politics, populism.

Name of the Candidate: **Emilia Zankina**

Check below what applies. Sign and submit together with your review or opinion.

Research

The Candidate has conducted research in the following areas:

- ☐ Democratic transitions; **Yes**
- ☐ East European politics; **Yes**
- ☐ Political elites; **Yes**
- ☐ Public policy and public administration; **Yes**
- ☐ Political parties; **Yes**
- ☐ Populism; **Yes**
- ☐ Gender and politics. **Yes**

Teaching

The Candidate has teaching experience in the following areas:

- ☐ Comparative politics; **Yes**
- ☐ Bulgarian politics; **Yes**
- ☐ Russian politics; **Yes**
- ☐ Political elites; **Yes**
- ☐ Public policy; **Yes**
- ☐ Research methods. **Yes**

Signature and date:

Assoc. Prof. Nikolay Marin, PhD

January 13, 2017