

REVIEW

By: **Prof. Gabriela Belova-Ganeva, 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**.*

American University in Bulgaria

Dear members of the Habilitation Jury,

Having familiarized myself with the announced position for an Associate Professor in Political Science, I conclude that all requirements of the procedure are met. Emilia Zankina is the only applicant for the position in question.

I. Emilia Zankina earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science, Communication and Rhetoric in the University of Pittsburg, USA. She graduated Magna cum Laude in 2000. In 2003 she obtained a certificate in Advanced East European studies from the Center for Russian and East European Studies at the University of Pittsburgh. In 2010 she was awarded a PhD degree in International Affairs after the successful defense of her thesis **“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.

II. Teaching

Emilia Zankina's teaching experience as a full-time Assistant Professor at the American University in Bulgaria started in 2010 and has continued for six and a half years. This happened after she had occupied other positions related to research activities and publications such as Managing Editor, Editor-in-chief and Associate Director at the Center for Russian and East European Studies. She has passed two successful evaluations in teaching, research and service at the American University on Bulgaria.

Recently, she has been teaching four different courses at the Department of Political Science and European Studies, namely: **Comparative Politics, Public Policy Analysis, Bulgarian Government and Politics and Topic in Politics**. In relation to the latter, she has developed two topic courses in the last three years – “Elites, Political Parties, Populism” and “Political Parties”.

From 2012 to 2015 Emilia Zankina was a regular contributor in the National Program “Governing skills” organized annually by the Bulgarian School of Politics “Dimi Panitza” which trains young political and civic leaders from parliamentary represented political parties in Bulgaria and representatives of civic and professional organizations. In 2016 the program targeted to local community leaders. Gaining experience as a lecturer for practitioners, in 2014 Dr. Zankina took part in a training for trainees for experts of the Ukrainian School of Political Studies targeted to Alumni of the Ukrainian School of Political Studies.

Most recently, Dr. Zankina has delivered two lectures – “Stakeholder Analysis” and “Advocacy-Coalition Building” and led a practical exercise on stakeholder analysis in **Trust for Social Achievement Workshop** for participants in the Program



American University in Bulgaria

“Springboard for School Readiness 2014-2015” (14 Roma organizations working in the field of early childhood education).

In her AUBG teaching career Dr. Zankina has consistently tried to improve her pedagogical skills and adopt new approaches to optimizing student learning of the material by large groups of students. She uses a variety of interactive teaching methods, which help to improve the understanding and retention of the presented material. In her attempt to offer upscale theoretical and practical knowledge to all students intrigued by the field of Political Science she often uses short (2-5 min.) video clips (from EURONEWS, for example) to illustrate a point or to start a discussion. Dedication of the beginning of a class to discussions of current events allows her to engage students in an unforced, conversational style. According to her colleagues' evaluation, Dr. Zankina is able to create 'a student-centered learning environment, which helps students to develop their analytical and critical skills in a very comfortable way'. She proved to provide a good balance between an interactive and at the same time disciplined learning environment.

The only minor problem that appeared in her first years of teaching – consistently higher overall level of grades in Dr. Zankina's classes – seemed to be overcome in the following years and the grade discrepancy between her and her colleagues has been resolved.

Among the approaches Dr. Zankina uses are the preparation and presentation of case studies, short video projections, frequent quizzes, country reports, team discussions and term papers, etc., all depending on the peculiarities of the course.

As full-time faculty at the AUBG, Dr. Zankina develops and offers new courses in the curriculum, including two topic courses “Elites, Political Parties, Populism” and “Political Parties”, which I have mentioned before. It should be noted that in the course “Bulgarian Government and Politics” some of the topics change every year such as ‘elections’, ‘protests’, ‘corruption’ and ‘socialist nostalgia’ in accordance with the reality and specifics of the political life in the country.

Her serious dedication to teaching, the application and continuous improvement of specific techniques in teaching a large number of specialized courses make Emilia Zankina an appropriate candidate for the rank of associate professor. They indicate hard work, responsible attitude to the delivery of complex knowledge to all students, excellent knowledge of Political theory and practice and the most up-to-date analytical tools as well as constant follow-up on modern research results in the respective fields of Political Science.

III. Research

Emilia Zankina provides ten publications in her application for the position of an “Associate Professor” 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.

Three of the submitted publications are in peer-reviewed journals with strong impact factor. These are:

- “How Radical, How Much for Women? Examining the Gender Question in Radical Right Parties in Bulgaria”, *West European Politics*, 2014 (in co-authorship)
- “Populism and Construction of Political Charisma: Post-transition Politics in Bulgaria”, *Problems of Post-Communism*, 2015 Vol. 60 (1): 3-17 (in co-authorship);
- “Backdoor Politics: Politicisation through Restructuring in the Bulgarian Civil Service”, *East European Politics*, forthcoming.

All the submitted publications were published after the defense of her dissertation in 2010 and do not relate to its topic.

One can notice that her scholarly interests and publications are a natural continuation of the research work her doctoral thesis is based on. Most of Dr. Zankina’s work deals with the issues of populism, women in politics, and the quality of governance and democracy in transition countries.

A leading theme of Dr. Zankina’s research and publication activities is her novel approach to examining the rise of populism in Europe, inspired by Institutional Economics. She provides an explanation to a populism as a political strategy that reduces the transaction costs for investment in politics, thereby eventually causing lasting and negative effects on democratic institutions and processes that go beyond the simple electoral gains. This pioneering approach allows explaining the rise and fall of populist parties, as well as explaining populism both in West European and East European countries. This approach allows for better understanding of voter behavior and voter support for populist parties and introduces a dynamics-based component which links them to changes in the political and economic context. The second of the abovementioned publications is dedicated to a populism as a feature of the post-transition political life in Bulgaria and is published in a peer-reviewed journal with an impact factor of 0.44. Another theoretical work on populism but more specifically as a part of the political reality in East European countries and Bulgaria is “Theorizing the New Populism in Eastern Europe: A Look at Bulgaria” which was published in the peer-reviewed *Czech Journal of Political Science* (no impact factor). And perhaps the most convincing and comprehensive research work in this

American University in Bulgaria

field is the book proposal for the European Consortium for Political Research Press "A Marriage of Convenience: Personalism and Populism in Contemporary European Democracies (in co-authorship with Boris Gurov), forthcoming.

The second part of Zankina's research is dedicated to gender and politics. It fills a major gap in literature by focusing on the new East European democracies in a comparative perspective. Together with her co-author Ekaterina Rashkova (four joint publications in prestigious editions; one of them is the first from the above-mentioned) Dr. Zankina examines women's representation at all levels – legislative, executive and party level. Based on the specifics of the region, this new theoretical approach to gender representation allows for cross comparison across countries and across levels. She follows the representation of women across parties, districts and over time in Bulgaria, Greece and Serbia as the Balkan region combines the East and West politically, sharing patriarchic cultural traces and historic features, which may prove crucial for the gender balance in the political field. The obvious conclusion of this part of the research is that regulation of political parties has important indirect consequences for women representation and gender regulation proves to be the most powerful tool for the inclusion of women in politics.

The third area of research of Dr. Zankina is the civil service reform. She has presented several papers at the largest regional conference on public administration – Network of International Schools in Public Administration in Central and Eastern Europe and has one article that was accepted for publication in *East European Politics* (a peer-reviewed journal with 0.44 impact factor, third of the abovementioned publications). The article demonstrates the new approach according to which the restructuring becomes the main instrument for politicians to fill the administration with politically loyal cadres both with the goal to control and reward thus bypassing institutional mechanisms that intend to guarantee a professional and apolitical service. Her contribution can also be seen in looking at restructuring as a way to bypass formal rules and legislation and furnish administration with political appointments. Using this approach the article links specific instances of restructuring to concrete political events and the general political context. She also has examined the motivation of civil servants and the incentive structures offered by state bureaucracies and the link between EU conditionality and civil service reform.

Dr. Zankina has participated in two international research projects. She was a country expert on Bulgaria in a large project titled "Support for Developing Better Country Knowledge on Public Administration and Institutional Capacity Building", led by the the European Institute of Public Administration in partnership with the Hertie School of Governance and the Ramboll Group, funded by the European Commission. She was an advisor and an external member of a dissertation committee of Mr. Brendan Duprey from Central European University, Budapest for



American University in Bulgaria

implementation of EU environmental policy in Bulgaria.

Emilia Zankina has presented research papers at various international and national conferences and seminars. In 2014 and 2015 she 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 Study, the American Research Center in Sofia, etc. She participated in the V-Democracy and Chapel-Hill Expert Surveys, the former currently being the largest database on democracy, and the latter being the most widely-used by researchers database on political parties. 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, last but not least, Balkanski Panitza Institute for Advanced Studies.

Dr. Zankina applies for the rank of associate professor with the impressive number of 20 citations of her works by other authors (all in publications abroad) indexed in Google Scholar, Research Gate, SCOPUS and Google Books.

The volume and theme of her publications satisfy the requirements for the announced position of associate professor. Emilia Zankina is a distinguished researcher and university lecturer with her own individuality in research and teaching.

IV. Critical remarks and recommendations

I would recommend translating and publishing Dr. Zankina's most recent scientific results in the field of populism and especially in the field of gender and politics in Bulgarian with the purpose of establishing this prospective research field in our political science literature more firmly. This would allow attracting the efforts of a much larger number of new Bulgarian authors and publishing a lot more interesting theoretical and applied results which could potentially attract the attention of the western academic world.



I firmly recommend to the respected members of the Habilitation Jury to vote in favor of Emilia Zankina's habilitation as "Associate Professor" in the field 3.3 Political Science. She complies fully with the legal, primary and secondary requirements of the AUBG in terms of scientific publications and teaching activity for the position in question.

Signature and date:

Prof. Gabriela Belova-Ganeva, PhD

January 4, 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:



Prof. Gabriela Belova-Ganeva, PhD

January 4, 2017

American University in Bulgaria

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:



Prof. Gabriela Belova-Ganeva, PhD

January 4, 2017