



REVIEW

By: Prof. Dr. Georgi APOSTOLOV, Faculty of Philosophy, South-West University “Neofit Rilski”, Blagoevgrad

Regarding: The application of the following candidates for the academic position of **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 70 dated September 9, 2016

Candidate: Dr. Emilia ZANKINA, Assistant Professor in Political Studies, Department of Political Science and European Studies, American University in Bulgaria

I present the evaluation below in my capacity as a member of the Academic Jury appointed for the above mentioned procedure by a letter issued by AUBG dated November 4, 2016. 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 Applicant

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

I. Basis for Evaluation and general description of the publications and professional activities, submitted for consideration for this procedure

Dr. Emilia Zankina is the only candidate for the academic position of **ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR** in the Area of Higher Education – 3. *Social Science, Economic Science*, Professional Field – 3.3. *Political Science* opened by the American University in Bulgaria.

Dr. Zankina has submitted a complete set of all the documents required. It contains copies and/or detailed information about:

- 8 peer-reviewed publications (5 articles and 3 book chapters in refereed journals and volumes) specialized in the area;
- 2 non-refereed publications (1 article and 1 book chapter);
- 3 works in progress / under review (2 co-authored books and 1 article);

- 21 conference reports and participations (11 of which peer-reviewed and 3 reviewed by organizers);
- 20 citations (by publications in Bulgaria/abroad and excluding auto-citations) in SCOPUS, GoogleScholar, ResearchGate, GoogleBooks;
- 3 peer-reviews of teaching by the Faculty Evaluation Team, 2 recommendations by the President of AUBG, student evaluations for the past 5 years;
- participation in 2 international research projects;
- 8 memberships in professional organizations and expert bodies;
- 8 guest lectures and training seminars;
- Self-evaluation of the scholarly / theoretical and applied contribution; List of courses taught; Description of teaching; CV;
- 3 interviews; 2 expert surveys; peer-reviews; PhD supervision of 1 student.

II. Eligibility

1. *Please fill it out the enclosed **AUBG Academic Position Requirements (Enclosure 1)** and submit together with your Review. 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.*

Dr. Emilia Zankina's candidature for the position of the ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR **is eligible**. It complies with all the applicable regulations, procedural requirements and rules.

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

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

The principal areas of the Candidate's research are – political parties and populism [1,2,3,4,5,9], gender and politics [5,6,7,8] and civil service reform [4]. Dr. Zankina is also an established expert in the field of Bulgarian politics as well as in the political developments and specific civil phenomena across Eastern Europe and especially in the Balkans [1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10]. She has been gradually involving new topics of interest into her areas of research in order to get better understanding about the complexity and

dynamics of the socio-political environment of the region and thus contribute to theoretical knowledge and provide valuable insights for political practice improvements. Her work is highly systematic employing a great variety of research methods and approaches (mainly qualitatively-oriented and context-driven) to examine emerging issues which mark the transition process of the new democracies and give the uniqueness of its character. The topics, Dr. Zankina is dealing with, are gaining increasingly scholarship attention and her scientific performance and outcomes have become internationally visible and recognized, proofs of which are the citations of her works (20 for the period under review).

2. *Please fill out the enclosed **Additional Requirements list** (Enclosure 2) and submit it with your review. Include here a statement whether the Candidate's areas of research correspond to the specific requirements of the current procedure.*

The Candidate's areas of research fully correspond to the specific requirements of the current procedure. Furthermore, her publications demonstrate scientific interests and research capabilities reaching far beyond the areas indexed in the Additional Requirements list.

3. *Please include evaluation of the monograph(s) as an individual subject of evaluation. Include evaluation of publications other than the monograph, if submitted instead of or together with the monograph. (Evaluation according to Primary Indicators.)*

Dr. Emilia Zankina has published a number of articles and book chapters of equal standing to a monograph in specialized peer-reviewed journals. They do not repeat publications based on which her Ph.D. in International Affairs was granted in 2010 (all submitted publications are dated after 2010). These are 6 articles in academic journals (5 of which peer-reviewed) and 4 chapters of books (3 of which peer-reviewed). All publications represent original research conducted by Dr. Zankina between 2011 and 2016. In addition, she produced 3 more works which are currently under review and in process of publishing (2 co-authored books and 1 article).

4. *Please include evaluation according to the Additional Indicators related to research, such as participation in research projects, delivered conference reports, professional memberships and other applicable professional activities.*

There is a long and exhaustive track record of professional activities and achievements of the Candidate which demonstrate a high-level expertise and rich experience in the field of the current procedure as well as wide international visibility and recognition. Overall, Dr. Emilia Zankina participated in 2 international research projects (funded by

the EC, one of which under the FP 7) and 21 conferences (with reports and presentations, 11 of which peer-reviewed and 3 reviewed by organizers). During the period under review she got (individually or as a member of an expert team) 5 grants and awards. Additionally, she is a member of 8 professional organizations and expert bodies; gave 3 public interviews; was involved in 2 expert surveys; has been working as a peer-reviewer for several journals (e.g. East European Politics, Party Politics, Politics and Gender, Problems of Post-communism; etc.); is an editorial board member (International Review of Political Studies); and has supervised 1 PhD student. All these falls within the range of her background, research profile and professional performance and testifies that Dr. Emilia Zankina is an established scholar with excellent international reputation and acknowledgement. Additional proofs of that is the fact that she has been invited as a guest lecturer by a number of organizations as well as as a country expert in projects.

5. Please include a summary evaluation of the theoretical and applied results of the Candidate's research and the Candidate's theoretical and applied contributions.

A central point in Dr. Zankina's work [1,2,3,4,5,9] is populism, an emerging topic which increasingly attracts the attention nowadays of not only scholars but also a wide variety of experts (thinkers and practitioners) from many different fields. Her particular contribution in theoretical and methodological terms is in employing a novel approach to examining the rise of populism in Europe, with a special focus on its Eastern part. She regards populism as a political strategy that reduces the transaction costs for investment in politics and applies this standpoint in explaining the phenomena as well as the rise and fall of populist parties. The research results have significant instrumental value and strong practical application for analyzing concrete policies and current socio-political phenomena – nationally and internationally – political behavior and can be used also for examining the effects of populism on institutions. Dr. Zankina, together with her co-author, has proposed a general model of great explanatory value which could help understanding the burst of personalist populist parties across Europe today.

A considerable part of the Candidate's publications [5,6,7,8] is dedicated to a subject belonging to a fast-growing research area of great interest and importance all over the world – gender and politics. Her specific contribution to the theme is the focus on Southeastern Europe and the comparative approach she exploits (cross comparison across countries and across three levels – legislative, executive and party). Implications of this approach has theoretical as well as practical values. At the same time, the authors work contributes also to filling the gap in the literature (respectively research)

on the topic as regards to the countries and societies in the Eastern Europe. Proofs that Dr. Zankina's work is appreciated and highly valued are her guest lectures at different institutions around the world as well as the papers she presented at various international conferences. Moreover, an important outcome of her research is the contract with a prestigious publisher (Routledge) to publish a book on gender politics in Southeastern Europe.

Dr. Emilia Zankina's research interests have been moving towards a new area for the last few years – civil service reform [4]. She also directed her efforts and activities from developing theoretical concepts to their practical application. This new field of her performance is expected to become central during the coming years as it unites all her other interests in gender and populism. This move proves her scientific professionalism and demonstrates her self-reflection and systematic self-improvement as a scholar. Her approach to look at restructuring as a way to bypass formal rules and legislation and furnish the bureaucracy with political appointments when examining politicization of the public administration has original character and contributes to methodological, theoretical and applied aspects of current political science. It has certain implications for other social sciences, as well.

IV. Evaluation of the Candidate's teaching

- 1. Please include evaluation according to the Additional Indicators related to teaching, with emphasis on teaching in recognized liberal arts institutions and student-centered approach.*

The Candidate for the academic position of ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR has a very good teaching experience that completely corresponds to her scientific expertise. She has been working around 7 years at the American University in Bulgaria (Department of Political Science and European Studies), a prestigious and recognized liberal arts institution with student-centered approach. She has passed two successful evaluations (with excellent grades) in teaching, research and service at the university. Additionally, the grades which the students have been giving to Dr. Zankina's different aspects of teaching and class work in various subjects for the past 5 years are very high. Her teaching skills and performance are highly praised by her colleagues who have been in charge of evaluating her classes (Dr. A. Gurov, Dr. D. Lucci and Dr. I. Sardamov). She is said to use a variety of teaching methods, which help to improve the understanding and retention of the presented material; her classes are very well organized; all the supplementary materials are well prepared and with great attention to detail; she has

very good rapport with the students; her presentation of the material is at once conceptually meticulous, spirited, and good-humored; and that she is an “outstanding teacher”.

2. *Please indicate your opinion as to whether the Candidate’s areas of teaching correspond to the **Additional Requirements** (Enclosure 2) set forth by AUBG for this procedure.*

The Candidate’s areas of teaching completely correspond to the Additional Requirements set forth for this procedure. The submitted documents provide lots of evidences for such a conclusion.

3. *Please indicate your opinion with regard to the correspondence between the overall teaching experience of the Candidate and the requirements of the current procedure.*

Dr. Emilia Zankina’s teaching experience fully corresponds to the requirements of the current procedure. She has been teaching disciplines which subject matters completely cover the indicated topics of the current procedure.

V. Critical notes and recommendations

Taking into account the level of competencies, the amount of experience and the depth of expertise in the field of political science and academic instruction of the Candidate, I would like to recommend Dr. Zankina to consider taking over a leading role in research projects and PhD supervision. All the documents I’ve reviewed about her teaching and research performance and achievements, make me believe that she possesses all the necessary capacities to be a successful project leader and an excellent and inspiring PhD supervisor.

V. Conclusion:

1. *Appropriateness to the specific requirements of the American University in Bulgaria*

Dr. Emilia Zankina’s candidature complies with all the specific requirements of the AUBG and completely fits the outlined research, teaching and other criteria (general and additional) for the position announced.

2. *Recommendation “for” or “against” granting the academic rank.*

Having analyzed all the documents submitted by the Candidate, I would like to **strongly recommend Dr. Emilia Zankina for the position of ASSOCIATE**



American University in Bulgaria

PROFESSOR in Political Science opened by the American University in Bulgaria. She is highly qualified professional and possesses all the necessary qualifications, expertise and experience for an excellent job performance as well as for contributing to the development of the university as a prestigious international institution of higher education.

Signature and date:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'S' shape with a loop at the end.

19.01.2014

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, PhD**

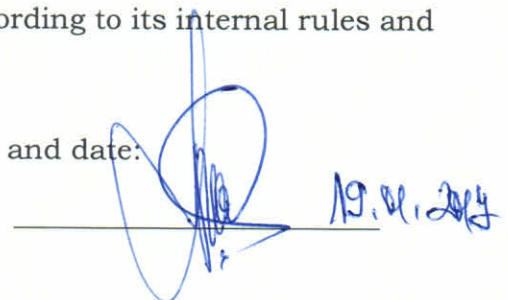
Applying for: **Associate Professor**

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;
- ☒ 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;
- ☒ 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;
- ☐ For applicants for Full Professor: The Candidate has other original research works, publications, and other theoretical or applied-theoretical works;
- ☒ The Candidate has experience from recognized academic liberal arts institution(s);
- ☒ The Candidate has experience in student-centered teaching approach;
- ☒ 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.
- ☒ The Candidate has experience in teaching in English at a higher education institution with instruction in English language.
- ☒ AUBG can ensure teaching and research load according to its internal rules and regulations.

Signature and date:



19.01.2024

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, PhD**

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

Research

The Candidate has conducted research in the following areas:

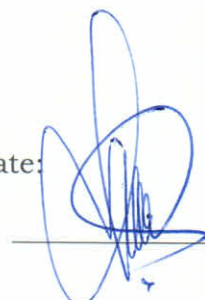
- ☒ Democratic transitions;
- ☒ East European politics;
- ☒ Political elites;
- ☒ Public policy and public administration;
- ☒ Political parties;
- ☒ Populism;
- ☒ Gender and politics.

Teaching

The Candidate has teaching experience in the following areas:

- ☒ Comparative politics;
- ☒ Bulgarian politics;
- ☒ Russian politics;
- ☒ Political elites;
- ☒ Public policy;
- ☒ Research methods.

Signature and date:



19.01.2018