

OPINION

for the scientific and teaching activity of

Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Vyara Vasileva Nikolova –

participant in a competition for the academic position of “Associate Professor” in a professional field 2.1. Philology (Japanese Literature), published in the Darjhaven vestnik, issue 21/17.03.2020

for the needs of The Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” Faculty of Classical and Modern Philology, Department of Japanese Studies

by Prof. Dr. Habil. in Sociology Maya Bedros Keliyan,

professional field

3.1. Sociology, Anthropology and Cultural Sciences, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology at Bulgarian Academy of Sciences,
member of Scientific Jury (Order of the Rector № RD 38-151/23.03.2020)

Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Vyara Nikolova is the only candidate in the announced competition for the academic position of “Associate Professor” in the professional field 2.1. Philology (Japanese Literature), published in the Darjhaven vestnik, issue 21/17.03.2020. On the submitted set of documents for participation in the competition, candidate delivered all necessary documentation as required by the Law for Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, of the Regulations for its implementation and the Regulations on the Terms and Conditions for Acquiring Scientific Degrees and Holding Academic Positions at The Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”.

No violations in the competition procedure have been identified.

1. Minimum scientific requirements for holding the respective academic position

In compliance with the minimum national requirements under Article 2b of The Law for Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, candidate **fully meets** the minimum scientific requirements for the scientific field **2. Humanities**, professional field **2.1. Philology** for holding the academic position of „**Associate Professor**”. Dr. Vyara Nikolova holds a Certificate № U 2016 - 6/10.10.2016 for recognition of the acquired educational and scientific degree PhD in Philology (Literature and Book Publishing) from Moscow State University of Press, and the dissertation was defended in Moscow on 27.05.2014. On the basis of the dissertation for the award of PhD degree has published a book. Dr. Nikolova also published habilitation work – a monograph “From the history of new Japanese literature (1868-1945)”.

2. Lack of data on plagiarism

The dissertation and publications of Dr. Vyara Nikolova are entirely the result of her own research work. This allows me to confidently state that **I have not established** plagiarism under Article 4, paragraph 11 of The Law for Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, and that I, as a member of the Scientific Jury, **have not received such signals**.

3. Teaching activity

According to the attached CV and reference to the circumstances under Article 97 for the academic work, the classroom and extra-classroom classes, the study load of Dr. Vyara Nikolova not only covers, but even many times exceeds the minimum annual standards established at The Sofia University. Her teaching activity fully corresponds to the theme of the announced competition, impressing with its wide-ranging issues aimed at important for the education of Japanese literature research fields. The developed lecture courses and the disciplines led by her

cover the training of students majoring in “Japanese Studies” at the bachelor’s level in disciplines directly related to the topic of this competition as “Latest Japanese Literature (From 1945 Onwards)” ,”New Japanese Literature (1868-1945)”, as well as important for the training of Japanese studies students courses such as “Japanese Language (Upgrading Techniques)”, “Japanese Language (Level A1-A2)”, “Practical Japanese (Level A1-B1)” and others. For the needs of the Master’s Program „Japanese Language and Culture” Dr. Nikolova has participated together with other colleagues in the development of courses, the issues of which are directly related to the competition, such as: „Gender Studies. The Role of Gender in Literature” „Artistic Translation and Reception: Literary Treasures of Japan” as well as of subjects as „European Language Framework and Standards of the Japan Foundation” and “Global Japanese Studies: Best Schools in the World”, which expand students’ cognitive horizons.

Impressive is the work of candidate to enhance her qualifications: she has specialized in Japanese language and culture at two Japanese universities and has attended three qualification courses for Japanese language teachers - two of them organized by the Japan Foundation and one in France.

I am fully convinced that Dr. Vyara Nikolova meets both the criteria regarding the academic employment for the academic position of “Associate Professor” and those on the topic of the announced competition.

4. Research and /or creative work

The scientific publications of Dr. Vyara Nikolova fully correspond to the topic of the announced competition. She has pointed out the following scientific contributions and achievements: detailed presentation in Bulgarian Japanese Studies of the development of Japanese literature during the period 1968-1945; comparative study of the influence of Chekhov in Japan and Bulgaria; the first spiritual contacts and connections between Bulgaria and Japan were traced and studied through research of the archives of the Zografski Monastery; new interactive methods for teaching foreign languages and cultures have been applied, emphasizing

the motivation of students and the role of extracurricular activities in the process of learning a foreign language; the specific connection between theory and practice in the philological fields and in particular in the study of the cultural and historical heritage has been studied; the reception of foreign literature in Bulgaria was studied, in particular - Russian and Japanese literature from the end of the 19th century to the middle of the 20th; contextualization of literature in historical aspect, indicating the influences and relationships between different cultures; the connection between literature and theater is studied, in particular the role of the publisher, the translator, the reader and the spectator is traced.

In the monograph „From the History of the New Japanese Literature (1868-1945)” Dr. Nikolova presents the historical development, genre and thematic diversity and the leading authors in Japanese literature in the period 1868-1945. A generalized image of the woman writer from that time is also proposed. The separate periods and the leading tendencies in the reception of the Japanese literature in Bulgaria are outlined. The influence of Chekhov’s dramaturgy in Japan and Bulgaria has been studied from comparative perspective. Historical documents from the archives of the Zografski Monastery are presented, testifying to the initial cultural and historical ties between Japan and Bulgaria.

She has participated in 24 research projects, leading 4 of them. The candidate presents their results in numerous publications and uses them directly in her teaching work. In addition to the above mentioned two monographs, one of which is based on texts from her dissertation, Dr. Nikolova has published a chapter from a book, 11 publications in scientific journals, 2 - in series, 33 - in collections, one study - in a series. She has presented papers at a number of national and international conferences, participated in editorial boards, compiled and edited anthologies, performed impressive translation work and published a textbook. Her publications, both in number and in importance, fully cover the expectations and criteria for holding the academic position of “Associate Professor” at The Sofia University.

Dr. Nikolova has cited 13 citations of her works, 12 of which are by foreign authors.

Conclusion

On the basis of the documentation provided, I am **fully convinced to declare**, that Chief Assistant Dr. Vyara Nikolova is **fully developed and recognizable as a scientist, researcher and teacher**, working in the field of Philology (Japanese Literature). She has gained **sufficient teaching experience and fully meets the requirements** for the academic position of “Associate Professor”, formulated in The Law for Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, in the Regulations for its Implementation and in the Regulations for the Conditions and the Order for Acquiring Scientific Degrees and Holding Academic Positions in The Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”.

As a member of the Scientific Jury in this competition, I recommend to the respected members of The Faculty Council of Faculty of Classical and Modern Philology to choose **Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Vyara Vasileva Nikolova for Associate Professor in the professional field 2.1. Philology (Japanese Literature)**.

4. 09. 2020

Prof. Dr. Habil. Maya Keliyan

Sofia

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