

Opinion

**by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Yordan Eftimov,
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**for a competition for a professor,
announced in DV, no. 87 of 19.10.2021
by 2.1 Philology (Contemporary French Literature)
with candidate Assoc. Prof. Dr. Reni Yotova**

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Reni Yotova is the only candidate in the announced competition for professor. The criteria for evaluation of the candidacy are the significance of the scientific contributions of the candidate, as well as his contributions in research projects and teaching and learning activities. By all criteria, we have a candidacy that impresses and not only fully meets the criteria, but also exceeds them many times over.

Assoc. Prof. Reni Yotova is a longtime lecturer in the Department of Romance Studies at Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”, where he has been working since 1993. Along with his academic work for years, she is one of the most recognizable figures of Francophonie, occupying an important place in the translation and promotion of French literature and in various forums related to teaching in French. She works not only for the development of Bulgarian-French cultural relations, but also for the development of Francophonie - not only in Bulgaria but also around the world. Since 2010, Reni Yotova has been the head of the Francophone Regional Center for Central and Eastern Europe of the International Organization of La Francophonie. But this is only a logical consequence of her many years of work in this direction. She is the organizer of a series of conferences and colloquia dedicated to the Francophonie, as well as thematic issues of the journal “Panorama” and the weekly “Literaturen vestnik”, the literary cafe “Sofia on the Seine” (2009 – 2012), a special edition of The Sofia International Literary Festival at the National Palace of Culture, to which key writers of contemporary French literature have been invited. The main issues in the presentation of Francophone writers in Bulgaria are undoubtedly the thematic issues of prestigious publications in our country, compiled and edited by it, which consistently present Swiss French literature (“Panorama”, book 2, 2014), “Voices of Francophonie” (“Literaturen vestnik” of March 15, 2017) and “Writing in French” (“Literaturen vestnik” of December 4, 2019) with its review “French Literature on Five Continents”. Her reputation as a researcher is built through numerous publications in highly prestigious publications registered in world scientific databases (cf. the attached reference and list of citations).

The first area in which I noticed Reni Yotova's work was the translation of French literature. Albert Camus's “The Rebel” (“L'Homme révolté”) is a famous text by its author, translated by Reni Yotova in 1994. This is also the time of Reni Yotova's first publications in the “Literaturen vestnik”, where I already worked as an editor. The next books she translated

continued the line of presentation of philosophical and culturological literature of the first sample – “Existentialism is humanism” by Jean-Paul Sartre (1997), the collection “History of Morals” (2001), “The Humiliated Word” by Jacques Ellul (2003). Then Reni Yotova turned more actively to the translation of fiction, presenting the latest French novels such as “My Mother’s Tears” by Michel Layaz (2005) and “Timelessness” by Fabrice Lardreau (2008), novels by Bulgarian French writers – “Mausoleum” by Rouja Lazarova (2009) and “The Returnee” by Sonia Anguelova (2013), plays by Michel Tremblay and Ágota Kristóf (2010-2011), “Journey from the Orient” by the classic of French literature Gerard de Nerval (2010) and examples of Francophone literature today as “Confessions of Missing Places” by Bessa Myftiu (2014). A logical consequence of this work of Reni Yotova was her title of Knight of the French Order of Academic Palms (2012).

For participation in the competition for professorship Assoc. Prof. Reni Yotova presented 31 publications, two of which are monographs published in French in the series “Le cippe – études littéraires”: “La Trilogie des jumeaux d’Ágota Kristóf” and “Trois pièces d’Ágota Kristóf” co-authored with Sara de Balsi. Central to the research on exile – a key theme in Reni Yotova's research – are fiction, novels (the trilogy “Le Grand Cahier”, “La Preuve” and “Le Troisième Mensonge”) and plays by Ágota Kristóf and personal projections. the experience. This is literature focused on political repression and exile. Reni Yotova has managed to enter into a personal relationship with the writer during her lifetime and to include oral interviews with her in her works. Such a richly developed issue of exile, central to both the existentialist tradition and feminism, which Reni Yotova knows very well, is complemented by unique first-hand observations of the work and life of one of the most interesting contemporary Swiss writers.

Conclusion

With her consistent scientific activity, Assoc. Prof. Reni Yotova has long occupied her unique place among philological researchers in our country. Her scientific reputation in the field of study of Francophonie, translation studies and teaching in French is indisputable. The competition of the Department of Romance Studies at Sofia University needs a candidate with the qualities of Assoc. Prof. Reni Yotova. Therefore, I am very pleased to give my positive vote, supporting the proposal of the scientific jury of which I am a member to award the academic position of PROFESSOR in the professional field 2.1 Philology (Contemporary French Literature) to Reni Yotova.

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Assoc. Prof. Dr. Yordan Eftimov