

## REVIEW

From Prof. Dr. Sc . Sonia Varadinova Mileva-Bozhanova, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski ", PN 3.8 Economics and Management by Industries (Tourism) on the scientific works for participation in a competition for the position of "PROFESSOR " in the professional field 3.9 Tourism (Development of tourist destinations),  
Announced in SG, issue №22 / 16.03.2021  
with the only candidate - Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mariana Atanasova Assenova

The review was prepared on the basis of Order RD 38-197 / 23.04.2021 of the Rector of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", decision of the scientific jury (Minutes № 1 / 20.05.2021) and is structured in six parts .

### I. Assessment of compliance with the minimum national requirements and requirements of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"

The candidate has fulfilled the requirements of Art. 29 para. 1 of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, meets the minimum national requirements (Art. 60, item 5 of the Regulations for application of the law on the development of the academic staff in the Republic of Bulgaria) and the additional requirements of Sofia University "Kliment Ohridski "(art. 115 para. 1 and 2 of PUDSU). There is no proven plagiarism in the scientific works according to the statutory order - no written signal for plagiarism has been received (under Art. 6, para. 1 of PUDSU and Art. 4 (11) ZRAS).

**By group A, indicator 1:** Assoc. Prof. Mariana Assenova holds a Diploma No Sofia University 2012-43, ed. on 15.05.2012 for awarded educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in professional field 3.9 Tourism (Geography of recreation and tourism) based on a dissertation on "Methodology for monitoring sustainable tourism development (on the example of the municipality of Tsarevo)" ( **50 points**)

**By Group B, item 3:** Deposited is Habilitation work - monograph co-authored entitled "Between Culture and Tourism: Tourist attractions based on cultural heritage" (2021), University Press St. Kl. Ohridski. A separation protocol is presented in a certificate for personal contribution and authorship of the candidate of 170 pages (out of a total of 760), as well as an Official Note from the University Press St. Kliment Ohridski that the monograph is in print and the electronic edition with ISBN 978-954-07-5167-2 is to be published (**100 points**).

**By group D the** candidate has **266 points out** of the required 200. *By indicator 6* presented are 5 articles and reports published in scientific journals, referenced and indexed in world-famous databases with scientific information. All are co-authored, correctly reduced according to the participation of the authors (**a total of 55 points**). In *indicator 7* are presented 27 papers and reports in non-referred editions with scientific reviewing or redacted collective volumes. From them 10 are written by the candidate and the rest are co-authored with correctly reduced author's participation (**111.6 points**). *According to indicator 9*, submitted are 9 studies, published in non- peer-reviewed journals with scientific review or published in edited collective volumes, incl. 3 independent and 6 co-authored works, correctly distributed, according to the participation of the co-authors (**69 points**). One of the studies (D 9.9) is in press, for which an official note from the University Press is presented. *According to indicator 10*, the candidate is the author of 3 chapters in collective monographs, distributed among the authors (**30.7 points**).

One of the monographs is in print, for which an official note from the University of Press “St. Kliment Ohridski” is presented (Ex. № 23 / 26.04.2021). The other 2 are in English published by Cambridge Scholars Publishing and from them 1 of the monographs the candidate is also an editor.

**By group E , indicator 11:** the candidate's report shows 23 citations (without self-citations) in scientific journals, referenced and indexed in world-famous databases with scientific information or in monographs and collective volumes, all in English ( **345 points in total**). According to *indicator 12*, 102 citations in monographs and collective volumes with scientific review have been established (**a total of 1020 points**). According to *indicator 13*, in total 86 citations or reviews were observed in non-referred journals with scientific review (**a total of 430 points**). In total for **group E the candidate collects 1795 points** (out of the required 100).

**By group F, indicator 15,** Assoc. Prof. Mariana Assenova has a tutored 4 successfully defended doctoral students (**160 points**). According to *indicator 16* the candidate has a participation in 5 national scientific or educational projects (**75 points**). According to *indicator 17*, the candidate participates in a total of 10 international scientific or educational projects (**200 points**). According to *indicator 18* there is 1 management of a national scientific project (**30 points**). According to *indicator 20*, presented is 1 university textbook or a textbook used in the school network published in co-authorship (**20 points**). In total for **group E the candidate collects 485 points** (out of the required 100).

**For all groups, the applicant collects points that exceed the required minimum threshold** (especially for indicators from groups E and F).

The candidate meets all additional requirements of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" (Art. 115 para. 1 and 2 of PUDSU), holding the academic position of “ Associate Professor ”in professional field 3.9 Tourism (development of tourist destinations), Certificate № SU 2013-80 / 21.02.2013. SU "St. Kliment Ohridski ”, over 28 years of working experience (Certificate № 331 / 09.04.2021 of the Human Resources Department of Sofia University“ St. Kl. Ohridski”), having successively held the positions of assistant (1993-1997), senior assistant (1997-2003) , Chief Assistant (2003-2013), Associate Professor (2013- present).

Based on the submitted items of evidence can be concluded that the applicant Mariana Atanasova Assenova responds to all **minimum requirements for academic positions "professor"** according to Art. 29 para. 1 of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, meets the minimum national requirements (Art. 60 item 5 of the Regulations for implementation of the law on the development of the academic staff in the Republic of Bulgaria) and the additional requirements of Sofia University (Art. 115 par. 1 and 2 PUDSU) and recommended criteria for obtaining the scientific degree and academic positions in Faculty of Geology and Geography.

## **II. Research activity and results**

### **2.1. Evaluation of the monographic work, creative performances or other publications, corresponding in volume and integrity of the monographic work, including evaluation of the scientific and scientific-applied contributions of the author.**

The candidate is the only participant in the announced competition for "professor". Presented is **habilitation work** (*Group B indicator № 3*), published as a monograph co-authored entitled "Between Culture and Tourism: Tourist attractions based on cultural heritage"

(2021), Sofia University “St. Kl. Ohridski”. The main contribution of Assoc. Prof. M. Assenova is related to the in-depth theoretical analysis of the typology, definitions and main characteristics and offer of tourist attractions based on cultural heritage. This part is fundamental both for the overall study and basis for the selected methodology and testing of basic hypotheses and research questions. The practical and applied part is dedicated to the policies in support of the tourist use of the cultural heritage in Bulgaria.

**Contributions** can be summarized as applied science in particular - improvement of existing definitions and typology of tourist attractions based on cultural heritage, as crossing cultural heritage and tourist attractions. The practical and applied contribution is related to the focus on public policies and the possibilities for the efficient allocation of public funds for the transformation of cultural heritage into tourist attractions. A typology of attractions based on cultural heritage has been developed and proposed, which has been tested in a field study along a predetermined route in the country.

As **criticism** I would say the lack of additional incision into the specifics and peculiarities of the different types of attractions tied to the target market segments and prospects for the development and management of them in light of new digital technologies and the dynamic changes of the external macro - and micro - environment ( for example after the COVID-19 pandemic ).

## 2.2. Evaluation of the scientific and practical results and contributions of the creative production submitted for participation in the competition

In the competition for the academic position "Professor", Assoc. Prof. Mariana Assenova has presented the following publications:

**Table 1. Publications presented on qualitative and quantitative grounds**

№	Type of publication	Authorship		Language of publications		Number	Numbering in the list of publications	Volume in no. page *
		Sole author	Co-authorship	Bulg.	English			
1	Monograph	-	4	3	1	4	B 3.1 , D 10.1, D 10.2, D 10.3	213.7
2	Studios	3	6	7	2	9	D 9.1, D 9.2, D 9.3, D 9.4, D 9.5, D 9.6, D 9.7, D 9.8, D 9.9	131.8
3	Articles and reports including:	4	28	17	15	32		148.9
3.1	In referenced	-	5	-	5	5	D 6.1 , D 6.1, D 6.3,	24.3

	and indexed						D 6.4, D 6.5	
3.2	In non-referred editions	4	23	17	10	27	D 7.1 - D 7.27	124.6
4	Textbooks and aids		1	1		1	E 20.1	80
	Total	7	67	45	33	78		574.4

\* in case of co-authorship the pages are proportionally reduced according to the participation of the authors

The publications submitted for participation in the competition for a professor are a total of 78, of which 33% are prepared and published in English. Individual publications represent 9% of the total production for participation in the competition.

Thematically the publications correspond to the name of the announced competition. The **major contributions** can be summarized as following:

**1. Management of tourist attractions with a focus on those based on cultural heritage** (B 3.1, D 6.5, D 7.8, D 7.20, D 7.21, D 7.22, D 7.23, D 7.24, D 7.25, D 9.9, D 10.1).

This trend is widespread, especially in the last few years (2019-2021).

The publications focus on the **tourist attractions, typology, characteristics and their importance for the development and management of the destination**. The main contributions of the author are theoretical and include supplementing and enriching the existing definitions and typology, as well as practical - improved focus of public policies and allocation of public funds to turn cultural heritage into tourist attractions. (B 3.1, D 7.25).

At the level of **resource provision of tourist attractions** based on cultural heritage, culinary holidays and festivals are studied as cultural and tourist attractions, representing an element of the product of culinary tourism in Bulgaria, outlining their regional specifics (D 7.20). The author's research searches extends and in order to identify the territorial concentration of the tourist demand for sites based on cultural heritage, a study was conducted on a selected route in 4 areas of the country. The results demonstrate the formation of clusters of tourist demand, with a clear distinction of hubs and their periphery. The formation of demand clusters has been studied in depth (D 7.22). The object of research are also the recreational, scientific and educational ecosystem services, as well as the ecosystem services of cultural heritage in the urban landscapes of Bulgaria, classified in 10 urban subtypes (D 10.1).

At the **level of policies and management**, the results and effects on the tourist attractions and the competitiveness of the tourist product as a result of the implementation of projects from Operative program "Regional development" 2007-2013 are analysed (D 6.5, D 7.8);

The research methodology is also applied **at the local level** and through the analysis of the tourist demand a quantitative assessment of the attendance and a qualitative assessment of the satisfaction of the visitors from the tourist attractions based on the cultural heritage in Veliko Tarnovo municipality is derived (D 7.21).

At the level of **tourist demand**, the typology of visitors is applied according to the methodology of McKercher (2002) and as a result the profile of "cultural tourists" in Bulgaria

is derived, based on a combination of two dimensions (1) the importance of cultural motives (cultural tourism) for visit to the destination and (2) the depth of the experience related to the culture and heritage of the destination. The main findings of the study are that the type of cultural tourist is in most cases a variable, which explains the differentiation in the behaviour of visitors better than the typically used socio-demographic characteristics (D 7.23 ).

In the field of *marketing and visibility of tourist attractions* is an analysis image and their reputation on line environment. The study reveals significant gaps and challenges in building an online identity of attractions based on cultural heritage and the impact of informal electronic communication channels. It is extremely important and are the conclusions arrived at, namely that the online reputation of Bulgarian attractions based on cultural heritage does not depend on the amount of information disseminated on the Internet and is formed mainly in a real environment (D 7.24).

At the *supply level*, the research is related to a study of the *state of staff training* in attractions based on the cultural heritage in Bulgaria (D 9.9). The results outline the main deficits and gaps of the staff in terms of knowledge, the way of providing and interpreting the information, as well as the proficiency in a foreign language, which has a direct bearing on the perceptions and experiences of the visitors.

2. ***Regional development and tourist areas, focusing on the specificity of mountainous areas and the Danube region*** ( D 6.2 , D 6.3, D 7.3, D 7.7, D 7.16 D 9. 8 - mountain areas; D 7.10 D 7.19 D 7.22 , D 9.3, D 9.6 - regional development and tourist zoning; D 7.5, D 7.12 - Danube region)

At the level of *mountain destinations*, the main models of development of mountain tourist centres in Bulgaria have been studied (D 6.2). The candidate participates in other similar studies at different hierarchical levels - three small destinations in the Central Stara Planina and the Rhodopes (D 6.3), mountain villages (D 7.3), inclusive study of the supply chain and the value chain in the process of creating a tourist product in mountain destinations on the example of the destination "Gorna Arda" (D 7.7). The results confirm the hypotheses that the successful development of tourism requires two types of prerequisites: 1) "necessary" - attractive factors and 2) "sufficient" - the will to develop the tourism industry through investment in accommodation and infrastructure.

More theoretical are the derived results in terms of challenges to the sustainable development of tourism in the mountainous regions of Bulgaria (D 7.16). A review of the studies on the development and management of tourism in the mountainous areas of Bulgaria was made, as a result of which all territorial surveys of mountain settlements, resorts, municipalities and regions were summarized on the basis of a systematized on a spatial and thematic principle (D 9.8).

In the field of *regional development and tourist zoning*, the candidate has contributed to the development of a concept for tourist zoning of Bulgaria (D 7.10) and the derived comparative analysis of the existing schemes for tourist zoning of Bulgaria (D 7.19). Innovative is the approach in the study of tourist areas in order to identify potential marketing tourist areas of Bulgaria, outlined on the basis of agreements between municipalities in connection with the implementation of projects related to regional development of the tourist product and marketing of destinations funded by Operational Program "Regional Development" (2007-2013) (D 9.3).

The critical analysis of the new tourist zoning of Bulgaria also deserves attention (D 9.6). The scientific and applied nature of the research is proved by the fact that the developed concept and the proposed regional scheme are officially accepted and approved by an order of the Minister of Tourism.

**Danube tourist region** is the subject of a number of research interests and participation in project activities of the applicant. The main contributions are related to the assessment of the tourist potential of the sites of the Bulgarian Danube Limes (D 7.5) and the comparative analysis of the condition of the Danube region of Bulgaria based on the pilot testing of the European System of Sustainable Tourism Indicators (ETIS). 12).

3. **Sustainable development and corporate social responsibility** (D 6.3, D 6.4, D 7.3, D 7.11, D 7.12, D 7.16 - *sustainable development*; D 6.1, D 7.1, D 7.4 *corporate social responsibility*).

**Sustainable development at the destination level** is present in almost all publications of the author, with special attention paid to the so-called small scale mountain tourism in Bulgaria have been identified patterns of tourism development in small places located in mountainous areas (D.6.3). The methodological approach for resource efficiency and clean production (RECP) has been applied in the accommodation sector in the Balkan region (D 6.4); models of rural tourism development in mountain villages (D 7.3); study of the importance of monitoring the sustainable tourism development in the Danube region (D 7.12); The main challenges to the sustainable development of tourism in the mountainous regions of Bulgaria have been identified (D 7.16). The application of the European system of indicators for sustainable development of tourism at destination level (D 7.11, D 7.12) has mainly scientific and applied contribution as part of the indicators are included in the monitoring systems of the Strategies for tourism development in the municipalities of Ruse and Sofia, and at national level. The theoretical contribution is expressed in the modification of the European system after the recommendations made for elimination of identified weaknesses in relation to some of the indicators and / or providing them with the necessary information. The contribution to the establishment of basic values of the indicators, which are important for subsequent monitoring, as well as the determination of target values, is also significant.

In addition, **corporate social responsibility** has been examined in support of the sustainable development of tourism (D 6.1), as well as with regard to the applicability of ISO 26000 - Guidelines for social responsibility, including in the field of tourism (D 7.1), corporate social responsibility at hotel level, raising some critical issues regarding the applicability of ISO 26000 (D 7.4)

4. **Marketing and destination management policies** (D 7.2, D 7.9, D 7.18, D 7.24, D 7.26, D 7.27, D 9.3, D 9.7 - *marketing*; D 10.2, D 10.3 - *policies*)

Publications in the field of marketing cover various **marketing tools**, analysis and evaluation in terms of their effectiveness for the development and promotion of the destination. Such are the publications aimed at measuring and evaluating the effectiveness of Bulgaria's participation in selected tourist exhibitions in 2010 and 2011 (D 7.2), research of the possibilities for development of the tourist product and marketing of the capital region of Sofia (D 7.9), generalized methodology for conducting marketing research of museums and galleries

necessary for the development of their marketing strategies and programs (D 7.18), research of online reputation of attractions based on cultural heritage in Bulgaria (D 7.24), opportunities for application of gamified applications for Sofia (D.26, D 7.27).

In the field of *management and policies to promote the development of the destination* are the publications related to the identification of potential marketing tourist regions of Bulgaria (D 9.3) and the chronological analysis of the evolution of destination management systems broken through the situational analysis for Bulgaria (D 9.7). According to predetermined criteria regarding the functionalities of the existing websites and platforms, on the one hand, and the content of the information - on the other hand, a comprehensive study of the Internet presentation of Bulgarian destination organizations - the Ministry of Tourism and all 265 municipalities. Transformation in the tourism sector, changes in the country's tourism policy, tourism management and marketing are the issues discussed in the chapter in a published general monograph on Central and Eastern Europe (D10.2). The latest publication in this field is part of a co-authored monograph and discusses policies for overcoming the COVID crisis in the field of tourism (D10.3).

**5. Local development of tourism (D 7.6, D 7.9, D 7.11, D 7.15, D 7.21, D 7.27, D 9.1, D 9.2, D 9.4).**

Local development occupies a central place in the creative production of the candidate. Such are the developments for the development of the destination of the example of the municipality of Lukovit (D 7.6), Sofia (D 7.9, D 7.15, D 7.27), Danube region (D 7.11), Veliko Tarnovo (D 7.21), the villages of Dolen, Leshten and Kovachevitsa (D 9.1), Vidin Municipality (D 9.4), Strandzha National Park (D 9.2). All publications have a practical and applied orientation for local tourism development.

**6. Training in the field of tourism (D 7.13, D 7.17, D 9.5, D 9.9)**

The publications in the field of education at the University of Tourism are mainly on the practices and training of students of tourism at the Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski". Issues such as student participation in real research projects (D 7.13), impact on university education from changes in business models in tourism (D7.17), assessment of work experience in tourism training (D 9.5), qualification of employees were studied. in tourist attractions (D 9.9).

*All publications of the candidate are peer-reviewed and printed in university publishing houses of the Yearbook of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", University Press of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", University of Economics - Varna, UNWE and other respected publishers.*

### **2.3. Citation by other authors.**

The reference of observed citations shows that the candidate has 23 citations, all in English (without self-citations) in scientific journals, referenced and indexed in world-famous databases with scientific information or in monographs and collective volumes, all in English. In monographs and collective volumes with scientific review 102 citations of 41 publications were noticed, incl. 81 in Bulgarian and 21 in English. In total 86 citations from 33 publications were found in non-referred and peer-reviewed journals. This confirms that the candidate's

creative output is recognizable and cited by a number of other scholars, both in the country and abroad.

## **2. 4. Evaluation of the results of participation in research and creative projects and application of the obtained results in practice.**

Assoc. Prof. Mariana Assenova has extremely extensive experience in participating in research and educational projects, both national and international, in the field of research in which she works, as follows:

- Participation in **5 national projects (Group E, indicator 16)**: (1) The mountain - models of socio-economic and cultural development. Perspectives for regional policies and cross-border cooperation (2013,); (2) For better understanding of ecosystem services in urban environments through assessment and mapping”( TUNESinURB ), (2016-2017); (3) "National Scientific Program" Cultural Historical Heritage, National Memory and Social Development "(2019-2021); (4) The National Scientific Program" Environmental Protection and Reduction of the Risk of Adverse Events and Natural Disasters "(2019-2021 (5) SECAP Preparation of an Action Plan for Sustainable Energy and Climate of Sofia Municipality, 2021-2030 (2020-2021).
- Participation in **10 international scientific or educational projects and (Group E, indicator 17)** : (1) Development of the methodological approach for the Resource Efficiency and Cleaner Production in Tourism ( RECP ), UNIDO , Vienna , 2013; (2) Evaluation of the potential of tourism resources for Vidin Municipality and opportunities for the development of cultural tourism, GIZ, 2013; (3) "RECVLTIVATUR": Preparation of a methodology for development of the route "The Road to Jerusalem" on the territory of Bourgas region as part of a project for European cultural route "The Road to Jerusalem" (2013); (4) Preparation of an analytical market study potential of the Bulgarian section of the Danube Limes - EU , transnational cooperation program " South Eastern Europe 2007-2013" (2013) (5) Sustainable Tourism Project as part of "Regional networking for strengthening cooperation and fostering transfer and adaptation of resource efficient and cleaner production (RECP) in the countries of South-Eastern Europe”, UNIDO, 2014; (6) Regional Program to strengthen the cross boarder tourism at the Middle and Lower Danube through the Danube Competence Center (2014); (7) Regional Program to strengthen the cross boarder tourism at the Middle and Lower Danube through the Danube Competence Center (2015) (8) Joint initiatives for the promotion of the cross-border region of Bulgaria - Turkey as an attractive tourist destination (2017); (9) CBC-BG-Turkey , Assessment of the potential of tourist sites under Interreg - IPA CBC Bulgaria - Turkey Program 2014-2020; (10) Development of spatial structural-functional models of coastal tourist and recreational systems in Pacific Russia, Crimea and Bulgaria ”under the Bilateral Cooperation Program - Bulgaria - Russia (2019-2020).
- Management of **1 national project (Group E, indicator 18)** “ Elaboration of a Concept for tourist zoning of Bulgaria (2014), NCTR , Ministry of Economy and Energy .

As can be seen from the topics of the projects, the participation in research and creative projects has a serious contribution both in terms of publishing activity and in terms of the

application of the results in practice and in the training of tourism students at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski".

### III. Academic and teaching activities

*The study employment* of Assoc. Prof. Mariana Assenova from the official report provided by the Department of Educational Activities includes realized workload for **2015/2016** academic load 1394 h., of which 572 auditoriums; for **2016/2017** academic load 2459.2 hours, of which 544 auditorium; for **2017/2018** academic load of 1541.1 hours, of which 766.5 auditorium; for **2018/2019**, the academic load of 1002.4 hours, of which 583.8 hours auditorium; for 2019/2020, the academic load of 1305.6 hours, of which 565 hours auditorium load. The academic load significantly exceeds the required thresholds and normative requirements for workload of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski".

*Outside the external academic load* in the period 2013-2021 includes tutoring of **20 graduates who** successfully defended **and 4 doctoral students who** acquired PhD. Within the project of the Ministry of Education and Science under the National Program "Young Scientists and Postdoctoral Students" the candidate was a **scientific mentor of 2 postdoctoral students and 1 young scientist.**

Assoc. Prof. Mariana Assenova **leads lecture courses** in Bachelor's degree - "Marketing in Tourism" (in Bulgarian and English) "Tour operator and agency activities", "Management of tourist destinations" (in Bulgarian and English), "World and regional tourist fairs and exhibitions", "Sustainable development of tourism - standards and certification" (in Bulgarian and English). In ACS "Master" - "Intermediary activity in tourism", "Marketing in tourism", "Tourism policy", "Tourism planning", "Management of tourist destinations".

In the period 2018/2019 -2020/2021, the candidate taught **3 courses in English and trained a total of 16 Erasmus students.**

In the period 2013-2021 the candidate actively participates in **national and international conferences and forums, incl. 32 participations in the country and 18 abroad**, which is an average of 4.5 scientific forums per year

Certificates **for 3 additional trainings and qualification are presented**, incl. by Travelport (2017), Travelife - Manager sustainable management in tour operator and agency activities (2016), La Fondation pour la formation Hoteliere - analytical work in hospitality (2016).

### IV. Administrative and public activities

Assoc. Prof. Mariana Assenova is Head of the Department of Tourism (2015- present), Deputy Dean of master's and doctoral programs (2019- present) of the Faculty of Geology and Geography at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski.

Assoc. Prof. Mariana Assenova is the official representative of Sofia University "St. Kl. Ohridski" at the Bulgarian Institute for Standardization (Decision of the Rector's Council of January 12, 2016) and a representative of Sofia University in Technical Committee 89 - Tourist activities. Participates in the working group of the Deputy Prime Minister for Economic and Demographic Policy on Tourism (2017), working group of the Ministry of Tourism on the National Vision for Digitalization in Tourism 2030 (2017-2018). She is a member of the

Advisory Council on Tourism under the Minister of Tourism (Order T-RD-16-307 / 11.09.2020) and EuroCHRIE (individual membership for 2021).

The professional development of Assoc. Prof. Mariana Assenova goes through various activities and responsible positions, incl. as Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Bulgarian Credit Rating Agency (2004-2020), Director of Market Bulgaria in International Travel (2002-2006), Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Economy (2000-2001), Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Trade and Tourism (1997-1999), Chairman of the Board of Directors of Orbita EAD (1998-2001), Chairman of the Board of Directors of Sunny Beach AD (1999-2001).

#### **V. Critical remarks and recommendations.**

First of all, it should be noted the predominant teamwork and co-authorship of the candidate (a total of 67 out of 78 publications submitted for participation in the competition). This is clear, based on the understanding of the complex and interdisciplinary profile of tourism, especially at the destination level. Co-authorship on the one hand enriches and contributes to the achievement of significant scientific results, but on the other hand makes it difficult to assess the personal merits and contributions of the candidate.

Secondly, there is a smooth overflow of themes, identity and overlap of texts (for example D 6.5, D 7.8, D 7.25 and B 3.1). Nevertheless, the publications are correct, and we cannot talk about the so-called "Recycling" of texts, but rather for the deployment, enrichment and expansion of the object and subject of research.

#### **VI. Conclusion.**

There is indisputable evidence for compliance with the requirements of Art. 2b, para. 2, Art. 29 para. 1 and 2, Art. 29b of ZRASRB, as well as art. 60 para. 1 and 2 of PPZRASRB, as well as of the Regulations for the terms and conditions for acquiring scientific degrees and holding academic positions at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" for holding the academic position "PROFESSOR".

This gives me reason to fully give my **positive assessment of the candidate Assoc. Prof. Mariana Assenova for holding the academic position "PROFESSOR" in professional field 3.9 Tourism** (Development of tourist destinations).

Sofia  
16.07.2021

Prof. Dr.Sc .PhD Sonia Mileva