

REVIEW

**by Professor Blagoy Nikitov Vidin, PhD in Law,
at the Faculty of Law of Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”**

**regarding the set of documents submitted for participation in the competition
promulgated in State Gazette No. 61/2.08.2022
for holding the academic post „Associate Professor“ in the field of higher education:
3. „Social Science, Economic Science and Law“, professional field:
3.3. „Political Science“ at Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”**

1. Information about the competition

The competition is for the purpose of holding the academic post of associate professor under 3.3 Political Science (International Relations). It was promulgated in SG No. 61 of 2.08.2022 for the needs of the International Law and International Relations Department of the Faculty of Law of Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”.

I am a member of the academic board under the competition pursuant to Order No. RD – 38-486/05.08.2022 of the Rector of SU. At the first meeting of the academic board, which took place on 10.10.2022, I was assigned to prepare a review.

A single candidate has submitted documents for participation in the competition – Chief Assist. Prof. Mira Zdravkova Kuneva, PhD.

In the course of the procedure or before it, no alerts alleging plagiarism have been received and no plagiarism has been established as regards the candidate’s academic works. She has also been entered in the public Register of Academic Staff and Defended Dissertations of Nacional Centre of Information and Documentation (NACID).

2. Information about the participant in the competition

Mira Zdravkova Kuneva is a chief assistant professor at the International Law and International Relations Department. She received her higher education at the Faculty of Law

of SU “St. Kliment Ohridski”: international relations – a Master’s degree (2007), law – a Master’s degree (2009). She has held a PhD degree in law since 20.12.2013 with a dissertation thesis entitled “Soft power: the new dimension of power in international relations in the 21st century”, defended at SU “St. Kliment Ohridski”.

3. Assessment of the teaching activities

Chief Assist. Prof. Mira Zdravkova Kuneva, PhD, carries out a considerable amount of teaching activities. At the Faculty of Law of Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”, she conducts seminars and lectures independently to students reading for a degree in Law and in International Relations, as well as in master’s programmes. She has taken part in the preparation of curricula and accreditation reports.

I believe that the candidate’s academic competence fully corresponds to the scientific specialty of the competition.

4. Overview of the submitted academic works/publications

Mira Zdravkova Kuneva has submitted 21 publications for review among which one monograph, one booklet (study research), 13 articles. Four of them are in English and the rest are in Bulgarian. Part of the works accepted for review repeat the works presented in the candidate’s dissertation abstract for the acquisition of the higher education and academic degree of Doctor of Philosophy. This is confirmed by the statement that Mira Zdravkova Kuneva sent to me on 10 December 2022, in my capacity as a member of the academic board, whereby she asks that these works not be reviewed. The following publications will not be reviewed:

1. The dichotomous essence of the international agreement in view of international negotiations theory. – Norm Journal, no. 10, 2012, pp. 29-44.

2. Soft power in international relations and its role in the philosophy and practice of EU security policy – In: Pantev, Pl. (Ed.). European Union security policy, based on soft power: actual implications and manifestations, potential opportunities and contingencies. Sofia: ‘St. Kliment Ohridski’ University Press, 2013, pp. 9-78.

3. The bounds of the use of force in the ambivalent term ‘international intervention’. – Contemporary Law Journal, no. 2, 2013, pp. 74-90.

4. Public diplomacy – disguised or dismantled propaganda? – International Relations Journal, no. 3, 2013, pp. 73-92.

The candidate has not reported articles published in scientific journals peer-reviewed and indexed in Scopus and/or Web of Science.

The main aspects of the candidate’s research activities may be traced in the field of security and the theory of international relations. She has presented academic works on the topics of refugees and migration, borders in international relations, foreign policy.

Mira Zdravkova Kuneva participates in the competition with the habilitation thesis entitled “Borders in international relations. Theoretical, normative and practical issues”. Sofia: Gutenberg Publishing House, 2022, 339 pages.

The monographic work constitutes a scholarly achievement. It is the result of a considerable intellectual effort that serves as an evidence of the candidate’s scholarly advance. It has been elaborated on the basis of a comprehensive bibliography comprising 564 items. The work is thorough, conscientious, structurally logical, and consistent in content. I cannot but agree with what Prof. Dr. Maria Boikova Struble, the scientific editor of the monograph, has pointed out on page 9: “A number of the author’s conclusions are not new; what is new is the way in which she brings them together to offer a coherent, in-depth and enriching discussion of some of the most significant contemporary issues in international relations.” The topicality of the monograph is unquestionable.

A novelty that reveals another opportunity for future research and deserves attention is the emphasis put by the author on the fiscal aspect of borders on pp. 154 – 164.

I believe that Mira Zdravkova Kuneva’s monograph fulfils the criteria for a habilitation thesis and supplies a gap in the Bulgarian specialized literature.

As for the rest of the academic works, it is possible to assess them in the following manner – they give grounds to draw a conclusion about the purposefulness and completeness of the candidate’s scholarly interests. By these works, she proves her qualities as a scholarly analyst, her skills in systematizing, formulating and arguing her theses. The said works testify

to an intended and achieved presence on the scholarly agenda as regards the topics of the competition.

In my opinion, in terms of the scope and subject of research, the presented academic works meet the requirements for holding the academic post of associate professor.

5. Evaluation of the scholarly and applied scholarly achievements

The contributions are reflected in the author's reference. I confirm their scholarly value.

6. Critical remarks and recommendations

I have no critical comments on the candidate's academic works presented and accepted for review under the competition. My recommendation to Mira Zdravkova Kuneva is to pay more attention to instruments of Bulgarian law, international law and European Union law.

7. Conclusion

In view of the above, I reckon that the candidature of Chief Assist. Prof. Mira Zdravkova Kuneva, PhD, meets the criteria for research and teaching activities and fulfils the requirements stipulated in the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act and the Rules for the implementation of the DASRBA. I present a positive review under the competition and suggest to the academic board to take a decision for holding the academic post "Associate Professor" in the professional field 3.3 Political Science (International Relations) at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski".

Sofia, 21 December 2022

Reviewer:

/Prof. Dr. Blagoy Vidin/