

## **OPINION**

by Assoc. Prof. Dobrin Hristov Kanev, PhD, NBU, 3.3. Political Science  
on the scientific works for participation in a competition for the academic position of Associate  
Professor in the professional field 3.3 Political Science, announced in the State Gazette, issue 41 /  
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with candidate Assistant Professor Evelina Radoslavova Staykova-Mileva, PhD

### **I. Assessment of compliance with the minimum national requirements and the requirements of the New Bulgarian University**

Assistant Professor Evelina Staykova-Mileva, PhD, is the only participant who submitted the necessary documents in time and was admitted to the competition announced by the New Bulgarian University for the academic position of Associate Professor in the professional field 3.3. Political Science.

The candidate meets all the requirements for holding the mentioned academic position, set in Art. 29 of the Law for Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria. The same applies to the additional requirements of the NBU. She obtained the scientific and educational degree "PhD" in the same professional field in 2012. She has held the academic position of Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science since 2012. She has presented a published monograph and academic articles and studies, which do not repeat those presented for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree "PhD" and were published after her appointment to the academic position of "Assistant Professor". As evidenced by the attached data, her current research output and teaching achievements meet the minimum national requirements for the academic position of Associate Professor and the requirements of NBU, and some of the indicators show higher results (sections D, E, E, and in all sections of NBU - G, H, I).

### **II. Research activities and results**

*1. Evaluation of the monograph, including evaluation of the scientific and scientific-applied contributions of the author*

The monograph of Evelina Staykova presented for the competition entitled "Urban policies and local democracy at the beginning of the XXI century. Global Trends, European Perspectives, Bulgarian Realities" is on a topic that is obviously of great scientific and political-practical significance. The interest

of scholars in the problems of the modern city has grown enormously due to the essential role of cities in many aspects of economic, social and technological development.

The work, which is 223 printed pages and has a rich bibliography, is structured in four chapters that follow a strictly logical sequence of problems - first, clarifying general issues and concepts related to city research and urban policies; second, starting from the general to the specific with the beginning clarification of the global tendencies in the object of research; third, after the global it descends to the European level, and fourth, it reaches the cities, urban policies and local democracy in Bulgaria.

The author has successfully dealt with the potential difficulties in choosing an appropriate methodology for studying such a complex phenomenon as the modern city. In this respect, she relies on interdisciplinarity with a leading role of the political science approach. Documentary analysis has been successfully applied in relation to a large number of studied in the text global, European and national agreements, strategies, reports. The paper also processes a significant amount of statistical data from various sources. The results of the author's participatory observation are also interwoven in the fourth chapter.

The demonstrated professionalism of Evelina Staykova in the choice of the research topic, in the structuring of the work and in the application of an adequate methodology are naturally the basis of her contributions to the research of "urban issues". Among them can be mentioned the specific perspectives, through which in many cases urban policies and issues are considered. On the one hand, this is the prism of local democracy. Her conclusion is that democratic governance is an "absolute imperative for the modern city" (p. 204), but this necessary condition is not enough if there is a lack of managerial capacity. On the other hand, it is the double analytical prism of looking at the city both globally and locally, which has allowed her to describe a true picture of the achievements, potential and shortcomings of modern cities and related policies. In the monograph the author has successfully presented all the new trends in the development of cities and the possible options for their future.

Contributions can be found in the fourth chapter of the monograph, which analyzes the state and shortcomings of the legislation and policies in Bulgaria regarding the cities with visions for their improvement.

In general, Evelina Staykova's monograph is a serious and comprehensive study, which collects, processes and analyzes a large amount of data on the development of cities in the world, in Europe, in Bulgaria and demonstrates the author's research abilities.

*2. Evaluation of the contributions in the other attached publications, made after the appointment of the academic position Assistant Professor. It also includes an assessment of the requirement for peer-reviewed publications.*

These abilities of Evelina Staykova are evident in the other publications that the candidate has presented for participation in the competition. These are a total of nineteen publications published since her appointment as Assistant Professor: six scientific publications (chapters in collective monographs and articles in scientific journals), referenced and indexed in world-famous databases (some of them co-authored), eleven articles and chapters from books and two studies in scientific peer-reviewed publications. Almost half of them are in English and French, and three have found a place in the publications of the most authoritative publishers such as Palgrave Macmillan and Routledge. It must be said that this rarely happens to young scholars like Evelina Staykova and is another proof of her research qualities.

In these publications the wider palette of research interests and results of the author is noticed. On the one hand, there is the topic of citizenship, which is present in seven of the publications and where we can also find the author's scientific contributions, for example regarding the treatment of global citizenship and e-citizenship. On the other hand are the problems of migration (four publications) - also a topic developed by Staykova for years, in which she has contributed. Several texts are devoted to the topic of populism. The same applies to the problems of political participation and political activism.

The overall view of the candidate's research output once again confirms the conclusion about her significant achievements in this regard.

*3. Citation by other authors*

Some of Eva Staykova's publications have entered international academic life, have been the subject of citations and references by other authors and have found their way into renowned databases. According to the attached reference, there are 14 citations, six of which are in scientific journals, referenced and indexed in world-famous databases. This shows that the candidate is already present as an author on the international and national research scene.

*4. Evaluation of the results of participation in research and educational projects and application of the obtained results in practice.*

Evelina Staykova proves her significant capacity as a researcher and lecturer with her work in an extremely large number of research and educational projects. In the last ten years she has participated in 15 international and 11 national projects. Apart from that, the candidate has been the leader of three

research and educational projects. In a number of cases, the projects are on important topics and sponsored by serious institutions, incl. European ones. From the point of view of the additional requirements of the NBU, it should be mentioned the fact that 11 of these projects have attracted external funds.

### **III. Teaching activities**

#### *1. Classroom and extracurricular workload, work in the electronic training module "MOODLE - NBU", providing student internships and trainings, work with students and graduates*

As the attached documentation shows, the lecture workload (classroom and extracurricular) of Evelina Staykova meets all requirements. In particular, in the past 2019/2020 academic year, her workload exceeded 400 hours, of which 344 hours were classroom lectures and 60 hours - extracurricular. Over the years, the candidate leads alone or together with other colleagues an extremely large number of courses - for example 14 in 2019/20, 15 in 2016/17. They are an important part of the programs of the Department of Political Science for all educational degrees. Among them in the last year are, for example, the bachelor's courses in Human Rights, Equality Policies, European Citizenship, Digital Policy, European Migration Policy, as well as the master's courses in E-Government, Management and Analysis of Urban Policies. In addition, Eva Staykova runs foreign language courses: Migration Policy (in English), Minority Policies in Central and Eastern Europe (in French), Nations, Ethnicities, Religions: Basic Concepts, International Migration (in French), E-Government (in French), Citizenship Policies (in French).

Most of these courses have been developed and uploaded in an appropriate form in the electronic training module "MOODLE - NBU" (their number reaches in the years 9-10).

Evelina Staykova works successfully with students. Her work with graduates is intensive, and in the period 2012-2020 she provided academic guidance to 11 successfully defended graduates. During these years she has engaged in 25 reviews of graduates, and has participated in 25 commissions for state exams.

The candidate has provided, organized or supervised student internships and trainings - for example, field research on the educational project "Urban Policies, Business Environment and Local Democracy: A Study of a Middle Bulgarian City (Lom)", funded by the Bachelor's Faculty, NBU (2017), with the participation for 8 students; internships at the Center for Migration Studies for 8 students; participation of 5 students at the International Winter University "Facing the Challenge of Youth Unemployment: Towards an Integrated European Policy of Integration Towards an Integrated European Policy of Integration. Friborg — Erasmus IP 2013" (2013) in Tilburg, Switzerland.

## *2. Working with Erasmus students.*

She has also worked actively with Erasmus students, both in the above activities and in the foreign language courses.

## *3. Grades from student surveys.*

According to the Center for Quality and Evaluation, the average grade from the student surveys for the last ten semesters for Evelina Staykova is excellent - 4.58 with a maximum of 5.00.

## **IV. Administrative and public activities**

### *1. Participation in collective governing bodies of NBU*

Evelina Staykova has been a member of the Academic Council of NBU since the autumn semester of the academic year 2020/2021 until now. He has been a member of the Faculty Council of the Bachelor's Faculty since the spring semester of the 2018/2019 academic year, and from the following semester he is its vice-president.

Since October 1, 2020, she is the Head of the Department of Political Science, having previously been the Administrative Secretary (2008-2009) and Program Director (2013-2018).

She is currently a member of university commissions - a committee at the Fund "Curricula" of the Bachelor's Faculty and a commission for accreditation of the Bachelor's Faculty.

### *2. Social activity.*

Her university activity is complemented by public activity in areas such as immigration, the fight against corruption and others.

### *3. Attracting students to the program.*

With her active teaching and administrative work, the candidate has contributed to attracting students to NBU.

## **V. Personal impressions of the candidate (if any)**

I have known the candidate since 2004, when she started as a political science student at NBU. Since then, until the completion of her master's degree, I have taught her a number of courses. She was an excellent student and was awarded the Charles Moser Prize in 2007 for academic achievement and civic courage, and a year later became the Bulgarian Student of the Year in the social sciences and law category. Her work as a PhD student was successful, and the jury's evaluation during the defense was high. As can be seen from the above, she has already established herself as an excellent and competent scholar. This

is complemented by her outstanding organizational qualities, which she demonstrates in her work in the department and at university level.

**Conclusion:** Based on all the above, I come to the conclusion that the candidacy of Assistant Professor Evelina Staykova-Mileva, PhD, meets all the requirements for holding the academic position of Associate Professor. I mean the quantity and quality of her research output; her participation in research projects; her successful teaching and administrative work at the New Bulgarian University; her ability to work with students and graduates. This gives me every reason to support categorically and with full conviction her admission to election by the Academic Council of NBU as an Associate Professor in the professional field 3.3. Political Sciences.

September 12, 2021

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