

## **OPINION STATEMENT**

By Assoc. Prof. **Todor Todorov Yalamov**, PhD, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", habilitated in "scientific field 3.7. Administration and management" about the habilitation portfolio of Juliana Bozhidarova Hadjitchoneva submitted for evaluation in a procedure for appointment of associate professor in "scientific field 3.7. Administration and management", announced in the State Gazette no. 44/19.05.2023.

Grounds for submitting the opinion: participation in the Evaluation Board in accordance with the Order № Z-RK-285/13.07.2023 of the Rector of NBU and the decision of the first meeting of the board from 25.07.2023. The opinion was prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for its Application and the Ordinance on the Development of the Academic Staff in the NBU. In terms of structure, the opinion consists of VI parts and a conclusion in accordance with the template for preparing an opinion for holding the academic position of "associate professor" at the NBU.

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

The only candidate - Assistant Professor Dr. Juliana Bozhidarova Hadjitchoneva significantly exceeds the minimum national requirements and the additional requirements of the New Bulgarian University for holding the position of associate professor not only based on the references provided, but also beyond them. For details, see for instance item II.3 about citations by other researchers. It is also obvious that according to item 24 of the requirements of the NBU, the candidate should be awarded additional 10 points.

Remark for non-Bulgarian audience of this opinion: Dr. Hadjitchoneva holds the second tier of assistant professorship, which requires a PhD and a certain level of publications and is a tenured position. It provides academic freedom of leading main courses in the curriculum at bachelor and master level corresponding to a tenured associate professorship level elsewhere. The habilitation procedure provides rights for PhD supervision and holding of administrative positions within the university.

### **II. Research (creative) activity and results**

#### **1. Evaluation of the monographic work, creative performances or other publications corresponding in volume and completeness to a monographic work, including an evaluation of the scientific and scientific-applied contributions of the author.**

I already had the opportunity and the pleasure to write a review of Dr. Hadjitchoneva's book "Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Artificial Intelligence in Bulgaria - Dynamics and Management", published by UNWE in 2022. The review was published as a short paper "On a study of entrepreneurship, innovation and artificial intelligence in Bulgaria" in Economic Thought journal, no. 4/2022. The book has the required characteristics of a monographic work and surpasses many of the habilitation monographs in Bulgaria both in terms of size and content.

**I endorse** the conceptualization of **the four research domains** in which Dr. Hadjitchoneva pledges contributions with her research publications, as well as **the theoretical and scientific-practical impact** of the monograph. She formulated the contributions in a style and format adopted by the Bulgarian research community. For potential readers of this review outside the evaluation board and the international research community, I would note three contributing themes:

- Serial entrepreneurship develops as an upgrade of the internal entrepreneurial culture - from the point of view of both an already existing entrepreneur-manager (who has not yet become serial) and internal entrepreneurs who later become "external" and serial;
- The attitudes towards entrepreneurship of Bulgarian students (both immediately after graduation and in a horizon of 5 years after completing their education) are high – higher than the world average and highest among the European Union countries included in the GUESSS study.
- An original author's model for research and analysis of entrepreneurial and innovation ecosystems has been developed, which provides an opportunity to explain a number of contradictions between existing attitudes, explanatory schemes and the reality of the Bulgarian economy.

In conclusion: the provided work of the assistant professor Juliana Hadjitchoneva is an independent scientific product that builds on her previous empirical research with new explanatory models and those that are original both for Bulgaria and for countries in transition, and also provides valuable insights regarding behavior in the state of the Covid-crisis.

## **2. Evaluation of the contributions in the other attached publications (creative performances) made after the appointment of the academic position of "chief assistant" (assistant professor).**

All publications provided are relevant to the announced habilitation procedure and present a well-balanced portfolio of quantitative and qualitative research, incl. case studies. It is worth noting the fact that Dr. Hadjitchoneva has publications that position her as a "global" researcher - ie. not only explores Bulgaria, but also Africa (Algeria, as well as Bulgarian-African relationships), Latin America (Chile as well as Bulgarian – Brazilian relationships), the European Union and globalization. Bulgarian community of economists needs researchers with Juliana's profile – having a wide global network of co-authors publishing on global issues. 2/3 of her publications are the result of a co-authorship, mostly international.

### **3. Citations by other authors.**

The submitted citations provide 80 points against the required 50 points, but in reality Juliana has at least 10 citations in the Scopus database, which equals to 150 points - cumulatively enough for the ranks of associate professor and professor at the same time.

It is worth noting the fact that both co-authored with researchers from different countries (usually they collect more citations) and individual articles and books by Dr. Hadjitchoneva are cited. The analysis of the provided citation references, and my own Scopus research demonstrates that Dr. Hadjitchoneva is a prominent researcher in the domains of entrepreneurship, innovation, and applications of the artificial intelligence in business.

**Publications in all four scientific domains** in which she claims contributions have been cited. The additional analysis of who cites Dr. Hadjitchoneva (within and outside Scopus database), shows that for the most part these are established international scholars.

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

Although the administrators of Bulgarian science have accepted that only candidates for a full professorship should show experience in projects, which I consider wrong, I would like to note the participation of Dr. Hadjitchoneva as coordinator for Bulgaria of the GUESS study (Global University Project on the Study of Entrepreneurial Attitudes and Entrepreneurial Activities of Students). The GUESS project, especially after Bulgaria dropped out of GEM (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor) provides wonderful perspectives not only to entrepreneurship researchers but is also relevant to policymakers.

## **III. Learning and teaching activity**

Dr. Juliana Hadjichoneva is a full-time assistant professor (second tier) at NBU and has classroom load that exceeds both the minimum requirements and the average for other universities. She teaches in Bulgarian, English and French language, which is quite rare in Bulgaria. This enables NBU to attract foreign students. According to the references, she has developed and provided students with a variety of study materials. She works actively as a supervisor of graduate students, prepares reviews, but most importantly, she engages students in research projects, empirical studies and internships in businesses, which then result in scientific publications.

The teaching activity of assistant professor Dr. Hadjitchoneva is evaluated very well by the students, according to the provided references. 4.14 out of 5 points is even an excellent

rating, against the background of typically average evaluations elsewhere. In my meetings with former NBU students, the name of Dr. Hadjitchoneva is always appreciated.

Dr. Hadjitchoneva's habilitation will enable her to be a great supervisor of PhD students who will quickly integrate into the international research ecosystem.

#### **IV. Administrative and public activity**

As a full-time lecturer at NBU, Dr. Hadjitchoneva participates in a variety of ways in the bachelor's programs in "Business Management and Entrepreneurship" and the master's programs in "Business Administration". Her strong business contacts enable her to bring in guest speakers, provide case studies to students and ultimately develop the programs to meet modern business requirements.

I have witnessed her role in the organization and holding of various francophone economic conferences in Bulgaria, and through conversations with common colleagues in France, I am convinced that her public activity makes her a truly global responsible scholar - with a focus on Africa and Latin America.

#### **V. Personal impressions of the candidate**

I knew some of Dr. Hadjitchoneva's publications from before and met her at conferences - both scientific and business events. I have also met her frequently at various meetings of the entrepreneurial and innovation ecosystems. My work with her as part of the first GUESS study convinced me that she is an erudite, creative and responsible academic researcher who **should have been habilitated a long time ago**. She has built an indisputable international reputation and authority, which can only benefit the Bulgarian economic research community.

#### **VI. Opinions, recommendations and notes on the activity and achievements of the candidate**

First of all, I recommend Dr. Hadjitchoneva and the academic management of the NBU to stimulate her to start the procedure for a full professorship more quickly than the associate professorship, since she has all the necessary results for this.

Secondly, I recommend Dr. Hadjitchoneva to be more active in disseminating her scientific results in the media and among policy makers, as they have the potential to change some opinions and attitudes in our society.

It is worth considering a second, revised edition in English or French of her monograph so that it has an even wider impact. I think she would do well.

## **Conclusion**

The candidate Associate Professor Dr. Juliana Hadjitchoneva meets the requirements for the academic position of "associate professor", in accordance with the national requirements and the additional requirement of the New Bulgarian University.

**I strongly suggest** to the members of the Evaluation board (Scientific Jury) and the Academic Council of the NBU **to appoint** Dr. Juliana Hadjitchoneva for the academic position of "**associate professor**" in "scientific field 3.7 Administration and management" (with a focus on Entrepreneurship, competitiveness, business development, artificial intelligence) at the New Bulgarian University.

September 2, 2023.

Signature

