

## **REVIEW**

### **of scientific works and teaching activities**

of Dr. Hasan Azis Ismail

**Subject: participation in a competition for the academic position of Associate Professor in the professional field 3.7. Administration and Management (Public Administration), announced in State Gazette No. 55 of 15.07.2022 for the needs of the Centre of Legal Sciences at Burgas Free University**

**Reviewer: Prof. Dr. Andrey Boyanov Zahariev, registered in the public register of the NATIONAL CENTRE FOR INFORMATION AND DOCUMENTATION as a habilitated person, lecturer at Dimitar A. Tsenov Academy of Economics professional field 3.8 Economics, with scientific specialty "Finance, Money Circulation, Credit and Insurance (Finance)"**

This review is based on the documents received under a competition announced by BFU, SG No. 55 of 15.07.2022 and on the university's website for the needs of the Centre of Legal Sciences. The documents submitted for the competition comply with the requirements of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the the Rules on Application of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and BFU's internal regulatory documents. The competition procedure has been correctly followed. The basis for writing this review is Order LS-181/09.09.2022 of the Rector of BFU Prof. Dr. Milen Baltov on the composition and powers of the scientific jury for the announced competition, as well as decisions from the first session of the scientific jury.

#### **1. General presentation of the materials received**

**One candidate, Dr. Hasan Azis Ismail from Burgas Free University has submitted documents for participation in the announced competition .**

Materials submitted to the competition include:

**1.1. Publications in the competition** – for participation in the competition the candidate **Dr. Hasan Azis has** submitted two monographs, one book based on a defended dissertation for the award of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor", 10 articles and reports published in non-refereed journals with scientific peer review or published in edited collective volumes, 2 studies published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or published in edited collective volumes - a total of 14 titles, which meet the requirements of Article 24 of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff and together with the citations bring the candidate in the competition 50 points from Group A, 100 points from Group B, 310 points from Group D and 185 points from Group E or a total of 645 points, which fully satisfies the minimum national requirements for the professional field. A stand-alone course on "**Foundations of Local Self-Government**" (196 pages) was also presented.

**1.2. The abstracts and electronic copies of the works**, references and official notes containing data on the candidate's participation in scientific and educational projects, certifying the pedagogical activity, research and publication activity, scientific contributions, as well as certificates relevant to the competition are submitted.

## **2. Candidate details.**

*Brief biographical data about the candidate* - Dr. Hasan Azis was born on 16 April 1969 in Kardzhali. His childhood passed in the village of Most, Kardzhali. He graduated with a Master degree as Engineer in Industrial and Civil Engineering at the University of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Geodesy in Sofia. At the same time he is studying Marketing and Management at the UNWE. In 2020 he received a PhD degree from the UNWE. In 2003 he was elected mayor of Kardzhali municipality. He was re-elected mayor in 2007, 2011, 2015 and 2019. He is a member of the scientific

board of the journal Scientific Atlas. He has been a member of the Bulgarian delegation to the European Committee of the Regions since 2007.

**CONCLUSION: The above facts gave grounds to form an objective positive personal characteristic of Dr. Hasan Azis, as a candidate for the academic position of Associate Professor at the Centre of Legal Sciences at the BFU.**

### **3. General characteristics and evaluation of the candidate's scientific output**

The total number of publications of Dr. Hasan Azis that I evaluated in the competition is 20, of which 2 were published abroad. For this competition, Dr. Hasan Azis has submitted a detailed description and electronic copies of all these publications that are the subject of this competition and are accepted for peer-review.

**Conclusion: The candidate in the competition fulfils the minimum national requirements for the academic position of Associate Professor in the field of higher education 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences and 3.7 Administration and Management, respectively, in accordance with the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the the Rules on Application of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria.**

#### **3.1 Assessment of the volume and structure of scientific output**

The structure of the presented scientific works of the candidate is as follows:

- Monographs - 1 independent, submitted as habilitation thesis for participation in the competition for "Associate Professor";

- Monographs - 1 independent, which is not submitted as a major habilitation thesis under a previous or current procedure.

- 1 book published based on a defended dissertation for the award of educational and scientific degree "Doctor".

- Studies – 3 independent.

- Scientific articles – 9 independent, published abroad.

- Scientific papers – 4 independent papers, 2 of them published abroad.
- Textbooks and teaching aids – 1.

The entire scientific output of the candidate is independent and the number of publications abroad is also 10%.

The publications are oriented towards topical issues of local administration. They form a group of contributions of scientific and practical-applied nature.

On the basis of the submitted reference list of publications used in the procedure for obtaining the Ph.D. degree, as well as the public information available in the National Information and Documentation Centre, it can be confirmed that they are excluded from the publications submitted for this competition.

The main monograph (Local Policies in the New Reality – Strategic Elements and Approaches of the Municipalities) does not repeat the topic nor the statements of the dissertation for obtaining the Ph.D. degree, therefore it can be concluded that it meets the requirements of Article 24, paragraph 3 of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria.

**CONCLUSION: In terms of structure and content, the candidate's scientific output corresponds to the profile of the announced competition for the academic position of Associate Professor.**

### **3.2. Assessment of monographs as an independent object of peer review**

The monograph **Local Policies in the New Reality – Strategic Elements and Approaches of the Municipalities**, Azis, H. (2022), was submitted in the competition for peer review. Publishing complex - UNWE, ISBN 978-619-232-634-0 Sofia. The scientific work consists of 324 pages and includes seven chapters, 190 pages of main exposition and 134 pages of appendices.

The monograph addresses issues related to local self-government, the decentralization process and the new opportunities for municipalities set out in the National Recovery and resilience plan for Bulgaria 2021-2027. A survey was conducted in 40 municipalities on the degree of decentralization, the social climate and

the leadership style of governance. The problems related to decentralization, central and local government and the need for their detailed analysis, for research and creation of working models for solving them in practice are grounds for further analysis. Decentralization is seen by the author as a major guideline for the European development of municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria, which aims to explore and present the best practices in the training of human capital and its specificity for the development of the local economy, as well as the laying of practical, not only theoretical conditions and measures to promote small and medium-sized businesses in municipalities.

The second monograph **Institutional capacity, satisfaction and social climate in Bulgarian municipalities**, Azis, H. (2022). Publishing Complex – UNWE, ISBN 978-619-232-642-5, Sofia is oriented to the study of the social climate and the levels of satisfaction in the work environment from the perspective of municipal administration, municipal councillors and mayors in local government. Their opinion was compared with the actual data of the same indicators in 39 Bulgarian municipalities with similar groups of participants in two periods: September - December 2017 and October - December 2020, applying a delta analysis method with a lag period of three years.

**CONCLUSION: The two monographs presented here are a testimonial of scientific breadth that confirms the research qualities of Dr. Hasan Azis. Representativeness of the stratified samples of respondents was achieved, which is the basis for reliable conclusions and recommendations.**

#### **4. Characteristics and evaluation of the candidate's teaching and pedagogical activity**

According to a memo from the BFU administration, Dr. Hasan Azis has a reported teaching load of 278 teaching hours, as follows: in the 2020/2021 academic year - 168 hours and in the 2021/2022 academic year 110 hours. He also teaches classes as a guest lecturer at the UNWE. The author's textbook Fundamentals of local self-government,

Azis, H. (2022), was also submitted to the competition . PC- UNWE, ISBN 978-619-232-391-2 (196 pages), which is built on 10 lecture topics.

**Conclusion: As a candidate for the academic position of Associate Professor and a representative of the practice, Dr. Hasan Azis successfully combines academic employment with far-reaching and responsible involvement in the field of local administration and local self-government.**

### **5. Scientific and applied contributions of the candidate**

Dr. Hasan Azis's academic writings are broadly, but not limited to, three main areas – strategic challenges facing local government, operational monitoring of the institutional capacity of municipalities, and the theoretical and applied foundations of local administration. All contributions are the result of entirely independent research and scientific activity (monographs, scientific articles, reports, textbook). The research is not limited within the country, but the analyses carried out in these areas have a much broader territorial scope, with a focus on European solidarity and instruments to support local development, which contributes to a systematic and thorough interpretation of the research results.

The contributions of the candidate are in theoretical and practical-applied aspects. I fully endorse their grouping and wording, with emphasis as follows:

- The work systematized the conceptual apparatus of the process of decentralization and deconcentration in the levels of government by deriving the model of connectivity between central and local government in Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey.
- The work systematized the conceptual apparatus of the process of decentralization and regionalization in the levels of government by deriving the model of connectivity between central and local government in Bulgaria.
- An assessment of the financial effects is made, presented in terms of changes in key indicators for local budgets and for the degree of decentralisation, such as growth in the percentage of tax, own and general revenues.

- An assessment of leadership styles of governance in the surveyed municipalities is made and the relationship between governance style and job satisfaction levels is shown as a result of the comparative analysis of the 2017 and 2020 study indicators.

- In-depth theoretical and methodological review of local self-government in Bulgaria and analysis of strategic documents in the municipalities, NAMRB and the Committee of the Regions, measuring the indicator for Bulgaria of financial, administrative and political decentralization.

- An Organizational Chart of the state administration of Bulgaria with hierarchical and functional interaction of the types of authorities has been designed by the author.

- The common planning of Bulgarian municipalities was analyzed on strategic issues and spatial areas in the new reality through the EU financial instruments. Strategic planning, defining the long-term goals of municipalities and their focus on communication between central and local government.

- The elements for the assessment of the development of party self-determination of local authorities as an indicator of the sustainability of the party system in Bulgaria are structured.

- The main challenges for improving the microclimate and increasing job satisfaction in Bulgarian municipalities were identified and on this basis deficits and potentials for overcoming them are pointed out.

- A methodology and an algorithm for empirical research of the administrative capacities and civic attitudes including selected applicable research methods and techniques are approbated, which make it possible to form a kind of diagnostic map of the decentralization process in municipal administrations and civil society.

- An Integrated Model of Local and Regional Governance has been developed following an analysis of the legal framework, civic attitudes and administrative capacities to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of border

management in line with the European Charter of Local Self-Government and to achieve the good governance indicators.

- Possible scenarios for reform towards decentralization of Bulgarian municipalities are proposed - new recommendations for improving legislation are made to ensure the sustainability of policies to strengthen and develop local self-government.

- Opportunities are outlined for applying the principles of "good governance" through the implementation of specific policies, rules and processes in local government decision-making.

- The pattern of connectivity between municipal administration, municipal councillors and mayors is outlined, highlighting specific dependencies in the social climate at work in each of the municipalities studied.

- Specific recommendations from the three groups of respondents for improving the microclimate and increasing satisfaction at work are derived and systematized, taking into account the specific characteristics of the municipalities studied.

- A complex toolkit for research and assessment of the social climate and job satisfaction levels in Bulgarian municipalities has been proposed.

## **6. Evaluation of the personal contribution of the candidate**

The texts of the publications referred to in the competition for Associate Professor are the personal work of the candidate. No plagiarism was found in these works. On the basis of the review, I believe that the above contributions are the personal merit of Dr. Hasan Azis. The formulated conclusions, research results and recommendations are his personal merit. Proof of the academic recognition of Dr. Azis' scientific contributions are 16 citations and references to his publications.

## **7. Notes and recommendations**

The candidate in the competition can successfully continue his research in the field of financial decentralization and public policy reform in support of regional development. I recommend Dr. Hasan Azis to deepen his publication activity in journals refereed and indexed in Scopus, Web of Science, EconLit & ERIH+.

## **8. Personal impressions**

I know professionally Dr. Hasan Azis, who is a candidate in the competition for associate professor. In my capacity as Chairman of the Board of the National Association of Chairpersons of Municipal Councils, in his person, as an active figure in the structure of the NAMRB, we have seen the necessary will to establish an environment for constructive dialogue between mayors and chairpersons of municipal councils, in years when this was extremely necessary and required changes in the statutes of the National Association of Municipalities of the Republic of Bulgaria (Article 12, etc.). As the Editor-in-Chief of the Economic Archive Journal, I am also familiar with his research qualities at the dissertation preparation stage, which gives me reason to affirm that Dr. Hasan Azis applies a sustained process approach to building as a scholar-practitioner and administrator.

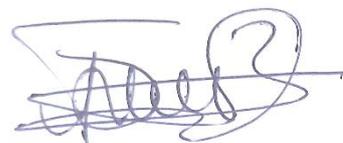
**Conclusion: In his person, the habilitated academic staff of BFU will receive a complement, which will be a testimonial of professionalism among PhD students, students, lecturers and the public.**

## **CONCLUSION**

After reading the materials and scientific works presented in the competition, analyzing their significance and scientific and applied contributions contained in them, I give my **positive** assessment and **recommend** the Scientific Jury to propose to the Centre of Legal Sciences at BFU to elect Dr. Hasan Azis to occupy the academic position of Associate Professor in the **professional field 3.7. Administration and**

**Management (Public Administration), under a competition announced in State Gazette No. 55 of 15.07.2022.**

18.10.2022

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Andrey Zahariev', written over a horizontal line.

Reviewer:.....

(Prof. Dr. Andrey Zahariev)