

REVIEW

by Prof. Maria Neikova Kaneva, D.Sc.

Member of scientific jury regarding procedure for
academic position "Associate professor" in
Professional Field: 3.7. Administration and Management (Public
administration) on the requirements of the Centre for Legal Sciences of
Burgas Free University
announced in the "State Gazette", No. 55/15.07.2022

DEAR MEMBERS OF THE SCIENTIFIC JURY,

Only participant at the procedure for academic position "Associate professor" in
Professional Field: 3.7. Administration and Management (Public administration)
announced in the "State Gazette", No. 55/15.07.2022 is Hasan Azis Ismail, PhD

According to the requirements of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the
Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for its implementation, the candidate has submitted
the following documents: Order No. JIC-181/09.09.2022 of the Rector of Burgas Free
University for establishing scientific jury for conducting the current procedure, curriculum
vitae, Reference for the contributions in the candidate's scientific publications, Summary,
Reference for Citation, etc.

All legal requirements regarding the current procedure have been fulfilled.

I. Presenting the candidate

Hasan Azis, PhD holds a Master degree in the field of Industrial and Civil Engineering
from the University of Architecture, Construction and Geodesy and a Master degree in
Marketing and Management from the University of National and World Economy. In 2020
obtains a PhD (Doctoral) degree in professional field "Administration and management" after
successfully defending doctoral dissertation on the topic of "Decentralization as a factor for
the development of local self-government" (based on which has obtained Diploma No.
448/08.06.2020). Since 2020 he is academic member of Burgas Free University.

Hasan Azis, PhD has extensive experience in management and administrative affairs.
From 2001 to 2003 he serves as a vice regional governor of the Kardzhali region and from 2003
since present he is Mayor of Kardzhali municipality. Since 2016 and currently provides
significant activities on establishment and development of cooperation between municipalities
in Bulgaria as Chairman of the Board of Directors of the National Association of Municipalities
in the Republic of Bulgaria.

In 2003-2006 he is vice-president of the Association of Rodopa Municipalities. Has
actively participated in the activities of the European Committee of the Regions as a member

from 2007 to 2020. He is members of the Committee of economic policy to the Committee of the Regions (ECON) and has been actively involved in discussion and adoption of statements, reports and resolutions related to local and regional authorities. As a member of the Commission for Citizenship, Governance, Institutional and External Affairs (CIVEX) he contributes to the Commissions' activities, as a member from 2015 to 2020.

II. General overview of the scientific production presented by the participant in the current procedure

The scientific work of Mr. Hasan Azis, PhD presented in the procedure on quality aspect comply fully to the legal requirements, as to quantity aspect it significantly exceed the minimum nationally established requirements for occupying the academic position of "associate professor", as well as the requirements of the Regulations for the Implementation of ZRASRB and the Regulations for the development of the academic personnel at the Burgas Free University.

Two monographic books and one textbook (lecture course) on "Fundamentals of local self-government" are presented as part of the documents to the current procedure. One monographic book on the topic of "Decentralization as a factor for the development of local self-government" has been presented. This monographic book has been developed based on a successfully defended dissertation theses.

The candidate presents to the scientific jury two research studies separately developed and published in 2021 and 2022 covering the topic of "Cross-border decentralization and integrated management - trends and interrelationships of the example of the municipalities of Edirne, Komotini and Kardzhali" and the topic of "Decentralization: models for reform through the vision of the National Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria ".

Total of 6 (six) scientific articles published in Bulgaria and 4 (four) reports based on participation in scientific forums have been submitted for review as part of the current procedure.

Three training courses developed by Hasan Azis, PhD have been included to an e-learning platform.

A wide range of scientific project activities was presented by the candidate, where 12 (twelve) of the conducted scientific projects are national and 2 (two) are international.

The scientific production presented by. Hasan Azis, PhD for review contains numerous scientific and scientifically-applied contributions. Main part of the contributions have practical significance.

III. Educational and Training activities of the candidate

Mr. Hasan Azis Ismail, Phd actively conducts educational and teaching activities, as his knowledge and experience is positively evaluated by the academic and scientific community

in the country. This statement is supported by the fact that he is an academic and guest lecturer at prestigious Universities. From 2020 since present, he teaches at the Center for Legal Sciences in Burgas Free University. He is an honorary lecturer at the University of National and World Economy and is a guest lecturer at Varna Free University "Chernorizets Hrabar". He conducts lecture courses on the following disciplines "Fundamentals of Local Self-Government", "Administrative Reform and Decentralization in Bulgaria", "Decentralization and Local Self-Government", "State Policies and Strategies", "State Policy and Local Government in Sports".

IV. Analysis of the monographic books, studies and textbooks presented

- *Monographic book titled „Local policies in the new reality - strategic elements and approaches of municipalities (published in 202. – ISBN: 978-619-232-634-0) contains 323 pages*

The monographic work presents the issue of "Local policies in the new reality - strategic elements and approaches of municipalities" containing seven chapters. The author focuses on the conditions in which the municipalities provide their activities in Bulgaria, evaluating decentralization from the perspective of the municipal administration, the municipal councils and mayors. The author precise and correctly defined the space - territorial limits where it is possible to exercise power and competences. At the same time, he presents analysis of the concept of decentralization through political, administrative and fiscal factors.

Research and analyses have been conducted and presented on the organizational processes through which management has been provided. In this context, special attention in being given to the stages of strategic planning, definition of goals and management of available resources, including the stage of subsequent evaluation. The author supports the conclusion that deconcentration and decentralization contributes to more efficient State management. (*on page 52 of the monographic work*).

The author thoroughly researches and presents the importance and significance of the relationship between public policy and strategic documents on regional development. He supports the conclusion that effective implementation of policies could be guaranteed through developing mechanisms for determining main priorities in certain territory. (*on page 62 of the monographic work*).

Analyzing the processes of deconcentration and decentralization, the author comes to the conclusion that every democratic State applies both principles of public administration. (*on page 108 of the monographic work*). Based on this analysis, he concludes that Bulgaria should also apply the principles of deconcentration and decentralization.

Particularly important is the analysis on the strategic planning activity of the municipalities in Bulgaria presented in chapter V of the monographic book. Considering the fact that Bulgaria is among the Member States of the European Union where there is a difference in the development between the capital of the country and other regions in the country's territory, the author provides special attention to the activities related to reform in public sector.

As contributive could be characterized the specified by the author opportunities for strengthening the capacity of local self-government bodies. Of particular importance are the

guidelines provided by the author on better management of municipal administration's activities. Possibilities for cooperation on different levels within one authority have been presented, additionally the author has focused on the interaction between individual authorities in compliance with the established in the Constitution principle on separation of powers.

- *Monographic book entitled „Institutional capacity, satisfaction and social climate in Bulgarian municipalities “ (published in 2022 – ISBN: 978-619-232-642-5)*

The monographic book presents a study on the social climate and the level of satisfaction in the working environment from the perspective of the Municipal administration, Municipal councilors and Mayors within the competence and powers of the local government. Emphatic attention is paid to individual characteristics and peculiarities of those who carry out managerial functions in the local executive authority. The author takes into account the fact that "each mayor has his own individual characteristics influencing their work, management, services and guidance they provide.". Through the method of statistical analysis and the conduction of a survey, the author explores the level of satisfaction in providing activities by structures of local executive authorities. Based on analyses of social climate at workplace the author has also discusses and provide results on the leadership style of management=

Significant importance provides the research on the mechanism for conducting activities in the society's best interest. The author explores the relation to the good interaction in the context of legal, regulatory and State management principles.

- *Monographic book titled „Decentralization as a factor for the development of local self-government (published in 2020 - ISBN: 978-619-232-364-6)*

The monographic book published in 2020 is developed based on the author's successfully defended dissertation theses, entitled "Decentralization as a factor for the development of local self-government". It presents a study of the improvement of regional development and of local self-government by strengthening the process of decentralization and provision of services. The study focuses on exploring border municipalities of Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey.

The author supports the opinion that an effective distribution of services, provided by public authorities, as well as related to powers and resources, need to be based on the principle of subsidiarity. The study presents a critical analysis and assessment of decentralization as process evolving, the possibilities for strengthening the capacity of local self-government bodies, according to the expectations of citizens. The author argumentatively substantiates two approaches (vertical and horizontal) for interaction between the structures of different levels of management. Of a contributing nature is the presented research (empirically established) on international differences and inconsistencies in decentralization for municipalities in Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey. Based on the research conducted, specific opportunities for improving the decentralization process have been outlined and presented.

- *The study „Quality and prospects for the development of the administration in connection with the process of decentralization in Greece.“ – published in National Archives, Svishtov, 2018, issue 3, pages 31-50*

The presented scientific study investigates and analyzes the process of decentralization in the Republic of Greece by comparing the assessment given to the process by the State authority on one hand and representatives of the municipal administration in the Republic of Greece on the other.

The degree of completion of decentralization in the country has been analysed and the attitude of employees in the administration towards the overall process of decentralization and towards some essential characteristics and peculiarities of the decentralization activity have been presented.

For the first time, such study has been implemented in the context of the development of the administration qualification, as it has a particularly contributing element for developing and improving the level of competence of the State and municipal executive authorities.

- *The study „Cross-border decentralization and integrated management - trends and interrelationships on the example of the municipalities of Edirne, Komotini and Kardzhali.“ – published in e-scientific magazine „Science atlas“, 2021, issue 2, pages 1-26*

Published in 2021 the study was build on and further develops the thesis provided in the author's scientific research prior to the publication and related to the topic of the implementation of the decentralization process. It focuses on the requirement for the use of functionalities, of integrated management on special attention to the analysis and comparison of decentralization practices in three separate countries - Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey.

As a significant contribution could be outlined the selected by the author scope and the research analysis range, as it is focusing on comparative review of the results presented.

- *Study textbook on the topic of „Basics of local self-government“ (ISBN: 978-619-232-391-2)*

The textbook submitted for review authored by Hasan Azis, PhD covers a lecture course on Basics of Local Government. In separate chapters the author presents the essential characteristics on the concept of "local self-government", in the scope of a historical-legal analysis on the role, function and significance of the activities provided by local government. In the focus of attention are the legal regulations, the normative framework and the institutional framework of local self-government bodies. The approaches outlined by the author in regional development and in the development of local self-government via the application of the main characteristics of the principle of regionalization could be characterized as such of contributing nature.

Of particular importance is the concept presented on "Good Governance", as well as the analysis on the key elements and strategic approaches are on positive level. The application of the strategic documents in the context of the implementation of activity by the local authority are contributing to the optimization of processes and activities at regional level, which in fact would improve the quality of activity and functioning of the local administration and the local executive authority.

V. Analysis of the articles and scientific publications presented

Mr. Hasan Azis, PhD has demonstrated an ability to formulate and support scientific theses. This is particularly evident in his valuable scientific production presented in the current procedure.

Results of his scientific and research activities have been presented within the framework of participation in specialized national and international scientific forums, in addition to a significant publication activity obtained.

In 2022, in the article "Decentralization and its influence on the leadership style of management in municipalities" (published in e-Journal, issue 17, 2022, pages 1-20), the author provides special attention to organizational psychology, specifically in the context of structural relationships, hierarchy and the exercise of power. Exploring the issues of leadership and presenting it in the focus of attention in the implementation of activities, competence and powers by the local authority, he provides an innovative approach, with a great positive content.

By using the method of comparative analysis, Mr. Hasan Azis, PhD presents the implementation and development of the decentralized governance approach in Greece and Turkey, and the results of this research are published in an article entitled "Local Government in Greece and Turkey - A Comparative Analysis of Development and the implementation" (published in Juridical Collection, BSU, volume XXVII, 2020, pages 59-79). The presented research has a contributing character regarding the improvement of understanding the decentralization process in general, as well as regarding the identification and introduction of essential factors for effective local self-government.

A good impression provides the wide range of presentation conducted by Mr. Hasan Azis, PhD on important elements in the decentralization process, especially as related to the topic of cross-border decentralization. In the framework of an international scientific forum (8th International Conference on Education and Education of Social Sciences), Mr. Hasan Azis, PhD presented the results of a conducted study on the effectiveness of applying a model for evaluating the level of management through cross-border decentralization.

The importance and significance of legal regulation in the development of a country is in the center of attention in the scientific research and practical application of the results achieved by Mr. Hasan Azis, PhD. Research the development in Greece, results related to changes in the structure and interaction of the public administration are presented by the author (within a scientific forum).

VI. Characterization and assessment of the scientific and scientifically-applied contributions in the scientific works presented

All scientific works submitted for review are in the scientific field where the procedure has been announced. Among the scientific production of the candidate, a special focuses is provided on the candidate's monographic books. There the author systematizes the conceptual apparatus of the process of decentralization and deconcentration in the management levels. The author's model of connectivity between central and local government in three countries - Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey - has a scientific contribution. In addition, the systematization of

the conceptual apparatus related to the process of decentralization and regionalization at the levels of management, specifically in the implementation of competence and powers of the central and local authorities in the Republic of Bulgaria is of significant importance.

Mr. Hasan Azis, PhD provides, analyzes and presents systematically models of public administration in the Republic of Bulgaria, presenting in the form of an organizational chart hierarchical and functional interaction between the individual authorities.

In a practical-applied contributive aspect is the integrated model of local and regional government developed and proposed by the candidate. Based on an analysis of the legal framework, supplemented by the results of a survey of citizen attitudes and administrative opportunities to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of management in border areas, the author precisely and accurately presents mechanisms for achieving good governance. Observing the requirements of the European Charter for Local Self-Government and based on principles and standards of quality in management, Mr. Hasan Azis, PhD offers a model based on efficiency, legality and strategic vision.

VII. Notes and recommendations

I recommend to Mr. Hasan Azis, PhD in his future scientific and practical-applied developments, to expand and deepen research on efficiency issues in the procedures for contracting activities in the budget sphere, especially in relation to the interaction between local government and central executive bodies.

The extend and rich experience possesses by Mr. Hasan Azis, PhD added to the appropriate application of the strategic approaches and policies proposed by him could contribute to the implementation of managerial activities, in support forming new generation of professionals, managers and leaders prepared and capable to deal with the challenges faced by the executive power and local self-government in Bulgaria.

Conclusion

In relation to the above stated, I confidently provide my positive assessment and recommend to the members of the honorable Scientific Jury to vote for the appointment of Dr. Hasan Azis Ismail, PhD to be appointed to the academic position of "Associate professor", in the field of Higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, Professional Field: 3.7. Administration and Management (Public Administration).

October 18th, 2022

Member of the Scientific Jury:

Prof. Maria Neikova, DSc.