

OPINION

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3.3. Political Science (European Studies - Economic Studies of the EU)

on the materials submitted for participation in the competition
to hold the academic position of '**associate professor**'
of the Higher School of Insurance and Finance, Sofia

- field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences
- 3.8. Economics (Budget Management and Innovative Budget Methods)

In the competition for associate professor, announced in the State Gazette, no. 52 of 07/05/2022 and on the website of the Higher School of Insurance and Finance, Dr. James Borislavov Jolovski, who is a part-time lecturer at the Higher School of Insurance and Finance, Sofia, is participating as the only candidate.

1. General presentation of the procedure and the candidate

By order No. 372 of 10.11.2022 of the Rector of the Higher School of Insurance and Finance, Sofia, I have been appointed as a member of the scientific jury of a competition for the academic position of "associate professor" at the Higher School of Insurance and Finance - Sofia. The competition is by field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, 3.8. Economics (Budget management and innovative budget methods). It was announced by the Higher School of Insurance and Finance - Sofia, and the only one candidate is Dr. James Borislavov Jolovski. He is a part-time lecturer at the Higher School of Insurance and Finance - Sofia.

Dr. James Jolovski has presented a complete set of materials, which is in full compliance with the Regulations for the terms and conditions for holding academic positions at the Higher School of Insurance and Finance - Sofia. This material package includes the following documents:

- a monographic work with a summary, reviewed by two qualified persons;
- a published book based on a dissertation work for awarding the educational and scientific degree "doctor";
- list of publications;
- summaries of publications;
- evidence of participation in scientific projects;

- a report on the fulfilment of the minimum national requirements for occupying the academic position "associate professor";
- a reference to the original scientific contributions in the works;
- a reference to the citations of works;
- curriculum vitae.

The documents submitted by the candidate Dr. James Jolovski are distinguished not only by a complete set of necessary materials and information, but also as they are very well and clearly systematised. This allows an excellent introduction to the scientific works and contributions, participation in projects, citations and other scientific achievements of the candidate.

I have the pleasure of knowing the candidate personally in his practical work, where he is also distinguished not only by high professionalism, but also by a depth of knowledge and a broad view of the matters on which he develops professionally. My personal impression is mostly along the lines of his work in the field of financial literacy, but I also have impressions from conversations with colleagues in the field of his activity in the Fiscal Council of Bulgaria. The very fact that the candidate develops simultaneously in the private, public and non-profit sectors, as well as having experience in activities related to education, will undoubtedly contribute to his work in a university environment.

2. General characteristics of the applicant's activity

The scientific and scientific-applied activity of the candidate, Dr. James Jolovski, is not only excellent, but also fully corresponds to the requirements that have been determined in connection with the current competition.

In the procedure for the competition for "associate professor", Dr. James Jolovski participates with the following monograph - habilitation thesis. The publication is on the topic "**Modern trends in the budgetary management of public finances**", which was issued in 2022 by the Higher School of Insurance and Finance, Sofia. It analyses such topical issues as, for example, the impact of the health crisis caused by COVID-19 on budget policies, the impact of the military conflict between the Russian Federation and Ukraine on budget expenditures and processes, and many others. Achievements of the monographic work are not only its relevance, but also the empirical research in it, as well as the clear but academic style in which the research was done.

Dr. James Jolowski's list of publications is long and varied, focused on budget management. Some of these publications that make an impression are, for example, on topics such as the use of budget policies to limit inflation, macroeconomic forecasts as a basis for budget management, green budgeting as an innovative budget methodology, and others. Other publications featured include the application of innovative technology in high school accounting education, retirement income planning, non-profit effectiveness and efficiency analysis, cash management, and many others. Regarding the publication activity, two phenomena make an impression. The first is that there is a preponderance of work in the scientific field, which is subject of the competition itself, related to the management of budget finances. This shows a consistent scientific and research orientation of the author. The second is that the author explores other areas, but all of them also have a direct or indirect connection with public finance management and national budgets. Of particular importance are the studies that are related to questions about the education system in the country.

The documents present also the publication from the candidate's doctoral degree, namely on "Theoretical-methodological aspects of budgeting in non-profit organisations (on the example of a foundation)".

On the basis of the information submitted by the applicant regarding the fulfillment of national minimum requirements according to the RASRD and the Regulations for its application, it can be confidently concluded that he meets the specified criteria as follows:

- group "A" - 50 points with a minimum of 50 points (Dissertation for awarding the educational and scientific degree "doctor");
- group "C" - 100 points with a minimum of 100 points (habilitation thesis - monograph);
- group "D" - 232.5 points with a minimum of 200 points (publications);
- group "E" - 95 points with a minimum of 50 points (citations).

The candidate has also presented detailed information on participation in five projects of scientific value, the majority of which are in the field of a very current and important issue, namely in the field of financial literacy. In the future, the candidate may be recommended to participate in scientific projects that are more directly related to the subject of the management of national budgets.

The scientific contributions reference to Dr. James Jolowski's publications is also very informative and provides comprehensive and detailed information about the candidate's scientific contributions. I accept the candidate's contributions presented in this way, which are clearly and punctually outlined.

3. Critical remarks and recommendations

I have no critical remarks regarding the publication and scientific activity of Dr. James Jolovski. As can be seen from the previous section, they are at a very high scientific and applied level. I would make only few recommendations regarding future research.

I recommend making more publications in English in reputable foreign publications with an impact factor. This will further build on the success already achieved by Dr. James Jolovski.

As a recommendation, which can be judged entirely by the author and his creative pursuits, I would make a proposal to develop more detailed analyses of the budget policies of the EU member states within the framework of the European Semester and how they affect the overall governance of the EU's Economic and Monetary Union. It is also essential to assess how the management of Bulgaria's budget policy fits within the European context. It is also interesting to make a more in-depth analysis of the circumstances surrounding the expected entrance of Bulgaria into the Eurozone and whether the introduction of the single European currency will in any way change the budgetary policy in the country.

Another interesting direction regarding budgetary policies with a European context are the debates on creating a fiscal union within the framework of the Economic and Monetary Union. It is interesting to follow how far the plans for the creation of this fiscal union have reached, what are Bulgaria's positions on its construction and what are the potential limits in which such a union can be established between the EU member states.

CONCLUSION

The documents and materials presented by the candidate, Dr. James Jolovski, fully meet all the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ZRASRB), as well as the Regulations for the Implementation of the ZRASRB and the Regulations on the Conditions and Procedure for occupying academic positions at the Higher School of Insurance and Finance in the city of Sofia.

In the scientific works of the candidate, there are not only original scientific contributions, but also scientific-applied contributions that are highly practical. The materials listed and presented by the candidate have a high theoretical value and practical applicability. It is of essential importance that a part of the materials are related to educational and learning activities. The fact that Dr. James Jolovski has not only a scientific, but also a teaching activity contributes significantly to his future development and to the contribution he can make to the Higher School of Insurance and Finance.

The results and successes achieved by the candidate, Dr. James Jolovski, including in research and teaching activities, fully comply with the specific requirements of the Regulations for the terms and conditions for holding academic positions in the Higher School of Insurance and Finance - Sofia.

After careful and in-depth research of the materials and scientific works presented in the competition, analysis of their significance and the scientific, scientific-applied and applied contributions contained in them, **I confidently provide my positive assessment** and recommend the scientific jury to prepare a report-proposal to the Academic Council of the Higher School of Insurance and Finance - Sofia for the election of Dr. James Borislavov Jolovski to the academic position of "associate professor" at the Higher School of Insurance and Finance - Sofia in the scientific direction 3.8. Economics (Budget management and innovative budget methods).

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