

## **OPINION**

From Prof. Dr. Iordanka Hristova Iovkova, UNWE - Sofia, scientific field 3.8. "Economics" on the scientific works for participation in the competition for the academic position of professor in professional field 3.8. Economics (Business Marketing and Business Management), announced in Official Gazette 41/18.05.2021, with candidate Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ivan Yochev Boevski.

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

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ivan Boevski is the only candidate in the competition for the academic position of professor in the professional field 3.8. Economics (Business Marketing and Business Management).

It is evident from the reference submitted by the candidate that he fully fulfils both the minimum national requirements and the requirements of New Bulgarian University for holding the relevant academic position in his capacity as a lecturer and researcher. In all groups of indicators, except the first two, which are fixed, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Boevski scored more than twice the minimum required points.

Assoc. Prof. Bojewski graduated from the German language school in the town of Lovech. He received his higher education at the Karl Marx Institute of Higher Education. In 1993 he was awarded the degree of Doctor of Science and in 2003 he was awarded the scientific title of Associate Professor. He has been a lecturer at NBU since 2011. Prior to his work as a lecturer and researcher Assoc. Prof. Bojewski worked in private business organizations in the field of business marketing and business management, where he gained considerable practical experience. He actively communicates and participates in a number of academic activities with foreign universities. He has specialised in Austria and Germany. Assoc. Prof. Bojewski lectures and participates in scientific juries for the defense of doctoral and master theses in Germany and Finland. He is a member of the board of the Institut für Genossenschaftswesen an der Humboldt Universität zu Berlin, Berlin, Deutschland and an extraordinary member of the Arbeitsgemeinschaft Genossenschaftswissenschaftlicher Institut (AGI), Deutschland.

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

For his participation in the competition for the academic position of "professor" Assoc. Prof. Dr. Boevski has submitted a total of 27 scientific publications, of which: monographic work ; Articles and reports in refereed peer-reviewed journals or edited collective volumes - 2 issues; Articles and reports in non refereed peer-reviewed journals or edited collective volumes - 16 issues Studies in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals - 2 issues; Chapters of collective monographs - 6 issues.

From the presented publications it can be concluded that the scientific interests of the candidate have a wide scope and interdisciplinary character. They can be classified (in a sense conditionally precisely because of their interdisciplinary nature) in several directions: 1) application of marketing-management in a specific area of theory and business practice, such as the field of cooperative business; 2) strategic and international marketing and management; 3) specific problems of real estate management and marketing; 4) entrepreneurship - economic and behavioural issues and approaches.

#### **1. Evaluation of the monographic work**

In the presented monographic work "Cooperative Work in Bulgaria. Specific organizational design, marketing-management, governance structure and innovations" summarizes many years of scientific research and analysis of the author, which have received publicity in separate publications



on private issues of the problems treated in the monograph, made after the acquisition of the scientific title "Associate Professor".

The monograph is an original study by the author. This assessment is based on the fact that, on the one hand, the Bulgarian economic literature lacks a comprehensive study of similar topics, and on the other hand, the processes of globalization, digitalization, "greening" of the economy and others of a similar nature, developing in our time, which give rise to specific transformational problems for science and business. One part of these problems can find their successful solution if modern scientifically based revitalised and innovative cooperative forms and structures and cooperative marketing and management approaches are used for this purpose.

The monographic work is structured in two parts. In the first part, which is theoretical in nature, the author, based on a study of numerous Bulgarian and foreign literary sources, his participation in a number of research projects and his own practical experience, develops the theoretical basis of his research by clearly outlining the main focuses (elements) characterizing cooperative work as a specific socio-economic phenomenon - cooperative, cooperative diversity, cooperative culture and cooperative managerial and cooperative managerial structure. Already here, as a merit of the monographic work, it can be noted that in its development the candidate uses modern scientific style and language, and in certain cases introduces modern terminology, the adoption of which in the field of cooperative business in our country would contribute to the expansion and facilitation of joint scientific and business projects and the implementation of joint research in this field with foreign scholars, universities and research centers. In characterising the cooperative, emphasis is placed on its dual nature and the resulting features of the marketing and management of the cooperative enterprise (membership community, relations with and between members, cooperative group, etc.). The derivation of the author's definitions of the main elements and some of their constituent subelements is one of the positive effects achieved by the development of this problematic. Cooperative diversity is the second focus of the study. A comprehensive classification of the types and types of cooperatives is made with justified and clear criteria. I also appreciate this as a strong point of the monographic work. The theoretical analysis of cooperative culture is comprehensive and all-embracing. It traces the emergence and development of cooperative values and principles and their importance for the viability of cooperative existence. The monograph devotes much attention to the cooperative Governance structure, which is in line with the problems studied and the theme of the competition. The basic research question, aims, objectives and hypotheses of the research are clearly and precisely formulated. On the basis of the general theory of the Governance structure, the essence and peculiarities of them in the cooperative business, in particular - in the cooperative enterprise, the types of cooperative Governance structures (internal and external) and their change over time in the direction of increased monitoring and control. An important positive point is the author's attitude to the problem of the efficiency of the internal cooperative Governance structure and the author's suggestion of indicators of its efficiency on the basis of which strategies for its increase can be developed. The justification of the relationship between the internal cooperative governance structure and cooperative culture is also worthy of positive evaluation. The external GVC structure has also been the subject of in-depth research, where the features of the two- and three-branch external structure have been highlighted.

The exposition as a whole is also very well illustrated. This can also be observed in the section dealing with the cooperative Governance structure. A number of the author's figures are included to give a clear idea of the type of structure involved and also to enable comparisons to be made between different structures. This has important implications for enriching the knowledge of the cooperative Governance structure, but also for increasing the options for choosing an appropriate one in cooperative business practice.

The second part of the monograph is of a practical and applied nature and is devoted to the study of the development of cooperative business in Bulgaria. This has been done on the basis of the author's characterization and identification of it through the four interrelated elements adopted in the theoretical part of the monograph. Three periods of the study of cooperative work are formulated - pre-socialist, socialist and post-socialist. The analysis of the elements of cooperative work in each of



these periods is preceded by an analysis of the pre-cooperative forms of people's association (tribal union, zadruga, harvesting bands, etc.) Their Governance structures are successfully characterized, concluding that they, logically, had an informal character, but at the end of the period some were formalized through the adoption of the first statutes. I judge the study of the nature and functioning of cooperative affairs in each of the three periods concerned to be a correct, logical and fruitful approach, since the different socio-economic and political systems in these three periods naturally give rise to differences in the structuring and functioning of cooperatives, in the promotion or restriction of cooperative diversity, in the different nature and strength of the impact of cooperative culture, and in differences in the construction and functioning of cooperative Governance structures. The paper consistently and convincingly reveals these differences, provides comparative analysis and draws reasonable conclusions and generalizations. The main characteristics of the cooperative enterprise in the pre-socialist period are outlined : a) the cooperative is characterized by a dual nature and the cooperative enterprise aims to support the farms and households of the members ; b) the cooperative diversity is growing, which leads to the need to introduce a professional management, applying a toolkit that is found characteristics of modern marketing management ; c) the cooperative group is homogeneous in nature ; d) the cooperative diversity is growing ; f) successful with the exposition is illustrated with appropriate author's figures (Fig. 15 to Fig. 24 ). They show the elements of the different internal and external Governance structures as well as their straight and inverse relationships. The study of this period gives grounds for the author to assess that it was a period of harmonious and successful development of cooperative work in Bulgaria.

The author characterizes the socialist period (1945 - 1989) as a period of restructuring of the cooperative work in accordance with the philosophy and concepts of the socialist system. The following areas of transformation are outlined - change in the functions of the cooperative; merging of different types of cooperatives, reduction of cooperative diversity; neglect of the dual nature of the cooperative; direct and indirect nationalization of cooperative structures and cooperative property; The relationship between these changes and the restriction of intra-cooperative democracy, between them and the gradual imposition of an authoritarian style of government and the compulsion to concentrate cooperatives is identified. These changes are also reflected and enforced through changes in the legal framework and the introduction of mandatory model statutes for cooperatives. A thorough analysis of important laws for cooperatives is made and the importance of the legal aspect of these transformations is outlined, with a central place given to the Cooperatives Act - its adoption, its changes and the results of its implementation. The possibility for legal persons to participate in cooperatives, which existed in the pre-socialist period, has been abolished. However, it should be stressed that alongside this, the author also takes into account some positive points in the legal framework during this period (e.g. tax breaks for cooperatives, etc.) , which shows the objective approach of his assessment. The negative consequences of the transformation of cooperative work during this period are formulated in accordance with the structure of his research plan: the support of the households and enterprises of the members is not mentioned in the Law as the main objective of the cooperative; the cooperative diversity is liquidated; the character of the cooperative culture changes as the original cooperative values and principles are supplemented by values and principles of the socialist type of relationship with and between the cooperative members; the cooperative governance structure is built on the top-down principle, as opposed to the pre-socialist one; there is party and state interference in the formation and construction of the cooperative governance structure; the individual member's ability to participate in decision-making is limited, etc.....

The analysis of the post-socialist period follows the structure of the analysis of the previous periods, allowing for subsequent comparative analysis. The changes in the legal framework, reflected in the adoption and repeated amendment of the Law on Cooperatives and other laws related to cooperative affairs, are analysed, and justified conclusions are drawn: in legal terms, cooperatives are returning to their true nature, state support and the role of cooperative unions are regulated, and a certain degree of harmonisation with European legislation is achieved. Along the way, difficulties and shortcomings of the legislation are revealed, among which of particular importance are the attempts to combine Western European and North American legal formulations, the strong politicization of the



issue, the long duration of the development and adoption of the relevant laws. More significant from the point of view of fulfilling the research tasks and verifying the hypotheses put forward is the substantive analysis of the elements of cooperative law during this period. The following enlightened conclusions are drawn: the cooperative is legally defined in the sense of its true essence, but in practice a significant number of cooperatives show deviations from this; the dual nature of the cooperative is destroyed and in reality it does not realize its true essence; the cooperative group is heterogeneous, with weak or missing links between members. The author's achievement is the comparative analysis between 15 characteristics of cooperative group in the three periods studied (Table 11). The author identifies an attempt to restore cooperative diversity, which in a sense he judges to be successful compared to the previous period, expressed in the restructuring of existing cooperatives and the emergence of so-called new generation cooperatives, the majority of which adhere to the principles of functioning of the actual cooperative. Cooperative culture is subject to contradictory influences - on the one hand cooperative values and principles harmonized with those of the MCA, on the other hand is the development of a consumer society and the drive to get rich quick. The cooperative Governance structure is analysed in detail in the different types of cooperatives. Innovative approaches in its construction in credit, agricultural, consumer and new generation cooperatives are revealed, indicating that there are cases of application of both types of internal Governance structure. A positive effect in this case is the comparative analysis of the characteristics of the internal Governance structure, visually presented in Table 12, in the three periods analysed. The external cooperative GAV structure is examined and analysed in its relative diversity, and different variants of this structure, including innovative ones, are indicated. Overall, the cooperative governance structure is defined as contradictory, mixed and containing prerequisites for inefficient management.

The thorough and in-depth research has enabled the author to draw significant theoretical and practical conclusions and to formulate justified, appropriate, targeted and feasible (under certain conditions) proposals for changes and development of the cooperative sector in Bulgaria in accordance with the changing environment, but also in adherence to the core values, principles, culture, mode of functioning and management of the various cooperative structures.

A number of **contributions** of a scientific and applied nature can be outlined in the monographic work. In summary, the more important of these, in my opinion, are as follows:

Enrichment of the theory and methodology of analysis and research of the Bulgarian cooperative business as a specific phenomenon, realized through the creation and functioning of specific structural units (cooperatives) requiring specific management and marketing;

Development of an original scheme (model) for the study of cooperative business in its dynamics. Approval of the proposed model for analysis and evaluation of the state and development of cooperative business in Bulgaria within three periods - pre-socialist, socialist and post-socialist;

The author's definitions of a number of important basic concepts and categories are given, including the term "modern cooperative work";

The contribution of cooperative practice and cooperative management and marketing to the development of modern marketing tools is demonstrated. This is shown in great detail in the comparative analysis carried out of CRM and loyalty programmes of cooperatives as an example of the originality of modern marketing approaches and tools. An analogical analysis of cooperative network structures and cooperative strategic alliances is also made, which correspond to the modern ones and in a certain sense precede them;

Specific cooperative governance structure is justified and the cooperative governance structure and its change during the analyzed periods are analyzed in detail, specifics of this structure under different variants of the internal and external structure are pointed out;

An original approach of the study of cooperative work is applied through an independent analysis of the role, significance and manifestation of its individual attributes - cooperative, cooperative diversity, cooperative culture, cooperative Governance structure;

In the context of cooperative diversity, a comprehensive typology and classification of cooperatives according to reasonably formulated criteria is proposed;



Reasoned , expedient and feasible suggestions are made for the future development of cooperative work in Bulgaria in the direction of increasing its viability.

## **2. Evaluation of the contributions in the other attached publications**

I accept the contributions to the study of other areas mentioned by the author, focusing my attention, according to my own scientific specialty, on the publications in which Assoc. Bojewski develops problems of real estate management and marketing. These are the publications No. 11 and No. 12, Group D, no. 7. Research in the field of economics and real estate management is a relatively new research field in our country. The publications of Assoc. Boevski in this field show that his research interest is wide-ranging and oriented towards new, unexplored issues. In these publications, important points of contribution are identified, namely:

Clarification of concepts essential for real estate management and marketing, such as Facility Management, Real Estate Life Cycle, Property-Companies and Non-Property-Companies, Outsourcing , Core Competence, etc.;

Justification of the importance of a strategic marketing-management approach in the design and planning of property development by taking into account the changes that occur during all subsequent phases of the property life cycle (e.g. cost changes, change of owners or tenants, likelihood of change of use of the property, etc.);

Research and conclusions on which companies are suitable for Facility Management and to what extent outsourcing should be used;

An analysis of the risks and success factors of implementing facilitation management.

It is also worth appreciating that a significant part of the research and publications of Assoc. Bojewski's research and studies are published in foreign publications. This shows that he has his recognition among both the Bulgarian and foreign academic and scientific community.

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

Assoc. Dr. Boevski has 12 citations in refereed and indexed in known databases of scientific information, which give him more points than the minimum required.

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

Assoc. Boevski declared participation in 47 projects, out of which 17 research projects are indicated in the attached reference for participation in the competition. This convincingly confirms his qualities as a prominent and active researcher in his areas of scientific interest.

## **III. Teaching and teaching activities**

**1. Academic and non-academic employment,** work in the e-learning module "MOODLE - NBU", provision of student internships and placements, work with students and PhD students - Assoc. Bojewski teaches lecture courses at NBU. The number of his courses is significant. They are topical and are updated periodically. Assoc. Bojewski has been a scientific supervisor of 29 successfully defended bachelor and master theses and a reviewer of 62. He has initiated 2 Master's programmes and participated in the updating of 2 Master's and one Bachelor's programmes. In his teaching work he actively uses the e-learning module "MOODLE - NBU", where he has uploaded his original materials for 20 lecture courses. He is involved in and has provided internships for 5 students. In addition to the presented successfully defended Ph. Dr. Teodora Rizova, he has brought up two other successfully defended PhD students, who are Assoc. Dr. Angel Stankov and prof. asc. Dr. Daniela Tsvetanova Tsviatkova. All of them successfully continue their career development. Boevski as a lecturer with extensive teaching experience and a broad interdisciplinary profile, who continuously improves and upgrades his own economic and management training and forms up-to-date lecture courses.

**2. Work with Erasmus students.** Assoc. Bojewski teaches 3 courses in English under the Erasmus+ program, as well as 1 course INNOVATION MANAGEMENT in English in a joint program (double degree) MANAGEMENT AND ECONOMICS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT between the NBU and the University of Urbino "Carlo Bo".

**3. Evaluations from student surveys.** Assoc. Prof. Dr. Bojewski is a lecturer who, given the results of the surveys conducted among the students he teaches, attracts the attention and satisfaction



of students with the quality of his lectures. The average student satisfaction for the last 5 years is 4.54 (with a maximum of 5).

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

1. Participation in collective management bodies of the NBU. Assoc. Bojewski participates regularly and actively in the meetings of the Departmental Council of the Department of Economics, and has been a member of the Programme Council of the same Department.

2. Public activity. From the documents submitted by Assoc. Bojewski, it is evident that he is to a considerable extent socially active.

3. Involvement of students in the program. During the 2019-2020 academic year, Assoc. Bojewski attracted 10 students from the "Exarch Joseph I" School in the town of Lovech in various undergraduate programs of the NBU, according to the reference submitted by him.

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

I know Assoc. Boevski from his work as a lecturer at the UNWE, in the department of which I was the head and as the Dean of the Business Faculty. I have very good impressions of his teaching work, in the implementation of which he shows good faith, initiative and creativity. His lectures arouse the interest of the students as they contain up-to-date theoretical knowledge and relevant examples from practice.

#### **VI. Opinions, recommendations and comments on the candidate's activities and achievements**

My acquaintance with the scientific publications of Assoc. Bojewski's publications and his teaching activities gives me grounds to recommend that in the future he focus his creative efforts on further developing and enriching his research in new directions concerning the digitalization and digitalization of the objects of his scientific interests. Also, although he has presented a lot of material in the MOODLE system, he should consider writing a stand-alone textbook in his program.

#### **Conclusion**

The publications proposed for review and the long-standing teaching activity of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ivan Boevski warrant their positive evaluation. The publications are in professional field 3.8. Economics (Business Marketing and Business Management) and correspond to the subject of the announced competition. The candidate has been awarded the degree of Doctor of Education and Science, as well as the required experience as an Associate Professor at the NBU. The volume of publications and the teaching employment meet the requirements of the Law on Research and Development and the NBU. The candidate has the qualities of a conscientious and purposeful researcher and an experienced teacher, and successfully combines research and teaching work. All this gives me grounds to confidently give my positive assessment of Assoc. Bojewski. Furthermore, I take the liberty to propose to the esteemed Scientific Jury to also **vote positively and to the Academic Council at New Bulgarian University, Sofia to elect Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ivan Boevsky for "professor" in 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional field 3.8 "Economics (Business Marketing and Business Management)".**

31.08.2021, Sofia.

Signature: .....

Prof. Dr. Iordanka Iovkova