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ASSESSMENT REPORT

Assessor: Professor Katya Georgieva Stoycheva, PhD
Department of Psychology
Institute for Population and Human Studies, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
Professional area: 3.2. Psychology

Evaluation of the scientific production submitted for consideration in the competition for promotion to the level of Associate Professor in the professional area: 3.2. Psychology (Transport Psychology) announced in the State' s Journal, Issue 46 from 26 May 2023

Candidate: Assistant Professor Zornitsa Petrova Totkova, PhD

Only one candidate has applied for promotion to the level of Associate Professor under the abovementioned competition. This is Dr. Zornitsa Petrova Totkova, Assistant Professor at the Institute for Population and Human Studies, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, in Department of Psychology, Unit of Personality and Cognitive Psychology.

For consideration in the current competition, Dr. Zornitsa Totkova has submitted these **scientific works**: 1 monograph (BAS Publishing house "Prof. Marin Drinov"); 1 book based on her PhD dissertation (BAS Publishing house "Prof. Marin Drinov"); 4 scientific articles, of which 2 are co-authored, in journals refereed in world-renowned databases; 3 co-authored papers in non-refereed scientific journals; 15 scientific articles and reports, of which 12 are co-authored, in non-refereed journals, collected reports and edited volumes in Bulgarian and in English.

Zornitsa Totkova's participation in this competition is a logical step on her professional path. She completed her higher education at Varna Free University "Chernorizets Hrabar" with a master's degree in applied psychology (2010). In 2014, she successfully defended her doctoral thesis on "Perceived parenting style and attachment to significant others in early adulthood". In 2015, she was elected at the position of Assistant Professor at the Institute for Population and Human Studies at the BAS, where her academic career has continued to this day. Z. Totkova was successfully involved in externally funded national and international **research projects** that were

carried out at the Institute and focused on important topics such as prevention of school bullying,

aggression and violence at school and motivating students to learn. After her election at the position of Assistant Professor, Dr. Totkova presented her scientific results at 8 international **scientific forums**, including the XVI European Congress of Psychology in 2019.

Since 2016, she is engaged with the field of transport psychology and studies risky driving behavior, the related to it personality and demographic factors, and its emotional regulation. These topics are central for her scientific work up to now. Dr. Totkova participated in the project "Increasing the level of road safety by developing new methods for researching the psychological fitness of drivers of motor vehicles /MPS/" with the beneficiary MTITS. This project aims to update the methodologies for assessing the psychological fitness of motor vehicle drivers and is financed by priority axis 5 "Technical assistance" of the Operational Program "Transport and Transport Infrastructure" (2014-2020), co-financed by the European Union through the European Structural and Investment Funds. Her project on the driving style and its relation to dangerous driving behavior was funded by the program in support of young scientists (2017-2018).

The culmination of this progressing research is Zornitsa Totkova's **scientific monograph** - *TRANSPORT PSYCHOLOGY Personality and driving behavior (Sofia, 2023, BAS Publishing house "Prof. M. Drinov").* The scientific contribution of the monograph is in the systematic study of driving behavior as a basic construct in transport psychology. Book's content is organized into three chapters, and its References include 317 literary sources, of which 311 titles are in English. The book presents the main approaches, theoretical models and practical guidelines in transport psychology; outlines the role of demographic factors and personality characteristics in driving behavior; focuses on the concept of driving style and the methods of its measurement; summarizes the results of two empirical studies with Bulgarian motor vehicle drivers, and outlines the demographic, personality and behavioral profile of the dangerous driver in Bulgaria. The work highlights the predictive value of personality traits and driving style and illustrates their relationship with objective negative driving outcomes and subjective assessment of the compliance with traffic rules. The monograph's applied contribution is related to the justified expectation of benefit from the possible long-term applications of the proposed in-depth understanding of driving behavior, through the development and implementation of programs and practices aimed at increasing traffic safety. The synthesis of theoretical research and empirical data in an area of national and European scientific priority – improving urban environment and quality of life by improving transport - deserves high praise as well.

Dr. Totkova is dedicated to the problems of personality and driving behavior in her **social engagement** too - she participates in the work of the State-Public Advisory Commission on Traffic Safety Problems and is a member of the Academic Council of the State Agency "Traffic Safety".

Dr. Totokova's statement on the original **scientific contributions** of her research work is grounded and reflects the development of her scientific interests and publication activity. In recent years, these contributions consolidated in the field of transport psychology: a) assessment of the personality factors related to dangerous driving behavior and its negative outcomes; b) conceptualization of the driving style, measurement of the individual differences in it and analysis of their relationship with driver's demographic characteristics; c) validating the subjective assessment of the compliance with traffic rules as an indicator of dangerous driving behavior; d) constructing and adapting methods for the measurement and evaluation of dangerous driving behavior and the related to it personality factors of emotional stability, anxiety, locus of control, anger, aggression, risk-taking and sensation-seeking; e) development of methods for a reliable assessment of the cognitive functions associated with driving - attention, memory, visual-spatial orientation, executive functions, praxis functions, and language.

Dr. Totkova's publictaions in developmental psychology continue to attract the interest of researchers. The value of the proposed approach to parenting style and individual's functioning in early adulthood is related to a) innovative research on parenting style which bring out the mixed styles of parenting; b) retrospective assessment of perceived parenting style; and c) using symbolic interactionist approach in the investigation of perceived parenting during early adulthood.

Zornitsa Totkova's publications on child and adolescent psychology, examining students' learning motivation through the prism of teachers' ideas about what and how motivates students, outline the following scientific and applied contributions: a) assessment of teachers' perception of students' key motivations for learning ; b) identified approaches that teachers use to motivate students and examined their attitudes towards them; c) highlighted the teachers' preferred teacher-student interaction style and its implications for school work.

The submitted list of **citations** provide evidence of the significance and relevance of Dr. Totkova's work: among the 12 citations of her publications from 2019 to 2022, there are 3 citations in publications refereed in world-renowned databases and 8 citations from 2022.

I accept the statement submitted by Assistant Professor Zornitsa Totkova, PhD, about **the compliance with the requirements for being promoted to the academic position of Associate Professor**, which attests to the fulfillment of the minimum national requirements for the scientific production of the candidate aiming at the academic position of Associate Professor in domain 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional area 3.2. Psychology, according to Art. 2b, para. 2 and 3 of ADASRB.

Co-authored publications in English-language sources that are refereed in world-renowned databases are indicative not only of the high-level research work of Dr. Zornitsa Totkova, but also of the effectiveness of her team participation. Her indisputable **personal qualities -** purposefulness, self-organization and efficiency, working capacity and persistence - also contribute to her success in teamwork and in individual undertakings. I have collaborated with Zornitsa Totkova in the organization of the Doctoral School for young scientists in social sciences, and I had the opportunity to directly appreciate her communication and coordination skills, her analytical mindset and precision in task completion. Applying the organizational experience of Dr. Totkova to the performance of the functions related to the position of "Associate Professor" would benefit the institution.

CONCLUSION

Assistant Professor Dr. Zornitsa Totkova is an efficiently working scientist who has established her field of research in transport psychology and whose scientific output has an international presence and recognition. Her publications feature in-depth studies, contributing notable results with important scientific and applied implications.

Based on my high appreciation of the academic performance of Assistant Professor Zornitsa Petrova Totkova, PhD, I propose that she be elected to the academic position of Associate Professor by the Scientific Council of the Institute for Population and Human Studies at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.

Sofia, 18 September 2023 Signature: *Professor Katya Stoycheva, PhD*