

## **STATEMENT**

by

Assoc. Prof. Svetla Slavova Ianeva, PhD

New Bulgarian University

Professional field 2.2 History and Archaeology

on the submitted materials for participation in the competition for the academic position

“Associate Professor”

in the professional field 2.2. History and archaeology,

announced in State Gazette No 69/16. 08. 2024

in which the applicant is Assist. Prof. Aleka Alexandrova Strezova, PhD

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

Assist. Prof. Aleka Alexandrova Strezova, PhD meets (and by a number of indicators – exceeds) the minimum national requirements for research and teaching activities in the field of High education 2. Humanities, Professional field 2.2 History and Archaeology, specified in ZRASRB as well as in NRAS of New Bulgarian University and necessary for holding the academic position “Associate Professor”.

### **II Research activity and results**

1. Assessment of the monograph and of the scientific and applied contributions of the author

For her participation in the announced competition, Assist. Prof. Dr. Aleka Strezova presents a habilitation work – *The Bulgarian diplomacy. Institutions and representatives. 1879–1918*. Sofia: Avangard prima, 2017, 240 s. ISBN 978-619-160-862-1. One of the contributions of this monograph is the elucidation of the process of building the Bulgarian diplomatic office in the years from the restoration of the Bulgarian statehood to the end of First World War. The structure, functions and funding of the Central Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and religious denominations have been reconstructed and analyzed in detail. The establishment and development of the diplomatic and consular networks of Bulgaria abroad are also examined. The second part of the monograph introduces us to the origin, life path and professional career of foreign ministers and diplomats from the Ministry of foreign affairs, thus contributing to the clarification of the social profile of the Bulgarian diplomats from

those years and to making more tangible the image of a number of interesting personalities from the history of modernizing Bulgaria from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## 2. Assessment of the contributions in the other publications of the applicant

Assist. Prof. Dr. Aleka Strezova is also the author of a monograph, which is not presented as a habilitation work in the present competition: *The Last of his kind. Dr. Georgi Valkovich (1833-1892)*. Veliko Tarnovo: Faber, 2022, 480 s. ISBN 978-619-00-1475-1. In my opinion, this monograph is a remarkable example of micro-historical research (still a relatively rare genre in Bulgarian historiography) and of the “history inhabited by people” (to quote Prof. Vera Mutafchieva). Based on the detailed analysis of various sources, the study not only successfully reveals the personality of a multi-layered, interesting and significant figure from the era of transition of the Bulgarian society from national emancipation and formation to the building of an independent statehood, but also substantially contributes to the understanding of the functioning of various institutions and of several key processes in the history of modernizing Bulgaria.

Dr. Aleka Strezova takes part in the announced competition with one study, published in a scientific edition, referenced and indexed in world-famous databases of scientific information, with three studies published in peer-reviewed journals and edited collective volumes, with three articles published in scientific journals, referenced and indexed in world-famous databases with scientific information and with five articles and papers published in peer-reviewed journals and edited collective volumes. The publications included in the application of Dr. Aleka Strezova for the academic position “Associate Professor” cover an impressive range of topics and problems, many of which have not been comprehensively studied before, and represent sound contributions to the field. A significant share of these publications is devoted to various aspects of the diplomatic history of Bulgaria at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, an important focus of the candidate's research.

## 3. Citations by other authors

The scholarly publications of Assist. Prof. Dr. Aleka Strezova are cited in two publications in a journal, which is referenced and indexed in world renowned data-bases of scholarly information, as well as in 10 other publications in 8 peer-reviewed monographs and collective volumes.

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

Assist. Prof. Dr. Aleka Strezova has participated in four national scientific projects: in the National Scientific Program “Development and promotion of Bulgarian studies abroad”; in a project at New Bulgarian University, funded by the Central fund for strategic development of NBU, “The forgotten notable Bulgarians – Nikola Stoyanov”; in a project of the Scientific archives of BAS “Encyclopedic Guide and database “Women in the history of academic science in Bulgaria”, funded by the National Commission for UNESCO at the Ministry of foreign affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria and in the project “Bulgarian diplomatic missions abroad 1879–1918. (Organization, structure, funding and representatives abroad)“, approved under the program for funding young scholars at BAS (of which project Dr. Aleka Strezova is the academic supervisor). She has also taken part in two international scientific joint projects with the Institute for Southeast European studies of the Romanian Academy of Sciences: the EBRD projects “Dobruzha as a border region in the late Ottoman Empire, Bulgaria and Romania: history and memory” and “In search of the useful past: history as a resource for the present”.

### **III Educational and teaching activities**

Dr. Aleka Strezova’s teaching activities meet all the requirements; she is also active on the electronic training platform MOODLE – NBU. She teaches in English in the MA program “Southeast European Studies” and works successfully with Erasmus students in the same program. She has taken part in several thesis defense and graduation examination juries. The feedback on her teaching and commitment from students in the courses she runs is entirely positive.

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

As a lecturer at NBU Dr. Aleka Strezova has contributed to several seminars, discussions and examination boards of the History department. By participating in various projects, she contributes to the rethinking of the Bulgarian historical past and of the role of individuals in history as a valuable resource for the present social development.

### **V. Personal impressions of the applicant**

My personal impressions of the candidate give me reason to believe that Dr. Aleka Alexandrova Strezova has all the academic qualities necessary to hold the academic position

of Associate professor and a great potential for development as a researcher and lecturer. She shows commitment to the teaching process, interest in the opinions and in the progress of the students, as well as abilities of constructive dialogue and correct professional interrelations with her colleagues.

#### **VI. Opinions, recommendations and notes on the activities and achievements of the candidate**

In the above paragraphs, I have expressed my positive opinion about the activities and achievements of the candidate and I have no further recommendations or remarks. I am convinced that by joining the academic staff of NBU as Associate professor she could contribute to the strengthening and development of the History Department and the university as a whole, both in the field of scientific research and in terms of the educational mission of New Bulgarian University.

**In conclusion**, on the basis of all the above, I state my positive evaluation of the academic activities of the applicant in the competition for the academic position “Associate Professor” in the field of High education 2. Humanities, Professional field 2.2 History and Archaeology Assist. Prof. Dr. Aleka Alexandrova Strezova and fully support the presentation of her candidature for election by the Academic Council of New Bulgarian University.

Date: 28.11.2024

Signature:

Assoc. Prof. Svetla Slavova Ianeva, PhD