

STATEMENT

for the contest for taking the academic position of "Professor"

by specialty according to the announcement in the "State Gazette" No. 29 of April 12, 2022, page 117

Applicant: **RUSKA SABEVA STANCHEVA**

Associate Professor at the Contemporary Bulgarian Language Section of

The "Lyubomir Andreychin" Institute for Bulgarian Language at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences

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Statement is always disadvantaged as a genre when it comes to presenting a candidacy in certain academic procedures, since it has to be short, but also not repeating already presented statements. In the case of Assoc. Prof. Ruska Stancheva, this task becomes even more complicated, as she is a contemporary language scholar who develops vast science activity regarding observation – be it theoretical or practical, and codification of Bulgarian language. Before I get to the mandatory statement requisites, I would like to start presenting her candidacy with an important fact, in my humble opinion. The Institute for Bulgarian Language (in the latest decades mostly through the work of Professor of Philology Vladko Murdarov of the same Section) has the uneasy task of observing the phenomena of language development and dynamics, and codify them in order to offer today's Bulgarian society adequate solutions, regarding writing and punctuation. Ruska Stancheva continues this tradition responsibly, and presents her concept and the concept of her colleagues in front of the public very well-argued; takes position on important public matters, for which society looks at specialists for answers. This uneasy function – to speak publicly on professional topics, probably fits the language scholars at the Institute for Bulgarian Language, because they codify the norms and should be able to explain their decisions not only in front of the linguistic community, but also in front of the whole Bulgarian society. Here, concepts such as language policy and the mission of the Bulgarian linguist are closely intertwined, who should not be perceived by our society as an isolated office scientist, but as a specialist with a professional position that reaches out to every Bulgarian citizen in order to answer their questions regarding of language as one of the few unifying markers of national identity. To this socially significant function of Assoc. Prof. Stancheva, I cannot help but add the meetings organized by the Department of Bulgarian Language of the Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" between her students of Bulgarian and Slavic Philology.

The ease with which Ruska Stancheva presents such a complex matter to the students is impressive, as well as the strong argumentation, expressed through scientific hypotheses but also defended through many modern corpus, statistical, sociological and other analyses, through which she presents the public attitudes towards the processes in the modern language. After her summaries, there is no doubt among the young researchers, but also among the specialists, in the objectivity of the studies and in the interdisciplinarity that is sought to support the codification decisions, understood as the mission of the codifiers in a complex dialogue with the university linguist professors and the expectations and attitudes of Bulgarian society.

1. General characteristics of the presented materials - monographs, articles and reports, textbooks, dictionaries, etc.

The materials presented for the contest present the researcher as a thorough and serious scientist who, from the beginning of her scientific journey until today, expands and deepens her observations on the problems of the modern Bulgarian language in their breadth and diversity. A key monograph with which the candidate participated in the contest for Associate Professor ([https://press.bas.bg/bg/eBooks-105/show-106\(30\)](https://press.bas.bg/bg/eBooks-105/show-106(30))) is a contribution both to the history of the literary language and to the modern Bulgarian language - **Codification practice of the first Bulgarian scientific grammars**. I will allow myself to pay attention to it, as it intertwines with the interests of my linguistic research and marks key contributions in the development of Assoc. Prof. Stancheva, which are a prerequisite for her growth as a scientist. The monograph explores the Bulgarian grammatical heritage during a poorly studied period in the history of Bulgarian linguistics (between the two world wars). This is the time, in which the first six complete scientific grammars of the Bulgarian literary language appeared in just 8 years (1936–1944).

The author extracts and presents new data in three directions: a) the active processes in the literary language, requiring normative assessment; b) the commitment of the authors of the grammars to a certain linguistic platform from which they describe linguistic variation; c) the current state of the codification at that moment in terms of its various characteristics. As completely innovative in relation to the three directions, I define the work of Ruska Stancheva also in terms of the fact that she analyzes a stage of the development of the language in which the theory of language culture is a new phenomenon in linguistics, and the codification of literary norms seeks a formulation for scientific principles and approaches to innovations and archaisms (as defined by the author) in the literary language. The study of grammatical descriptions, the figure of the linguist codifier, and the debates about language (sometimes I think it is more appropriate to use the combination "philological disputes about language", used in the spirit of the time) shed light on an understudied stage of the codification of grammatical norms and rank the author's name worthy of such authorities as L. Andreychin, R. Rusinov, Hr. Parvev, K. Vachkova, D. Ivanova, Vl. Murdarov, B. Valchev, etc., complementing and expanding them in her observations and analyses.

The monograph with which Ruska Stancheva is participating in this contest ([https://press.bas.bg/bg/eBooks-105/show-106\(32\)](https://press.bas.bg/bg/eBooks-105/show-106(32))), is more than a work worthy of a professorship and, in my opinion, deserves to be translated into English as well, in order to present to the world scientific community moments from the complex path that the Bulgarian language takes in the process of its codification; to expand the notion of its contemporary state, and most importantly, to present the attitude of today's Bulgarian in regards to the complex nature of the codification process.

Her book "Codification in the Context of Linguistic Attitudes", presented as the main work in the contest, only confirms the high professionalism and depth with which the author unfolds such a globally relevant problem. And here the key words are **norm, usus, codification, attitudes** that we can actually define as a field of scientific interests of Ruska Stancheva. It is very important that this contribution book summarizes the observations of the project "Research of Public Attitudes and Value Orientation; Towards the Modern Bulgarian Literary Language as a Factor in the Codification of its Norms" (2017 – 2019), of which the author is the initiator and manager.

The analyses in the monograph are extremely in-depth and reasoned, and present a sociological survey from 2017, concerning the attitudes of Bulgarians towards the codification of the norms of the modern Bulgarian literary language, related to the hierarchy of the functions of the literary language; the degree of obligation of the literary norms; the status of the codification (in terms of content and technical characteristics). The book achieves its main goal: it outlines the significance and prospects for the

codification of the literary norms of the modern Bulgarian literary language, understanding them as a continuous and ongoing process. In this way, through her work, Ruska Stancheva not only theoretically indicates models, offers solutions, but she herself, as a codifier, is "inside" the process and observes it precisely and thoroughly. I can boldly summarize that this study of Ruska Stancheva shows herself as a modern linguist who deals with the most current problems of the language, sparking the interest not only of linguists in Bulgaria and abroad; to society as a user and speaker of the language and to all those who implement a national language policy.

The number of studies (*9 studies in refereed prestigious publications*) that Ruska Stancheva presents for the contest is remarkable. Their common feature is **thoroughness, topicality and precision** in the presentation of conclusions. It is not by chance that the author attracts colleagues as her co-authors (such as Krasimira Alexova, doctoral students such as Zh. Zlateva, M. Stoicheva, etc.), who, with the help of modern linguistic trends, expand and complement the scientific views of the researcher. The candidate for the contest has submitted more than *thirty scientific articles* (independently and in co-authorship; in refereed editions) for her participation. And in these texts, her scientific pursuits are met, in which synchrony and diachrony are combined, and this makes the texts both classic and modern at the same time. Key words here, too, are the concepts of norm, codification and linguistic attitudes, presented through a self-designed and developed theoretical framework and through many (and various) checks through surveys, corpus studies and sociological summaries, which were important and about time to be popularized for the needs of linguistics (mostly as objectification accompanying codification).

2. General characteristics of the candidate's scientific, scientific-applied and pedagogical activities.

I can summarize that the candidate for the contest - Assoc. Prof. Ruska Stancheva, is a modern researcher whose eyes are focused on the dynamics of linguistic phenomena and whose scientific competence allows her to easily examine these dynamics by taking into account the processes in the history of the literary language, and at the same time, it applies all modern means to monitor and analyse the current linguistic situation in Bulgaria, which is the result of specific socio-economic processes in society. Her difficult task as a codifier requires this extensive and in-depth preparation, and the work on the Spelling Dictionary requires the combination of many different approaches and diverse linguistic competences. Only a brave linguist can take on the responsibility of being part of the team of a nationally representative dictionary and bear the frequent criticism of colleagues and the public about the approaches in making such a complex lexicographic work, which has its own specific functions and serves very closely the needs of the public, of the administration, of school. I dare to point out that with the same precision Ruska Stancheva participated in the development of Bulgarian language textbooks for secondary school, which probably (and with many reservations) can be referred to the mission of the modern linguist, although it is my deep conviction that this activity should primarily be the work of Bulgarian teachers. Projects, as a modern form of implementation of scientific ideas, are a strong point of the candidate not only because of her sensitivity to current problems and the implementation of what is included in the scientific project proposals, but above all because of the scale of the scientific generalisations, which elevate Ruska Stancheva as a linguist of not only at national level, but also at world level and thus make modern Bulgarian science recognisable outside the borders of our country, which is really important, taking into account the specificity and regionality of our language and considering the still relevant concept of Prof. Venche Popova that there is no Bulgarian doctrine in world linguistics. A fact that the works of Ruska Stancheva and the team of researchers from SSBE gradually disprove over time and with their research. The national and international projects, well described in the documentation, present the researcher as a

thorough contemporary scholar who feels the pulse of current language processes; deeply observes specific phenomena and summarises them in scientific research (here, in addition to her publications, I would also mention the appendices of the magazine "Bulgarian Language", which presents its pages on the conclusions of scientific experiments and presents them to the scientific community in Bulgaria and abroad). In order not to repeat already stated information, I will share that Ruska Stancheva has passed on her precision and thoroughness to her doctoral students, who worthily continue the direction set by their scientific supervisor. I know the texts of her doctoral students and I am convinced that they will develop as worthy students of their scientific supervisor.

3. Analytical assessment of the main scientific and/or scientific-applied contributions of the candidate.

The candidate's contributions to modern Bulgarian linguistics are indisputable. In a number of respects, they exceed the requirements necessary for the announced academic position. In general, they can be presented and summarised in the following groups:

1. Scientific linguistic contributions that trace the history of the language and make sense of its current state, looking for continuity and interdependence of processes; Role of the codifier;

2. Modern studies focused on the theory of literary languages and its main concepts: usus, norm, codification; to syntax problems; to spelling, grammar and punctuation problems;

3. Lexicographical practice (New spelling dictionary of the Bulgarian language, 2002; Official spelling dictionary of the Bulgarian language, 2012) and language attitudes as an objective expression and attitude of citizens to the development language processes.

I will allow myself to summarise that the works of Assoc. Prof. Ruska Stancheva, along with the works of Prof. Vladko Murdarov, are the basis and permanent bibliographic part of the synopsis on linguistic culture course and on the history of the modern Bulgarian literary language in the training of Bulgarian philologists at SU "St. Kliment Ohridski", and the reference to the citations, attached by the candidate in the contest documentation, shows that they are unavoidable in any modern linguistic study.

4. Critical notes and recommendations on the works presented.

I have no critical remarks on the works presented. All of the author's research has gone through the full rigor of academic attestation; through anonymous peer review in refereed publications; through discussions during the conferences and that is why they so seriously summarise the scientific views and experience of Ruska Stancheva.

Summary: In the procedure for the contest for a professor at the Institute of Bulgarian Language, all the requirements of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, the Regulations for the Implementation of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, the Rules for the Terms and Conditions for the Acquisition of Scientific Degrees and for the Occupancy of Academic Positions in the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, of the Regulations for the terms and conditions for acquiring scientific degrees and for holding academic positions at the Institute of Bulgarian Language "Prof. Lubomir Andreychin". Something more. Prof. Stancheva has presented all the documentation extremely precisely and this facilitates the authors of reviews and opinions.

The magnitude of the scientific research of the candidate in the contest, combined with the depth and significance of her works for science (national and supranational), for society and for university philological education. give me a definite reason to vote *IN FAVOUR* of awarding the academic position of "Professor" to Ruska Stancheva.

Date:

August 2, 2022

Statement by: _____

(Associate Professor Vladislav Milanov, PhD)