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Letter of Recommendation Andrey Launov

Dear Professor Klasen,

as you might know, I first met Andrey Launov in March 2005 after having advertised a six-year post-doc position at my chair, then in Wuerzburg. Because of the quality of his papers, his presentation skills which I got to know when he came for a talk and because of the impression I got of him as a person, he was my first choice.

Over the one and a half years at my chair he has shown a great dedication to teaching and especially research. With respect to teaching, he held tutorials in international trade and economic growth. In these tutorials, students run regressions in our computer pool in Eviews and STATA. Andrey has added a lot to the empirical contents to the tutorial and the entire course, introducing students to the relevant instrumental variables and system estimation methods as well as panel data regressions as applied in empirical international trade. In summer 2006 he has also taught an entire course in microeconometrics (1 semester, i.e. 14 weeks of 90 minutes per week, plus problem sets of the same amount taught by a teaching assistant). Topics included the theory of maximum likelihood estimation and testing procedures followed by discrete choice models, models with limited dependent variables, count data models and finally duration data models and mixtures. This course has proven very successful and he in fact held the same course in summer 2007. He also held a tutorial in applied intertemporal optimization (part 2, see www.waelde.com/aio) where he also learned a lot himself and improved his theoretical skills.

More important for a post-doc, he is much more devoted to research. When he came to Würzburg in May 2005, he had one (then forthcoming) publication in the Journal of Population Economics and was working on 2 papers. Since then, he has completed these 2 papers and he started 3 new projects.

I know one of these two now completed papers, "Search Equilibrium, Production Parameters and Returns to Education: Theory and Estimation" (with Chris Holzner), relatively well and I consider this to be a paper that is publishable in a top-20 journal. In our joint work "Hartz IV Labour market



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reforms in Germany – the effects of time-varying unemployment benefits with optimal job search” we also already made good progress. He derived a solution for a special case of our general theoretical model, computed an analytical solution and estimated parameters of the model. This allows us to structurally estimate the extent to which both the unemployment rate and individual welfare of the unemployed respond to the changes in the level and duration of unemployment insurance and assistance payments. Once this paper is completed, I would expect this to be one of my best papers.

Generally speaking, I think Andrey puts a strong emphasis on the quality of his work, and not quantity. I strongly support him in this view.

Concerning conferences, many of his papers were accepted to all major conferences during the last three years. In fact, he was at Econometric Society European Meeting in 2003, 2004 and 2006 and two of his co-authors presented their joint papers at EEA 2005 and meetings in Germany. Further, he is well connected and active in the organization of our seminar series. Among others, he invited and hosted Zvi Eckstein for a talk here in Würzburg, Frankfurt and Zürich.

I also strongly supported him in his application for Louvain-la-Neuve. I am glad he went there for this post-doc position.

Summarizing, I can strongly recommend him for the position at your Department. There is one condition though, I still want to write papers with him ...

If you have any further questions, please let me know. I am happy to provide any other information you could find helpful.

Klaus Wälde

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