

OPINION

By prof. Dr. Pobeda Vasileva Lukanova,
Economic Research Institute at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
of the materials of Assoc. Dr. Lyudmila Vekova, presented for participation in
a competition for the academic position "Professor" of Plovdiv University
"Paisii Hilendarski" in: field of higher education: "Social, Economic and Legal
Sciences"; professional field: "Social activities (Social protection and social
work)

In the competition for "professor", announced in the State Gazette, no. 92 of 18.01.2023
and in the inter-net page of Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski" for the needs of the
Department of Social Activities at the Faculty of Pedagogical, Assoc. Dr. Lyudmila Vekova
from Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski" Department of Social Activities at the Faculty of
Pedagogical,

1. General presentation of the procedure and the candidate

The set of materials in electronic format that are presented to me by assoc. Dr. Lyudmila
Pavlova Vekova are in accordance with the Rules for the Development of the Academic Staff
of Plovdiv University and includes all required documents.

The candidate Assoc. Dr. Lyudmila Vekova has applied a total of 33 scientific papers:
1 monograph; 30 research papers, of which 5 are in English; 2 textbooks for students. These
works are accepted for review. 5 scientific papers outside the problems of the competition are
not reviewed, as well as 25 scientific papers for acquiring the scientific degree "Associate
Professor". Of the peer-reviewed scientific works, 4 articles in English have been published
abroad, and the rest - in Bulgaria.

The submitted annotation of the publications clearly and accurately describes their
content and orients the scientific results of the candidate's research.

The reference for the minimum national requirements for the scientific activity of the
candidates for the academic position "professor" has been prepared according to the
requirements with the necessary evidence list of publications, citations and participation in
projects. According to this report, the real number of points of Assoc. Vekova is 1105 with a
required minimum of 550 points, which clearly proves the opportunity to participate in the
competition. There is a precise correspondence between the list of scientific works for
participation in the competition and the author's reference for the contributions of the works.

In my opinion, the procedure is administratively correct and the attached documents of
Assoc. Dr. Vekova are prepared according to the preliminary requirements. They can be used
as a basis for objective evaluations..

2. Short biographical data of the applicant

Ass. Dr. Lyudmila Vekova after graduating from higher education (Higher Institute of
Economics Sofia, specialty "Economics of Labor") turned to professional realization in the
studied specialty. She developed as a lecturer and expert analyst in the field of social security.
Her responsible work as Secretary General, Acting Director of the Secretariat Directorate at the
Economic and Social Council of the Republic of Bulgaria (2008 – 2011) allows her to expand
her experience and skills in preparing analyses and opinions on important issues in the field of
social protection.

Ass. Vekova has a broad and significant professional career as a teacher. As such she
has accumulated 30 years of pedagogical experience at the UNWE, NBU, Varna Free
University and Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski". Kliment Ohridski". She started
teaching at the University of Plovdiv, Department of Social Activities since 2011, and in 2015
she was elected Head of the newly established Department of Social Activities.

Personal impressions

Possitive personal impressions of the candidate's professional performances and as lecturer.

3. General characteristics of the applicant's activities

Pedagogical activity

Ass. Vekova takes part in all activities available for her professional realization as a university lecturer such as:

- Significantly higher audience occupancy than the statutory one (420 hours with a norm of 280 hours); she applies modern technical and methodological means of teaching;

- Authorship of two textbooks, which are applied in teaching at the Faculty of Pedagogy;
- -Author of new curricula for Bachelor specialty "Social Activities" and of EQD Master specialty "Management of Social Organizations and Social Entrepreneurship" (2014); author of updated curricula (2017); author of 5 current study plans for the education of Bachelor's degree (2019) and EQD of Master (2020), under which their training is now being implemented;

The content of these programs well proves the ability of the teacher to adapt the educational content of the classes to the interests of students of different specialties, as well as to offer them new topics.

- Engagement with students in the preparation of their theses (successfully defended 25 bachelors and masters); supervisor of 3 doctoral students;

- Periodic participation with reports at prestigious scientific conferences; compiler and scientific editor of the authoritative collection "Problems and Perspectives of Social Activities (2021) and a textbook on social economy (2020).

- Ass. Vekova is included as an academic mentor in three projects for student practices, which well proves her interest in working with students. Another group of responsibilities are with the management of the Social Activities Department, which she successfully implements.

On the basis of these teaching activities and achieved results, I believe that according to educational status and academic development, Assoc. She is in a completely relevant position for the announced competition procedure. The high results achieved so far in its realization as a lecturer, scientific leader, author of curricula and textbooks, head of the Social Activities Department are categorically positive attestation for her further development as a professor at the relevant department, faculty and university. The pedagogical and organizational activities listed above are interrelated and complementary in the educational process and the development of the SD Department, which gives grounds for a general positive assessment of the realized competences of Assoc. Vekova.

Evaluation of the scientific and applied activities of the applicant

The scientific and applied activity of Assoc. Vekova is developing in four main directions: contemporary challenges to social work; current problems in the preparation of social workers and their professional realization as such and as managers of social services and enterprises; pension insurance and insurance; improvement of pedagogical work in the training of social workers. In each of these guidelines, she has proposed publications with her own views on appropriate solutions. The monograph "Social Protection in Case of Unemployment / Social Work with Unemployed Persons / (2022) occupies a central place in her publications. It groups together and analyzes the problems of the unemployed as an object and subject of social protection, including an analysis of their opportunities for inclusion in employment in social enterprises and other enterprises of social economy. Such a large-scale study of changes in the positions of the unemployed in a difficult social situation and with the need for specialized care is offered for the first time in Bulgaria.

Ass. Vekova participates as a researcher in 6 projects with a scientific and applied focus, which well proves her scientific interests.

Contributions (scientific, scientific-applied, applied) and citations

The reference for the scientific contributions formulated by the candidate has been developed professionally and has been specified in all her scientific works. I fully accept the eight groups of scientific and applied scientific contributions presented and their content according to the respective groups of publications. They contain, above all, their own views on the essence and importance of the social protection system and its individual elements and its contemporary challenges globally and nationally, as well as challenges to social work and social protection of the unemployed. The following contributions are of interest to the scientific community:

- the development of a concept of social protection in unemployment as a system with meaningful components – social security in case of unemployment, social assistance for unemployed people and active measures on the labor market; the systematization of contemporary problems of it;

- critical analysis of alternative forms of employment provision for risk groups; assessment of measures to limit the negative impact of the health crisis on the labor market;

- overall presentation of the pension insurance system and its specifics in the Bulgarian pension model;

- analysis of the processes and factors influencing the organization and management of social work in Bulgaria, with a specific thematic focus - social protection in case of unemployment; social enterprises as an alternative form and opportunity for employment and social inclusion of risk groups.

- systematized problems and challenges to higher education in social work.

Each of the proposed groups of contributions also outlines specific prospects for the development of the future studies of Assoc. Centuries. The priority place is occupied by social protection, in general, its organization and management, as well as its application in the work with the unemployed.

The reference with the citations has been prepared correctly and includes a total of 36 citations of scientific publications. Of these, 5 are in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world-famous databases with scientific information; 4 in monographs and collective volumes with scientific review; and the rest in non-peer reviews. The interest in these publications is high and is directed mainly to the author's theses on the development of social work and social protection.

Assessment of the applicant's personal contribution

I believe that the contributions formulated correspond to the content and results of the scientific publications of Assoc. Centuries are her personal work and merit.

4. Critical remarks and recommendations

I have no critical remarks, so far.

CONCLUSION

The materials presented by Assoc. Dr. Lyudmila Vekova are in accordance with the requirements of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for the Implementation of the Law on Academic Staff in Bulgaria and the relevant Rules of Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski".

The candidate in the competition has submitted a significant number of published scientific works. They include original scientific and applied contributions that have received international recognition and some are published in journals and scientific collections issued by national and international academic publishers. Her publications have scientific and practical applicability, some of which are directly oriented towards the academic work. The scientific and teaching qualification of Assoc. Vekova is undeniable and cannot be questioned.

Achieved by Assoc. Lyudmila Vekova results in academic and scientific research activities fully comply with the minimum national and additional requirements of the Faculty of Pedagogy, adopted in connection with the Rules of the University for the application of the

Law on Educational Research.

After getting acquainted with the scientific works presented in the competition, I find it reasonable to give my positive assessment and recommend to the Scientific Jury to prepare a report-proposal to the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Pedagogy for the selection of Assoc. Dr. Lyudmila Vekova at the academic position "Professor" at Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski" in: field of higher education Social, economic and legal sciences, vocational legislation "Social activities (Social protection and social work)".

15.03. 2023

Prepared the opinion:

(signature)

(Prof. Pobeda Loukanova, Ph.D)

(name, surname)