

OPINION

by Veselina Toneva Zhekova, PhD ,

Associate Professor at Plovdiv University Paisii Hilendarski

on the materials submitted for participation in a competition for

the academic position "**Associate professor**"

of Plovdiv University Paisii Hilendarski

in field of higher education 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences,

Professional area 3.7. Administration and Management

(Fundamentals of management, Competitiveness of the business organization)

By order No. РД-21-54 of 16.01.2023 of the Rector of Plovdiv University Paisii Hilendarski (PU), I have been appointed as a member of the Scientific Jury of a competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the field of higher education 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, Professional area 3.7. Administration and Management (Fundamentals of Management, Competitiveness of the Business Organization), announced for the needs of the Department "Management and Quantitative Methods in Economics" at the Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences.

In the competition for "Associate Professor", announced in the State Gazette, no. 92 of 18.11.2022 and on the website of Plovdiv University Paisii Hilendarski for the needs of the "Management and Quantitative Methods in Economics" Department at the Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences, Chief Assistant Professor Gergana Dimitrova Dimitrova, PhD who is from the same department, applied as a candidate.

The set of materials presented by Chief Assistant Professor Gergana Dimitrova Dimitrova, PhD is in accordance with the *Rules for the Development of the Academic Staff of PU* (RDASPU) and includes the following correctly formatted documents: Respective application form to the Rector for admission to participation in the competition; CV in European format; Diploma for Educational and qualification degree "Master"; Diploma for Educational and scientific degree "Doctor"; List of scientific works; Annotations of the materials under Art. 65.(3) of the RDASPU, including Self-assessment of the candidate's contributions; Certificate of work experience; Documents for the candidate's academic work; Research Papers; Reference for classroom and out-of-classroom work; Reference for individual scientific-metric indicators and their compliance with the minimum national and additional faculty requirements; Declaration of originality and authenticity of the attached documents.

For participation in the competition Chief Assistant Professor Gergana Dimitrova, PhD presented 30 scientific papers and a list of 7 research/educational projects. The scientific works are as follows: 1 independent monograph, 1 book based on a defended dissertation work, 1 study, 14 arti-

cles (including 7 in Scopus/WoS), 12 scientific reports (including 1 in Scopus/WoS), 1 stand-alone textbook on "Competitiveness of the business organization".

1. General presentation of the procedure and the candidate

During the period 1997 - 2001 Chief Assistant Professor Gergana Dimitrova, Ph.D., obtained her bachelor's degree in business administration at the Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences at Plovdiv University Paisii Hilendarski, and in 2009 at the Agricultural University - Plovdiv, Faculty of Economics she acquired master's degree in accounting and Control. Gergana Dimitrova continues her studies in doctoral program 3.8 Economics and Management (Industry) at the Department "Management and Quantitative Methods in Economics" of the Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences (FESS), and in 2019 she successfully defended her dissertation on the topic: "*Competitiveness of micro- and small enterprises from the wine industry in Plovdiv region*".

Since September 2019, he holds the academic position of "Assistant Professor", and since October 2020, the academic position of "Chief Assistant Professor" at the FESS.

Chief Assistant Professor Gergana Dimitrova, PhD is fluent in English. She has excellent computer skills - works with Microsoft Office /Word, Excel, Power Point/; Internet databases; SPSS. She is a member of the Union of Scientists in Bulgaria and the Commission for Quality and Accreditation at FESS. She has a sense of belonging and empathy with the scientific community, which makes her responsible in her research and practical-applied work. She is able to work in a team. She possesses the necessary knowledge, skills and scientific-applied competences, which she skilfully uses in her educational and teaching work.

2. General characteristics of the applicant's work

As a full-time lecturer at FESS during the period of September 2019 - until now, Gergana Dimitrova, PhD has led lectures and exercises classes on the following academic disciplines: (1) *Fundamentals of management*; (2) *Management in Telecommunications*; (3) *Competitiveness of the business organization*; (4) *Sports Management and Marketing*. The fact that Chief Assistant Professor Dimitrova, PhD has developed an independent study plan for the study discipline *Competitiveness of the business organization* is worth mentioning.

The structure of the scientific works of Gergana Dimitrova, PhD can be summarized as follows:

(1) She is the author of a monograph that has the quality of a work for the achievement of academic rank: Cluster approach for competitive positioning of Bulgarian wine production.

(2) She is the author of a book based on a defended dissertation work for the award of a PhD degree: "Competitiveness of micro- and small enterprises from the wine industry (based on the example of Plovdiv region).

(3) She is the author of a textbook: "Competitiveness of a business organization".

(4) Scientific studies – 1 study

(5) Scientific articles – 14 articles.

(6) Scientific reports – 12 reports.

Of the 30 scientific works submitted for review, 9 are in English and 21 are in Bulgarian.

The scientific texts with which Chief Assistant Professor Gergana Dimitrova, Ph.D., participates in the competition for the appointment on the academic position "Associate Professor", can be distinguished by: relevance of the studied topics; with a diversity of research approaches used; demonstrate professional competence; outline the in-depth scientific interests of the candidate in the field of the competition, which is a prerequisite for the successful development of the relevant field at the Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences of Plovdiv University.

The obtained results, the scientific and scientific-applied contributions in the presented publications, which are distinguished by the marked relevance of the studied issues, can be united in the following directions:

1) The theoretical-methodological approaches to managing the competitiveness of the industrial enterprise are comprehensively examined, enriched with the proposed: (1) conceptual model for generating competitive advantages (Appendices: 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.7, 5.12, 5.16, 5.20, 5.23) and (2) methodology for building an aggregate composite indicator for assessing the competitiveness of the industrial enterprise and the attractiveness of the industry (Appendices: 5.2, 5.3, 5.7)

2) A comprehensive analysis of the concepts of the cluster approach to competitiveness management and its application in two aspects is presented: the formation of wine clusters and the formation of educational/innovation clusters.

3) The leading competitive advantages of the enterprises in the sector and the competitive position of Bulgaria on the world wine map are outlined (Appendices: 5.1, 5.2, 5.4, 5.12, 5.20, 5.23) and basic recommendations to Bulgarian wine producers are made (Appendix: 5.2).

4) A conceptual model is proposed for assessing the competitiveness of higher education institutions (Appendix 5.5), which, in the conditions of the knowledge economy, is decisive for the competitiveness of the national economy.

5) On the basis of the proposed model, the leading competitive advantages of the universities were identified, the competitive environment in the sector was analysed (Appendices 5.18, 5.20, 5.21) and the competitive potential was identified (Appendices 5.5, 5.13, 5.18, 5.25), with a focus

on applicability of the cluster approach, considered in the context of the so-called "triangle of knowledge" (Appendices 5.5, 5.6, 5.9, 5.10, 5.13, 5.22, 5.24, 5.25, 5.26, 5.30).

I support the contributions indicated by the candidate in the summary she submitted. For the most part, they are reduced to systematization and enrichment of existing knowledge, research and systematization of empirical material, on the basis of which trends and problems are deduced. The overall review of the works presented for review by Chief Assistant Professor Gergana Dimitrova, Ph.D., creates the figure of a purposeful researcher who competently complements a number of theoretical and practical-applied aspects in the field of her interests.

In parallel with research and teaching activities, Dimitrova, PhD participates in various scientific-applied and educational projects. So far, she has been involved in 7 projects: *two* international; *two* national and *three* university.

Dimitrova, PhD takes an active part in the organization of scientific conferences, seminars, workshops, both within Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences and in the organization of accreditation procedures.

3. Critical notes and recommendations

I have no critical remarks about the teaching and research activities of Gergana Dimitrova, PhD. I would allow myself only one recommendation for her future scientific, practical-applied and teaching activities, namely - to focus her efforts to achieving mobility under the ERASMUS+ programme.

CONCLUSION

The documents and materials presented by Chief Assistant Professor Gergana Dimitrova, Ph.D., **meet all** the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LDASRB), the Regulations for the Implementation of the LDASRB and the relevant Regulations of PU Paisii Hilendarski.

The candidate in the competition has submitted a **sufficient** number of scientific papers. The works of Chief Assistant Professor Gergana Dimitrova, PhD contain original scientific, scientific-applied and applied contributions. Her theoretical developments have practical applicability, and some of them are directly targeted at the academic work.

The achieved results of Chief Assistant Professor Gergana Dimitrova PhD in academic and research activities **fully** correspond to the specific requirements of the Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences.

After familiarizing myself with the materials and scientific works presented in the competition, analysing their significance and the scientific, scientific-applied contributions contained in

them, I consider my **positive** assessment as well-grounded and I **recommend** the honourable Scientific Jury to prepare a report-proposal to the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences for choosing Chief Assistant Professor Gergana Dimitrova Dimitrova, PhD for the academic position of Associate Professor at PU P. Hilendarski in professional field **3.7 Administration and management (Fundamentals of management, Competitiveness of the business organization)**.

04.03.2023

City of Plovdiv

Opinion by:.....

/Associate Professor Veselina Zhekova, PhD/