

## **STATEMENT OF PROFESSIONAL OPINION**

Delivered by:

**Mina Nikolaeva Angelova, PhD –**

**Associate Professor at the University of Plovdiv “Paisii Hilendarski”, Bulgaria**

based on the submitted materials

regarding the competitive selection procedure of applicants

for the tenure-track academic job position

*'Associate Professor'*

at the University of Plovdiv “Paisii Hilendarski”

in the Field of Higher Education **3. Social, Economic, and Legal Sciences**

Professional Field **3.7. Administration and Management**

**(Fundamentals of Management, Competitiveness of the Business Organization)**

The competitive selection procedure for the “Associate Professor” job position is publicly announced both at the State Gazette, Issue 92, as of November 18, 2022, and at the website of the University of Plovdiv “Paisii Hilendarski” - to meet the needs of the Department of Management and Quantitative Methods in Economics at the Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences. In reference to this, it is the Chief Assistant Professor Gergana Dimitrova Dimitrova, PhD of the University of Plovdiv “Paisii Hilendarski”, who applied as a candidate for this job position.

## 1. General Presentation of the Procedure and the Candidate

It is the Order № RD-21-54 of January 16, 2023 of the Rector of the University of Plovdiv “Paisii Hilendarski” (UP), which designates me as a Full Member on duty for the Scientific Jury Panel to deliver professional assertion on employment for the academic job position “Associate Professor” at UP in the field of Higher Education 3. Social, Economic, and Legal Sciences; Professional Field 3.7. Administration and Management (Fundamentals of Management, Competitiveness of the Business Organization), announced by the Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences (FESS) to meet the needs of the Department of Management and Quantitative Methods in Economics (MQME) of the FESS.

It must be stated that for the announced competitive selection procedure, it is only one candidate, who has applied for this position: **Chief Assistant Professor Gergana Dimitrova Dimitrova, PhD** of the University of Plovdiv “Paisii Hilendarski”.

The submitted set of materials of Dr. G. Dimitrova complies to *the Rules of Development of the Academic Staff of the University of Plovdiv* (RDASUP). It includes the next documents:

- 1) a request to the Rector for admission to the competition;
- 2) a CV in European format;
- 3) a Master Degree diploma;
- 4) a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Degree diploma;
- 5) a list of scientific papers;
- 6) separation protocols of papers and list of citations;
- 7) a reference for compliance with the minimum national requirements;
- 8) a reference for compliance with the additional faculty requirements;
- 9) an annotation of materials under Art. 65. from RDASUP in Bulgarian;
- 10) annotations of the materials under Art. 65. from RDASUP in a foreign language;
- 11) self-assessment of contributions;
- 12) a declaration of originality and authenticity of the enclosed documents;
- 13) certificate of work experience;
- 14) documents for academic work;

15) documents for research work;

16) documents according to the additional requirements of the relevant faculty and other documents.

The candidate submitted a total of 40 scientific papers. It is worth stating that 6 papers had been already presented to substantiate the PhD awarding process. The same argument is valid for another 4 peer-reviewed scientific papers which shall not be taken into account for this procedure, as candidate had already utilized their scientific values to contribute to the competitive selection procedure to occupy the academic job position of the Chief Assistant Professor at University of Plovdiv "Paisii Hilendarski".

There are 30 scientific papers deemed compatible for scientific consideration and assertion, as they do not fall at the scope of the PhD-thesis works and PhD-related publications, and, thus, may be accounted for the final evaluation and assertion. They include: 1 monograph, 1 book, 1 textbook, 1 study, 14 articles and 12 reports. Therefore, classification of the scientific papers by the standards of compliance used in Bulgaria and abroad, is as it follows: 25 publications are popularized in Bulgaria (4 of which are in English language and 21 are in Bulgarian) and other 5 papers are published abroad (in English).

It's obvious from the submitted materials deemed compatible for scientific consideration and assertion that:

- 1) The materials are not with contents overlap;
- 2) There is no missing documents;
- 3) There are applied publication certificates;
- 4) All the publications are applied in full text.

The applicant in this competitive selection procedure has valuable practical experience in positions, such as a General Manager, Office Manager, Administrative Manager and Expert in Procurement and Placement (from 1998 to 2012). It is evident from the submitted CV that Dr. Dimitrova has a pedagogical internship more than 6 years (as of March 2023). She works as a part-time assistant professor at the UP from 2017 to 2019. She holds the position of "assistant" from 2019 to 2020. In 2020 she is a tenure-track assistant professor at the post of Chief Assistant at UP. The scientific experience corresponds with this competitive selection procedure and is approved by the quality of the submitted materials for assertion.

Dr. Dimitrova holds a Bachelor Degree in “Business Administration” (UP) and a Master Degree in “Accounting and Control” (Agrarian University, Plovdiv). During the period 2016-2019 she is studying in a full-time PhD programme at the Department of Management and Quantitative Methods in Economics in the University of Plovdiv, and she defends her dissertation and obtains the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Degree in the professional field Economics and Management (Industry).

It is evident from the CV of Dr. Dimitrova argumentation for the presence of communicative, organizational, professional, digital, and other skills.

I have known Dr. Dimitrova personally since 2016, and I have excellent impressions of an initiative, responsible and promising scientist, which is confirmed by the documents presented in connection with the competition. I shall not dare to miss the positive feedback shared with me from my colleagues who work with her in different project teams.

## **2. General Characteristics of the Applicant's Activities**

Chief Assistant Professor Gergana Dimitrova, PhD has a teaching load that meets the approved annual mandatory teaching load at the University of Plovdiv “Paisii Hilendarski”. Her auditorium teaching load for the academic 2022/2023 year according to the specifics of the professional field covers the minimum of 45 hours lectures. In particular, she held 270 hours of lectures on the academic discipline "Competitiveness of the business organization" till now. She has conducted over 850 hours, leading classes in the disciplines “Fundamentals of Management”, “Sports Management and Marketing” and “Management in Telecommunications” for students in full-time and part-time study.

Her auditorium teaching load for the 2022/2023 academic year is accounted at 485 hours of lectures and seminars (converted to academic exercises). It includes the next academic courses at the FESS:

- Competitiveness of the Business Organization;
- Fundamentals of Management;
- Sports Management and Marketing;
- Management in Telecommunications.

According to art. 64 (2) of RDASUP is provided an auditorium teaching load that meets, even exceeds, the minimum requirements.

Dr. Dimitrova actively works with students. She is a member of the Manager's Club and the Marketing Club at FESS, actively participating in the organization of various events at FESS. In the scientific projects in which she participates, students and doctoral students are also involved.

In general, Dr. Dimitrova's researched scientific contributions may be summarized in the following categories:

1) **Theoretical and methodological statements for the management of the industrial enterprise competitiveness**, enriched with the proposed *conceptual model for generating competitive advantages*, based on the developed system of indicators for evaluating the company's competitiveness and a model for evaluating the competitiveness of the industrial enterprise and the possibilities for its improvement, and *methodology for building an overall composite indicator for assessing the competitiveness* of the industrial enterprise and the attractiveness of the industry;

2) **Formation of wine clusters** - developed methodological positions and a research model for building a wine cluster based on wine tourism, and the proposed conceptual project of a wine cluster was approved through an empirical study conducted among SMEs from the wine industry in the country;

3) **Formation of educational/innovation clusters** - assessment of the competitiveness of higher schools, analysis of the competitive environment, identification of their key competitive advantages and the applicability of the cluster approach for competitive positioning of higher education institutions.

Having focused on the announced competitive selection procedure, it must be stated that the publications of Dr. Dimitrova have applied scientific, practical, and educational contributions.

The following set of papers and publications are submitted and taken into consideration: 1 individual monograph (in Bulgarian), 1 book (in Bulgarian), 1 individual textbook (in Bulgarian), 1 study (in Bulgarian), 14 scientific articles of which 6 in Bulgarian and 8 in English, and 12 reports of which 11 in Bulgarian and 1 in English. Their importance is undeniable, as they were published in prestigious editions, and 8 of them were published in scientific editions, referenced and indexed in world-renowned scientific information databases Scopus and Web of Science.

Affidavit of support of the quality of the R&D results, achieved by the applicant - is the level of their citation. The total number of noted citations of the scientific works is 23, and 9 of them are in articles indexed in world-renowned scientific information databases Scopus и Web of Science, and 14 of them are in monographs and peer-reviewed collective volumes. The candidate actively participates in International Scientific Events in the role of scientific jury, organizer, reviewer.

I accept the division of scientific and applied science contributions, according to the mode of submission by the candidate.

The analysis of the scientific publications substantiates the assertion that Dr. Dimitrova's R&D activities are distinguished by their emphasized practical value. It is also impressive the well-aware professional aptitude of the applicant, her analytical way of thinking and precise synthesizing skills.

Furthermore, a good impression is made by the applicant's participation in interdisciplinary teams with scientists from other scientific fields. The monograph presented is written at a high scientific level, including a theoretical study of competitiveness and cluster approach, supported by extensive literature review, methodological contributions and empirical results. In my opinion, the contributions are a personal matter of Dr. Dimitrova.

The overall conclusion is that the Dr Dimitrova's scientific output exceeds the quantitative indicators of the national criteria and the faculty requirements for occupying the academic position of an 'Associate Professor'. The total number of reported points, according to the submitted documents for participation in the competition, is **1096.00** and includes: *I. National minimum requirements according to the ADASRB (Article 2b) and the Regulations for its application (Article 1a, Paragraph 1) - a total of 737.50 points and II. Additional indicators of FESS for evaluation of candidates - a total of 358.50 points.*

### **3. Critical Comments and Recommendations**

In order to assist the applicant's future research work in the competition, I can make the following notes and recommendations:

- 1) to continue with the publication activity in high impact factor / rang editions;
- 2) to develop a new direction according her areas of interest, such as digitalization;
- 3) to present the results of the research at conferences abroad;
- 4) to prepare a study course in a foreign language for the needs of foreign students;
- 5) to make an extensive research of other issues not less important for improvement and directly related to increasing the competitiveness of the Bulgarian economy.

## CONCLUSION

The documents and materials presented by Chief Assistant Professor Gergana Dimitrova Dimitrova, PhD **meet** all the requirements of the *Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria* (ADASRB), *the Rules of Application* of the ADASRB, and the corresponding *Rules* of the University of Plovdiv “Paisii Hilendarski”.

The candidate has submitted a sufficient number of scientific papers, published after publishing of the materials, employed for the defence of the Doctoral Degree (PhD) and after meeting the occupation criteria of the academic job position of Chief Assistant Professor.

The applicant's works have original scientific and applied contributions that have received international recognition, as a representative part of them have been published in journals and scientific papers, published by international academic publishers. Theoretical achievements of the candidate have practical applicability; some of them are directly oriented to the educational work.

Dr. Dimitrova's scientific and teaching qualifications are undoubtedly professional.

The achieved educational and R&D results by Chief Assistant Professor Gergana Dimitrova, PhD **fully comply** to the specific requirements of the Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences, approved in regard to applying the Rules of the University for the implementation of ADASRB.

Having considered the whole set of materials and scientific works of the applicant, submitted in this competitive selection procedure, and having conducted a thorough analysis of their importance along to the scientific and applied contributions contained therein, I reckon that I have sound reasons to deliver my **Positive Assessment** and I recommend to the Scientific Jury Panel to prepare a Project-Report to the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences to elect Chief Assistant Professor **Gergana Dimitrova Dimitrova, PhD** for the academic position of an Associate Professor at the University of Plovdiv “Paisii Hilendarski” in professional field **3.7. Administration and Management (Fundamentals of Management, Competitiveness of the Business Organization)**.

01. 03. 2023

Signature:.....

(Associate Professor Mina Angelova, PhD)