STATEMENT

by Prof. Asen Kanchev Rahnev, PhD,

University of Plovdiv "Paisii Hilendarski", Plovdiv

on a competition for the occupation of an academic position "Associate Professor",

announced in State Gazette No. 96/17.11.2023

in field of higher education: 4. Natural sciences, Mathematics, and Informatics,

Professional field: 4.6 Informatics and Computer Science

(Artificial Intelligence)

for the needs of the University of Plovdiv „Paisii Hilendarski",

Faculty of Mathematics and Informatics (FMI)

By Order № RD-21-70 of 16.01.2024 of the Rector of the University of Plovdiv "Paisii Hilendarski", I have been appointed as a member of the scientific jury of the competition to fill the academic position of "Associate Professor" at the University of Plovdiv (PU) in field of higher education 4. Natural Sciences, Mathematics, and Informatics, professional field 4.6. Informatics and Computer Science (Artificial Intelligence).

Two candidates have submitted documents to participate in the announced competition – **Chief Assistant Professor Asya Todorova Toskova, PhD, and Chief Assistant Professor Veneta Veselinova Tabakova-Komsalova, PhD**; both candidates are from the Department of Computer Systems, Faculty of Mathematics and Informatics at the University of Plovdiv "Paisii Hilendarski". Following the protocol of the committee session convened on 18.01.2024, which was signed by all members without any remarks, both candidates were duly admitted to the competition. Subsequently, the Dean of the Faculty of Mathematics and Informatics at the University of Plovdiv "Paisii Hilendarski" conveyed the Commission's decision to the candidates through letters numbered 1249/19.01.2024 (addressed to Veneta Veselinova Tabakova-Komsalova) and 1250/19.01.2024 (addressed to Asya Todorova Toskova), respectively.

As a member of the scientific jury, I have received all the documentation associated with the application bearing the registration number RASD-08-6/11.01.2024 from Chief Assistant Professor Asya Todorova Toskova, PhD, addressed to the Rector of PU "Paisii Hilendarski" for participation in the competition. Additionally, I have obtained all the necessary documents linked to the application with registration number RASD-08-11/15.01.2024 from Chief

Assistant Professor Veneta Veselinova Tabakova-Komsalova, PhD, also directed to the Rector of PU "Paisii Hilendarski" for participation in the competition.

Dr. Toskova's submission includes one textbook and 21 scientific papers, comprising:

- 5 publications in journals;
- 12 publications in international conference proceedings;
- 2 publications in national conference proceedings;
- 1 book chapter;
- 1 monograph.

Two of the publications are indexed in the WoS database, one of which has IF(Q3). Twelve articles and the book chapter are indexed in SCOPUS, with 3 of them having SJR (due to duplication of ISSN numbers Dr. Toskova has wrongly indicated another 4). Five publications and the textbook are in Bulgarian; the rest are in English. Of the 21 scientific papers and one textbook submitted, in which no plagiarism has been legally proven, Dr. Asya Toskova is the sole author of 4, the first co-author of 8, the second co-author of 8, and listed in fourth place or subsequent in 2.

The main scientific and scientifically applied contributions in Dr. Toskova's publications cover several research areas, including the detection of weeds in wheat, the recognition of Bulgarian embroidery, and the recommendation of serious games for children with special educational needs. However, only 10 publications are listed in Dr. Asya Toskova's self-assessment report of contributions, and there is no information available on the remaining publications. Furthermore, neither the self-assessment report of contributions nor the annotations of the scientific papers make any reference to the textbook, which does not align with the specific subject of the competition.

Some of the accomplishments achieved by Chief Assistant Professor Asya Toskova have been incorporated into two university projects for young scientists, two National Research Programs, and one international research project. Additionally, Chief Assistant Professor Toskova has showcased her work at 19 scientific conferences and seminars held at international, national, and university levels.

Chief Asst. Prof. Asya Toskova, PhD, is involved in teaching activities, including:

- lectures on "Software Technologies 1" in the second year of education of the specialty "Software Technologies and Design" in full-time and part-time study;
- elective courses in "Cognitive Robotics" and "Machine Learning";
- seminars in "Software Technology 1", "Introduction to Software Engineering", "Software Technology Practicum", and "Java Programming";

Under the supervision of Chief Asst. Prof. Asya Toskova, PhD, one Diploma student successfully defended their thesis.

Chief Asst. Prof. Veneta Tabakova-Komsalova, PhD, is the author and co-author of a total of 63 scientific papers. For her participation in the competition, she has submitted one textbook and 48 scientific works, including:

- 15 publications in journals;
- 23 publications in international conference proceedings;
- 5 publications in proceedings of national conferences;
- 2 book chapters;
- 2 monographs;
- 1 dissertation book.

Eight publications are indexed in the WoS database, one of them has IF(Q1). Eleven articles are indexed in SCOPUS, three of them with SJR. Seven publications, two monographs, a dissertation book, and the textbook are in Bulgarian, the rest are in English. Of the 48 scientific papers and one textbook submitted, in which no plagiarism has been legally proven, Dr. Veneta Tabakova-Komsalova is the sole author of 2, the first co-author of 22, the second co-author of 8, the third co-author of 6, and listed in fourth place or subsequent in 11.

The main scientific and scientifically applied contributions in the publications of Dr. Tabakova-Komsalova are in several scientific fields, according to the competition:

- Artificial Intelligence Systems – I would like to make special mention of the two monographs;
- Introducing Artificial Intelligence in Secondary School – In this area the main results of the candidate are in continuation of her dissertation work on teaching informatics and information technology;
- Application of Artificial Intelligence in Smart Agriculture.

Some of the achievements attained by Chief Assistant Professor Veneta Tabakova-Komsalova have been incorporated into three university projects, two national projects (with one in which she assumes a leadership role), two National Research Programs, and an international research initiative. Additionally, Chief Assistant Professor Veneta Tabakova-Komsalova has shared her research contributions at numerous scientific conferences and seminars, spanning international, national, and university levels.

Dr. Tabakova-Komsalova has presented a list of 53 citations, 27 of which are in WoS and Scopus. Sixteen of the citations are from foreign authors and the remaining 37 are from Bulgarian authors.

Chief Asst. Prof. Veneta Tabakova-Komsalova, PhD, is involved in teaching activities, which encompass:

- lectures in "Intelligent Systems";
- lectures in "Databases";
- an elective course on "Introduction to Artificial Intelligence and Prolog Logic Programming";
- seminars in Artificial Intelligence, Intelligent Systems, and Databases.

Under the mentorship of Chief Assistant Professor Veneta Tabakova-Komsalova, PhD, three Diploma students successfully defended their theses.

I have a casual acquaintance with Asya Toskova as a colleague since she began working at the Faculty of Mathematics and Informatics. I am acquainted with Veneta Tabakova-Komsalova both as a colleague and as a reviewer of her PhD thesis.

I do not have firsthand knowledge of the teaching performance of Chief Assistant Professor Asya Toskova, PhD, and Chief Assistant Professor Veneta Tabakova-Komsalova, PhD. I am eager to hear the perspectives of students regarding their teaching capabilities.

CONCLUSION

The documents and materials submitted by both candidates fulfill all the stipulations outlined in the Academic Staff Development Act in the Republic of Bulgaria (ASDA), the Regulations for the Implementation of ASDA, and the pertinent regulations of the University of Plovdiv "Paisii Hilendarski." Additionally, they meet the additional faculty requirements of the Faculty of Mathematics and Informatics for attaining the academic position of "Associate Professor."

To give an advantage to one of the two candidates over the other, I will compare their results on several criteria, taking into account the subject of the competition announced in the State Gazette:

- The teaching activity and the textbook of Chief Assistant Professor Veneta Tabakova-Komsalova, PhD are more closely aligned with the subject of the competition;

- Dr. Veneta Tabakova-Komsalova supervised three successfully defended Diploma students, whereas Dr. Asya Toskova only supervised one.

- Dr. Veneta Tabakova-Komsalova authored and co-authored two monographs related to the subject of the competition, while Dr. Asya Toskova authored one.

- According to the minimum national requirements, Dr. Toskova has 777 points, of which I accept 729, while Dr. Tabakova-Komsalova has a total of 1040 points, which is nearly 43% higher.

- Chief Asst. Prof. Veneta Tabakova-Komsalova, PhD, has submitted 48 scientific papers for the competition, the majority of which are relevant to the competition's subject, while Chief Asst. Prof. Asya Toskova, PhD, has submitted 21 scientific works for the competition, a significant number of which are not related to the competition's subject.

- Dr. Veneta Tabakova-Komsalova's documents are well-formatted (except 5.1), complete, accurate, and provide the necessary information, while Dr. Asya Toskova's documents are more inadequately formatted, incomplete, with omissions, and inaccuracies.

All these factors provide grounds for **a positive recommendation** for the election of Chief Asst. Prof. Veneta Veselinova Tabakova-Komsalova, PhD for the academic position of **Associate Professor** in "Artificial Intelligence", professional field: 4.6 Informatics and Computer Science, in field of higher education: 4. Natural Sciences, Mathematics, and Informatics.

I propose to the Honorable Scientific Jury to unanimously recommend to the Respected Faculty Council of the Faculty of Mathematics and Informatics at the University of Plovdiv "Paisii Hilendarski" to elect **Asst. Prof. Veneta Veselinova Tabakova-Komsalova, PhD** for the academic position of Associate Professor.

12.03.2024   **Prepared by: ....**

Plovdiv   Prof. Asen Rahnev, PhD