

STATEMENT

by Assoc. Prof. Viktoria Boykova Sotirova, PhD
South-West University "Neofit Rilski", Blagoevgrad
on the materials submitted for participation in the competition
for the academic position of "Associate Professor"
in the field of higher education 3. Social, Economic, and Legal Sciences,
professional field 3.4. Social Activities
(Social Policies for Adults and Elderly People),
Department of Social Activities, Faculty of Pedagogy
at Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski",
announced in the State Gazette, issue 98 of 19.11.2024

General Presentation of the Procedure and Candidate

By order No. RD-22-445 of 18.02.2025 of the Rector of Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski" (PU), I was appointed as a member of the scientific jury for the competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the field of higher education 3. Social, Economic, and Legal Sciences, professional field 3.4. Social Activities (Social Policies for Adults and Elderly People), announced for the needs of the Department of Social Activities at the Faculty of Pedagogy. One candidate has applied for the announced competition – Chief Assistant Dr. Tanya Alyosheva Vazova from Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski," Department of Social Activities at the Faculty of Pedagogy. The documents and materials submitted by the candidate comply with the requirements of the Law and the Regulations for the Development of the Academic

Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, as well as the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at PU. The minimum national requirements and additional faculty requirements of PU have been met.

Brief Biographical Data

Tanya Vazova obtained her Doctorate (PhD) degree in 2018 at the University of National and World Economy, Sofia, in the scientific specialty "Economics and Organization of Labor," within the Department of Labor and Social Protection. Her dissertation topic was: "Competency Models in the Long-Term Care Sector." She completed her higher education at the same university, earning a Master's degree in "Economics and Organization of Labor" and a Bachelor's degree in the same specialty.

From her nearly twenty years of professional experience, she has been a lecturer at the Department of Social Activities at the Faculty of Pedagogy of PU for four years (2021–2023 as an assistant professor). Since April 2023, she has held the academic position of "Chief Assistant Professor".

Summary of the Candidate's Scientific Output and Activities

The candidate has submitted 23 scientific works for the competition: 1 monograph – habilitation thesis; 1 book based on the dissertation; 1 article and 1 study (in press) in refereed and indexed journals in international databases; 19 articles and papers in non-refereed journals with scientific peer review. Of these, 17 publications are individual, while 6 are co-authored: in 5, she is the first author, and in 1, she is the second author. The submitted materials reveal a scientist deeply dedicated to the helping professions, who enhances her teaching work with managerial expertise in the field of social activities. She has participated in 15 scientific forums, including 7 with international

participation, and in 2 scientific projects. Her continuous pursuit of personal and professional development is evidenced by her participation in training courses, for which certificates have been provided.

The knowledge, skills, and competencies acquired throughout her years of scientific research are reflected in her teaching work and in the developed lecture courses:

- **Bachelor's Degree in Social Activities:** Individual Assessment of Needs for Social Services and Support; Human Resource Management in the Social Sphere; Social Work with Adults and Elderly People; Casework with Children and Students with Special Educational Needs and At-Risk Children in School;
- **Master's Degree in:**
 - ✓ Management of Social Organizations – for specialists and non-specialists: Crisis Interventions and Supervision;
 - ✓ Management of Social Organizations – for non-specialists: Individual Assessment of Needs for Social Services and Support; Human Resource Management in the Social Sphere.

Alongside her organizational work as a supervisor of student internships in the Social Activities program, Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Vazova is also the academic advisor of four Bachelor's degree graduates.

Evaluation of Scientific and Practical Contributions of the Submitted Research

Dr. Vazova's research in the broad field of social work is focused on two contemporary issues—longevity and technological development, and the resulting need for changes in social policies and social services. These themes define the scientific contributions in her research.

I accept the presented contributions in all three thematic directions. Particularly significant for theory and practice are the structured professional profiles with competency sets for helping professionals who provide care for elderly individuals. These are skillfully combined with strategies for enhancing both their knowledge and skills, as well as the overall effectiveness of social work (Book 2021; 3; 4; 5; 7; 8; 11; 14; 15).

The changing needs of people in "modern societies" logically lead to the necessity of reforming social services. A profound understanding of these services is a prerequisite and a significant contribution to practice in structuring guidelines for "sector improvement" aimed at enhancing the quality of social services (habilitation thesis; 2; 6; 17; 18; 20).

New times bring new challenges and requirements for adaptation. The efficiency of social work is increasingly determined by the digital competencies of professionals. The implementation of models for digitalizing social work is a guarantee of success (1; 12; 13; 14; 15).

Time will confirm the importance of the identified practical contributions, which skillfully integrate theory and practice in social work.

Dr. Vazova's recognition in the scientific community is evidenced by 12 citations: 7 in refereed and indexed journals in globally recognized scientific databases and 5 in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals.

Critical Remarks and Recommendations

The submitted documents and materials regarding the candidate's scientific, research, professional, and teaching activities do not provide grounds for critical remarks or recommendations.

Conclusion

The documents and materials submitted by Chief Assistant Dr. Tanya Alyosheva Vazova meet all the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ZRASRB), its Implementation Regulations, and the corresponding Regulations of Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski."

The candidate has presented a significant number of scientific works published after the materials used in her PhD defense. Her research includes scientific and applied contributions that have received both national and international recognition, with some of her works published in journals and collections by international academic publishers. Her theoretical studies have practical applications, some of which are directly integrated into teaching. The scientific and teaching qualifications of Dr. Tanya Vazova are indisputable.

The achieved results in teaching and research fully meet the minimum national and additional requirements of the Faculty of Pedagogy, in accordance with PU's regulations for implementing ZRASRB.

After reviewing the submitted materials and scientific works, analyzing their significance and contributions, I find it justified to give my positive assessment and recommend that the Scientific Jury prepare a report-proposal to the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Pedagogy for the appointment of Chief Assistant Dr. Tanya Alyosheva Vazova to the academic position of "Associate Professor" at PU "Paisii Hilendarski" in the field of higher education 3. Social, Economic, and Legal Sciences, professional field 3.4. Social Activities (Social Policies for Adults and Elderly People).

04.04. 2025 г.

Prepared by:

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