

REVIEW

by Prof. Lyudmila Pavlova Vekova, PhD,

Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski"

of the materials submitted for participation in the competition

to acquisition of the academic position **“Associate Professor”**

at Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski"

in field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences,

professional field 3.4. Social activities

(Social policies for adults and older persons)

In the competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor", announced in the State Gazette, issue 98 of 19.11.2024 and on the website of Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski" for the needs of the Department of Social Activities at the Faculty of Pedagogy, Assistant Professor Tanya Vazova, PhD from Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski" (PU), participated as the only candidate.

1. General presentation of the received materials

By order No. ПД-22-445 of 18.02.2025, of the Rector of the Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski" (PU), I have been appointed as a member of the scientific jury for the competition for the academic position of „**Associate Professor**“ **at the University of Plovdiv** in the field of higher education 3. Social, Economic, and Legal Sciences, professional field 3.4. Social activities (Social policies for adults and older persons), announced for the needs of the Department of 'Social Work' at the Faculty of Pedagogy.

Only one candidate has submitted documents for participation in the announced competition: Asst.Prof. Tanya Alyosheva Vazova, PhD, lecturer at the University of Plovdiv.

The set of materials on paper submitted by the sole candidate Asst.Prof. Tanya Vazova, PhD, is in accordance with the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of the University of Plovdiv and includes all required documents listed in Article 66, Paragraph 2 of the PDASPU [PRASPU], described in the application form: a sample application to the rector for admission to

participate in the competition; a European-format CV; a copy of a higher education diploma with an acquired educational and qualification degree "Master", a copy of a diploma for an educational and scientific degree "Doctor"; a list of scientific works; scientific works (copies of publications); a list of citations; copies of publications with citations; a certificate of compliance with the minimum national requirements; a certificate of compliance with additional faculty requirements.

The candidate Asst.Prof. Tanya Alyosheva Vazova, PhD, has presented a list of a total of 23 scientific papers, to which the full text of the publications is attached, including 1 habilitation monograph, 1 book based on a defended dissertation for the award of the educational and scientific degree "doctor", 1 study, 20 articles and reports (6 of them co-authored). Publications related to the defense of the dissertation and the competition for "chief assistant" are not included. All scientific papers are in the profile of the competition, meet the requirements and are accepted for review.

2. Brief biographical data of the candidate

The candidate Asst.Prof. Tanya Alyosheva Vazova, PhD has an economic education - she graduated with a Bachelor's degree and a Master's degree in Economics and Labor Organization at the University of National and World Economy. She has a scientific and educational degree "Doctor" in the scientific field 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, professional field 3.8. Economics, acquired in 2018 at the UNWE with a dissertation on the topic "Competency Models in the Long-Term Care Sector". Her professional path as a specialist and manager before academic development in the field of "Social Activities" is directly related to the education she has acquired and is focused on human resources management and the field of social services. Since 2002. works as an expert and manager in "Human Resources Management", as a consultant in companies and organizations providing social services in the long-term care sector in a home environment. Since 2019, she has been working at the University of Pedagogy, and since 2021. she has been an assistant, and since 2023. she is currently a chief assistant in the Department of "Social Activities" at the Faculty of Pedagogy. She is the Chairman of the Association "Network for Social Development and Support" with activities in the field of social work and social services.

The practical activity and academic career of Asst.Prof. Tanya Vazova, PhD prove her serious and developing professional realization in the field of social work and her orientation to the issues in the social services sector and, as a priority, to services for the elderly and the elderly.

3. General characteristics of the candidate's activity

Assessment of educational and pedagogical activity and preparation of the candidate

Asst.Prof. Tanya Vazova, PhD has an active educational and pedagogical activity as a lecturer in the Department of Social Activities of the Faculty of Pedagogy. Her annual classroom and extracurricular employment, according to the submitted report, is 645 hours and it significantly exceeds the standard of the University of Sofia for a chief assistant of 360 hours. Asst.Prof. Tanya Vazova, PhD teaches lectures and exercises in 10 academic disciplines - mandatory and elective, with the majority of them being in the Bachelor's Degree Programme in the specialty 3.4. "Social Activities". Directly related to the specialty of the competition are the disciplines "Social Activities with Adults and Elderly People", "Individual Assessment of the Needs for Social Services and Support", "Human Resources Management in the Social Sphere". There is an increase in the in-class and out-of-class employment of the candidate due to the increase in lectures and exercises in taught disciplines both in the specialty "Social Activities" and in other specialties of the Faculty of Pedagogy - in "Psychology", "Special Pedagogy" and "Social Pedagogy". In the EQD "Master" in the specialty "Social Activities", the master's program "Management of Social Organizations" (for specialists and non-specialists), Asst.Prof. Tanya Vazova, PhD lectures in several academic disciplines - "Individual Assessment of the Needs for Social Services and Support", "HRM in the Social Sphere", "Crisis Interventions and Supervision". Extra-curricular employment includes the management of teaching practices, as well as scientific supervision of 4 graduates. She has experience in preparing curricula - 4 for the "Bachelor" and 3 for the "Master" in the specialty "Social Activities". Participates in the training courses for teachers organized by the Faculty of Pedagogy to improve their professional training, which is proven by the attached certificates.

Assessment of Scientific Activity and Contributions

The candidate, Asst.Prof. Tanya Vazova, PhD, has presented a list of a total of 23 scientific papers. The distribution of scientific papers in relevant categories, in the country and abroad, is as follows: 18 publications in the country (of which 3 in English), 3 publications abroad in English. The scientific works for participation in the competition are divided into categories "published in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information - 2 (1 study and 1 article) and "published in non-refereed journals with scientific review or published in edited collective volumes - 19 publications. Of the published articles and reports, 15 are independent and 6 are co-authored.

A central place in the presented scientific publications is occupied by the habilitation work of Assistant Professor Tanya Vazova, PhD - the monograph "Social Services for the Elderly and the Elderly in Bulgaria: Development, Challenges, Prospects", published in 2024.

The monograph represents the first representative study for Bulgaria of trends in the development of social services for the elderly and the elderly for the period 2002-2024, which systematizes the challenges in this area and substantiates the prospects for their development.

The development of social services is analyzed over a long period of time, with two stages delimited depending on the legal framework of the activity and their specificity in quantitative and qualitative aspects is analyzed. The monograph is logically structured, with a sequence of exposition, with all chapters ending with systematized conclusions, problems, recommendations or key actions. The terminology is correctly specified and defined. The study is based on a complex and interdisciplinary approach, in which, through the use of various tools, an objective analysis of social services for adults and elderly people in Bulgaria for the specified period is achieved.

The theoretical review is based on an in-depth examination of the constituent categories - "adults and elderly people" and "social services" based on an assessment of scientific publications by Bulgarian and foreign authors on the specified problems, which also allows the author to formulate his own view. The theoretical and methodological aspects are complemented by a precise presentation of the main documents of the international and national legal framework.

The formulation of the main trends in the development of social services for adults and the elderly for each of the periods is based on a critical assessment of the regulatory framework (the applicable legal and regulatory framework), on the systematization and analysis of a large volume of statistical data - both from official sources (NSI, ASP, AZ, IME), and on the author's own calculations. The integrated approach in the monographic work is based on supplementing the quantitative analysis with conceptual views and basic theories, with a very good knowledge of the practice in social services for adults and the elderly, which also determines the undeniable qualities of the scientific work as a significant and up-to-date scientific study, and the author - as a leading expert in the issue.

For participation in the competition, the book based on the defended dissertation "Competency models in the long-term care sector for the positions of caregiver, child care worker, home assistant". is presented. In it, Asst.Prof. Tanya Vazova, PhD specifies the conceptual vision for applying the competency approach in long-term care for adults and the elderly and, based on empirical research data, develops author-approved competency models for the selection, training and assessment of key positions in the sector - caregiver, child care worker, home assistant.

The remaining publications, which are the subject of evaluation in this review, include articles in periodicals and conference proceedings - national and with international participation. They examine and analyze problems and topics related to the overall research work of Asst.Prof. Tanya

Vazova, PhD. The main focuses of the presented publications are related to the development of the competency model and the definition of competencies for positions in the long-term care sector (publications No. 3, 4, 5, 11), systematization of professional competencies for key positions in the sector (No. 8). In direct connection with the above-mentioned issues are also the publications examining requirements for the field of education for acquiring the necessary competencies in the long-term care sector (publications No. 7, 9, 10). The demographic challenges associated with population aging in the context of the development of independent living are considered in publication 6, while publication 17 analyzes the problem in the direction of achieving equality and integration of older people. Special attention is paid to the impact of social innovations (No. 12) as important factors for improving the quality of social services, as well as to information technologies as a strategic perspective for their future development (publications No. 13, 14, 15.). The emphasis in the publication work of Asst.Prof. Tanya Vazova is the problems of dementia and the challenges facing services for older people with dementia (No. 16), essential problems for the future of social services (No. 10). The international and national legal framework, as well as legislative changes, are considered in the aspect of strategic guidelines for improving the quality and access to services for older people (publications No. 18, 19, 20).

Accepting the scientific contributions formulated by Asst.Prof. Tanya Vazova, PhD in the scientific papers submitted for review, I structure them in two main directions:

1. Scientific contributions

- Presented a comprehensive view of social services for the elderly and the elderly in Bulgaria as a state, challenges and prospects (habilitation work).
- Original conceptual and research approach in studying the problems and prospects of social services for the elderly and the elderly and examining the problem in relation to basic concepts (habilitation work, publications 17,18).
- Own definitions of basic concepts on the issues of the competition - "elderly people", "old people", "social services for the elderly and the elderly", "profiled social services for the elderly and the elderly", "unit for providing social services" "active life of the elderly and the elderly", as well as the systematized main characteristics of the indicated categories (habilitation work, publication 2).
- Formulation of the main trends in the development of social services for the elderly and the elderly in Bulgaria based on a comprehensive quantitative and qualitative analysis for a long period (habilitation thesis, publications 2, 6, 10, 16, 17, 19, 20).

- Introduction and development of the competency approach in long-term care for the elderly and the elderly as a factor for improving the quality of social services. (published book, publications 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15).

2. Scientific and applied contributions:

- Systematized assessments of the quantitative and qualitative changes in the development of social services for the elderly and the elderly and their legal framework during the two periods of the considered time interval 2002 - 2024. (habilitation thesis).

- The analyses and assessments made for the (in)sufficiency in the provision of social services for adults and the elderly in the period after 2002 and formulated problems and challenges (habilitation thesis).

- Integrated provision of social services for adults and elderly people, including the implementation of innovations and use of the capabilities of modern information technologies (habilitation work, publications 2, 6, 10, 19, 20).

- Systematized key reforms and challenges facing social services for adults and elderly people in the future based on a complex analysis (habilitation work; publications 2, 6, 17, 18, 19, 20).

- The recommendations formulated regarding:

- The development of active aging policies (publications 2, 6, 12, 17, 20).

- Improving the provision of social services for adults and the elderly, taking into account demographic trends and increasing their quality and efficiency - increasing the number and capacity of social institutions; optimizing financial resources and expanding the possibilities for financing social services; cooperation and coordination between the various sectors providing social services; investments in infrastructure; development of software platforms for managing social services (habilitation thesis, publications 2, 19, 20, 21).

- Defining key technical and behavioral skills necessary for the effective performance of work duties and introducing models for determining competencies for positions in the long-term care sector (published book, publications 3, 4, 5, 8, 11).

- Formulated requirements for the field of education for acquiring the necessary competencies in the long-term care sector and for certain groups of users (dementia patients) and special emphasis on digital literacy and its importance for the effectiveness of social services [1, 7, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15].

- Proposed models for distance learning of social workers and a specific model for developing digital competencies of social workers through web-based platforms and artificial intelligence (publications 1, 12, 13, 14, 15).

Citations and recognition in scientific circles both domestically and internationally

The candidate Asst.Prof. Tanya Vazova, PhD has submitted a list of 12 citations for participation in the competition, of which 7 are citations in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases (Scopus and Web of Science). The information on the citations is evidence of established authority among researchers in the issues of the competition and evidence of recognition in scientific circles not only in our country, but also abroad. The candidate's citations in publications in international databases such as Web of Science, CEEOL, Google Scholar show serious interest in her scientific research on the part of scientific circles abroad, oriented towards the problems of care for the elderly and the elderly, including the development of services for them. The necessary information about the scientific work and publications of Asst.Prof. Tanya Vazova, PhD, which is also provided through the COBISS electronic library catalog to increase citations and strengthen recognition among a wider range of researchers in Bulgaria. With regard to the current number of citations in scientific publications abroad, more serious attention deserves the periodic check in international databases, which may affect the degree of recognition of the candidate abroad.

The attached references show the participation of Asst.Prof. Tanya Vazova, PhD with reports and articles in a number of national and international forums, where she presents the results of her research activities. Special attention deserves the active participation of Asst.Prof. Tanya Vazova, PhD in scientific forums - national and international, on the problems of aging and the needs of social support for the elderly. The results of these participations in forums in the narrow specialty of the competition, mentioned in publications No. 4, 5, 6 and 10, prove the serious research interest, the active scientific presence and contribute to the establishment of her scientific authority as one of the leading specialists in the indicated issues.

Compliance with Quantitative Indicators

According to the attached Reference 8 for the fulfillment of the minimum national requirements under Art. 26 of the Act on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ADSRB) for holding the academic position of "associate professor", the candidate has 555 points with a required minimum threshold of 400 points. Asst.Prof. Tanya Vazova, PhD covers the points for the minimum requirements (under indicators A and B), and under indicators D she

exceeds them by 75 points (out of a minimum of 200) and under indicator D - by 80 points (out of a minimum of 50).

Asst.Prof. Tanya Vazova, PhD also fulfills the additional requirements for holding the academic position of "associate professor", adopted by the Faculty Council (FC) of the Faculty of Pedagogy:

- With an additional 60 points required for scientific and research activity above the nationally determined 200 points for group D, she has 75 points;

- While at least 1 publication in scientific journals, referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases, is required, she has presented 2 in the reference, one of which was accepted for publication in a journal. "Medichni perspektivi" – indexed in Scopus and Web of Science" and one in the journal Strategies of Educational and Scientific Policy.

- With an additional 20 points required above the nationally determined 50 points for group D (regarding citations and reviews), she has 130 points, i.e. – an excess of 80 points.

The additional requirements of the FP regarding the workload of academic activity at a higher education institution during the last active academic year for the candidate have also been met: with a minimum threshold of 30 points, she has 78.5 points, detailed in the attached reference 8.

As evidence of the scientific research work of Asst.Prof. Tanya Vazova, PhD, a list is presented certifying participation in 15 scientific forums - 7 of them are international.

The review of all attached documents and materials shows that all quantitative indicators of the criteria for occupying the academic position of "Associate Professor" have been met and the candidate Asst.Prof. Tanya Vazova, PhD fully meets both the National Minimum Requirements, according to the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (Art. 2-b) and the Regulations for its Implementation (Art. 1a, para. 1), as well as the Additional Requirements for the Academic Position "Associate Professor", determined by the Faculty of Pedagogy of the Plovdiv University.

4. Assessment of the candidate's personal contribution

The scientific papers submitted for the competition contain their own scientific and applied scientific contributions, which are of an authorial nature, have received national and international publicity and can be defined as personal contributions. The publications are the personal work of Asst.Prof. Tanya Vazova, PhD, and their content correctly indicates references, citations and references to other authors. The analysis of the theoretical and empirical information was carried out in accordance with the standards and contains a personal assessment of the author and a

personal position on the issue under consideration. I have not identified plagiarism in the publications submitted by the author, which gives me reason to assume that the presented scientific results were achieved independently, and the formulated contributions are her personal merit.

5. Critical remarks and recommendations

The materials presented and the results achieved by Asst.Prof. Tanya Vazova, PhD in her academic and teaching activities to date, her ability to develop and substantiate her own views on important scientific problems in the field of social work are the basis for me to make the following recommendations:

1. To promote the results, conclusions and recommendations from the monographic work to the responsible institutions that determine policies regarding social services for adults and the elderly, to the academic community and practitioners.
2. To strengthen the connection between research and teaching work by publishing a textbook or teaching aids on the topic of the competition, as well as on other taught disciplines.
3. To strengthen project activities in the field of social services with an emphasis on long-term care and services for adults and the elderly.

6. Personal Impressions

My personal impressions of the candidate Asst.Prof. Tanya Vazova, PhD. are from our joint work in the Department "Social Activities", from her work as an assistant in academic disciplines taught by me, as well as from our participation in various scientific forums and in a scientific research project. My opinion is that Asst. Prof. Tanya Vazova, PhD is a responsible and authoritative academic lecturer and a well-established researcher in various problem areas of the scientific specialty "Social Activities" and especially in the field of social policies for adults and the elderly, with rich and constantly developing practical experience and potential for participation in scientific projects. The accumulated serious experience as a researcher and lecturer, the rich practical activity and the scientific results achieved to date give me reason for confidence in the successful future professional and academic growth of the candidate, Asst.Prof. Tanya Vazova, PhD.

CONCLUSION

The documents and materials submitted by Asst.Prof. Tanya Vazova, PhD **meet all the requirements** of the Law for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ZRASRB), the Regulations for the Implementation of ZRASRB, and the corresponding Regulations of Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski."

The candidate for the competition has presented **a sufficient number** of scientific works published after the materials used for the defense of the doctoral degree and for holding the position of assistant professor. The candidate's works contain original scientific and applied contributions, which have been published in scientific journals and have public visibility and citation. The theoretical developments have practical applicability, with some directly oriented towards educational work. I consider the scientific and teaching qualifications of Assistant Professor Tanya Vazova, PhD, to be **unquestionable**.

The results achieved by Asst.Prof. Tanya Vazova, PhD, in educational and scientific-research activities **correspond** to the minimum national and additional requirements of the Faculty of Pedagogy at Plovdiv University.

After reviewing the materials and scientific works presented in the competition, analyzing their significance and the scientific, applied scientific, and practical contributions contained within them, 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 election of Asst.Prof. Tanya Alyosheva Vazova, PhD, to the academic position of "Associate Professor" at Plovdiv University "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 Older Persons).

10.04.2025 г.

Reviewer::

(подпис)

Prof. Lyudmila Vekova, PhD