

REVIEW

by Prof. Ginka Andonova Mehandzhiyska, PhD,

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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 PU "Paisii Hilendarski" participates 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", 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 Education.

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 submitted for review is in accordance with the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at the University of Plovdiv and includes all applicable and required documents for the competition, as listed in Article 66, Paragraph 2 of the PDASPU [PRASPU]. The candidate, Asst. Prof. Dr. Tanya Vazova, has submitted a list and attached in full text a total of 23 scientific works. These include 2 authored books (1 habilitation monograph, 1 published book based on a defended dissertation for the award of the educational and scientific degree "PhD") and 21 studies, articles, and reports (1 study, 20 articles and reports). No separation protocols have been attached, and there is a lack of information about the personal contribution of the candidate in co-authored publications 1, 3,

5, 14, and 15 – therefore, these works can hardly be reviewed in the current procedure. In Article No. 2, the personal contribution of the co-authors is distributed and reflected in the publication itself. The works for the competition are categorized as "reviewed" and "non-reviewed." The publishing details of the publications are also visible.

2. Brief biographical data of the candidate

The candidate Tanya Vazova has an economic education. She defended her dissertation in 2018 in the scientific field 3. Social, Economic, and Legal Sciences, and in the professional field 3.8. Economics, on the topic "Competence Models in the Long-Term Care Sector." Since 2021, she has been an assistant, and since 2023, she has been an assistant professor at Plovdiv University. She is the chairperson of the "Network for Social Development and Support" association, which operates in the field of social services. Her professional path prior to her academic career has been entirely dedicated to social activities. Tanya Vazova's professional profile includes experience as a manager and specialist in social protection and the provision of social services, particularly in the sector of long-term care in a home environment.

3. General characteristics of the candidate's activity

Educational and pedagogical activity and candidate preparation

In her university work as a lecturer, Asst. Prof. Tanya Vazova, PhD, has developed experience in conducting classroom courses and student practices, supervising coursework, administering exams, as well as preparing curricula. The programs most closely related to the specialty of the competition are "Social Activities with Adults and Elderly People," "Individual Assessment of Needs for Social Services and Support," and "Human Resource Management in the Social Sphere." It should also be noted that Asst. Prof. Tanya Vazova, PhD, is involved in scientific projects at Plovdiv University and participates in scientific forums. In 2022, she completed a course at the Faculty of Pedagogy at Plovdiv University on "Teaching in an Academic Environment," for which she has a certificate.

Assessment of Scientific Activity and Contributions

The monograph "Social Services for Adults and Elderly People in Bulgaria: Development, Challenges, Perspectives" has been submitted to the competition as a habilitation work. In it, the author Tanya Vazova examines the trends in the development of

social services for elderly people in Bulgaria, the challenges, and the prospects in the field. The analytical approach is problem-oriented and seeks well-argued solutions. The book is excellently structured, with comprehensive content and careful clarification of terminology. The scope of the analysis divides the development of services for elderly people into two periods based on legislative criteria. The theoretical overview is supported by appropriately selected national and international documents, as well as scientific publications from Bulgarian and foreign authors. All main sections of the monograph conclude with formulated conclusions and identified problems or factors. The analysis is exceptionally data-driven, with Tanya Vazova selecting, systematizing, and, as she indicates, building upon her own investigations, rich statistics from reliable sources such as the Agency for Social Assistance (ASP), National Statistical Institute (NSI), Institute for Market Economics (IME), and others. The scientific quality of the work is enhanced by the skillful integration and linking of quantitative analysis with conceptual references and explanatory models (for example, the concept of equal opportunities, which is elaborated in detail in publication No. 17, the theory of active aging, theories of age-related changes, and periodization). The monograph presents the author as a strong and leading expert on the subject.

In theoretical terms, I find the author's conceptual and research approach to be productive and original. The economic qualification, combined with a very good understanding of the practice and the regulatory frameworks and limitations in the studied field, has resulted in valuable scientific and practical contributions. In my opinion, the main scientific contribution lies in the fact that Tanya Vazova has derived from the data analysis a distinctive investment-innovation model for the development of social services for the elderly, which she has shaped and argued. This result from the monographic study holds special value. It can serve as a basis for justifying, through scientific research, a priority method for the development of social policy in the sector. I also evaluate the defended integrated service delivery as a significant and promising contribution, but in the context of active intersectoral cooperation, including utilizing the opportunities provided by modern information technologies.

Another published book included in the competition is "Competency Models in the Long-Term Care Sector for the Positions of Caregiver, Childcare Provider, and Home Assistant." For this work, I believe it is important to note that it demonstrates Tanya Vazova's skills in conceptualization, creating original designs and tools, and conducting scientific research based on empirical data. The developed and tested competency models represent a

practical contribution to the training, selection, and evaluation of personnel in the field of long-term care.

The co-authored study (publication №2), published in an indexed foreign journal, addresses issues and trends in social-demographic policy and the support of active aging and a healthy lifestyle. Here, Tanya Vazova's own contributions are highlighted, showcasing excellent skills in quantitative and qualitative analysis of statistical data. As a result of the analysis, recommendations have been made for organizational provision, coordination, and financing of the discussed policies.

The remaining publications that are the subject of evaluation in this review encompass articles in periodicals and collections. They present individual topics or parts of the overall research work of Tanya Vazova. A competency model and key skills for caregivers in home settings are developed (publication №4); addressing the demographic challenges related to the aging population is linked to measures against dependency on care and maintaining a functionally independent life (publication №6).

Part of Tanya Vazova's scientific and publication work addresses the challenges faced by services for elderly people with dementia (publication №16), where competencies are systematized (publication №8), and a training program for staff caring for people with dementia is generated and created through scientific methods (publication №7); a similar effort is made in compiling a training model for social workers (publication №9). The viewpoint and thesis for the quality of social services through training, motivating, and developing staff competencies in the social sector are also defended (publications №7, 10, 11).

An original overview and a reasoned forecast have been made regarding the role and direction of the development of social, economic, health, and technological innovations aimed at improving the quality of services and the quality of life for older adults (№12, 13). Reviews of legislation, as well as international and national policies in social support for older adults, have also been published (№18, 19, 20).

It can be confidently stated that the published results from Tanya Vazova's research work are entirely within the field of the announced competition. The scientific contributions have an applied character and significance for the development of policies and practices aimed at improving the quality of social services for elderly people, including those with

limited functional autonomy and those dependent on care. Tanya Vazova's authorship includes the developed competency models and, in relation to them, tested models for training and career development of employees in the long-term care sector. Based on the analysis, a model of investment-innovation policy for the development of services for elderly people has been derived, and its priority and prospects have been defended.

Citations and recognition in scientific circles both domestically and internationally

Candidate Tanya Vazova has submitted a list of 12 citations for participation in the competition. Of these, 7 are citations in scientific publications that are refereed and indexed in world-renowned databases (Scopus and Web of Science). An overview of the visibility and citation of the candidate's scientific works shows that there are publications in international databases such as Web of Science, CEEOL, Google Scholar, and others. The accessibility and awareness of the scientific work of Asst. Professor Tanya Vazova is also ensured through the electronic library catalog COBISS – some of her publications are available in it, with one exception being her habilitation monograph, which, as a new edition, is likely still in the process of being indexed. I would also like to note that a review of some of the databases where Assistant Professor Vazova's publications are indexed indicates that her citations are likely significantly more numerous than those noted and described in Reference 7.2.

It is evident from the materials attached to the application that Asst. Prof. Tanya Vazovaq PhD, has participated as a scholar in national and international forums where she has presented the results of her research activities. Notably, Tanya Vazova's involvement as an author in several specialized thematic collections published in our country from 2016 to 2021, dedicated to the issues of aging and the needs for social support of the elderly (publications No. 4, 5, 6, and 10), also attests to the quality and activity of her scientific presence, recognizability, and representativeness of her work in the specific field of the competition.

Compliance with Quantitative Indicators

From the review of all the attached documents and materials, I find that the quantitative indicators of the criteria for holding the academic position of "Associate Professor" have been met. Reference No. 8 provides a detailed account of the attached evidence. The number of points for each publication or citation is indicated, as well as total values by categories. These show compliance with the quantitative values according to both national and additional faculty requirements.

4. Assessment of the personal contribution of the candidate

The review of the scientific results in the publications peer-reviewed for the competition shows that they have an original authorship character and can be considered as a personal scientific contribution. In the presentations of the scientific texts, references, citations, and acknowledgments of other authors are correctly indicated. Thus, the author's own scientific research and achievements are clearly specified, which contributes to the unambiguous determination and evaluation of the candidate's personal contribution. The author, Tanya Vazova, employs a correct style of presentation and analysis of theoretical and empirical information that corresponds to standards. This allows me to accept and evaluate the scientific data in the submitted publications for assessment as credible and obtained independently.

5. Critical remarks and recommendations

The achievements in the academic career of Asst. Prof. Tanya Vazova, PhD, up to this point, as well as the potential revealed in her scientific publications and her work as a whole, give me grounds to make the following recommendations: 1/ In the upcoming period of her academic development, she should direct her creative and publication activity towards the development of a textbook or educational material in the field of teaching; 2/ She should keep the content of her profiles in scientific databases and platforms up to date, which will contribute to greater visibility and promotion of her scientific results and contributions.

CONCLUSION

The documents and materials submitted by Assistant Professor Dr. Tanya Vazova 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 indisputable and unquestionable. The results achieved by Assistant

Professor Tanya Vazova, PhD, in educational and scientific-research activities correspond to the minimum national and additional requirements of the Faculty of Education 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 Assistant Professor Tanya 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).

08.04.2025г.

Reviewer:

/ Prof. Ginka Mehandzhiyska, PhD /