

# STATEMENT

**By:** *Prof. Dr. Hristo Ivanov Katrandjiev, UNWE, Sofia scientific specialty: 05.02.26 Marketing*

**Regarding:** *competition for the academic position of Professor in the field of higher education Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, professional field 3.8 Economics, scientific specialty Marketing at Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski"*

## **1. Presentation of the procedure and the candidate**

By Order No. RD-22-44 of 09 January 2026 issued by the Rector of Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski" (PU), I was appointed as a member of the Scientific Jury in a competition for the academic position of "professor" at PU in the field of higher education 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, professional field 3.8 Economics, scientific specialty Marketing, announced for the needs of the Department of Marketing and International Economic Relations at the Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences.

The candidate who has submitted documents for participation in the announced competition is Assoc. Prof. Teofana Valentinova Dimitrova-Staneva, PhD, from the Department of Marketing and International Economic Relations at Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski".

The set of materials submitted by Assoc. Prof. Teofana Dimitrova-Staneva complies with the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski" and includes the following documents: an application form addressed to the Rector of PU; a CV in European format; diplomas for a Master's degree and a Doctoral degree; a diploma for the academic position of Associate Professor; a list of scientific publications; copies of the scientific publications; a report on compliance with the minimum national requirements and the additional faculty requirements; a declaration of originality and authenticity of the submitted documents; abstracts of the materials under Art. 76 of the University Regulations (in Bulgarian and a foreign language); self-assessment of the scientific contributions; a list of citations; division protocols; a document (certificate) for work experience; documents related to teaching activity; documents related to research activity; documents in accordance with the additional requirements of the Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences; other documents; and a complete set of all documents in electronic format.

Within the competition for the academic position of "professor", a total of 35 publications are reported, including: 1 monograph – habilitation thesis; 2 monographs not presented as the main habilitation work; 1 book based on a defended doctoral dissertation; 8 studies published in scientific journals indexed in Scopus and/or Web of Science; 4 studies published in non-indexed peer-reviewed journals or edited collective volumes; 4 articles and 1 conference paper published

in journals indexed in Scopus and/or Web of Science; 9 articles and 4 conference papers published in non-indexed peer-reviewed journals or edited collective volumes; as well as 1 university textbook.

Twenty-seven of the publications are co-authored (publications: 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 23, 24, 25, 26, 28, 30, 31, 32, 33) and eight are single-authored (publications: 1, 4, 20, 22, 27, 29, 34, 35). In fifteen of the co-authored publications (57.69%), the candidate participates as first author (6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 21, 25).

The language distribution of the publications is as follows: 23 (65.71%) in English and 12 (34.29%) in Bulgarian.

The candidate's record in the Scopus database is ID: 57200270351, with a Hirsch index (h-index) of 3, including nine scientific publications published since 2017. As of 05 January 2026, six of these publications have received a total of 55 citations, all realized after 2014, i.e., after the competition for the academic position of Associate Professor. Of the nine publications indexed in Scopus, eight appear in journals with an assigned quartile: six in Q2 (Publications: 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12), one in Q3 (Publication 11), and one in Q4 (Publication 21).

The candidate's record in the Web of Science database is ID: ONJ-8440-2025, with an h-index of 3, including nine scientific publications since 2019. Four of these publications do not duplicate the documents reported in Scopus (Publications: 10, 18, 19, 20). They are published in journals indexed in ESCI (Emerging Sources Citation Index).

The candidate has participated in seven research projects (six institutional and one national project). In one of them the candidate serves as project leader (Appendix 19.1), and in another as project coordinator (Appendix 19.2).

During the period 2020–2025, the candidate has prepared 5 reviews of monographs, 11 reviews of scientific articles, including 5 in journals indexed in Scopus, as well as 6 reviews of scientific conference papers.

A list of 67 citations has been submitted as part of the competition documentation. Of these, 10 citations (150 points) in publications indexed in Scopus and Web of Science are reported in the report on compliance with the minimum national requirements for the academic position of “professor”.

Assoc. Prof. Dimitrova has supervised three PhD students, one of whom has successfully defended his dissertation and obtained the Doctoral degree (PhD).

The candidate has held previous and current memberships in the editorial boards of five national and international scientific journals.

Assoc. Prof. Dimitrova has submitted documentation and supporting evidence demonstrating compliance with the minimum national requirements and the additional requirements of the Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences for the academic position of “professor”. The total number of points with which she participates in the competition is 1084.16 points (from indicators: A – 50; B – 100; C – 599.16; D – 150; E – 185), which significantly exceeds the required threshold of 550 points. She also exceeds the additional requirements of the

Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences at PU, where 821.2 points are reported compared to the required 450 points.

## **2. General characteristics of the candidate's activity**

### **2.1. Evaluation of teaching activity**

Assoc. Prof. Dimitrova delivers two lecture courses, “Marketing” and “Marketing Management,” within the Bachelor’s and/or Master’s degree programmes in three faculties of Plovdiv University. She is also the titular lecturer for “Brand Management,” taught in Master’s programmes at the Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences.

Her reported classroom workload for the period 2020/2021–2024/2025 amounts to a total of 2,266 hours of exercises, exceeding the established norm of 300 hours per year for full-time academic staff at Plovdiv University in each of the respective academic years.

The candidate has authored one independent textbook and one teaching manual, which provide the necessary teaching and methodological support for student education.

The submitted reports indicate that during the recent academic years the candidate’s classroom workload consistently exceeds the required minimum, which confirms the department’s need for a habilitated academic staff member in the field of the announced competition. This demonstrates substantial teaching experience and active engagement in teaching activities.

***The teaching activity of Assoc. Prof. Dimitrova as a lecturer and author of textbooks, teaching materials, and course syllabi fully meets the requirements for the academic position of “professor” at Plovdiv University “Paisii Hilendarski”.***

### **2.2. Assessment of research activity**

Within the framework of the present competition, the candidate has submitted a monograph entitled “Sustainable Consumer Behavior: From Global Evidence to Local Insights among Generation Z in Bulgaria.” The study addresses an important and highly relevant topic of contemporary research – sustainable consumer behavior (SCB) and the ways in which young people form and express their consumption choices in the context of increasingly pressing global environmental challenges. The monograph is structured into three chapters that successively examine the theoretical, analytical, and empirical aspects of sustainable consumer behavior. In the first chapter, Assoc. Prof. Dimitrova traces the development of research in the field of SCB through a bibliometric analysis of publications indexed in Scopus and Web of Science for the period 1999–2024, identifying leading journals, authors, research networks, and major thematic areas. The second chapter presents a systematic review of the scientific literature on sustainable consumer behavior among Generation Z, conducted in accordance with the PRISMA methodology and based on publications indexed in Scopus, Web of Science Core Collection, and ProQuest. The third chapter presents the results of an empirical study on the purchasing behavior related to sustainable clothing among representatives of Generation Z in Bulgaria, analysing the applied research methods, the tested hypotheses, and the established relationships. The

monograph has both scientific and practical relevance, as it contributes to a deeper understanding of the factors shaping sustainable consumer behavior among Generation Z and expands research in the fields of sustainable consumption and marketing.

The other two monographs and the book based on the candidate's doctoral dissertation also address issues and problems directly related to the thematic scope of the announced competition.

The remaining publications submitted within the present procedure address contemporary aspects of applied marketing, including marketing communications, brand loyalty, and the management of marketing activities across various sectors, as well as digital transformation, marketing ethics, innovation development of enterprises, and the application of analytical and managerial models in marketing.

**It can be concluded that the candidate not only exceeds the national minimum quantitative requirements but also demonstrates a high level of quality in her scientific output.**

*The analysis of the publications submitted for the purposes of the present competition did not reveal any evidence or signals of violations of copyright or academic integrity at the time of preparation of this review.*

#### **Characterization of scientific contributions**

The 34 scientific publications submitted by the candidate can be classified into the following four thematic areas:

- 1) *Sustainable consumer behavior* (publications: 1, 9, 13, 24);
- 2) *Marketing in higher education* (publications: 2, 3, 11, 16, 19, 20, 22, 28, 32, 33, 34);
- 3) *Educational branding* (publications: 6, 10, 25);
- 4) *Applied aspects of marketing management in different sectors of the economy* (publications: 5, 12, 14, 15, 18, 21, 23, 26, 29, 30, 31, 35).

I consider that the individual contribution of Assoc. Prof. Dimitrova in the presented scientific works is indisputable, and I accept the candidate's statement of contributions in the aforementioned thematic areas as follows.

#### **Scientific contributions**

- Synthesis and expansion of scientific knowledge on sustainable consumer behavior. The leading theoretical frameworks, key determinants and barriers, dominant thematic areas, and behavioral outcomes in the scholarly literature on sustainable consumption and consumer behavior are identified. (Publications: 1, 9, 13, 24)

- Enrichment of marketing theory in the higher education sector. The role of the marketing concept, marketing communications, educational product quality, public image, and competitiveness of higher education institutions has been systematized and conceptually analyzed, along with the main approaches, tools, and indicators for their management and evaluation under conditions of intensified competition and increasing market orientation of the higher education system. (Publications: 2, 3, 11, 16, 19, 20, 22, 28, 32, 33, 34)

- Further development of scientific knowledge on educational branding. It is established that brand image, brand associations, perceived quality, satisfaction, and engagement function as key factors in shaping loyalty and word-of-mouth communication in the educational sphere. (Publications: 6, 10, 25)

### **Scientific and Applied Contributions**

- Development and validation of a methodology for studying sustainable clothing purchase behavior among Generation Z. The methodology includes modeling and assessment of the direct and indirect effects of key environmental, social, and personal factors on purchase intention and actual sustainable consumer behavior. (Publication: 1)

- Development, empirical testing, and validation of psychometric models for measuring consumer behavior in the Bulgarian context. Complex causal relationships among latent constructs are analyzed, including direct, indirect, and moderating effects, while accounting for the specific characteristics of Bulgarian research participants. (Publications: 6, 7, 8, 9, 13, 17)

- Expansion of the scientific and applied aspects of marketing management. Analytical and hybrid management tools (SWOT–AHP–TOWS, SPACE analysis) have been developed, integrated, and tested. Key managerial opportunities and challenges have been identified across various sectors (healthcare, finance, telecommunications, wine industry), supporting strategic decision-making and the development of sustainable competitive advantages. (Publications: 5, 12, 14, 15, 18, 21, 23, 26, 29, 30, 31, 35)

### **Academic recognition**

The candidate for the academic position of “professor” is recognized within the scientific community, as evidenced by the submitted citation report. A total of 44 citations in publications indexed in internationally recognized scientific databases, 4 citations in peer-reviewed monographs and edited volumes, and 19 citations in non-indexed peer-reviewed journals have been identified. A search in Google Scholar at the time of preparation of this statement indicates 291 citations (248 after 2021) and an h-index of 6.

### **3. Identified weaknesses, critical remarks, and recommendations**

During the analysis of the submitted application, no weaknesses were identified. I have no critical remarks. I can only recommend that Assoc. Prof. Teofana Dimitrova continue her work with the same level of dedication, both as a lecturer and as a researcher.

### **4. Conclusion**

The documents and materials submitted by Assoc. Prof. Teofana Dimitrova-Staneva **meet all the** requirements of the Act on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ADASRB), the Regulations for the Implementation of the Act, and the Regulations of Plovdiv University “Paisii Hilendarski.”

The candidate **has** presented **a substantial** body of scientific publications produced after the materials used for obtaining the PhD degree and the academic position of “associate professor”. The candidate’s works contain original scientific and applied contributions, some of

which have received international recognition, with a representative part published in journals and scientific volumes issued by international academic publishers. The theoretical developments demonstrate practical applicability, with some of them being directly oriented toward teaching activities. The scientific and teaching qualifications of Assoc. Prof. Teofana Dimitrova-Staneva are **beyond doubt**.

The results achieved by Assoc. Prof. Teofana Dimitrova-Staneva in teaching and research activities **fully** comply with the minimum national requirements and the additional requirements of the Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences, adopted in accordance with the University Regulations for the implementation of the ADASRB.

After reviewing the materials and scientific papers submitted in the competition and considering their significance and the scientific and applied contributions contained therein, I find it justified to give my **positive** assessment and **to** recommend that the Scientific Jury submit a proposal to the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences for the election of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Teofana Valentinova Dimitrova-Staneva to the academic position of Professor at Plovdiv University “Paisii Hilendarski” in the field of higher education 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, professional field 3.8 Economics (Marketing).

9 March 2026

Prepared: .....

/Prof. dr. Hristo Ivanov Katrandjiev/