

OPINION

by Prof. Nikolay Georgiev Papuchiev, D.Sc.

Professor at Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”

regarding the materials submitted for participation in the competition

for occupying the academic position of “Professor”

at Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv,

in: field of higher education **2. Humanities,**

professional field **2.1. Philology (Slavic Literatures – Polish Literature)**

In the competition for the position of “Professor,” announced in the State Gazette, issue 96 / 11 November 2025, and on the website of Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv, for the needs of the Department of Slavonic Studies at the Faculty of Philology, the candidate participating is Assoc. Prof. Dimitrina Georgieva Kostadinova-Hamze, PhD, from Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv.

1. General Presentation of the Materials Received

By Order № RD-22-48 of 09 January 2026 issued by the Rector of Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv (PU), I was appointed as a member of the academic jury for the competition for the academic position of “Professor” at PU in the field of higher education 2. Humanities, professional field 2.1. Philology (Slavic Literatures – Polish Literature), announced for the needs of the Department of Slavonic Studies at the Faculty of Philology.

One candidate has submitted documents for participation in the announced competition:

Assoc. Prof. Dimitrina Georgieva Kostadinova-Hamze, PhD, from Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv.

The set of materials submitted by Assoc. Prof. Dimitrina Georgieva Kostadinova-Hamze in paper format complies with the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at PU and includes the following documents:

- Application form addressed to the Rector requesting admission to the competition
- Curriculum vitae in European format
- Diploma for higher education with the acquired educational and qualification degree “Master” with transcript (original and copy) or a notarized copy

- Diploma for the educational and scientific degree “Doctor”
- Diploma (certificate) for the academic position “Associate Professor” (original and copy) or a notarized copy, or an order by the Rector (Director) confirming the appointment to the position of Associate Professor
- List of scholarly works
- Scholarly works (copies of publications)
- Reference demonstrating compliance with the minimum national requirements and additional faculty requirements
- Declaration of originality and authenticity of the submitted documents
- Abstracts of materials under Art. 76 of the PU Academic Staff Development Regulations (in Bulgarian and in a foreign language)
- Self-evaluation of scholarly contributions
- List of cited literature
- Document (certificate) certifying work experience
- Documents related to teaching activities
- Documents related to research activities
- Documents pertaining to artistic and creative activities

The candidate has submitted a total of 26 scholarly works, 1 study, and 1 monograph. Eligible for review are 1 scholarly work that is not part of the dissertation and 7 research projects, which are considered in the final assessment. Not subject to review are 1 scholarly work related to the dissertation as well as works outside the scope of the competition. The distribution of scholarly works by category, in Bulgaria and abroad, is as follows: 13/13.

There are no missing documents or documents with incomplete content.

2. Brief Biographical Data of the Candidate

Dimitrina Kostadinova-Hamze completed her secondary education in Sofia in 1981. In 1987 she received a Master’s degree in Slavic Philology (Polish Studies track) from Sofia University. In 2016 she obtained the educational and scientific degree “Doctor” at Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv (PU). In 1995 she was appointed as a full-time lecturer at the Department of Slavonic Studies at PU. In 2023 she was appointed as Associate Professor at the same university. In addition to her work at PU, the candidate has taught Polish language at various other universities and centers in the country. Her scholarly profile is enriched by numerous academic specializations, language courses, and exchange programs in which she has actively participated. Her research activity has been validated through numerous research projects, some of which international. Assoc. Prof. Kostadinova-Hamze is also a translator of Polish literary works. She has received 46 prestigious awards for achievements in scholarly and translation activity. Since 2023 she has been Head of the Department of Slavonic Studies at Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv.

3. General Characteristics of the Candidate’s Activity

The evaluation of Assoc. Prof. Kostadinova-Hamze's teaching and pedagogical activity is excellent. The candidate in the present competition works actively with students from different universities in Bulgaria and abroad. Under her supervision, three diploma theses have been successfully defended, and she is currently working with two additional diploma candidates. She has prepared and actively supported students in research tasks, the results of which have been presented at scholarly conferences. The candidate has participated actively in the development of curricula for four Bachelor's programs, as well as for the additional Master's specialization "Cultural-Historical Slavistics." The report on annual teaching workload shows that Assoc. Prof. Kostadinova-Hamze is substantially engaged in teaching activities, exceeding the required minimum contact hours. In addition, she demonstrates exceptionally high activity in establishing contacts between PU and Polish universities and in initiating exchange programs for students and academic staff.

Evaluation of the Candidate's Scholarly and Applied Research Activity

Assoc. Prof. Dimitrina Kostadinova-Hamze, PhD, has participated in more than 150 scholarly forums, many of which took place abroad or featured international participation. At these events she presents the results of her research in Bulgarian, Polish, Russian, and English. In her list of scholarly works, the candidate reports authorship of over 200 monographs, studies, and articles published in reputable Bulgarian and international outlets. All publications are described in detail by year, with an indication of which of them were used in previous academic procedures. In connection with the announced competition, 19 citations have been listed, with a total score of 200 points – twice the number required for obtaining the academic rank of Professor. The citations are substantive, with no evidence of self-citation. Citations by foreign researchers serve as a clear attestation to the candidate's contributions in the field of philological knowledge.

In the present procedure, Assoc. Prof. Kostadinova-Hamze participates with the monograph "Dimensions of Existence in the Works of Olga Tokarczuk" (2026, PU Publishing House, 232 pages). A key concept in the study is integrativity. Integrativity in the writing of Olga Tokarczuk is described as "a reflex manifested both on a cosmic and an anthropological level. In the latter case, it appears in the fundamental spheres of the subject's existence – the psycho-mental and the creative" (pp. 9–10). For analytical purposes, the researcher elevates the concept of integrativity to a second degree, arguing convincingly that in Tokarczuk's work the author "artistically transforms it in her literary creations" (p. 10). This focus yields an important contribution to the study, lending depth and complexity to its conclusions.

Among the major contributions of the work is the researcher's commitment to following the creative material itself. Nowhere in the exposition does one observe terminological pressure or an attempt to force the material into pre-existing theoretical models. On the contrary, the opposite tendency is evident: the scholarly text is strongly influenced by the humanistic ethos of the Polish Nobel laureate, thereby sharing a common understanding of how realities are conceptualized. Literature creates roles, argues Dimitrina Hamze in agreement with Tokarczuk, "so that we can identify with them" (p. 17). This identification – an effect of the overall narrative construction, which is not hierarchically

organized in terms of plot – remains accessible to the reader's reception. Thus, the understanding of the text transcends the rational sphere and projects itself into the domain of the individual psychological experience. Tokarczuk's provocations toward the reader are multiple – from the encounter of the everyday and the unusual, through the clash between the mythical and the rational, to the transgression of existential norms.

Particularly significant in the work of Assoc. Prof. Dimitrina Hamze is the issue of human identity and its reflections in literature. The human being is multiple; their psyche contains a series of embryonic possibilities, of which only one is developed (p. 44). This concept is fundamental to the work of the Polish author, who creates literature with a high humanistic charge based on the relativity of certain conceptual categories. The world is unknowable; its order is shaped significantly by the inner motivations of the characters. This psychological dimension, which according to Dimitrina Hamze defines Tokarczuk's oeuvre, overcomes modern psychoanalytic tendencies and their association with gender, opening human perception to the broad horizons of complex human nature.

A specific emphasis in the author's scholarly pursuits is placed on language and speech constructions. As an excellent connoisseur of several Slavic languages, the researcher contributes to the development of translation studies through several articles that closely analyze the semantic depth of proverbs, pauses, silence, and their role not only in literature but also in concrete communicative situations.

In both her articles and her monograph, Assoc. Prof. Dimitrina Hamze stands out as a researcher with an established approach to reading literary texts. Her topological analyses – exploring key concepts characteristic of the authors' works that form the semantic code of the literary text – are marked by strong internal motivation and scholarly rigor.

4. Evaluation of the Candidate's Personal Contribution

The analysis of the materials submitted for the competition indicates that the contributions of Assoc. Prof. Dimitrina Kostadinova-Hamze are authorial and original, resulting from in-depth, long-term research. In her analyses, she correctly cites the scholarly achievements of other authors and does not commit plagiarism or self-plagiarism in her works.

5. Critical Remarks and Recommendations

In outlining the possible directions for future research, grounded in the habilitation work, the author points to a line of inquiry referring to “the integration of otherness and the creation of a kaleidoscopic and polyvalent identity.” In addition to this, as a recommendation for further studies by Assoc. Prof. Dimitrina Hamze, one may emphasize the need for a potential expansion of her research activity toward imagology, which occupies an important place in contemporary literary studies.

CONCLUSION

The documents and materials submitted by Assoc. Prof. Dimitrina Georgieva Kostadinova-Hamze, PhD, meet all the requirements of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LDASRB), the corresponding Regulations for its implementation, as well as the relevant Regulations of Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv (PU).

The candidate in the competition has presented a substantial number of scholarly works published after the materials used for the defense of her doctoral degree and the acquisition of the academic rank of Associate Professor. The candidate's works contain original scholarly and applied contributions that have received international recognition, with a representative part of them published in journals and scholarly collections issued by international academic publishers. Her theoretical studies have practical applicability, and some of them are directly oriented toward teaching practice. The scholarly and teaching qualifications of Assoc. Prof. Dimitrina Georgieva Kostadinova-Hamze are indisputable.

The results achieved by Assoc. Prof. Kostadinova-Hamze in teaching and research activities fully correspond to the minimum national requirements and the additional requirements of the Faculty of Philology adopted in accordance with the PU Regulations for the implementation of the LDASRB.

After reviewing the materials and scholarly works submitted in the competition and on the basis of the analysis of their significance and the scholarly, applied, and practice-oriented contributions they contain, I find it well-justified to give my positive evaluation and to recommend that the Academic Jury prepare a report proposing to the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Philology the election of Assoc. Prof. Dimitrina Georgieva Kostadinova-Hamze, PhD, to the academic position of Professor at Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv in: field of higher education 2. Humanities, professional field 2.1. Philology (Slavic Literatures – Polish Literature).

Prof. Nikolay Georgiev Papuchiev, D.Sc.

Sofia, 25 January 2026