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9002 Varna, 77 "Kniaz Boris I" Blvd., tel. +359 882 164 622  
www.ue-varna.bg

Университет  
"Проф. Д-р Асен Златаров"  
8010 Бургас, бул. "Проф. Якимов" №1

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## REVIEW

On a competition for the academic position "associate professor"  
For the needs of the Department "Economics and Management of Tourist Service",  
College of Tourism at the University "Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov" – Burgas with  
**Single candidate chief assistant professor, PhD, Elena Damyanova Ilieva**

**Reviewer:** prof. Velina Ivancheva Kazandzhieva, PhD,

From University of Economics – Varna, professor at professional field 3.9 Tourism,  
Scientific specialty "Economics and Management" (Tourism)

Validated in the Register of academic staff, List of habilitated

Member of an Academic Jury for holding an academic position "associate professor"

### 1. General information and data for the competition

The competition was announced on the basis of Art. 57 (2) of RILDASRB and the art. 70 (2) of Rules for the Development of Academic Staff at University "Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov – Burgas in the State Gazette, issue 42/12.05.2023 and is for the occupation of the academic position "associate professor" in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional field 3.9. Tourism (Alternative Hospitality), according to decisions of the Academic Council (Protocol № 58 of 28.06.2023). The review is prepared on the basis of the Rector's Order № RD - 198 from the first meeting of the academic jury held on 07.10.2023.

### 2. Candidate for the competition

Chief assistant professor, PhD, Elena Damyanova Ilieva is the only applicant for this procedure. Since 2015, she is a full-time lecturer and assistant professor at the College of Tourism at the University "Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov" – Burgas. In the period 09.2013 - 02.2015 she was a part-time assistant professor at the same college. She completed her secondary education at the German Language High School, GPNE "Gothic – Burgas" in the period 2001 - 2006.

Elena Damyanova Ilieva has earned her Master's degree in "International Tourism Business" from the University of Economics – Varna and holds a Bachelor's from the same



university. The applicant has a PhD degree in "Economics and Management" (Tourism) from the University of Economics – Varna for a successfully defended dissertation, titled: "Possibilities for the application of timeshare in the hospitality industry of the Southern Black Sea tourist region" (Diploma No. 059/29.06.2015). Since the middle of 2018, she is a chief assistant professor at the Department "Economics and Management of Tourist Service" at the College of Tourism at the University "Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov" – Burgas.

Regarding her professional development, chief assistant professor, PhD, Ilieva accumulates significant and diverse practical experience as a result of her individual qualities and skills in the following fields: tour guiding; tourist animation; hotel accommodation; tourist intermediary business; sales of tickets and representation of airlines. Thanks to specialized education, professional development and personal achievements, chief assistant professor Elena Ilieva is constantly improving herself, as evidenced by the areas of her scientific interests. They correspond directly to the topic of the defended dissertation and the set of disciplines within the scope of her current teaching activity as a full-time lecturer.

The candidate, chief assistant professor, PhD, Elena Ilieva covers the minimum national requirements (MNR), presented in RILDASRB and the minimum university requirements (MUR) in Appendix 1 of the Regulations for the conditions for acquiring scientific degrees and holding academic positions at the University "Prof. Dr. As. Zlatarov" – Burgas for the academic position of "associate professor" in PF 3.9 Tourism. In three groups of indicators, the applicant's points exceed the minimum ones (Table 1).

**Table 1.**  
*MNR for "associate professor" in PF 3.9 Tourism according to LDASRB, MUR and declared points from chief assistant professor, PhD Elena Ilieva*

GROUPS OF INDICATORS	According to LDASRB	MUR for "associate professor"	Points of chief ass. prof. Ilieva
Group A	50	50	50
Group B	-	-	-
Group V	100	100	100
Group G	200	400	467,5
Group D	50	100	165
Group E	0	100	130
<b>Total for academic position "associate professor"</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>750</b>	<b>912,5</b>



### 3. Features of the submitted scientific works after the last procedure

In the competition for "associate professor", chief assistant, PhD, Elena Ilieva participates with a total of 41 scientific publications, including: 1 single author monograph (habilitation work) and participation in 1 collective; 1 book, based on a defended dissertation; 33 articles and reports, of which 29 single authored; 1 co-authored study; 1 single author textbook; 3 teaching aids, of which 2 single authored (Table 2). All scientific publications are accepted for the preparation of the review. Of the publications in the competition, 34 are single authored, which is 83% of the presented scientific works and is a solid preponderance of the candidate's individual publication activity. This unequivocally proves the serious and in-depth nature of the research of chief assistant, PhD, Elena Ilieva. She has 2 single author articles in the WoS database and 1 co-author study in Scopus. The other scientific publications are indexed and refereed in other databases.

Table 2.

*Summary table for the scientific works submitted*

Type of publications	Independent Count	With co-authors Count	Total Count
1. Monographs	1	1	2
2. Books	1	-	1
3. Scientific articles and reports	29	4	33
4. Studies	-	1	1
5. Textbooks	1	-	1
6. Teaching aids	2	1	3
<b>Total:</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>41</b>

Each scientific publication has been undergoing a review process, which guarantees the novelty and relevance of the reported results, correctness of the reasoning, clarity of the presentation and the expected impact of the findings. There has been no established plagiarism.

The candidate has published an independent monograph (habilitation work): *Ilieva, E. 2023. Status and prospects for the development of shared accommodation in the Bulgarian Black Sea tourist regions, Sofia: Librum*. The scientific work is discussed in the primary unit ("Economics and management of tourist services" department), reviewed by two habilitated



scholars, is published in a specialized scientific publishing house, has an ISBN, has an expanded structure and deployed content with a total volume of 396 pages, has a comprehensive and up-to-date bibliography, does not repeat any known knowledge, brings up a current scientific problem at a very high scientific level discussed.

The other scientific publications of the author cover diverse themes, which can be summarized in the following main three topics:

- studies of the development, status and modern business systems in alternative hospitality;
- explorations of the economic aspects of tourism and hospitality in terms of impacts and effects, current changes and future challenges;
- surveys of current aspects of tourist demand.

#### **4. Teaching and project work**

Chief assistant professor, PhD, Ilieva has conducted courses, lectures and seminars, in the following disciplines: "Hotel and Restaurant Economics"; "Pricing policy in tourism"; "International Economic Relations"; "Economics of the Tourism Enterprise"; "Practice in a working environment"; "Educational manufacturing practice"; "Specialized practice". In recent years, there has been a full audience workload. Chief assistant professor, PhD, Ilieva participated in the preparation of several curricula and the realization of 7 projects, of which 2 international. She is the head of 1 research project.

#### **5. Identification of scientific contributions and citations**

I accept and confirm the scientific and scientific-applied contributions, highlighted by the candidate in the competition. They are the result of her systematic, purposeful and profound research and publication activity. Among the more important contributions, I would like to note:

- ✓ the author's specially developed methodology in the habilitation work for the study of shared accommodation in tourist areas and determining the integral profiles of the leading subjects;



- ✓ positioning tourism in the shared economy structure while clarifying its nature and modern transformations;
- ✓ a wide-range, but at the same time focused study of shared accommodation in a global aspect, according to clearly defined criteria and indicators;
- ✓ study of the features and prospects of the timeshare concept, as well as the impacts of shared accommodation in rural areas;
- ✓ research on the state of the franchise market in the Bulgarian restaurant industry;
- ✓ theoretical and empirical studies of health tourism in Bulgaria and, in particular, the possibilities for its development along the Bulgarian Black Sea coast;
- ✓ assessment of the labor market in the Burgas region and determination of the socio-economic role of tourism in the area;
- ✓ systematization of economic indicators for analysis of hotel and restaurant industries, etc.

The publications of chief assistant professor, PhD, Ilieva have been cited 22 times, of which 3 citations are in scientific works indexed in the largest and most popular multidisciplinary scientific platforms – Scopus and Web of Science; 4 citations in monographs; 15 citations in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals. The reference to the citations is made correctly and auto citations are not included.

## 6. Critical notes, questions and recommendations

To the scientific production of chief assistant professor, PhD, Ilieva, it is difficult to make critical comments. I would like to make the following more important recommendations:

- to continue and expand the publication activity in referenced and indexed global databases with scientific information, thereby increasing the specialized audience of the results of specific research;
- to participate in national and international projects in which she can be very useful with her valuable experience and expertise in the scientific directions of her scientific interests;
- to examine the influences of the factors, affecting the shared accommodation, in addition to the direction of influence, the strength of influence and the probability of change, etc.



The interesting and up-to-date scientific topic of the habilitation work is the reason for the following clarifying question: What proposals for changes, in the regulatory framework in Bulgaria, can be made for the development of shared accommodation?

## 7. Conclusion

The careful examination and evaluation of all documents and publications of the candidate chief assistant professor, PhD, Elena Damyanova Ilieva, submitted for participation in the competition for the academic position "associate professor" in the professional field 3.9. Tourism (Alternative Hospitality), show that all the requirements of the LDASRB, RILDASRB and the Rules for the Development of Academic Staff in the University "Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov" – Burgas have been met. The applicant meets the minimum national and university requirements for taking up the academic position "associate professor" in the professional field 3.9. Tourism (Alternative Hospitality). This gives me a reason to **confidently recommend to the esteemed members of the academic jury to award to chief assistant professor, PhD, Elena Damyanova Ilieva the academic position "associate professor" in the field of higher Education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional field 3.9. Tourism (Alternative Hospitality).**

27.07.2023,

Signed:

Varna

Member of the Academic Jury (prof. Velina Kazandzhieva, PhD)