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OPINION

**by Assoc. Prof. Georgina Lukanova PhD, University of Economics – Varna,
Assoc. Prof. in PN 3.9. Tourism (Economics and Management),
Member of a scientific jury for the academic position “Associate Professor”
in a competition announced by the University “Prof. Dr. Assen Zlatarov” - Burgas**

1. General information

The opinion was prepared by Assoc. Prof. Georgina Lukanova PhD, University of Economics – Varna, Faculty of Management, Department of Economics and Organization of Tourism. The grounds for writing the opinion is the participation in the Scientific Jury, determined by order of the Rector of the University “Prof. Dr. Assen Zlatarov” – Burgas No-198/10.07.2023, and along with the decision of a meeting of the Scientific Jury, held on June 28, 2023.

The only candidate in the competition for the academic position of “Associate Professor” is Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Elena Damyanova Ilieva, lecturer in the Department of “Economics and Management of Tourism Service” at the College of Tourism, University “Prof. Dr. Assen Zlatarov” – Burgas.

2. Quantitative and substantial characteristics of the presented scientific works after the last procedure

After the review of the publications presented by Ch. Asst. Professor Dr. Elena Ilieva for participation in the competition, the relevant findings could be stated as follows:

➤ According to the attached Reference Declaration, in groups C (B) and D (Г) Ch. Asst. Professor Dr. Elena Ilieva collected a total of 567,5 points with a minimum of 300 points according to the minimum national requirements for occupying the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the field of higher education 3. "Social, Economic and Legal Sciences", according to Article 2b, Paragraphs 2 and 3 of the Law for the

Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LDASRB) and a minimum of 500 points according to the Regulations for the Terms and Conditions for Acquiring Scientific Titles and Holding Academic Positions at the University "Prof. Dr. A. Zlatarov" – Burgas.

- 41 publications were submitted to the competition.

- Quantitatively, the distribution of publications is presented as follows: 1 individual monograph thesis, 1 book based on a defended PhD dissertation, participation in 1 collective monograph thesis, 1 co-authored scientific study, 17 scientific articles, including 14 individual and 1 co-authored, 16 conference papers, including 13 individual and 3 co-authored, 1 individual textbook and 3 teaching manuals (1 individual and 2 co-authored).

- In terms of structure, monographs theses, scientific studies, articles, and conference papers predominate (just over 90%), which is a positive assessment of the quality of the candidate's research activity.

- In terms of content, predominate scientific works that are oriented towards current issues related to shared accommodation and modern forms of hotel property management. Some of the publications are related to the development of alternative forms of tourism, such as health, climatic, rural, etc. The influence of various factors on the development of tourism and hotel management, such as the labour market, information and communication technologies, tax policy, etc., is studied. The thematic orientation of the publications is a testimony to the diverse research interests of the candidate. At the same time, they are focused on a global topic, which allows its in-depth study.

- 3 of the publications have been published in journals indexed in Scopus and Web of Science, and the majority of the remaining publications have been included in the National Reference List.

- All publications have an ISBN or ISSN and are available for reading.

- No plagiarism was found in the presented scientific works.

➤ Not a single work replicates those for acquiring the educational and scientific degree of "Doctor".

The stated circumstances show that the presented scientific works of the candidate are completely sufficient in volume and relevant in terms of the structure and content of the announced competition.

3. Quantitative and qualitative evaluation of teaching activity

Ch. Asst. Professor Elena Ilieva has been working as a teacher in the department "Economics and Management of Tourist Services" in the College of Tourism at the University "Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov" from 2013, respectively: until 2015 - as a part-time assistant professor, from 2015 to 2018 - as an assistant professor and from 2018 to the present - as a chief assistant professor. She conducts lectures and seminars in the disciplines "Economics of the hotel and restaurant", "Pricing policy in tourism", "International economic relations", "Economics of the tourist enterprise", and "Special seminar. Complex Business Game". She also conducts practical classes in Specializing Practice and Educational and Production Practice.

According to the attached academic workload report, for the last five years, the applicant has fully met and even exceeded the required minimum workload.

From the attached list of scientific works, it is evident that the Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Elena Ilieva has developed 1 individual textbook and participated in the development of 3 teaching manuals. She has also participated in the development of a number of curricula for university courses. During the last 5 years, Elena Ilieva has been a tutor of three specialties. In addition, she has been a supervisor of one graduate student in the Master's degree program and a consultant in scientific conferences of five students.

The general finding that can be made regarding the teaching activity of Ch. Asst. Professor Elena Ilieva is that her educational-methodical and teaching activity as an academic teacher, author of curricula, textbooks, and teaching manuals, and supervisor of students, in terms of quantity, quality, and structure, fully meet the normative requirements for occupying the academic position of "Associate Professor".

4. Evaluation of scientific and research contributions

❖ Participation in research projects

From the attached documents for participation in the competition, it is clear that for the period 2013 - 2022, Elena Ilieva has worked on six research projects. Out of them - 4 internal university ones, successfully managing one of them, and 2 international ones.

❖ Scientific contributions

The specific results of the scientific and publishing activity of Ch. Asst. Professor Dr. Elena Ilieva, which have the character of scientific and scientific-applied contributions, are systematized in detail in the Author's Reference deposited with the documents for participation in the competition. They can be summarized in the following more important areas:

- ✓ a complex scientific-theoretical and scientific-applied study of the peculiarities and modern development of alternative hospitality;
- ✓ theoretical and scientific-applied study of the economic aspects of tourism and hospitality;
- ✓ study of the peculiarities and modern aspects of tourism demand;
- ✓ study of the peculiarities and modern aspects of the tourist offer.

❖ Citations

According to the presented citation report, the candidate's scientific works are cited 22 times, 3 of which are in publications indexed in Scopus and Web of Science; 4 citations in monographs; 15 citations in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals - a total of 165 points (min. 50 p. according to the minimum national requirements and min. 100 p. according to the Regulations for the Terms and Conditions for Acquiring Scientific Titles and Holding Academic Positions at University "Prof. Dr. A. Zlatarov" - Burgas, Appendix 1).

Based on the above information, the general conclusion that can be made is that the research work of Ch. Asst. Professor Dr. Elena Ilieva fully corresponds to the profile of the announced competition for the academic position of Associate Professor.

5. Critical remarks and recommendations

The presented information about the research and teaching work of Ch. Asst. Professor Dr. Elena Ilieva does not imply serious remarks. I would like to recommend Elena Ilieva to focus her efforts on working towards publications in refereed journals indexed in Scopus and Web of Science and strengthening her cooperation and publication activity with researchers from other universities in the country and abroad.

6. Conclusion

The careful review of the competition materials and the scientific works of the candidate, Ch. Asst. Prof. Elena Ilieva shows that there is full compliance with the requirements of the LDASRB and the Regulations for the Terms and Conditions for Acquiring Scientific Titles and Holding Academic Positions at the University "Prof. Dr. A. Zlatarov" – Burgas. This gives me a reason to evaluate positively her candidature and to strongly recommend the Scientific Jury to make the decision that the Ch. Asst. Professor Dr. Elena Ilieva be elected for the position of "Associate Professor" in PN 3.9. Tourism, scientific specialty "Tourism (Alternative Hospitality)".

September, 13

Varna

Sincerely,

(Assoc. Prof. Dr. Georgina Lukanova)