

REVIEW

By Prof. Antonia Yordanova Yanakieva, PHD
Member of a scientific jury, appointed by Order No. RD-82/01.03.2024 of
the Rector of the University "Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov" - Burgas

Subject: Competition for the occupation of the academic position "Professor" in the field of higher education 7. "Health and sport", by professional direction 7.4. "Public Health" (Health Tourism), University "Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov" - Burgas, announced in State Gazette no. 1 of 02.01.2024

By Order of the Rector of the University "Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov" - Burgas I have been appointed as a member of the Scientific Jury under the procedure for occupying the academic position "Professor" in the field of higher education 7. "Health and Sports", professional direction 7.4. "Public Health" (Health Tourism) and Report Reg. No. 614/19.02.2024 of the Dean of the Faculty of Public Health and Health care .

I. Analysis of the applicant's career profile

Associate Professor Zlatina Kaludova Karadjova graduated in 1995 from the Institute of International Tourism, specializing in "Hotel and Restaurant Organization and Management." She obtained a Master's degree in "International Tourism" from the University "Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov" - Burgas in 1999. In 2006, she earned a Ph.D. in the scientific specialty code 05.02.20 "Social Management" with a dissertation on "The quality of the Bulgarian marine tourism product and its management /on the example of the Southern Black Sea/."

From 2008 to 2010, Assoc. Prof. Zlatina Karadjova worked as an Assistant Professor at the University "Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov" - Burgas. She then served as the main assistant at the same university from 2010 to 2012 and as an Associate Professor in the scientific specialty "Economics and Management" in the field of Tourism at the Faculty of Social Sciences, Department of Marketing and Tourism from 2012 to 2016. Since September 30, 2016, she has been a qualified teacher at the Faculty of Public Health and Health Care and has been the Head of the

department "Organization and Management of Health Care" since December 19, 2023.

Assoc. Prof. Zlatina Karadjova has built her professional career by holding various positions in the "Tourism" sector at CC "Sunny Beach" and engaging in other tourist activities. She is actively involved in academic governance, serving as a member of the Faculty Council, the General Assembly, the Election's Committee, the Teaching and Methodological Council, the Quality Committee, and the Attestation Committee at the Faculty of Public Health and Healthcare. Additionally, she holds the position of Deputy Chairman of the General Assembly and is a member of the Faculty Council at the FON, University "Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov" in Burgas. She is a member of the Bulgarian Scientific Society for Public Health and the Southeast Union of Tour Guides "Vanya Raykova" in Burgas.

Furthermore, Assoc. Prof. Zlatina Karadjova has extensive experience as a participant and supervisor in 11 research projects. She is proficient in French, English, and Russian, demonstrating excellent communication and digital skills.

II. General description of the submitted materials for the competition

To participate in the competition, Assoc. Prof. Zlatina Karadjova presents a scientific production that exceeds in volume and quality the minimally required scientometric indicators for "Professor" according to the Regulations for the terms and conditions for acquiring scientific degrees and holding academic positions at the University "Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov" - Burgas.

In the current competition, the candidate participated with a total of 63 scientific works. Assoc. Prof. Zlatina Karadjova presents 54 scientific publications published in non-refereed journals with scientific review and indexed or published in edited collective volumes, of which 36 independent and 18 co-authored, 17 in English and 5 in Russian and one publication in scientific publications, refereed and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information. The candidate participates with one independent monograph (habilitation thesis), two published monographs that are not presented as the main habilitation thesis, one published book, based on a defended dissertation work for the award of the Doctor thesis, three monographs, one textbook and participation in 7 national and four international projects, of which she is the head of two of them.

The total number of citations of the presented scientific works is 66. The chronological characteristic of the publication activity shows uniformity over the years.

III. Evaluation of the scientific works of the candidate for the overall academic development

✓ General characteristics of scientific production and publication activity

The scientific publications of Associate Professor Zlatina Karadjova are characterized by depth, specificity, and thorough analysis. Her research focuses on several key areas, including health tourism as a year-round alternative to seasonal vacations, positioning Bulgaria as a four-season tourist destination, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on public health, safety and security of the tourism product in relation to public health, quality and standards in tourism and health tourism, the relationship between education, career development, and quality of life, the role of Bulgarian tour operators in health tourism mediation, and opportunities for diversifying and innovating the Bulgarian tourist product in the context of sustainable development and emotional and mental health.

Her work addresses current issues, trends, and innovative approaches in various fields, such as the convergence of medicine and tourism for the preservation of physical and emotional well-being, the importance of security and safety in destination selection, lifelong learning in the European context, the interaction between providers of tourist services and their clientele, and other related topics.

✓ Scientific activity - dissemination and application of the candidate's scientific and practical achievements among the scientific community

Associate Professor Zlatina Karadjova participates in a variety of international and national scientific forums, where she annually presents her research findings in scientific journals and conferences.

✓ Evaluation of the research activity

Associate Professor Zlatina Karadjova has presented a list of publications in specialized scientific journals, including:

- Publications referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases with scientific information

- Publications in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or published in edited collective volumes

- Monographs

- Educational materials in author collective

- National and international projects

The scientific research activities of the candidate are focused on the following thematic areas:

The primary focus of Associate Professor Zlatina Karadjova's research lies in the area of "**Healthy tourism as an alternative to seasonal holidays for the development of a year-round Bulgarian tourist product. Impact of the Covid-19 pandemic in the context of public health.**" The key scientific contributions, both theoretical and applied, include:

- Emphasizing the pivotal role of health tourism as a promising avenue to enhance Bulgaria's competitiveness in the global and domestic tourism markets. It serves as a viable alternative to traditional sea and mountain tourism, addressing issues such as seasonal employment and turnover.

- Establishing a classification of health tourism types and outlining the user profile for such services. The resources in the Burgas region for fostering health tourism are detailed, along with the reasons for selecting the Bulgarian Southern Black Sea Coast as a medical tourism destination. Motivational factors for choosing health-oriented tourism in Bulgaria are explored, alongside prospects for enhancing sector activities and practices.

- Presenting research on the socio-economic repercussions of the Covid-19 pandemic, including its effects on travel motivations and opportunities for sustainable development through preventive health measures and restorative procedures.

- Conducting a study to evaluate Bulgaria's potential as a health tourism destination, with a focus on the role of tour operators as intermediaries between tourism demand and supply. This includes their involvement in providing health tourism services such as medical facilities, spa hotels, and recreation centers.

The candidate's contributions in the field of **Security and safety of the tourist product**, focusing on the impact of terrorism on tourism in the context of public health, include:

- Studying the impact of terrorist and cyber attacks on tourist behavior.
- Conducting a survey among Bulgarian hoteliers to assess the readiness of hotel complexes on the Southern Black Sea coast to respond to potential terrorist acts and cyber attacks.
- Formulating recommendations for specific actions that, when implemented, ensure the physical, moral, and emotional security and safety of Bulgarian and international tourists in the context of public health.

The third thematic area focuses on **Quality and standards in tourism and health tourism**, exploring the relationship and interdependence between education quality and career development. Key scientific and practical contributions include:

- Establishing quality as the primary competitive advantage and defining criteria for service quality in health tourism.
- Formulating principles for developing a quality system in health tourism.
- Presenting basic quality standards and developing certification technology with supporting evidence for standards implementation.

The fourth area focuses on the opportunities for **Bulgarian tour operators to facilitate mediation in the field of health tourism**. The scientific contributions include models for mathematical modeling, such as:

- Presenting possibilities for diversifying and introducing innovations to the Bulgarian tourist product for sustainable development through alternative types of tourism (cultural, sports, adventure, yacht, cruise). These offerings, when presented as a comprehensive tourist product on the national and international market, aim to enhance Bulgaria's reputation as a well-known and competitive destination in the global market for health and rehabilitation services.

- Highlighting the relationship and interdependence between opportunities for recreation and recovery on physical, mental, and overall health levels. A scientific-practical study is presented on the most preferred forms of recreation, Bulgaria's suitability as a four-season recreational destination, and the role of tour operators in promoting it as such.

- Providing guidelines on positioning Bulgaria as a year-round destination offering opportunities for both active and passive recreation. Research confirms the significant role of health tourism as the most preferred form of recreation.

Other directions

Associate Professor Zlatina Karadjova also contributes to scientific advancements and publications in the areas of diversified supply and innovation of the Bulgarian tourist product within the framework of sustainable development and emotional and mental health. She explores communication channels for recognition, as well as educational and qualification opportunities for the emergence of hybrid specialties that integrate various professional domains and the training of specialists with expertise in multiple fields. Additionally, she delves into modern societal developments, the challenges in human resource management as the fundamental societal capital, and the impact of today's fast-paced lifestyle on human health. The interconnection and interdependence between education quality, career progression, and quality of life are emphasized in her research.

IV. Evaluation of the scientific work like monographs or equivalent publications submitted for participation in the competition for the academic degree "Professor" by the candidate.

Associate Professor Zlatina Karadjova presents her monograph "Management of Health Tourism," highlighting the significant role of health tourism in boosting employment and investments through year-round utilization and enhancing the overall tourist experience. The monograph addresses challenges such as staff turnover, sustainable use of natural resources, and the growth of new and existing industries. The author concludes that health tourism is a preferred form of tourism for modern individuals, offering opportunities for prevention, strengthening, restoration, and maintenance of health.

Additionally, Assoc. Prof. Zlatina Karadjova co-authored the monograph "Bulgarian Tourism and Global Terrorism - Influences and Challenges," which explores the innovative topic of mitigating the impacts of terrorism on Bulgaria's tourism sector. The monograph aims to enhance safety and security measures in the tourism industry amidst the globalization phenomenon, emphasizing risk management practices, and the importance of security in destination selection.

V. Comprehensive, qualitative evaluation of the teaching-methodical and teaching activity, incl. scientific guidance of students, PhD students.

The candidate for the academic position of "Professor" delivers lecture courses at the University "Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov" - Burgas in the following disciplines:

For the specialty "Health Management," OCS "Bachelor" and OCS "Master": Strategic Management and Business Planning, Fundamentals of Health Care Management, Change Management and Risk Management, Business Models in Health Care, Time Management in Health Care, Health Tourism, Recreational Management, Quality Management in Health Care, International Health Cooperation

For the specialty "Tourism," OCS "Bachelor" and OCS "Master": Tour Operator, Agency, and Tourist Transport Activity, Management of the Tourist Enterprise, Time Management of Human Resources in Tourism, Quality Management.

Additionally, as part of scientific supervision of doctoral students, Associate Professor Zlatina Karadjova has served as the scientific supervisor for three successfully defended doctoral students.

VI. Critical notes and recommendations

None.

VII. Overall assessment of the applicant's compliance with the mandatory conditions and mandatory quantitative criteria and scientometric indicators in accordance with the Terms and Conditions for Acquisition of Academic Degrees and Occupation of Academic Positions of the *University of Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov, Burgas.*

The presented documents for the competition, the scientific participations of the applicant, her activities within the community and commitment to it, including the learning load are a good reason to note that Assoc. Prof. Zlatina Karadjova fully complies with the requirements to obtain the academic degree *Professor* in accordance with the Terms and Conditions for Acquisition of Academic Degrees and Occupation of Academic Positions of the *University of Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov, Burgas, The Law for Preserving the Academic Staff in the Republic Bulgaria, and the Conditions for its Implementation.*

VIII. Conclusion

In conclusion, I consider that the research work of Assoc. Prof. Zlatina Karadjova is up-to-date, innovative and transparent. Her scientific contributions show constant development in the field of economics in healthcare and its practical application for solving problems in the sphere of public health as well as in the field of safe and healthy labor conditions.

Besides the scientometric parameters, which are more than convincing and considering the above-mentioned information, I give the candidate high comprehensive assessment marks and vote positively for the choice of Assoc. Prof. Zlatina Karadjova to hold the academic degree *Professor* in the high education area 7. *Public health care and sport* with professional field 7.4 *Public health, (health tourism)*.

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Prof. Antoniya Yanakieva, PhD

May 7th, 2024

Sofia