

EVALUATION REPORT

from

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with scientific specialty "Organization and Management of Production (enterprise management, agricultural management)", PN 3.7 "Administration and management",
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Subject: Competition for the academic position of "Professor", announced by the University of Thrace, Stara Zagora in the Official Gazette, no. No. 52/16.06.2023, the scientific specialty: "Economics and management (Economics and business, entrepreneurship); professional direction: 3.8."Economy", field of higher education: 3. "Social, economic and legal sciences".

I present the opinion as a member of the Scientific Jury on the announced competition in implementation of Order No. 3133/19.09.2023 of the Rector of Thracian University (TrU), Stara Zagora and Decision of the FS of the Faculty of Economics (SF), protocol No. 1/14.09.2023, based on Art. 4 (3), (4) of ZRASRB, art. 5 (3), (4) of PRASTRU. The opinion was developed in compliance with the requirements of the RSARB, the Regulations for its implementation, and the Regulations for the development of the academic staff in the State University of Applied Sciences and in compliance with the scientometric criteria for PN 3.8. "Economics" for occupying the academic position "Professor".

Candidate: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Darina Georgieva Zaimova from the "Industrial Business and Entrepreneurship" Department of the Faculty of Economics at TrU, Stara Zagora is the only candidate under the announced competition.

1. BRIEF BIOGRAPHICAL DATA OF THE CANDIDATE:

Associate Professor Dr. Darina Georgieva Zaimova was born on May 9, 1979 in Stara Zagora.

In 2002, she graduated from the University of Economics, Varna with a bachelor's degree in Business Administration (Diploma No. 45832/05.11.2002), and in 2004 with a Master's degree in Business Administration (Diploma No. 3151/26.04.2004).

From 2005 to 2008, she was a doctoral student at the "Management" department, Faculty of Economics at TrU. In 2009, she defended his doctoral thesis on the topic "Organizations of agricultural producers (on the example of the South Central and South-Eastern planning regions)" and obtained the ONS "Doctor" in the scientific specialty 05.02.18 "Economics and management (agriculture)", attached Diploma No. 32804/12.01.2009

Since 2009, he has been an assistant in the "Management" department, Faculty of Economics at TrU, Stara Zagora.

From April 2013 to the present, he is an associate professor in the scientific specialty "Economics and management (by industry) in the department of "Industrial business and entrepreneurship" at the Faculty of Economics at TrU, Stara Zagora (Diploma No. 0071/19.04.2013).

During the years of her academic development, Associate Professor D. Zaimova has completed specializations and trainings in a number of educational and scientific institutions: Institute of Agrarian Economics at Christian-Albrecht University, Department of Farm Management and Production Economics, Kiel, Germany (2006); EURICSE, Trento, Italy (2010 – 2011); Production Economics Course - Verona, Italy (2011); ERASMUS - Gyor, HUNGARY (2012); ZIP Center for Youth - Employment and Entrepreneurship, Pirot, Serbia (2014 – 2018); University of Almeria, Spain (2014 – 2018); University of Macedonia, Thessaloniki, Greece (2018).

The candidate holds administrative positions at TrU: Head of the Projects Department (2014 – 2016); Deputy Rector for Project Activities (2016 – 2019); Vice Rector for Scientific and International Activities (from June 2023 to the present).

In 2019, she was the Deputy Rector for International Activities at Pavlodar State Pedagogical University, Kazakhstan.

From 2012 to the present, she is the Chairman of the Management Board of the GO-UP business incubator.

She is fluent in written and spoken English, Russian, Italian and German. Has very good computer skills.

2. COMPARISON OF THE MINIMUM NATIONAL REQUIREMENTS AND THE ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS OF PRAS OF THE TRU WITH THE RESULTS OF THE SCIENTIFIC ACTIVITY OF THE CANDIDATE FOR ACQUIRING THE ACADEMIC POSITION "PROFESSOR".

In the competition for "Professor", Assoc. Prof. Dr. Darina Zaimova submitted documents that are in accordance with the scientometric indicators laid down in the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and TRU as follows:

| Indicators | Minimum national requirements | Submitted materials by the candidate | Points above minimum national requirements |
|--------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| Group A | 50 points | 50 points | |
| Group B | 100 points | 100 points | |
| Group C | 200 points | 251,6 points | + 51,6 points |
| Group D | 100 points | 435 points | + 335 points |
| Group E | 100 points | 525 points | + 425 points |
| Group J | 100 points | 155 points | + 55 points |
| Total | 650 points | 1516,6 points | + 866,6 points |

With the required 650 points, the candidate Assoc. Prof. Dr. Darina Zaimova presented scientific production and materials for participation in the competition totaling 1516.6 points, i.e. exceeds the minimum national and additional requirements by 866.6 points or 2.3 times more.

3. EVALUATION OF THE SCIENTIFIC AND EDUCATIONAL PRODUCTION AND OF THE CANDIDATE'S ACTIVITIES:

3.1. Publication activity

3.1.1. Overall performance:

In the announced competition for filling the academic position of "Professor", Assoc. Prof. Dr. Darina Zaimova participated with a total number of 37 scientific works published in the period 2013-2023 (after occupying the academic position of "Associate Professor"), grouped in the attached list, as follows:

Independent monograph (habilitation thesis) - 1 in Bulgarian: "Bioeconomy and sustainable development", 248 pages (Group of indicators "B");

- Chapters of collective monographs – 7, independent and co-authored, incl. 2 in Bulgarian and 5 in English (Group of indicators "D, 7");

- Articles and reports published in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world-famous databases with scientific information - 14 co-authored articles, all in English (Group of indicators "D, 3");

- Articles and reports published in non-refereed journals with scientific review or published in edited collective volumes - 14, independent and co-authored, incl. 3 in Bulgarian and 11 in English (Group of indicators "D, 4");

- Learning aid – 1 in Bulgarian (Group of indicators "E, 7").

The participation of Associate Professor Dr. D. Zaimova in the mentioned works is as follows:

- ✓ 4 publications are independent;
- ✓ in 8 publications she is the first author;
- ✓ in 12 publications she is the second author;
- ✓ in the remaining 13 publications, she is the third and subsequent author.

Of the total number of 37 scientific works, 30 (81%) are in a foreign language and 7 (19%) in Bulgarian.

From the attached reference from the Central Library of TrU, 20 scientific publications in journals indexed in Web of Sciences are indicated, one of them has an Impact factor (IF= 3.231) and 3 indexed in Scopus with a general Impact rank (SJR = 1.045).

In summary of the publication activity of Associate Professor Dr. D. Zaimova, I give a high rating with conviction, since he participated in the competition for the academic position of "Professor" with a sufficient number of scientific publications of high scientific value. Proof of the statement is the presented report on the feasibility of the scientometric criteria, the list of publications and summaries of the scientific works. The candidate has covered all scientometric criteria, and according to one of them, there is several times higher feasibility.

3.1.2. Scientific fields of publications:

Assoc. Prof. Dr. D. Zaimova conducts research and analysis in five scientific fields. The focus of her scientific publications are the first four areas, which I consider to be the main ones:

- 1) "Social economy and social entrepreneurship" – 14 publications; (D 3 – 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 12; D 4 – 1, 2, 3, 7, 9; D 7 – 1);
- 2) "Cooperatives and cooperative business model" – 19 publications; (D 3 – 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 11, 12; D 4 – 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 11, 13, 14; D 7 – 1, 2, 7);
- 3) "Sustainable development, bioeconomy, circular economy" - 15 publications; (B -1; D 3 – 5, 11, 12, 13, 14; D 4 – 5, 6, 8, 10, 12; D 7 – 3, 4, 6, 7);
- 4) "Environmental entrepreneurship and business practices" – 18 publications; (B – 1; D 3 – 5, 11, 12, 13, 14; D 4 – 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14; D 7 – 2, 3, 6, 7);
- 5) "Digitization and new technologies" – 2 publications; (D 3 – 9, 10; D 7 – 5).

The published scientific works fully correspond to the professional direction and scientific specialty of the competition. In each of the scientific fields, the author has researches and analyses, conclusions and recommendations that are significant for science and practice, which gives me grounds for a high assessment of her scientific work.

3.1.3. Citation of publications:

In total, the citations of the scientific works of Assoc. Prof. Dr. D. Zaimova are about 80, of which 26 were submitted for participation in the announced competition. Of these, 19 citations are in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world-famous databases, 2 citations in monographs and peer-reviewed collective volumes and 5 citations in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals. In summary, this is proof of high scientific value, as well as national and international recognition of the candidate's scientific works.

3.2. Teaching activity:

The total teaching experience of Assoc. Dr. Darina Georgieva Zaimova is nearly 15 years and 8 months (from February 2008 to the present). Her teaching activities include:

3.2.1. Developed training programs:

14 curricula are attached, 8 of which were developed and conducted independently, and 6 in co-authorship. Of the study programs, 7 are for "Bachelor" and 7 for "Master". 9 of the academic disciplines are taught in the Faculty of Economics, and 5 in the Faculty of Medicine of the TrU.

The candidate gives lectures on the academic disciplines: "Intellectual property"; "Organization of Social Enterprises"; "Leadership and CSR"; "Social Entrepreneurship" for "Bachelor" and "Business Models in the Social Sphere"; "Business planning"; "Entrepreneurial Environment Management"; "Quality Management" for "Master". In the rest of the attached study programs, developed in co-authorship, there are seminars and exercises.

3.2.2. Lecture employment:

According to the attached curricula, Associate Professor Dr. D. Zaimova conducts within one academic year 195 hours of lectures and 231 hours of exercises/seminars in full-time and part-time form of education in "Bachelor" and "Master" in 2 faculties of TrU.

3.2.3. Published study materials:

Prof. Assoc. Dr. Zaimova has developed an independent teaching aid "Intellectual property" - 1 in Bulgarian, with a volume of 124 pages (Group of indicators "E, 7").

3.2.4. Scientific Guide:

Assoc. Dr. D. Zaimova is the supervisor of five successfully defended diplomas in "Bachelor's", 1 in "Master's". The candidate is the scientific supervisor of one successfully defended doctoral student, who obtained the ONS "doctor" and of one doctoral student in the process of training.

In summary of the teaching activity of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Darina Zaimova, I give a high assessment, which is based on an active educational commitment, related to the delivery of lectures and exercises, conducting exams and scientific supervision of diploma and doctoral students, with the development of a study guide for the students. The candidate has annual classroom employment exceeding the required minimum for holding the academic position "Professor".

3.3. Project Activity:

From the presented documents/references, the significant project activity of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Darina Zaimova, both at the national and international level, is evident, in which she is involved as:

- Head of four international projects financed under the programs: «Erasmus+ KA2 Strategic Partnerships», «Marie Curie IAPP», «FP7-PEOPLE-2013-IAPP», «Horizon Booster Results»;
- Head of one national project under the "Policies for youth in the field of the environment" program;
- Coordinator of one national scientific program «Intelligent animal husbandry»;
- Participant in 9 international projects under the programs: «Erasmus+ KA2 Strategic Partnerships», «Interreg Balkan Mediterranean Programme», «BBIJT-2020», «Horizon Europe»;
- Participates in four national projects.

In summary, there is a high level of project engagement of Assoc. Prof. Dr. D. Zaimova for the assessment period, which has contributed to the development of scientific publications and participation in scientific forums.

4. CONTRIBUTIONS:

The candidate for the academic position "Professor", Assoc. Prof. Dr. D. Zaimova presents a list of the main contributions in the scientific works, detailing them in detail by scientific fields. I accept the author's contributions and synthesize by scientific fields as follows:

- In the field of "*Cooperatives and cooperative business model*", a scientific contribution to the enrichment and upgrading of the theory, through the formulated and tested integrated approach to the analysis and evaluation of cooperative organizations and their development, stands out.

Scientific works: D 3 – 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 11, 12; D 4 – 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 11, 13, 14; D 7 – 1, 2, 7.

- In "*Social Economy and Social Entrepreneurship*" a scientific contribution to the confirmation and expansion of theoretical statements, methodological and methodical approaches determined by the specific features of the social enterprise and social entrepreneurship stands out. The results of research and analysis are integrated into the learning process.

Scientific works: D 3 – 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 12; D 4 – 1, 2, 3, 7, 9; D 7.

- In the two areas "*Sustainable development, bioeconomy, circular economy*" and "*Environmental entrepreneurship and business practices*", there are theoretical and applied contributions related to clarifying the content and principles of functioning of the circular economy, eco-entrepreneurship and the prerequisites for transforming production systems, the diversification of production types, the orientation to sources of new investments in view of their connection with the components of sustainable development and in the context of the "Green transition". Conclusions and recommendations have been made, supporting the business.

Scientific works: In -1; D 3 – 5, 11, 12, 13, 14; D 4 – 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14; D 7 – 2, 3, 4, 6, 7.

- In the field of "*Digitalization and new technologies*", practical and applied contributions stand out, which have an original character and are of great importance for agricultural practice and the development of rural areas.

Scientific works: D 3 – 9, 10; D 7 – 5.

5. NOTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

I believe that the works presented by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Darina Zaimova, with which she participated in the competition for the academic position "Professor", meet quantitatively and qualitatively the requirements of ZRASRB, PPZRASRB and the Regulations for the development of the academic staff at TrU. All scientometric indicators are met, and some significantly exceed the minimum national requirements. There are contributions to science and practice, which gives me reason not to make notes.

I recommend the candidate to direct her research experience in the direction of preparing more doctoral dissertations and master's theses.

CONCLUSION:

Based on the analysis of the scientific, teaching, project-applied activities of **Associate Professor Dr. Darina Zaimova**, I give a **POSITIVE** assessment of her overall work with complete conviction.

I take the liberty of proposing to the honorable Scientific Jury to vote positively, and the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Economics at TrU - Stara Zagora to elect **Assoc. Prof. Dr. Darina Georgieva Zaimova** as "**Professor**" in the field of higher education: 3. Social, economic and legal sciences; professional direction: 3.8 "Economics"; the scientific specialty "Economics and Management (Economics and Business, Entrepreneurship)".

11/06/2023
Stara Zagora

Prepared by:  !
(Prof. Dr. Todorka Atanasova-Kalaidzhieva)