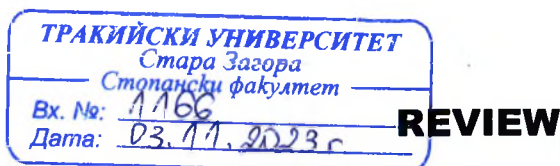




**TRAKIA UNIVERSITY – STARA ZAGORA, BULGARIA**  
**FACULTY OF ECONOMICS**



REGARDING: Competition for the occupation of the academic position "Professor", in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional field 3.8. Economics, scientific specialty "Economics and Management (Economics and Business, Entrepreneurship)" of Trakia University, Stara Zagora, published in the State Gazette - no. 52 of 16.06.2023 with candidate **assoc. prof. Dr. Darina Georgieva Zaimova**

**Reviewer : Prof. Dr. Nadka Stefanova Kostadinova**, scientific specialty Economics and Management (Agriculture), Department of Management at the Faculty of Economics of Trakia University - Stara Zagora , determined by Order No. 3133/19.09.2023 of the Rector of Trakia University.

The review was prepared on the basis of LDASRB, RILDASRB and the Regulations for the development of the academic staff of Trakia University - Stara Zagora.

In the announced competition for "Professor", associate Professor Darina Georgieva Zaimova participated as the only candidate. From 2013 until now, she holds the academic position of " associate Professor" in the Department of "Industrial Business and Entrepreneurship", Faculty of Economics of Trakia University. The occupied academic position "associate Professor" is based on the decision of the FC of the Faculty of Economics, Protocol No. 7/09.04.2013 and Order No. 737/12.04.2013 of the Rector of TrU.

The submitted materials and documents, in terms of type and content, meet the normative legal requirements for participation in the competition.

**I. General information on the candidate's career development**

In 2002, the candidate graduated with a bachelor's degree, Specializing in Business Administration at the University of Economics - Varna, and in 2004 she graduated from the master's program in "Business Administration" at the same university. From 2005 to 2008, she was a full-time doctoral student at the Department of "Management" at the Faculty of Economics of the Trakia University. She successfully defended her doctoral dissertation on the topic: "Farmer Organizations (per the example of South Central and Southeast Planning Regions)". She obtained a doctorate from in the scientific specialty "Economics and management (agriculture)", diploma No. 32804/12.012009 of

HAC. From 2009 to 2012, she was an assistant in the "Management" department at the Faculty of Economics of Trakia University.

From 2014 to 2016, associate Professor Dr. Darina Zaimova was the head of the Projects Department at Trakia University, from 2016 to 2019 she was the Deputy Rector for Project Activities, and from 2023 she is the Deputy Rector for Scientific and International activity.

Trainings and specializations in the country and abroad have a significant role in increasing her teaching and research training: University of Macedonia, Thessaloniki, Greece; University of Almeria, Almeria, Spain; ZIP Center for Youth - Employment and Entrepreneurship, Pirot, Serbia; ERASMUS - Intensive International Program 2012, Gyor, Hungary; EURICSE, Trento, Italy; Kiel, Germany; Belgium, Estonia, Kazakhstan, etc.

Assoc. prof. Dr. D. Zaimova has an excellent knowledge level of English, a very good level of Russian, and a good level of Italian and German. She is proficient in Microsoft Office™ tools.

She is a member of scientific organizations and structures as follows: from 2014 to 2018. TARGET COST NETWORK TN1302, "BESTPRAC"-Steering Committee Representative; since 2016 Center for Research and Analysis - Member of the Advisory Board; From 2021 Chairman of the Management Board of GO-UP Business Incubator. She participates in the team of the Council for Resource Efficiency and Circular Economy at the BAS, etc. She is a member of the editorial boards of three international journals.

My overall assessment of the candidate for the academic position of "Professor", according to the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff of the Republic of Bulgaria and the regulations for its application at Trakia University - Stara Zagora, is:

The information on the career development, the presented scientific publications, the scientific-educational and qualification profile of the candidate meet the requirements of the announced competition for "Professor" in the scientific specialty "Economics and Management (Economics and Business, Entrepreneurship)".

## **II. General description of the submitted materials for this competition**

In the competition for "**Professor**", associate Professor D. Zaimova participated with a total of 37 pieces of scientific works, including 1 independent monograph and 6 co-authorships in chapters of collective monographs;

- papers and reports published in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases with scientific information - 14 in English that she co-authored, of them - in 5 she is the leading author. Of these publications, 1 pc. is with impact factor and 3 with an impact rank;

- articles and reports published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or published in edited collective volumes - 14 items, of which - 11 items in English, 10 pcs. in co-authorship, of which 4 as a primary author, 1 as a sole author; in Bulgarian - 3 pcs. of co-authored articles;
- textbook – 1 pc.

The total number of cited scientific publications of associate Professor Dr. Zaimova is 33. Of them in foreign and Bulgarian publications with an impact factor - 26, in monographs and collective volumes with scientific review - 2 and citations in non-refereed journals with scientific review - 5.

According to a reference submitted by the Central University Library of Trakia University, there are 29 citations in foreign and Bulgarian publications with an impact factor.

In the current competition for "Professor", assoc. prof. Dr. Darina Zaimova has submitted documents that are in accordance with the scientific indicators sited in the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LDASRB), and the Regulations for its Implementation (RILDASRB) as follows :

**Indicator A** (min. requirements of 50 points) – materials for 50 points are presented.

**Indicator C** (min. requirements of 100 points) – a monograph corresponding to 100 points is presented.

**Indicator D** (min. requirements of 200 points) - materials for 251.6 points are presented.

**Indicator D** (min. requirements of 100 points) - the presented materials correspond to 435 points.

**Indicator E** (min. requirements of 100 points) - documents corresponding to 500 points are presented.

**Indicator G** (min. requirements of 100 points)- materials for 155 points are presented.

With the required 650 points, the candidate has submitted materials for 1516.6 points, which exceeds the minimum national and additional requirements by 866.6 points.

We can summarize that the scientific output of associate Professor Dr. Zaimova in terms of quantity and quality not only fulfills, but significantly exceeds the scientific criteria sited in the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of Trakia University - Stara Zagora.

### **III. Main research fields and contributions in research work.**

The scientific and scientific-applied contributions of the candidate can be formulated and summarized by directions as follows:

#### **Research field: Social economy and social entrepreneurship**

On the basis of conducted research and popularization of the results at scientific forums, she

confirms and develops the social economy and social entrepreneurship.

- Integrates econometric models in the analysis and evaluation of the activity of social enterprises;
- By researching the specifics of social enterprises, she further develops the concept of corporate social responsibility and, on this basis, creates a Master's course at the Faculty of Economics of the Trakia University.

(D 3 – 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 12; D 4 – 1, 2, 3, 7, 9; D 7 – 1)

**Research field: Cooperatives and cooperative business model**

Formulates and implements an integrated approach in the analysis and evaluation of cooperative organizations and their development.

- Based on the application of parametric and non-parametric models (DEA, SFA, LCA), establishes main institutional and social factors that influence the social, economic and environmental sustainability of cooperatives;
- She reveals the interactive components in the synergy between strategic partnerships and institutions that influence the sustainability of the cooperative business model.

(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)

**Research field: Sustainable development, bioeconomy, circular economy**

The cause-effect model is enriched by the added value of generated multidisciplinary knowledge.

- Through analysis and evaluation of the concept of bioeconomy, opportunities for business, synergy and balance between public needs and sustainable development have been established;
- On the basis of developed prototypes and questionnaires, consumer behavior was studied, as a result of which trends were established in the market of bio-based industries;
- Regional perspectives and successful business models are presented with an emphasis on green technologies-opportunities, market, etc.;
- By analyzing entrepreneurial risk, business planning techniques, etc. opportunities for modifying production systems and developing eco-entrepreneurship have been established;
- Based on research and analysis of hidden needs, she defines concepts for new products, services and innovation culture.

( B -1; D 3 – 5, 11, 12, 13, 14; D 4 – 5, 6, 8, 10, 12; D 7 – 3, 4, 6, 7 )

There is no report on the candidate's teaching workload, but in the directory of the Faculty of Economics for the current academic year, as well as from previous years, according to the curricula of the economics majors, assoc. prof. Dr. Darina Zaimova is the main and only lecturer of the university courses on " Intellectual property ownership" and "Organization of social enterprises" in bachelor programs, as well as the university course "Management of an entrepreneurial environment" in a masters program therefore, I accept that the condition of Art. 85 para. 2 of the RDAS of Trakia University is fulfilled.

The presented university courses programs correspond to the specifics of the scientific specialty of the competition.

Under the scientific guidance of assoc. prof. Dr. D. Zaimova, one doctoral student – Mikhail Todorov Kozhuharov – successfully defended his thesis on 15.06.2018. Assoc. prof. Dr. D. Zaimova was also the academic supervisor of 6 successfully defended graduate students – of them 5 in bachelor programs and 1 - a masters program.

#### **VI. Main critical notes and recommendations to the candidate**

I recommend assoc. prof. Dr. Darina Zaimova in her future research activities to concentrate her studies in fewer directions in the field of economics, which will contribute to deepening of her research and lead to obtaining even more significant results.

#### **VII. Personal impressions of the candidate**

My personal impressions are that assoc. prof. Dr. D. Zaimova is ambitious, creative, with outstanding organizational abilities and innovative approaches.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Based on the analysis of the candidate's scientific and scientific-applied activities, I believe that assoc. prof. Dr. Darina Georgieva Zaimova **MEETS AND COMPLETELY COVERS THE REQUIREMENTS** of the LDASRB, RILDASRB and the Regulations for the development of the academic staff of Trakia University - Stara Zagora.

I propose to the Scientific Jury to vote positively by proposing to the FC of the Faculty of Economics to elect assoc. prof. Dr. Darina Georgieva Zaimova for "Professor" in scientific area 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional field 3. 8 Economics, with a scientific specialty Economics and Management (Economics and Business, Entrepreneurship).

03.11.2023

Reviewer:  .....

**Prof. Dr. N. Kostadinova**