

OPINION

by Assoc. Prof. Katya Yankova Ilieva, PhD,
Prof. Dr Assen Zlatarov University – Burgas,

regarding the occupation of the academic position of "Associate Professor" in a competition announced by Prof. Dr Assen Zlatarov University – Burgas, in Area of Higher Education: 3. Social, economic, and legal sciences, Professional Field: 3.9. Tourism (Alternative Hospitality), announced in State Gazette, issue 42 of 12.05.2023.

1. General information.

Opinion submitted by Assoc. Prof. Katya Yankova Ilieva, PhD, Prof. Dr Assen Zlatarov University – Burgas, Area of Higher Education: 3. Social, economic, and legal sciences, Professional Field: 3.9. Tourism, Scientific Specialty: Organization and Management.

Reason for writing the opinion on the competition: Order № RD-198/10.07.2023 of the Rector of Prof. Dr Assen Zlatarov University – Burgas, regarding the establishing of a scientific jury for a competition for the occupation of the academic position of "associate professor", announced in State gazette, issue 42 of 12.05.2023, and decisions of the Scientific Jury of 17.07.2023.

2. Information about the competition.

The competition for the occupation of the academic position of "associate professor" is announced by Prof. Dr Assen Zlatarov University – Burgas in: Area of Higher Education: 3. Social, economic, and legal sciences, Professional Field: 3.9. Tourism (Alternative Hospitality), For the Department of Economics and Organization of Tourist Services, College of Tourism, Prof. Dr Assen Zlatarov University – Burgas.

The announcement of the competition was published in State Gazette, issue 42 of 12.05.2023.

3. Candidate for the competition:

The only candidate to participate in the competition is Chief Assistant Professor Elena Damyanova Ilieva, PhD, lecturer at the Department of Economics and Organization of Tourist Services, College of Tourism, Prof. Dr Assen Zlatarov University – Burgas.

The candidate has presented all the documents necessary to participate in the competition, satisfying the requirements of Article 24 of DASRBA and the requirements of Article 67 of the Rules on the Terms and Conditions for Acquiring Scientific Degrees and Holding Academic Positions (RTCASDHAP) of Prof. Dr Assen Zlatarov University – Burgas.

4. General description of the candidate's scientific works.

The scholarly output list presented by Chief Assist. Dr Elena Damyanova Ilieva testifies to intensive and systematic research and publication activities. Chief Assist. Dr Elena Ilieva participates in the announced competition for associate professor with **41 publications outside the dissertation**, with a total of 1455,5 pages.

The list of publications for the competition presents (Table 1):

1. Monographs - 2 (with a total number of pages - 433), of which one is an individually-authored monograph – a habilitation work (399 pages), and a co-authored monograph (individual contribution - 34 pages);

2. A book based on the thesis defended for awarding the educational and scientific degree of “doctor” - 1 (211 pages);

3. Articles and reports, published in academic journals, refereed, and indexed in Web of Science – 2 individually-authored publications (a total of 16 pages);

4. Articles and reports, published in non-peer reviewed academic journals - 31 (a total of 257 pages, of which 27 are the candidate’s own work (244 pages) and 4 are co-authored (individual contribution -13 pages);

5. Studies published in academic journals peer-reviewed and indexed in world famous databases of scientific information (Scopus) – 1 (25 pages) co-authored, (individual contribution -12,5 pages);

6. Publications for the needs of the academic process: a university textbook - 1, an individually-authored publication (270 pages); university course packs – 3 titles altogether of which 2 are the candidate’s own ones (210 pages) and 1 is co-authored (candidate’s individual contribution - 46 pages).

Table 1

Scholarly output of Chief Assist. Dr Elena Ilieva

Type of the presented publications	Individually-authored publications (number)	Co-authored publications (number)	Total number of publications	Volume (number of pages)
1. Monographs	1	1	2	433
2. Books	1	-	1	211
3. Articles and reports in WoS	2	-	2	16
3. Articles and reports in non-peer viewed journals	27	4	31	257
4. Studies, Scopus	-	1	1	12,5
5. Textbooks	1	-	1	270
6. Course packs	2	1	3	256
Σ :	34	7	41	1455,5

The analysis of the scholarly output of Chief Assist. Dr Elena Ilieva and the reference-declaration proves the fulfilment of the minimum national requirements (MNR) as well as the minimum scientific requirements (MSR) of the group of indicators specified in Appendix 1 of the Rules on the Terms and Conditions for Acquiring Scientific Degrees and Holding Academic Positions (RTCASDHAP) of Prof. Dr Assen Zlatarov University (UAZ) – Burgas (Table 2).

Table 2

Fulfilment of the MNR and MSR of the RTCASDHAP of UAZ - Burgas

Group of indicators	Candidate’s fulfilment of the requirements for the AP of “associate professor”	MSR of UAZ for holding the AP of “associate professor”	MNR according to DASRBA
A	50	50	50

B	-	-	-
C	100	100	100
D	467,5	400	200
E	165	100	50
F	130	100	0
In total for the AP of "associate professor "	912,5	750	400

The presented scholarly output of Chief Assist. Dr Elena Ilieva is in full compliance with the requirements of the announced competition and is the result of profound, precise, and innovative research work. The scholarly output is distinctive for its high quality, topicality, and originality of the research. It presents excellent knowledge of the global trends and scientific achievements in the research area and shows a quick response reflex to the changes in the condition of the tourism business. All publications are based on a well-thought-out and logical structure. Modern research tools are applied in the works. The style and language of the scholarly works are academic and precise. They are characterized by ethical citing of literature and information sources.

The candidate's own monograph (Ilieva, E. (2023). Condition and prospects of shared accommodation in the Bulgarian Black Sea tourist areas, Librum Publishing House, Sofia) is a profound and original piece of research into shared accommodation as one of the most dynamic branches of sharing economy, and meets the requirements of §1, item 10 of the additional provisions of DASRBA. The habilitation work has a total of 399 pages and presents competent and innovative solutions to current basic and applied research problems on a high contemporary level. It does not repeat or summarize the existing knowledge. It has an ISBN, an extended content, and a comprehensive bibliography. There are citations of other scholarly works in the text. Two habilitated persons have reviewed it – scholars of authority in professional filed 3.9 "Tourism" and was published by a specialist publisher.

All candidate's works are published in reputable academic journals in Bulgaria and abroad as well as in editions of national and international academic forums. The publications are peer-reviewed, and no examples of plagiarism have been detected.

The reference list of the citations of the publications of Chief Assist. Dr Elena Ilieva is correct and includes 23 references to scholarly works as follows: three citations in scholarly publications refereed and indexed in Scopus and Web of Science; four citations in peer-reviewed monographs and collective volumes, and 16 citations in non-peer reviewed journals, which is additional academic and scholarly recognition of the research achievements and professional qualities of the candidate.

The scholarly and applied activities of Dr Elena Ilieva also include participation in seven research projects altogether. She has taken part in two international projects as an expert, one of which is of Burgas Municipality known under the acronym CHRISTA, and in a project with reference number BSB 570 within a Cross-border Cooperation programme. Dr Ilieva has also participated in university's research

projects. She is the project leader of Project № NIH 469/2023 and is a team member of four other research projects in the period between 2016 and 2023.

In terms of subject matter and volume the scientific works presented by Chief Assist. Dr Elena Ilieva satisfy the requirements of DASRBA as well as the requirements of Article 67 of the Rules on the Terms and Conditions for Acquiring Scientific Degrees and Holding Academic Positions Prof. Dr Assen Zlatarov University – Burgas.

5. General evaluation of the candidate's teaching activity.

The competition-related documents presented by Chief Assist. Dr Elena Ilieva characterize her as a modern lecturer possessing energy, creative potential, and practical experience in various fields of the tourism industry. Her professional biography in 2004-2018 shows that she did various operations jobs in the tourism industry and air transport (hotel receptionist and representative, tour guide and entertainer, air companies' representative, etc.) which have contributed to her competencies in the hospitality industry.

Dr Elena Ilieva acquired the EQD of Master in Economics and Management (Tourism) at the University of Economics – Varna in 2011, and in 2015 she acquired the ESD of Doctor, PF 3.9 Tourism at UE – Varna. During her studies as a doctoral student Dr Elena Ilieva taught seminar classes in Tourism Resources as a part-time assistant to students specializing in Tourism at UE – Varna, which gave her the opportunity to gain some teaching experience and skills.

Her participation in professional training courses is of vital significance for her professional training, scientific achievements and competencies, as are the respective certificates for the acquired skills in working with reservations programmes, IATA, command of foreign languages – proficient German and English, technical skills and competencies.

Chief Assist. Dr Elena Ilieva is a lecturer at Prof. Dr Assen Zlatarov University – Burgas, College of Tourism, Department of Economics and Management of Tourists Services. Since 2015 Dr Ilieva's teaching activity has included lectures and seminar classes in nine subjects to students in programs of study for:

- EQD of Professional Bachelor, College of Tourism, specialties: Hotel and Restaurant Organization and Management and Travel Agency and Tour Operator Activities Management, subjects: Hotel and Restaurant Economics, Tourism Enterprise Economics, Specialized Seminar – Complex Business Role Play, Practical Training in a Real Work Environment;

- EQD of Bachelor, Faculty of Social Sciences, specialties: Tourism, Marketing and Business Administration, subjects: Hotel and Restaurant Economics, Pricing Policy in Tourism, International Economic Relations, Practical Training.

During the specified period Dr Ilieva had a full workload, over the 360-hour requirement (until 2020-2021 school year) and over the 400-hour requirement from 2021-2022 school year on.

Dr Ilieva is the author of three syllabi for the subjects: Economics of the Tourism Enterprise, specialty: Travel Agency and Tour Operator Activities Management, semester 4, Practical Training in a Real Work Environment, specialty: Travel Agency and Tour Operator Activities Management, semester 3 and semester 4 – 2 items. In 2022 she updated the three syllabi for the subject Hotel and Restaurant

Economics, specialty: Hotel and Restaurant Economics, full-time and part-time courses.

Dr Ilieva's teaching activity goes hand in hand with intensive research work with students. She is the supervisor of two graduate students in the master's degree program in Economics and Organisation of Tourism Business, specialty: Tourism, UAZ. As a supervisor and consultant, she prepares students in the bachelor's degree program in Tourism and the professional bachelor's degree program in Hotel and Restaurant Organization and Management for participation in scientific conferences and sessions.

Chief Assist. Dr Elena Ilieva has been a tutor to students pursuing a professional bachelor's degree in Hotel and Restaurant Organization and Management since 2018 and bachelor's degree in Tourism from 2017 to 2018. She is a member of the College Council and of the Training Quality Commission at the College of Tourism – Burgas.

She is a member of Raphael – Info, Culture and Tourism - a professional tourism association.

The analysis of the requirements related to the academic activities proves that Dr Elena Ilieva is an established lecturer and a specialist of authority in professional field 3.9 Tourism. The subjects taught by the candidate, the designed syllabi and the academic hours are in complete accordance with the requirements of Article 67 and Paragraph §1 of the additional provisions of the Rules on the Terms and Conditions for Acquiring Scientific Degrees and Holding Academic Positions of Prof. Dr Assen Zlatarov University – Burgas.

6. Identification of the scientific contributions.

The scholarly publications presented by the candidate for evaluation and opinion reveal significant scientific, applied, and methodological contributions of innovative nature which expand and deepen the existing knowledge in the research areas and are essential to the development of modern tourismology.

I consider the presented reference accurate and correct and distinguish the following main contributions:

- In the habilitation work the global sharing economy has been investigated and analysed as a contemporary phenomenon in the economic and market relations with the purpose of identifying the place and role of the collaborative economic relationships in tourism around the world;
- The first of its kind complex scientific, theoretical, and applied research on shared accommodation in Bulgaria has been conducted. On the basis of profound studies and analysis the essence of shared accommodation is distinguished, basic terms are defined such as 'sharing economy', 'shared accommodation', 'mediator in shared accommodation', etc. The candidate has developed her own methodology for empirical research on the condition and potential for the development of shared accommodation in a tourist area, especially rural areas. Concrete recommendations are presented for a development based on good international practices and the progress of ICT;
- Operational characteristics and features of the concept of 'timeshare' have been developed, the focus being on the specific characteristics related to the functional directions – marketing, human resource management, operations, and finance. The

possibilities for timeshare to be developed in Bulgaria, the economic effects, and the clients' profile have been evaluated. An original author's methodology has been constructed for the research on the development and applicability of timeshare in the hospitality industry in the tourist regions;

- An analysis and evaluation have been made of the franchise market in the Bulgarian restaurant industry and the representation of international restaurant chains on the national market;

- An evaluation and research have been conducted on the labour market in tourism in major geographical regions in the world, in Bulgaria and in Burgas Region. Possibilities and future scenarios are specified for sustainable development of tourism, for the economic and social significance of tourism in the investigated regions;

- The modern aspects of tourism demand have been researched, and the predominant tourists participating in the country's domestic tourism have been segmented. An author's methodology for characterizing and presenting the profiles of the tourists has been developed and profiles of some of the main market segments within Bulgaria's domestic tourism have been prepared;

- A theoretical analysis has been made of the conditions for development of health tourism in Bulgaria and its positioning in the system of tourism. An empirical study has been conducted of the suitability of the hotel facilities for the development of health tourism along the Black Sea coast of Bulgaria;

- The economic aspects and specific characteristics of the hotel and restaurant business have been revealed as well as the indicators to measure their effectiveness, pricing, main steps in analysing economic information;

7. Critical notes and recommendations

I have no concrete criticisms on the contents of the scholarly output of Chief Assist. Dr Elena Ilieva. I recommend that she should broaden the scope of her research in the field of restaurant business in Bulgaria and complaints in tourism.

This recommendation does not underestimate the significance of the scholarly and applied contributions pointed out and my positive overall evaluation of the creative work of the candidate.

8. Conclusion.

Chief Assist. Dr Elena Ilieva participates in the present competition with scholarly production which in terms of volume, quality, innovation, and applicability to tourism industry completely satisfies the requirements of the announced competition.

The candidate for the competition Chief Assist. Dr Elena Damyanova Ilieva meets all the requirements of the competition in compliance with the requirements of DASRBA and the requirements of Article 67 of the Rules on the Terms and Conditions for Acquiring Scientific Degrees and Holding Academic Positions of Prof. Dr Assen Zlatarov University – Burgas, for holding the academic position of “associate professor”.

In my capacity as a member of the Scientific Jury I declare that the scholarly and applied contributions of the candidate, her qualities and achievements as a lecturer and research worker give me reason **to vote in favour of Chief Assist. Dr Elena Damyanova Ilieva's holding the academic position of “associate professor”** in:

Area of higher education: 3. Social, economic, and legal sciences, Professional field:
3.9. Tourism (Alternative Hospitality).

17.08.2023
Burgas

Member of the Scientific Jury:
/Assoc. Prof. Katya Ilieva, PhD /