

R E V I E W

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Member of scientific jury appointed by order No. RD - 82 / 01.03.2024 of the
Rector of University "Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov" - Burgas

Subject: contest for occupying the academic position " Professor" in the field of higher education 7. "Health and sports", professional direction 7.4. "Public Health" (Health Tourism) announced in SG, № 1 / 02.01.2024 for the needs of the Faculty of Public Health and Health Care (FPHHC) at the University "Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov" - Burgas.

The only candidate in the competition is Assoc. prof. Zlatina Kaludova Karadjova

1. Biographical data and career development of the candidate

Assoc. prof. Zlatina Karadjova was born on 13.11.1973 in the city of Burgas. In 1995 acquires the EQD professional "bachelor" in the specialty "Tourism" from IMT "Aleko Konstantinov" at University "Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov" - Burgas. In 1999, she acquired a master's degree from the same university in the specialty "International Tourism". In the period 2002 - 2005, she was a doctoral student at the University "Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov". In 2006, she defended her dissertation on the topic "The quality of the Bulgarian sea tourism product and its management on the example of the Southern Black Sea Coast" and obtained a PhD in the scientific specialty "Social Management". From 2005-2012, she worked successively as Administrator, Front Office Manager and Complex Manager at RC "Sunny Beach". The academic career development of Assoc. prof. Zlatina Karadjova began in 2008 when she won a competition for an assistantship. In 2010, she was elected as chief assistant in the Department of "Marketing and Tourism" of the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University "Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov" - Burgas. In 2016, she acquired the academic position of "associate professor" in the scientific specialty "Economics and Management" in professional direction 3.9. "Tourism". From 19.12.2023, she was elected as head of the "Organization and Management of Health Care" Department at the Faculty of Public Health and Health Care (FPHHC). The candidate has a very good command of French and speaks English and Russian.

The brief information about the career development of Assoc. prof. Zlatina Karadjova shows the presence of extensive administrative experience and purposeful pursuit of academic development and professional development.

2. Scientific output of the candidate

Assoc. Prof. Zlatina Kaludova Karadjova presented herself in the competition with 63 real publications distributed by scientometric indicators in the following groups:

- A.1. Dissertation work for ESD "Doctor" - 1 piece;
- B.3. Habilitation thesis - monograph - 1 piece;
- G.5. Published monograph, which is not presented as the main habilitation thesis - 2 pieces;

- G.6. Published book based on a protected dissertation - 1 piece;
- G.7. Publications and reports published in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world-famous databases with scientific information - 1 piece;
- G.8. Publications and reports published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or published in edited collective volumes – 54 pieces;
- G.9. Published chapter of a collective monograph – 3 pieces;
- E.20. Published university textbook - 1 piece.

Of all the publications presented, 41 were printed in Bulgarian scientific publications, and 22 in foreign language and foreign scientific journals and anthologies. Assoc. prof. Zlatina Karadjova is the independent author in 40 (63.5%), first author in 14 (22.2%) and second author in 9 (14.3%) of the scientific publications. The candidate's scientific output has been published in authoritative Bulgarian scientific journals and anthologies.

The citation reference submitted by the candidate indicates 66 citations in Bulgarian and foreign scientific publications found in the databases of WEB OF SCIENCE and SCOPUS , etc. Citations within indicator "D" of the minimum requirements are distributed as follows: D.10. - 5 pieces; D.11. – 21 pieces; D.12. – 40 pieces.

3. Compliance with the minimum requirements of the University "Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov" - Burgas to occupy the academic position "professor" in PA 7.4. "Public Health"

Groups of indicators	Required number of points	Number of points scored by the candidate
Indicator A	50	50
Indicator B	0	0
Indicator C	100	100
Indicator G	250	1750
Indicator D	150	485
Indicator E	120	285
Total points	670	2670

From the 63 publications presented, the candidate scored 2,670 points, the number of which many times exceeds the minimum requirements of the University "Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov" - Burgas to occupy the academic position of "professor".

4. Thematic orientation and contributions of scientific production

Assoc. prof. Zlatina Karadjova's scientific interests are focused in the field of health tourism as a structural element of public health, finding realization in sustainable scientific development, individual and team publication activity. The broad scope of the candidate's published research results is determined by the integral approach used, which looks for the

intersections of methodological approaches used by different scientific disciplines. The scientific production presented by the candidate corresponds to the direction of the announced competition, containing original contributions of a theoretical, scientific-applied and scientific-informative nature, thematically grouped in the following five scientific directions:

4.1. Main determinants for sustainable development of health tourism in Bulgaria as an alternative to seasonal holiday tourism and a factor for strengthening public health. The COVID 19 pandemic and the Bulgarian tourism product (No. C3.1, D5.1, D8.2, D8.5, D8.6, D8.7, D8.10, D8.11, D8.12, D8.13, D8.14, D8.15, D8.16, D8.17, D8.18, D8.19, D8.26, D8.38, D8.43, D8.45, D8.48, D8.49, D8.51, D8.54, D9.1, D9.2)

This thematic direction, including twenty-six publications, is the most comprehensively developed in the candidate's scientific output. With substantiated theoretical and scientific-applied contributions are the four published monographs (two independent and two in a collective) including investigations on the existing managerial, economic, health and integrative opportunities and problems related to the sustainable development of health tourism in national and international aspects. In the wide range of thematic emphases in this direction, the following two independent monographs "*Recreation and health-relationship and dependence*" and "*Management of health tourism*" have original theoretical and applied scientific contributions. In them, Associate Professor Z. Karadjova defines health tourism as the intersection of medicine and tourism, in the context of preserving the physical and emotional health of the individual and society. Based on specific empirical studies, the candidate defines the following four main factors for the global development of medical tourism: *demographic*, related to the increase in life expectancy and population aging; *medical* related to growing number of socially significant diseases requiring specialized treatment, recreation, rehabilitation, etc.; *economic*, reflecting the increased material possibilities and scope of health insurance / insurance coverage; and *social* related to increased health literacy, accessible health information and travel options. The processes determining the need for recreation as an essential factor in health tourism for the prevention and treatment of diseases have been analyzed, namely - industrialization, urbanization, chronic stress, the "burn out" syndrome, leading to the deterioration of the individual's health condition. Basic terms related to recreation are defined, and the possibilities of standard and alternative types of tourism for a positive impact on the human organism are analyzed. In addition, the candidate establishes health tourism as most preferred ways of recreation, as well as the opportunity for Bulgaria to position itself as a four-season recreational destination. An empirical study conducted, established the leading place of health tourism in the preferences of respondents, as well as the contribution of tour operators to its promotion as a way of prevention and recreation. The forms of advertising and PR of Bulgaria as a year-round destination for active and passive recreation have been analyzed.

The candidate's studies on the concepts of sustainable development of touristic business management systems and, in particular, on management strategies and solutions in health

tourism have original contributions of a theoretical, applied and informative nature. The specific features of: health tourism as an alternative for the development of tourism in Bulgaria have been analyzed; the types of health tourism - medical, balneo, SPA and wellness; the health tourism management system within the touristic business - levels, structures and bodies; management strategies for the development of health tourism in our country; franchise activities, outsourcing and use of digital marketing to increase the efficiency of the tourism product.

In separate chapters of the published two collective monographs, Associate Professor Z. Karadjova presents results of the study of the possibilities for the development of health tourism on the "Bulgarian Southern Black Sea" and in the "Burgas Region". Their main contribution is the consistency and systematicity in the analysis of the motives and prerequisites for combining the tourism industry with business interests in the field of public health at the regional level. Original and scientifically applied contributions have been developed: evaluation of the available natural and anthropogenic resources determining the possibilities for the development of mass marine and health tourism at the regional level; strategic model for evaluating the effectiveness of structural units in health tourism at the regional level; algorithm of an example model of a system of indicators for evaluating the effectiveness of treatment and health-rehabilitation organizations; good practices in the field of medical and health tourism.

In this direction, the candidate has published 22 scientific articles and reports, thematically grouped in the following three areas: impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on tourism in Bulgaria; regional destinations for sea, climate and spa tourism; good practices, user profiles and evaluations of health tourism in our country. The published results establish: the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the national and international tourism market; the close relationship of health tourism with balneology, rehabilitation, medical care and recreation; the possibilities for prevention, rehabilitation and treatment of the consequences of diseases; techniques for developing strategies for the development of health tourism and for accounting for its socio-economic effect.

The publications of Prof. Zlatina Karadzova in this thematic direction contain original theoretical and applied scientific contributions, as well as opportunities for applying the obtained results.

4.2. Quality and standards of services in health tourism and the relationship of education and training to the quality of the tourism product. (D6, D9.3, D8.3, D8.21, D8.24, D8.25, D8.28, D8.29, D8.33, D8.34, D8.52)

The eleven publications of Assoc. prof. Z. Karadjova presented in this direction are mainly independent developments, thematically oriented to researching the quality of services in health tourism and its relationship with the quality of the educational process in our country. Studies on the quality of the tourist product for the end user in its technical, economic, social and educational aspects have a beneficial character. Of particular interest are the self-published book *"Quality and standards in tourism"* and the collective monograph *"Quality of services in health tourism on the example of spa centers in Bulgaria"*. In them, the candidate presents obtained results of

high scientific and practical significance for the development of health tourism, which legitimize her as a leading specialist and finder of the quality and standards of services in tourism. The interrelationships of quality in all its aspects are analyzed, such as quality of the tourist product, quality of services in health tourism and quality of the educational process. Basic approaches to quality management are proposed, with criteria and indicators for evaluating the complex tourist product in its hotel, restaurant, tour operator, travel agency and entertainment subsystems. As a result, the candidate offers specific models, methods and standards for evaluating the quality of health tourism products and services.

In nine independently published scientific articles and reports, Assoc. prof. Z. Karadjova presents the results of empirical sociological research conducted among employers in the field of tourism and employees of tourist enterprises operating on the territory of the Southern Black Sea coast. The connection of continuous training to the quality of services in tourism and to the career development of those employed in this business has been proven. The validity of the concept of training as an investment in tourism and the relationships between the quality of the educational process, the quality of the services and the quality of the tourist product in health tourism have been investigated. Recommendations have been formulated for the development of the training methodology with a problem-target orientation to the specific needs of health tourism.

Publications in this thematic direction are distinguished by the use of adequate methodological tools and opportunities for application of the obtained results.

4.3. Security and safety of the tourist product (G5.2, G7.1, G8.1, G8.8, D8.22, D8.23, D8.41, D8.46, D8.47)

Security and safety threats in tourism are an important decision-making factor both in offering travel packages and in choosing a particular tourist destination. The consequences of terrorist acts and threats have a strong impact on both tourist flows and the decision to travel due to heightened concerns about personal security and safety. In this aspect, the monograph of Assoc. prof. Z. Karadjova "*Bulgarian tourism and global terrorism: influences and challenges*" examines the impact of terrorist threats and attacks on tourism in Bulgaria. The conducted survey among Bulgarian hoteliers establishes the degree of preparedness of the hotel complexes on the Southern Black Sea coast for actions in the event of possible terrorist acts and threats. Good practices in risk management, as well as aspects of security and safety as main factors for choosing a tourist destination such as Bulgaria, have been analyzed. The scientific contributions of this monographic work include analyses of: the genesis and essential characteristics of global terrorism; threats to national security; the risks and consequences for tourism development; the existing good practices for ensuring security and safety of tourism at the regional and national level.

In this thematic direction, the candidate has published three articles and five reports at scientific conferences on the issues of security and safety of the tourism industry and the impact of terrorism on the activities of hoteliers, tour operators, transport companies, etc.

Recommendations have been made and normative and practical measures have been proposed to increase the security of tourists in Bulgaria.

4.4. Tour operator, agency, transport and intermediary activities in tourism (E20.1, G8.9, G8.20, G8.35, G8.36, G8.44)

The publications of Assoc. prof. Z. Karadjova in this thematic area are focused on researching the theoretical, methodical and applied aspects in the activities of tour operators, travel agents and transport agencies, considered as a link between the producers of basic and additional tourist services and their potential and real users - the tourists. In the wide range of thematic emphases in this direction, the published university textbook entitled "Tour operator, agency and tourist transport activity", as well as the six scientific articles and reports, have original theoretical and applied scientific contributions. Among the contributions in this direction, those of an original nature should be noted:

- The thesis that the tour operator is the main party to the contract for the tourist package as an independent type of contract to which the general rules for contracts can be applied.
- The complex analysis of the essential nature of the travel agency with its main functions, activities and tasks in the conditions of globalization.
- The results of the comparative analysis of the characteristics of the tourist and road transport with their economic, material and technical characteristics.

4.5. Diversification in the supply of Bulgarian tourist products (D8.4, D8.27, D8.30, D8.31, D8.32, D8.37, D8.39, D8.40, D8.42; D8.50.)

The main goal of the processes for the diversification of the tourist product in Bulgaria is related, in addition to the opportunities that the country has in offering summer and winter tourism, to focus on the development of alternative tourism - rural, cultural, ecological, sports, yachting, etc. The publications of Assoc. prof. Z. Karadjova in this direction represent analyzes of the possibilities of the Southern Black Sea coast to improve the business environment through: new investment decisions; construction of tourist attractions and related infrastructure; modernization of tourist sites; improving the marketing of tourist destinations; strengthening the partnership between the various actors; improvement of communication channels for recognition of the Bulgarian tourist product. The obtained results indicate opportunities for diversifying and innovating the Bulgarian tourist product and its development by enriching it with alternative types of tourism. Of interest is the candidate's scientific-practical study, aimed at analyzing the preferred ways of recreation; Bulgaria's opportunities for positioning itself as a year-round recreational destination and the role of tour operators in its promotion. The guidelines for the positioning of our country as a year-round destination offering very good opportunities for active and passive recreation are presented. The research confirms the leading role of health tourism as a preferred way of recreation.

The candidate's publications in this direction have applied scientific and scientific-informative contributions.

5. Educational and teaching activity and scientific supervision of doctoral students

The presented information establishes that Assoc. prof. Zlatina Karadjova is engaged in conducting lectures and exercises for students from EQD "Bachelor" and EQD "Master" in 13 disciplines from the specialties "Health Management", "Health Tourism", "Balneo Turism", Spa and wellness management. The academic workload realized by the candidate for the period 2020-2023 exceeded by one hundred hours the teaching normative for 2020-2021 of 360 hours and of 400 teaching hours for the period 2021-2023 academic years. The candidate is also involved in the development of curricula and case studies for educational practical seminars for students from the Bachelor's and Master's Colleges for the above-mentioned specialties.

Assoc. prof. Z. Karadjova is the scientific co-supervisor of three doctoral students who successfully defended their dissertations at the University "Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov" Burgas.

6. Participation in scientific projects

The participation of Assoc. prof. Zlatina Karadjova as a member and team leader in the implementation of seven national and four international scientific and educational projects was established.

CONCLUSION

In the current competition for awarding the academic position "professor" participated as the only candidate Assoc. prof. Zlatina Kaludova Karadjova. She presents itself with 63 real publications containing the necessary scientific and practical contributions. 66 citations were found in Bulgarian and foreign sources. The assessment of the candidate's scientific production and educational activity shows: exceeding the scientometric requirements; relevance and contributing nature of the presented scientific works; published research results of scientific and applied value.

In accordance with the provisions of the "Law for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria" and the "Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of the University "Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov" Burgas, I will vote positively, recommending the members of the honorable Scientific Jury to award Associate professor Zlatina Kaludova Karadjova the academic position of "Professor" in the field of higher education 7. "Health care and sports" in professional direction 7.4. "Public Health" (Health Tourism) for the needs of the Faculty of Public Health and Health Care at the University "Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov" Burgas.

04/12/2024
Sofia

Reviewer:

Prof. Dr. Kancho Tehanget