



## STATEMENT

Regarding: competition for the occupation of the academic position "Professor" in the field of higher education 7. Health care and sports, professional direction 7.4 "Public health" (health tourism), for the needs of the Faculty of Public Health and Health Care, University "Prof. Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov, Burgas, announced in State Gazette No. 1/02.01.2024 and on the website of Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov University, Burgas on 03.01.2024

by Prof. Zlatka Dimitrova Dimitrova, Ph.D., Dsci, Faculty of Chemistry and Pharmacy, SU "St. Kl. Ohridski", Educational and Scientific Laboratory of "Social Pharmacy", Department of Physical Chemistry, member of the Scientific Jury, appointed by Order No. R-82/1.03.2024. of Prof. Hristo Bozov, MD, PhD- Rector of "Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov" University, Burgas.

Associate Professor Zlatina Kaludova Karadjova, PhD, participated in the announced competition as the only candidate. The Scientific Jury in its meeting on 15.03.2024 at 1:15 p.m. decided to admit the candidate to scientific evaluation and chose the chairman of the Scientific Jury and the reviewers, and the other members of the Scientific Jury must present an opinion on the announced competition. My opinion has been drawn up in accordance with the Law on Higher Education in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for the Application of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff and the Regulations on Terms and Conditions for acquiring scientific degrees and occupying academic positions at the University "Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov- Burgas, accepted by the Academic Council on 14.03. 2024/protocol No. 11/.

### I. Career development of the candidate:

Zlatina Kaludova Karadjova was born on 13.11.1973. She graduated from the Institute of International Tourism as a professional bachelor majoring in "Hotel and Restaurant Organization and Management"/diploma 003951/. She graduated with a master's degree in "International Tourism" in 1999 at the Faculty of Social Sciences at "Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov" University, Burgas/diploma 004671 from 1999/. In 2006, she successfully defended a dissertation on the topic "The quality of the Bulgarian marine tourism product and its management (on the example of the southern Black Sea coast)" in front of a specialized scientific council SSC "Management of the Economy" and obtained a PhD in the scientific specialty 05.02.20 "Social Management" / diploma No. 30526 /29.05.2006, SC 16, Protocol No. 5/14.03.2006/.

From 2005 to 2012, she worked at RC "Sunny Beach", successively holding all positions in the tourism industry - from administrator to complex manager. From 2013 to 2023, she carried out translation, mediation and tour guiding activities, information services for English and French tourists in Bulgaria, office and administrative activities. She is an outstanding specialist with many years of practical experience in the field of tourism in our country.

Her career development as a teacher and researcher in the field of tourism at "Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov" University, Burgas includes:

- 2008-2010 she was selected as an assistant professor with the ONS "doctor";
- 2010-2012 she was promoted and worked as a chief assistant professor in the "Marketing and Tourism" department, FSS;
- on 29.11.2012 of the Faculty of Social Sciences /FSS/ after winning the competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" elects her as "Associate Professor" in the scientific specialty 05.02.18. Economics and management (tourism) in professional direction 3.9. Tourism in the Department of



"Marketing and Tourism", FSS, in which department she carries out for 4 years educational and scientific research activities, scientific guidance of student projects and theses, scientific guidance and reviews of diploma theses, participation and management of scientific and educational projects and other activities supported by the relevant orders of the Rector of the University;

- from 30.09.2016- until now Zlatina Karadzova, PhD works as an Associate Professor in the Department " Organization and Management of Health Care", Faculty of Public Health and Health Care at "Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov" University. Burgas./a certificate of the candidate's work experience in FPHHC/ has been presented;

She was awarded the Certificate for contribution to practical trainings carried out under the project of the Ministry of Education and Science and the University of "Prof. Dr. As. Zlatarov, Burgas.

## **II. Scientific research activity:**

The overall scientific production of Assoc. Professor Zlatina Karadjova, PhD includes **63 scientific works** (monographs, publications, participation in scientific forums) and **11 participations** in research projects, which do not repeat those presented for AD "Assoc. Professor" and are outside the list of publications from the dissertation for the educational and scientific degree "PhD", distributed as follows:

- 1. One independent monograph (habilitation thesis) according to indicator B.3.1;**
- 2. Two published monographs (1 independent and 1 co-authored), which are not presented as the main habilitation thesis according to indicator G 5.1., G 5.2.**
- 3. One published book, based on a protected dissertation work for the award of the ESD"PhD" under indicator D6.**
- 4. Chapters in three collective monographs, by group of indicators G.9.1., G.9.2., G.9.3.;**
- 5. One textbook on indicator E 20.;**
- 6. One publication under indicator G .7. (published in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information (Scopus)**
- 7. Fifty-four (54) publications from indicator G.8. in full text, of which: 36 independent and 18 co-authored, 17 in English and 5 in Russian. (publications and reports published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals and indexed or published in edited collective volumes).**
- 8. Participation in 4 international, 5 national and 4 intra-university projects, 2 of which She is the leader of.**

The main topic of the publications of Assoc. Prof. Zlatina Karadjova, PhD completely falls within the scope of the scientific speciality of the announced competition and confirms the reference for the contributions of the author.

The main part of the research is oriented in the following directions:

- I. Quality and standards in tourism and health tourism. Relationship and dependence between the quality of education and career development - 11 scientific works and publications (G 6, G 8.3, G8.28, G 8.29, G 9.3; G 8.21; G 8.24; G8.25; G8.33; G8.34 , G8.52.)
- II. Security and safety of the tourist product, impact of terrorism on tourism - in the context of public health - 12 scientific works and publications (according to indicator G 5.2, G 7.1, G 7.2, G 8.1, G 8, G 8.8, G 8.22, G 8.23, G 8.41, G 8.46, G8., G 8.47).
- III. Opportunities for diversified supply and innovation of the Bulgarian tourist product, in the context of sustainable development and emotional and mental health. Communication channels for recognition - 9 publications (according to indicator G 8.4; G 8.27, G 8.30, G 8.31, G 8.32, G 8.39, G 8.40, G 8.42; G 8.50.)
- IV. Possibilities of the Bulgarian tour operators for mediation in the field of health tourism - 6 scientific works and publications (according to indicator G 8.9, G 8.20, G 8.35, G 8.36, G 8.44, E 20.1)
- V. Health tourism as an alternative to seasonal vacations for the development of the offer of a year-round Bulgarian tourist product. Impact of the Covid 19 pandemic in the context of public health - 26 scientific works and publications (by indicator B 3.1, G 5.1, G 8.2, G 8.5, G 8.6, G 8.7, G 8.10, G 8.11, G 8.12, G 8.13, G 8.14, G 8.15, G 8.16, G 8.17, G 8.18, G 8.19, G 8.26, G 8.38, G 8.43, G 8.45, D 8.48, G 8.49, G 8.51, G 8.54, G 9.1, G 9.2.)



The scientific researches of associate professor Dr. Zlatina Karadjova, PhD have an indisputable contribution in various areas of mass and alternative forms of tourism. Burgas region offers a combination of mass marine recreational, route-informative, rural, cultural, festival, culinary, wine, adventure, eco and health tourism in an area with an exceptional diversity of natural and anthropogenic tourism resources. The unique combination of sea, lakes, mountains and rivers, exotic vegetation and diversity of animal and plant species, together with traditions and authentic culture and customs, provide diverse opportunities for the development of alternative types of tourism: cultural, yacht, sports and cruise, which are analyzed and evaluated in detail in the works of Associate Professor Zlatina Karadzova, PhD. After her transfer to the Department of Health Care Organization and Economics at the Faculty of Public Health and Health Care, her scientific studies are directed to a new field of tourism, namely **health tourism**, which combines "medical", "climate-balneotherapy", "wellness" and "spa" tourism. In her studies over the last few years, emphasis has been placed on society's needs for developing and maintaining health tourism in our country, highlighting Bulgaria's opportunities to become a leading destination in this direction. Based on the five strategic goals of the Health Tourism Development Plan in Bulgaria for the period 2022-2025 of the Ministry of Tourism, related to the creation, imposition of image and positioning of Bulgaria as a tourist destination for health tourism, with responsible institutions the Ministry of tourism and the Ministry of Health

([https://www.tourism.government.bg/sites/tourism.government.bg/files/documents/202112/turizum\\_2022\\_-\\_2025.pdf](https://www.tourism.government.bg/sites/tourism.government.bg/files/documents/202112/turizum_2022_-_2025.pdf)) FPHHC at the University "prof. Dr. As. Zlatarov" 3 years earlier proposed two scientific research projects for internal university funding and was involved in their implementation, the head of which was Associate Professor Zlatina Karadjova, PD: Project 428/2019 on the topic: "Analysis of the possibilities for the development of health tourism in the Burgas region and Project 443/2020 on the topic: "Analysis of the possibilities for integrating marine with medical tourism on the Bulgarian southern Black Sea coast". She participated as an expert in 3 more projects related to the development of tourism in the Burgas Region, namely: Project 437/2022 on the topic: "Climatic-balneotherapy tourism in the South-Eastern Black Sea Coast as a management decision to change the standard marine tourism product in crisis conditions", Project 420/ 2019 "The Bulgarian diaspora in Moldova, Hungary, Serbia and Romania - problems and challenges" and Project BG16RFOP002-2.010-0002 "Increasing the capacity of SMEs in the tourism sector by providing support for the creation and functioning of the Organizations for the Management of Tourist Areas" , financed by the Operational Program "Innovations and Competitiveness" 2014-2020, co-financed by the European Union through the European fund for regional development and national co-financing". In her capacity as an expert, she is a member of the working teams of 4 more international projects financed under the cross-border cooperation program INTERREG IPA Bulgaria - Turkey 2014-2020.

The results of her studies are reflected in her numerous publications, reports presented at scientific conferences in the country and abroad and in several monographs - independent or co-authored, but with a clearly defined personal contribution of the candidate in the current competition. Her participation with reports at scientific forums at home and abroad has made the results of her scientific research known to the scientific community. I was strongly impressed by the fact that a research group has been formed in the department, which works very actively on projects funded at various levels according to the possibilities for organizing high-quality, economically efficient and safe forms of new types of tourism, including health tourism, and provides guidelines for improving the image of our country as a year-round destination offering wonderful opportunities for active and passive recreation. I find particularly useful from a content point of view and supported by empirical studies, the series of monographs discussing the various important aspects of tourism, incl. and health tourism - strategic, organizational, economic, managerial, marketing, social, etc., along the Bulgarian southern Black Sea coast for all interested parties. But I must note my surprise at the only Russian-language publication in co-authorship in a journal referenced and indexed in a world database with scientific information (Scopus). Considering the importance of her developments and excellent command of English, French and Russian



languages, I will allow myself to recommend the candidate in the future to direct her publications in co-authorship with colleagues, PhD students and students in scientific publications, refereed and indexed in the world databases with scientific information. I am convinced that this will significantly increase the number of citations of her publications.

The citation reference shows 5 citations in scholarly publications referenced and indexed in the world's scientific information databases, 21 citations in peer-reviewed monographs and collective volumes, and 40 citations in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals. I fully accept the author's reference for the contributions of her scientific research in a scientific theoretical and applied aspect. If no less than 670 points are required, the presented scientific output of Assoc. Prof. Zlatina Karadjova in her Reference for the fulfillment of the minimum requirements specified in Appendix one of the Regulations for the conditions for acquiring scientific degrees and holding academic positions at a University "Prof. Dr. As. Zlatarov"-Burgas corresponds to 2,670 points, exceeding many times the minimum requirements, not only in general, but also by groups of indicators.

She is the scientific co-supervisor of 3 successfully defended doctoral students

**III. Academic and teaching activity, scientific guidance and reviews of diploma theses in bachelor's and master's programs, scientific supervisor and consultant of student research projects and other expert activities:**

Assoc. Prof. Zlatina Karadjova, PHD has been teaching for 11 years in the Faculty of Public Science(FPS) and the Faculty of Public Health and Health Care(FPHHC) at the University "Prof. Dr. As. Zlatarov" Burgas as a qualified teacher. Her academic workload exceeds her statutory employment by more than 100 hours on average per year. She is the academic mentor of 139 students who completed 240 hours of internships, since 2022 she is the tutor of tourism and health tourism students, she is the scientific supervisor of 15 graduates from master's programs and a reviewer of theses of another 6 masters and she is the scientific supervisor and consultant of more than 15 student research projects reported at scientific conferences in the two faculties: FPS and FPHHC. She has participated in a project to create materials for distance learning, for training students in marketing research, conducting practices from schools in Burgas etc. She has participated in committees for developing and/or updating curricula and programs for the ECD Bachelor and ECD Master in Health Management, for the opening of new master's programs in Management of a Tourist Destination and International Tourism, etc.

In connection with the established trend to create hybrid specialties, uniting different professional areas and the training of specialists with knowledge and skills in more than one professional field, a new master's program "Healthy Tourism" was created in PN 7.4 "Public Health" from the department " Organization and management of health care", University "Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov» - Burgas. It is intended for the training of specialists with competencies from both PD 3.9. Tourism and PD 7.4. Public Health. The master's program is also inspired by the requirements of business, namely: medical and rehabilitation centers and medical facilities planning to conclude contracts with the health funds of other countries, spa and wellness hotel complexes, increasingly emphasizing health services, specialized hospitals for treatment and rehabilitation, centers for complex medico-social care, hospices for rehabilitation and palliative care and all stakeholders of the health infrastructure. Prof. Karadjova actively participates in this process according to her competence.

My personal impressions of the candidate are very good. I know her as a correct researcher, an ambitious and searching specialist, a built and established manager and marketer in the tourism industry, and I am fully convinced that after her habilitation as a professor, she will involve her students and PhD students in scientific research and development of scientific projects.

**Conclusion.** Based on the analysis presented above, I give my positive assessment of the candidate's research, teaching and expert activities in the current competition. I believe that Assoc. Prof. Zlatina Kaludova Karadjova, PhD is an established teacher and researcher and far exceeds the minimum

requirements for occupying the academic position of "Professor", approved by the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria( LDASRB), the Regulations for the Application of The Law on the Development of the Academic Staff (RALDAS) and the Regulations on the conditions for acquiring scientific degrees and occupying academic positions at the University "Prof. Dr. As. Zlatarov"-Burgas. With complete conviction, I recommend to the respected members of the Scientific Jury and to the members of the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Public Health and Health Care at the University "Prof. Dr. As. Zlatarov"-Burgas to vote for awarding the academic position of "Professor" to Assoc. Prof. Zlatina Kaludova Karadzova, PhD in professional direction 7.4 "Public Health" (health tourism)", field of higher education 7. Health care and sports, for which personally I will vote "Yes".

15.04.2024  
Sofia

Signature: .....  
/ Prof. Zlatka Dimitrova, PhD, ~~D~~Sci /