

REVIEW

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Regarding: evaluation of a candidate in a competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" in a professional field 3.8. Economics, scientific specialty "Economics and Management (Industry)"

Grounds for providing of the review: Decision of the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Industry and Commerce (Protocol No. 8/26.04.2023), order No. 364/02.05.2023 of the Rector of the Tsenov Academy of Economics, Svishtov for the appointment of the composition of the Scientific Jury and decision of the Scientific Jury at its first meeting on 15.05.2023.

1. Competition data

The competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" is in the professional field 3.8 Economics, scientific specialty "Economics and Management (Industry)", for the needs of the Department of "Industrial Business and Entrepreneurship". It was announced by decision of the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Industry and Commerce (Protocol No. 8/26.04.2023). The competition announcement was published in the State Gazette, issue 21/07.03.2023.

2. Candidate in the competition

Emil Borialavov Nikolov is the only candidate in the announced competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" in professional field 3.8. Economics, scientific specialty "Economics and Management (Industry)" for the needs of the Department of "Industrial Business and Entrepreneurship".

It is clear from the documents and materials provided to me that Emil Nikolov, Ph.D., was admitted to participate in the announced competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" at the Department of "Industrial Business and Entrepreneurship" at the Academy of Economics "D. A. Tsenov", Svishtov. It meets the requirements specified in Art. 116 of the "Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at the Academy of Economics" (RDASAE) for admission to participation in a competition for the academic position of "associate professor".

Emil Nikolov was born on February 16, 1982 in Svishtov. He graduated from secondary education in 2000 at SCHS "Dimitar Hadjivasilev" - Svishtov (diploma Series B-2000, No. 005253, reg. No. 5361/43 dated 03.07.2000), specialty "Business Administration". In the same year, he was accepted as a student at the "Dimitar A. Tsenov" Academy of Economics, majoring in "Business Administration". He successively acquired the Bachelor's degree (diploma Series CA - 2004, No. 029926, registration No. 52065/20.10.2004) and the Master's degree (Diploma Series CA - 2005, No. 035926, reg. No. 56637/30.11.2005 .) in the same specialty. Based on a competition in 2006, he was enrolled as a full-time doctoral student at the "Industrial Business and Entrepreneurship" department of the Dimitar A. Tsenov Academy of Economics. After successfully defending a dissertation on the topic of "Sustainability of the firm's competitiveness", he obtained the Educational and Scientific Degree "PhD" (diploma No. 33628 dated 14.12.2009).

Emil Nikolov worked as an "Economist" at "Svilosa" AD - Svishtov in the period 2006-2007. After winning a competition in 2009, he was appointed as an assistant in the "Industrial Business and Entrepreneurship" department of the "D. A. Tsenov", and a year later - as head assistant. At the time of participation in the competition, the candidate held the academic position of "head assistant" on a basic employment contract at the department of "Industrial Business and Entrepreneurship" at the "D. A. Tsenov" Academy of Economics. According to the Certificate dated 20.03.2023, on the same date Emil Borislavov Nikolov, assistant professor, has a total work experience of 14 years and 1 month, of which in "D. A. Tsenov" Academy of Economics 13 years and 4 months. The professional experience of the candidate fully meets the requirements of art. 116, paragraph 2, item 3.1.

By decision of the Departmental Council of the "Industrial Business and Entrepreneurship" department from 2016, Emil Nikolov was appointed as the departmental Erasmus coordinator.

The candidate participated in a number of trainings and specializations ("Virtual Learning Environment Moodle", "Project Management", "Project Management with Microsoft Project", "Training of Trainers - Basic Course", "Application of the Case Method in Teaching Economics Students", "Publication in refereed journals with an impact factor", "Technology transfer and intellectual property protection and management", "Intellectual property objects - essential aspects and opportunities for generating economic growth", "Basics of Java programming" and etc.), in order to increase his qualifications and skills.

Emil Nikolov has been a member of the "Bulgarian Association of CSR Specialists" since 2021 (currently "Association's Sustainability Specialist"), and since 2023 he has been a member of the association's Management Board.

Head assistant professor Emil Nikolov, PhD, is a member of the Faculty Council of the Faculty of "Industry and Commerce" for the term 2020-2024 from the quota of non-habilitation members.

Emil Nikolov takes an active part in mobilities as a teacher under the "Erasmus +" program (Croatia - 2 mobilities, Moldova, the Czech Republic, Montenegro and the Republic of North Macedonia), as well as under the project BG05M2OP001-2.016-0004-C01 "Economic education in Bulgaria 2030 " of the "NOIR" program, carried out in Romania.

The candidate is fluent in English (independent level) and Russian (basic level).

According to the announced competition, the candidate has submitted a published monographic work, which does not repeat the one for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree "doctor" and fully meets the minimum national requirements for scientific and teaching activities.

3. Quantitative and meaningful characteristics of the presented scientific works

Emil Nikolov participated in the competition as an author (co-author) of 34 publications, including:

- √ monographs (without dissertation work for awarding the educational and scientific degree "doctor") - 1 pc. with a volume of 184 standard typewritten pages;
- √ scientific studies – 8 pc, of which 7 co-authored, with a total volume of 275 pages;
- √ scientific articles – 6 pc., of which 2 co-authored, with a total volume of 95 pages;
- √ scientific reports – 19 pc., of which 4 co-authored, with a total volume of 160 pages.

The total volume of the scientific production of the associate professor candidate is 714 standard pages. Scientific publications do not repeat those presented for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree "doctor".

From the provided Reference on the fulfillment of the minimum national requirements for occupying the academic position of "associate professor" in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences and the additional requirements specified in RDASAE, it is clear that Dr. Nikolov meets the requirements. So, for example, the candidate has the required 50 points for indicator group "A" (defended dissertation work). According to group of indicators "B", an independent monograph published in 2019 was presented (100 points), and

according to group of indicators "G", with the required 200 points, Dr. Nikolov declared 276.52 points.

Dr. Emil Nikolov's publications are in various scientific fields - corporate social responsibility, knowledge management, company competitiveness management, personnel management, entrepreneurship, etc. It should be noted, however, that a large part of them are focused in the field of corporate social responsibility. This fact shows the consistency and purposefulness of the scientific research of the associate professor candidate. Emil Nikolov's publications are on current economic and management issues, they are distinguished by a good knowledge of the issues, use of a rich research toolkit, thoroughness and analyticalness, argumentation of theses and conclusions, scientific correctness and the possibility of practical applicability. Dr. Nikolov's orientation towards insufficiently researched and developed problems (for example, entrepreneurial attitudes of students in Bulgaria, models for managing company knowledge, effects of corporate social responsibility, etc.) deserves admiration. A large part of Dr. Nikolov's publications have found a place in authoritative publications (Economic World Collection, The Scientific Papers of UNWE, Economic Archive, Dialogue, Scientific Research Almanac, etc.).

It is important to note that the candidate's publications are closely related to the scientific specialty for which the current competition is announced:

√ in publ. 9.1 and 9.3 present the results of empirical studies of the attitudes and intentions of students from Bulgarian universities, which allows to identify the obstacles and opportunities for stimulating the entrepreneurial activity of young people in Bulgaria;

√ in publ. 9.8 examines company knowledge as a strategic resource and factor in the competitive struggle, the mechanisms for their sharing (publ. 7.13), and in publ. 7.22, 7.23 and 9.6 a process-oriented conceptual model of company knowledge management is proposed, noting that each company, depending on the specifics (size, company culture, management style, available information technologies, etc.), as well as from the amount and nature of the knowledge available, one or another model for managing this knowledge can offer;

√ publ. 6.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4, 7.5, 7.6, 7.7, 7.8, 7.9, 7.10, 7.11, 7.12, 7.14, 7.15, 7.17, 9.2 and 9.4 are dedicated to various aspects of corporate social responsibility - its essence, its development in Bulgaria, its main directions, positive and negative effects, reporting of financial and non-financial information, international CSR reporting initiatives, its manifestation in the field of human resources, in enterprises from individual sectors of the economy and in the conditions of COVID-19, its integration in agricultural cooperatives and

the tourist industry, as well as corporate social irresponsibility, its motives and forms of manifestation (publ. 7.1);

√ various aspects of the field of personnel management are the subject of research in publ. 7.19.

√ in publ. 7.18 and 9.7 various issues of the competitiveness of Bulgarian enterprises are considered, problems are outlined, conclusions and ideas are formulated and recommendations are made that can serve the enterprises in choosing competitive strategies.

A central place in the candidate's scientific output is occupied by the monographic work "Corporate social responsibility: disclosure of non-financial information". The monograph project was discussed at a meeting of the Departmental Council of the "Industrial Business and Entrepreneurship" department (Protocol No. 12 of 03/25/2019). The purpose of this undoubtedly up-to-date research is to systematize, summarize and further develop the theoretical propositions dedicated to corporate social responsibility and the disclosure of non-financial information, to analyze and evaluate the extent to which Bulgarian business organizations take advantage of the opportunities for non-financial reporting. In the monograph, the author defends the thesis that the wider spread of non-financial reporting among Bulgarian business organizations would lead to the achievement of a number of positive effects for them and society, including the provision of competitive advantages and sustainable development.

The first chapter of the monograph presents the theoretical foundations of corporate social responsibility. The essence, characteristics and principles of CSR are clarified. The author analyzes and classifies the existing definitions of CSR into two main groups - author's and institutional. The historical development of CSR has been traced, both from the point of view of its practical appearance, and in terms of the development of theoretical positions in this area. Arguments for and against CSR are identified. The problem of CSR evaluation is also examined, concluding that the lack of a generally accepted definition of CSR also affects the impossibility of reaching a validated and generally accepted methodology for its evaluation. The second chapter is entirely devoted to the reporting of non-financial information. In it, the author clarifies the essence of non-financial reporting and its distribution in business organizations. The issues of the positive effects and barriers to CSR, established structures (frameworks) for non-financial reporting and the quality of social reports are successively examined. Finally, the nature, meaning, approaches used and applicable standards in the process of auditing social reports are clarified. The results of the empirical study of non-financial reporting in the practices of Bulgarian business organizations are presented in chapter

three of the monographic work. The author introduces us to the research methodology - its goals, scope, information security, limitations and algorithm. The conclusion of the study is that Bulgarian enterprises make little use of both the structure and guidelines of the Global Reporting Initiative and the Communication of Progress for disclosing non-financial information, and the possibilities of the Corporate Register are little known and even less used by them. In addition, serious issues related to the quality of the communiqués and the overall reporting process were also identified. At the end of this part, the author reasonably presents various possibilities for stimulating non-financial reporting by Bulgarian business organizations.

The associate professor candidate has participated in six research projects funded by the state grant for scientific activity (one independent project, one project as supervisor and four as a member of the research team), as well as in one project with partial funding of a scientific forum. With this, he exceeds the requirements of Art. 116, para. 2, item 4.

In conclusion, Dr. Nikolov's publications prove his scientific fruitfulness, innovation, high competence and specific knowledge in the fields of corporate social responsibility, company competitiveness management, personnel management, company knowledge management and entrepreneurship.

Conclusion: The scientific research and project activity of Dr. Emil Nikolov in quantitative and qualitative terms corresponds to the requirements of RDASAE for occupying the academic position "Associate Professor".

4. Quantitative and qualitative assessment of the teaching activity

In order to prepare a quantitative and qualitative evaluation of the teaching work, the candidate has submitted documents and evidence necessary for participation in the announced competition for the academic position of "associate professor". For example, from a report issued by the "Bachelor and Master's Education" department, it is clear that the total classroom workload of Emil Borislavov Nikolov, head assistant professor, for the last five academic years (from 2018/2019 to 2022/2023) significantly exceeded the employment standard set by the Academic Council of the Academy of Economics.

In educational and qualification degree "Bachelor" Emil Nikolov, head assistant professor, leads lectures/seminars on the academic disciplines:

- "Enterprise Economics";
- "Organization of the Industrial Enterprise";

- "Human Resources Management";
- "Management of the Small Enterprise";
- "Management of the Competitiveness of the Industrial Enterprise";
- "Projects Management in Industry";
- "Entrepreneurship" etc.

In addition, Emil Nikolov is responsible for the pre-graduate practice of the students of the "Industrial Business and Entrepreneurship" major.

At the Master's, the candidate takes part in the training of students from the master's programs "Industrial Management", "Corporate Management" and "Business Innovation and Management (joint program)" in the following disciplines:

- "Outsourcing Projects Management";
- "Anti-crisis Management of the Corporation";
- "Knowledge Management in the Industrial Enterprise";
- "Innovative Entrepreneurship" and others.

The candidate participated in the development and teaching of 14 lecture courses - 8 lecture courses in the educational and qualification degree Bachelor and 6 in the educational and qualification degree Master. Specifically, these are:

in EQD "Bachelor":

- " Enterprise Economics";
- " Human Resources Management";
- "Management of the Competitiveness of the Industrial Enterprise";
- "Management of the Small Enterprise";
- " Projects Management in Industry";
- "Entrepreneurship";
- "Entrepreneurship - Part One";
- "Entrepreneurship - Part Two";

in EQD "Master":

- "Corporate Management";
- "Anti-Crisis Management of the Corporation";
- "Outsourcing Projects Management";
- "Knowledge Management";
- "Innovative Entrepreneurship";
- "Corporate Entrepreneurship".

To ensure his educational and teaching work Emil Nikolov co-authored a number of textbooks ("Enterprise Economics", "Outsourcing Projects Management", "Management of the Competitiveness of the Industrial Enterprise", "Entrepreneurship", "Management of the Small Enterprise", etc.) , providing the education of students from various specialties in EQD "bachelor" and master's programs administered by the Department of "Industrial Business and Entrepreneurship" and in the various forms of education (regular, part-time and distance).

The candidate has submitted, in accordance with the requirements of Article 116, Paragraph 5, Item 3 from RDASAE, a self-contained textbook. The textbook on "Project Management in Industry" was discussed and accepted at the Faculty Council with two internal reviewers (Protocol No. 20 of 25.06.2019). It is in accordance with the established curriculum for the study discipline "Project Management in Industry", studied by students in full-time and part-time study at the Bachelor's degree of Economics and Business, majoring in "Industrial Business and Entrepreneurship".

Conclusion: The educational and teaching activity of Emil Nikolov, quantitatively and qualitatively, meets the requirements of Art. 116, Para. 5 of RDASAE for occupying the academic position of "associate professor".

5. Scientific and scientific-applied achievements and contributions of the candidate

The main contributions in the candidate's scientific publications can be expressed in the following directions:

Contributions of a theoretical-scientific nature, finding expression in the enrichment of theories in the fields of company knowledge management and corporate social responsibility:

- √ a conceptual model for company knowledge management was developed;
- √ a classification of the positive effects of corporate social responsibility was developed;
- √ dozens of forms of manifestation of corporate social irresponsibility have been systematized;

- √ an integrated model of the main and secondary directions for the realization of corporate social responsibility has been developed;

- √ scientific knowledge in the field of reporting non-financial information has been further developed.

Contributions of a methodical and practical nature:

- √ a methodology for evaluation and analysis of the integration of non-financial reporting in business organizations has been developed and approved;

- √ a sector-oriented methodological toolkit for assessing corporate social responsibility was constructed, tailored to the specifics of enterprises from the "bicycle manufacturing" sector;
- √ an assessment was made of the degree of distribution and quality of non-financial reporting among Bulgarian business organizations, based on which problem areas were identified and various recommendations and possible solutions were defined;
- √ important problems in the field of staff training in Bulgarian enterprises have been identified and conclusions and recommendations have been formulated that can serve to improve the training process;
- √ the manifestation of corporate social responsibility among enterprises from different sectors and branches of the Bulgarian economy has been studied and analyzed;
- √ problems have been identified and possible solutions have been proposed for using the Communiqués on progress as a tool for disclosing non-financial information by Bulgarian enterprises.

6. Candidate's Citations

From the attached Report on the implementation of the minimum national requirements for occupying the academic position "docent" in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences and the additional requirements specified in RDASAE, it is clear that a significant part of the scientific publications of ch. assistant professor Emil Nikolov, PhD, are cited by other authors, and according to group "D" indicators, with the collected 100 points, he far exceeds the required 50 points. This is sufficient reason to conclude that Dr. Nikolov is known in scientific circles and his scientific results in the fields of corporate social responsibility, management of company competitiveness, entrepreneurship and knowledge management are recognized by his colleagues as well as by "D . A. Tsenov" Economy of Economics, as well as from other Bulgarian universities.

7. Critical notes, questions and recommendations

I do not find any significant weaknesses in the candidate's scientific output. There is some repetition of texts and settings in different publications, but this is understandable and to some extent inevitable. I kindly make the following recommendations:

- to publish his scientific works in renowned foreign publications;
- engage in scientific supervision of doctoral students;

- to use his accumulated experience and knowledge to initiate and lead scientific research and other projects, including international ones.

8. Summary conclusion and opinion

Taking into account the indisputable achievements in the teaching, research and project activities of the candidate, his professional qualities, expert potential and academic reputation, I dare to say that he meets the requirements specified in the "Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at the Academy of Economics" for occupying the academic position "Associate Professor". Therefore, with complete conviction, I declare my positive vote and recommend to the respected scientific jury to propose to the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Industry and Commerce to approve Emil Borislavov Nikolov as an "Associate Professor" in the scientific specialty "Economics and Management (Industry)".

Svishtov

19 May, 2023

Reviewer:

(Prof. L. Varamezov, PhD)