

## REVIEW

By Prof. Dr. Lyubcho Vamezov, Department of Industrial Business and Entrepreneurship at the Tsenov Academy of Economics

**Regarding:** evaluation of a candidate in a competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the field of higher education: 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional field 3.8. Economics, scientific specialty: "Economics and management (tourism)"

### 1. Candidate presentation

**Chief Assist. Prof. Dr. Lyubomira Krasimirova Todorova** is the only candidate in the announced competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional field 3.8. Economics, scientific specialty: "Economics and Management (Tourism)" for the needs of the Department of "Economics and Management of Tourism" - 1 place. The announcement of the competition was published in the State Gazette, issue 113 of December 23, 2025.

From the documents and materials provided to me, it is evident that Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Lyubomira Todorova has been admitted to participate in the announced competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" at the Department of "Economics and Tourism Management" at the Tsenov Academy of Economics - Svishtov.

The candidate Lyubomira Krasimirova Todorova holds the academic position of "Chief Assistant" on a basic employment contract at the Department of "Economics and Tourism Management", Faculty of "Industry and Commerce" at the Tsenov Academy of Economics - Svishtov from 19.09.2019 to the time of participation in this competition and continues to work in this position.

### 2. Grounds for writing the review

This review was prepared in accordance with a decision of the Faculty of Industry and Commerce, Protocol No. 6/18 February 2026 and Order No. 140 of 19 February 2026 of the Rector of the Tsenov Academy of Economics, according to

which I am appointed as a member of the scientific jury for the announced competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor". The order is based on Art. 5, para. 1 and para. 2 of the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at the Tsenov Academy of Economics (RDASTAE) and the decisions of the first meeting of the Scientific Jury, held on 02.03.2026 in connection with a competition announced in the State Gazette, issue 113 of 23 December 2025 for the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the field of higher education: 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional field: 3.8. Economics, scientific specialty: "Economics and Management (Tourism)".

The form and structure of this review are in accordance with the sample review structure attached in the documentation provided to me. The content of the review is based on documents and materials from the announced competition, which meet the requirements of RDASTAE for admission to participate in a competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor".

### **3. Personal characteristics of the candidate**

Lyubomira Krasimirova Todorova was born in Plovdiv. She completed her secondary education in 2004 at Tsar Simeon the Secondary School in Plovdiv (specialty: Manager of Medium and Small Business), and her higher education at the Tsenov Academy of Economics in Svishtov, majoring in Finance (bachelor's degree) in 2008, and majoring in Banking Management (master's degree) in 2009.

In the period 2008 – 2014, Lyubomira Todorova worked as a "Sales Specialist" at Alfa Bank. Since 2013, she has been a full-time doctoral student at the Department of Commerce and Tourism Business, scientific specialty "Economics and Management (Commerce)". After a successful public defense of a dissertation on the topic "Management of Trade Credit by Enterprises in the Furniture Sector" in 2016, she acquired the educational and scientific degree "Doctor". From April 2022 to the present, Lyubomira Todorova holds the position of "Evaluator" at the Scientific Research Fund, and since 2023 she has been a consultant at "Amavi Travel" EOOD. From 03.10.2016 to the present, she has been a full-time lecturer at the Department of Economics and Tourism Management. The candidate for associate professor is also a

graduate teacher of economics, and during the period 2018 - 2020 she worked as a part-time lecturer at the "Paisiy Hilendarski" University, Plovdiv. She has very good computer skills, and is fluent in English and Russian.

From the documentation provided to me, the educational, scientific and career development of Lyubomira Krasimirova Todorova at the Tsenov Academy of Economics can be traced:

- Academic positions at the Tsenov Academy of Economics:
  - 03.10.2016 - 18.09.2019 – Assistant Professor;
  - 19.09.2019 - to date - Chief Assistant Professor.
- 2013 – "Methodology of scientific research".
- 2014 - „Web 2.0 tools for e-learning. Web-based online learning systems”.
- Diploma No. 2016005 dated 04.07.2016 for the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the scientific specialty "Economics and Management (Trade)".
- from 2016 – until now – Scientific Secretary of the Department of Tourism Economics and Management.
- from 2016 – until now – Member of the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Industry and Commerce.
- 2020 - 2021 – Foreign language specialization (English language – B1 and B2 - Center for Professional Training at the Tsenov Academy of Economics).
- from 2024 – to now – Head of the "Industry Laboratory for Entrepreneurship and Business Innovation" at the Faculty of Industry and Commerce.
- from 2025 – to now - Secretary of the Master's Program "Economics and Management of Tourism".

At the time of participation in the competition, the candidate holds the academic position of "chief assistant" on a basic employment contract at the Department of "Economics and Management of Tourism" at the Tsenov Academy of Economics. Certificate 93.00-4 dated 23.01.2026 testifies that as of 23.01.2026, chief assistant Dr. Lyubomira Krasimirova Todorova has a total work experience of 15 years, 4 months and 19 days, including 9 years, 3 months and 20 days at the Tsenov Academy of

Economics. Thus, she meets the requirements for holding the academic position of "associate professor" specified in Art. 116, para. 2, item 3.1 of the RDASTAE.

#### **4. Quantitative and qualitative assessment of teaching and learning work**

To prepare a quantitative and qualitative assessment (analysis) of the academic work, the candidate has submitted a number of documents and evidence necessary for participation in the announced competition for the academic position of "associate professor". They are in full compliance with those specified in Art. 116, para. 2, item 5 of the RDASTAE.

For example, the Certificate No. 93.00-11 of 16.02.2026 submitted by the candidate regarding academic employment during the last five academic years shows that the candidate's lecture workload exceeds the minimum statutory workload required by the Academy of Economics. Thus, Dr. Lyubomira Todorova complies with Art. 116, para. 2, item 3.1 of the RDASTAE.

From the Report on developed and taught lecture courses, submitted by the candidate, it is evident that the Department of "Economics and Tourism Management" has assigned Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Lyubomira Todorova lectures and seminars in basic disciplines from the current curriculum of the bachelor's degree program "Economics of Tourism":

- „Innovation in tourism”;
- „Tour operator, agency and transport activities in tourism ”;
- „Tourist destinations ”;
- „Tourism Economics“;
- „International tourism“;
- „Tourism organizations, exchanges and exhibitions“, etc.

In the Master's Degree Program, Dr. Todorova has been assigned courses from the curriculum of the Master's degree program "Economics and Management of Tourism":

- „Tourism Basics“;
- „Strategies in tourism“;
- „Конкурентоспособност на туристическия бизнес“;

- „Master's Practicum in Tourism Economics and Management“;
- „Master's Seminar in Tourism Economics and Management“, etc.

Over the past 5 years, the candidate has also had academic employment in a number of other courses, such as: "Logistics Systems in Tourism", "Tourist Relationship Management", "Distribution and Logistics Management", "Real Estate in Tourism", "Tour Guidance", etc.

Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Todorova has been assigned the development of lecture courses (independently or in co-authorship) in several disciplines in the Master's Degree Program ("Competitiveness of the Tourism Business", "Fundamentals of Tourism", "Tourism Management", "Strategies in Tourism"), as well as in the Bachelor's Degree Program ("Restaurant Management and Catering", "Innovations in Tourism", "Economics of Tourism").

To ensure part of her teaching and learning work, Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Lyubomira Todorova has independently developed a textbook to provide training for undergraduate students in the specialty "Economics of Tourism". The author's textbook was published after the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree "doctor" and meets the requirements of Art. 116, para. 2, item 5.1 of RDASTAE. The textbook is entitled "Innovations in Tourism" (ISBN: 978-954-23-2465-2), published in 2024 by AI "Tsenov", Svishtov and has a volume of 148 pages. In addition to the textbook, the candidate has submitted for review and published in co-authorship the following academic textbooks:

- **„Fundamentals of Tourism“**. Authors: Lyubka Ilieva, Petya Ivanova, **Lyubomira Todorova**, Kristina Shopova, Pavlin Pavlov. Academic Publishing House - Tsenov, 2025. ISBN 978-954-23-2590-1 Pages: 210.

- **"Restaurant Management and Catering"**. Authors: Lyubka Ilieva, **Lyubomira Todorova**, Kristina Shopova, Pavlin Pavlov. Academic Publishing House - Tsenov, 2024. ISBN: 978-954-23-2592-5 Pages: 180.

- **"Economics of Tourism"**. Authors: Mariana Bozhinova, **Lyubomira Todorova**. Academic Publishing House - Tsenov-, 2018. Pages: 140.

▪ **"Competitiveness of the tourism business"**. Authors: Mariana Bozhinova, Lyubomira Todorova. Academic Publishing House - Tsenov, 2018 Pages: 102.

▪ **"Tourism Management"**. Authors: Mariana Bozhinova, Petya Ivanova, Lyubomira Todorova, Pavlin Pavlov. Academic Publishing House - Tsenov, 2017, ISBN: 978-954-23-1205-5 Pages: 237.

▪ **"Strategies in Tourism"**. Authors: Mariana Bozhinova, Petya Ivanova, Lyubomira Todorova, Academic Publishing House - Tsenov, 2017, ISBN: 978-954-23-1449-3 Pages: 124.

According to Official Note No. 1 dated 09.02.2026, Chief Assistant Professor Todorova, as a licensed trainer, has developed training content and has participated as a lecturer in conducting a number of training courses ("Organization of Guide Service", "Organization and Management of Tourist Animation", "Organization and Technology of Tourist Activity and Leisure", etc.) at the Center for Professional Training at the Tsenov" Academy of Economics.

Dr. Todorova annually participates in organizing round tables or student scientific sessions. She constantly updates and enriches her lecture courses. She widely uses new technologies in teaching. She delivers her lectures at a high level, but in an accessible and understandable language for the audience. Her pedagogical experience, combined with a specific style of presenting knowledge, her erudition and dedication are highly valued by students. Evidence of this is the results of the annual student satisfaction survey with the quality of education, to which I have access as the dean of the faculty. They show that Dr. Todorova receives the highest possible rating from the student audience. This fact further supports my already positive opinion of the candidate's teaching activities.

**Conclusion:** The teaching and research work of Dr. Lyubomira Todorova, in quantitative and qualitative terms, fully complies with the requirements of Art. 116, para. 2, item 5 of the RDASTAE for holding the academic position of "associate professor".

## **5. Quantitative and qualitative assessment of research activity**

### **A) Publications**

In the competition for the academic position of "associate professor", Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Lyubomira Todorova participated (submitted for review) with 28 publications, including:

- Independent monographic work – 1 issue (**100 p.**);
- Published book based on a defended dissertation for the award of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" – 1 issue (**75 p.**);
- Articles and reports published in scientific journals, refereed and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information (Scopus/Web of Science) – 12 issues (**107.50 p.**);
- Articles and reports published in non-refereed journals with scientific review or published in edited collective volumes – 9 issues (**59.17 p.**);
- Studies published in non-refereed journals with scientific review or published in edited collective volumes – 2 issues (**7.50 p.**);
- Published chapter of a collective monograph – 3 issues (**49 p.**).

These publications do not repeat those submitted for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree "doctor".

With the indicated publications, the candidate collects a total of **398.17** points, which is almost twice as much as the 200 points required by the Regulations for the Implementation of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria.

The list of publications submitted for review by Dr. Todorova shows that they are focused mainly in the field of innovations and, in particular, innovations in tourism (publ. 6.1., 6.3., 6.5., 6.6., 6.8., 6.9., 6.12., 7.6., 7.9., 9.1., 10.1., 10.2., 10.3. of the List, as well as the candidate's monographic work). These are almost half of all publications submitted for review. This fact shows a purposefulness of the scientific research of the candidate for associate professor. The indicated publications consider:

- √ the role of innovation, and, in particular, technological innovation, for the sustainable management of tourism organizations, as well as in the process of adapting the tourism sector to the processes of transformation and digitalization of society;
- √ the innovative activity of tourism enterprises;

√ the influence of various formal and informal networks on innovation processes in tourism;

√ the role of innovation in optimizing business processes in tourism enterprises and increasing their competitiveness, as well as the entire tourism sector;

√ the importance of innovation in increasing operational efficiency, customer engagement and competitiveness in the tourism market;

√ the impact of innovations introduced by European small and medium-sized enterprises on their sustainable development;

√ consumer attitudes towards innovations in tourism, etc.

The candidate's other publications examine: the impact of COVID-19 on Bulgarian tourism and the behavior of Bulgarian tourists (publ. 6.2., 6.11., 7.2., 7.3., 7.7., 9.2., 10.2.); the impact of artificial intelligence on the hotel industry (publ. 7.5.); the potential for tourism development in the Danube Tourist Region (publ. 7.4.); issues of Bulgarian cultural heritage (publ. 6.4., 7.1.); the impact of European environmental policy on the development of the tourism ecosystem (publ. 6.10.); the role of festivals as organized events to promote tourism (publ. 6.7.).

The candidate's publications are on current economic and management issues, are distinguished by good knowledge of the issues, use of a wide range of research tools, thoroughness and analytical skills, argumentation of theses and conclusions, scientific correctness and the possibility of practical applicability. Almost half of Dr. Todorova's publications are in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases (Scopus, Web of Science). The majority of Dr. Todorova's publications are co-authored, which is undoubtedly a testament to her skills in working in a team. It should be noted that all of the candidate's publications are closely related to the scientific specialty for which this competition is announced.

The central place in the candidate's scientific production is occupied by the monographic work "Tour operatorship based on innovations: new approaches and perspectives in contemporary tourism management". The relevance of this study is beyond doubt, since the modern tourism industry, and, in particular, tour operator activity, are developing in conditions of deep structural transformations caused by

globalization, increasing competition, digitalization, changes in the profile of tourists and their consumer attitudes, as well as the increasingly clear pressure to achieve sustainability. The study is built on the basis of a well-thought-out and correctly applied theoretical and methodological approach. A model of tour operatorship based on innovations is proposed. This is a consistent and logically justified relationship between the implementation of various types of innovations (product, process, organizational and marketing) and the sustainable development of tour operator activity. This model includes innovations, new approaches, efficiency and sustainability and is an effective tool for strategic management of innovations in tourism. This model has been examined in a specific Bulgarian tour operator – Amavi Travel EOOD.

### **B) Participation in projects**

In recent years, the candidate has actively participated in the following research projects (Certificate No. 220/21.01.2026):

1) Team research projects in the fields of science in which the Academy prepares students and doctoral candidates:

- Project No. 9-2017 "Problems and prospects for entrepreneurship in the field of tourism in Bulgaria" (team member);

- Project No. 9-2018 "Modern dimensions of the management of the tourist destination Bulgaria" (team member);

- Project No. 3-2021 "State and opportunities for the development of Bulgarian tourism in the conditions of COVID-19" (team member);

- Project No. 2-2025 "Researching the impact of innovations on the sustainable development of small and medium-sized enterprises" (team member).

2) Infrastructure research projects for conducting quality and competitive scientific research:

- Project IP3-2023 "Increasing the competitiveness of the tourism sector in Bulgaria through the implementation of innovations" (team member);

- Project IP5-2025 "Artificial Intelligence and Sustainable Economic Development - Cause-and-Effect Relationships" (team member).

Chief Asist. Todorova has also participated in the project "Formal and Informal Innovation Networks", funded by the Scientific Research Fund of the Ministry of Education and Science, as well as in the Project "Economic Education in Bulgaria 2030", funded by the OP "Science and Education for Smart Growth", in the position of "Expert/Digital Educational Content Joint Programs".

In connection with the implementation of the above-mentioned projects, a number of scientific studies, articles and reports have been published in co-authorship or independently.

Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Todorova has also participated in the following educational projects:

- Project BG05SFPR001-3.002.0001 "From Higher Education to Employment" as an academic mentor for students in the PF 3.8 Economics (Certificate No. 93.00-8/23.01.2026);

- Project BG05M2OP001-2.002-0001 "Student Internships" - Phase 1 as an academic mentor for students in the PF 3.8 Economics (Certificate No. 93.00-5/23.01.2026);

- Project BG05M2OP001-2.013-0001 "Student Internships" - Phase 2 as an academic mentor to students in the PF 3.8 Economics (Certificate No. 93.00-6/23.01.2026).

Finally, Dr. Todorova also reports participation in a number of projects under the Erasmus + program, both for teaching and training purposes (Official Note No. 93.00-9/10.02.2026).

Given the short evaluation period, both the number and volume of scientific publications, as well as the number and diversity of projects in which the candidate participates, are impressive. Dr. Todorova's publications prove her scientific fruitfulness, innovativeness, high competence and specific knowledge in the field of innovation management in the tourism sector and, in particular, in tour operator organizations. The completed projects are evidence of her ability to work successfully in a team, of her aspiration to expand the scientific areas of her research work.

**Conclusion:** The scientific research and project work of Dr. Lyubomira Todorova in quantitative and qualitative terms fully complies with the requirements of Art. 116, para. 2, items 4 and 6., as well as para. 3 of the RDASTAE for holding the academic position of "associate professor".

## **6. Scientific and applied scientific achievements and contributions of the candidate**

Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Lyubomira Krasimirova Todorova has systematized her scientific achievements and contributions in the following main areas:

I. The issues related to the digital transformation and sustainable management of tourism organizations have been clarified in theoretical and practical terms, and a comprehensive conceptual framework for a new generation of tour operators has been developed, uniting technological solutions, service personalization and integration of economic, social and environmental dimensions. This has laid a systematic foundation for interpreting innovations as a management and strategic tool in tourism.

II. An original analytical model for assessing the effectiveness of innovations in tour operator activities has been developed and empirically tested, which combines organizational, market and consumer indicators and allows tracking the connections between the implemented technological solutions, the quality of the tourist experience and the competitive positions of enterprises. The model has applicable value in the management of tourism organizations and in making strategic decisions.

III. The applicability of modern theoretical models for the adoption of technologies and organizational changes in tourism has been proven, by introducing a dual perspective – of the tourism organization and the end user – and arguing for the role of personalization, digital tools and user experience as key factors for market adaptability and sustainable positioning.

IV. Scientific knowledge of the interrelationships between formal and informal interactions, social capital and the development of tourism organizations has been expanded, identifying the mechanisms through which trust, knowledge exchange and

the balance between structure and flexibility support organizational learning, adaptability and innovative behavior in the sector.

V. The theory of tourism systems and destinations management has been developed by introducing an integrated analytical approach combining the perspectives of tourists, tourism business and public administration, which allows for a comprehensive assessment of the processes of development, sustainability and recovery of tourist regions, including by studying the impact of external economic and health crises on tourism revenues, employment and regional dynamics.

VI. The scientific knowledge on the application of technological, creative and managerial approaches in tourism and the management of tourist destinations has been enriched, through the analysis and systematization of good practices in the gamification of cultural heritage and the implementation of digital solutions as tools for increasing visitor engagement, enriching the tourist experience and promoting the sustainable development and competitiveness of tourist organizations.

I accept without doubt and reservations the indicated contributions. They are presented correctly and are entirely the work of the candidate.

## **7. Academic reputation of the candidate**

Chief Asist. Todorova has provided a reference for her citations only in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases with scientific information or in monographs and collective volumes, i.e. information is provided only for the candidate's citations in publications referenced in Scopus/WoS. Their number is 12, which bring Chief Asst. Todorova 180 points. This result far exceeds the 50 points required by the Regulations for the Implementation of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria. The indicated citations testify to the interest shown in the candidate's developments, moreover by established foreign scientists and researchers in the scientific field of this competition. The membership of Chief Asist. Todorova in authoritative associations, unions and editorial boards also contributes to the good positioning and recognition in scientific circles, such as:

- Union of Scientists in Bulgaria, certified by official note No. 1/12.02.2026;

- Association of Industrial Economics and Management Teachers;
- Journal of Tourism, Policy and Business – Member of the Editorial Board.

### 8. Critical notes and suggestions

I do not find any significant weaknesses in the candidate's scientific output. There are some repetitions of texts and statements in different publications, but this is understandable and to a certain extent inevitable. In a benevolent style, I recommend that Chief Assist. Todorova use her accumulated experience by not only participating in, but also leading research, educational and other projects.

### 9. Summary conclusion and opinion

I have known Lyubomira Todorova since the beginning of her scientific and teaching career, i.e. for more than 10 years and I have witnessed the entire process of her career and scientific development and growth. With a strong academic profile, impressively efficient, responsive, inquisitive, persistent, conscientious, correct and dedicated in relations with colleagues and students.

Taking into account **the undeniable achievements** in the teaching, scientific and project activities of Dr. Todorova, her professional qualities and academic fame, I allow myself to claim that she meets all the requirements specified in RDASTAE for holding the academic position of "associate professor". Therefore, with full conviction, I declare my **positive vote** and recommend to the esteemed scientific jury to propose to the Faculty Council at the Faculty of "Industry and Commerce" to approve the **Chief Assist. Dr. Lyubomira Krasimirova Todorova as "associate professor"** in the scientific specialty "Economics and Management (Tourism)".

23.03.2026

Svishtov

Reviewer:

(Prof. Dr. L. Varamezov)