

OPINION

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Tsenov Academy of Economics - Svishtov

Subject: Participation in a competition for occupying the academic position "Associate Professor" in the field of higher education: 3. Social, economic, and legal sciences, professional field: 3.8 Economics, scientific specialty "Economics and Management (Industry)", promulgated in the State Gazette issue 21/07.03.2023.

I. Presentation of the candidate

In the competition for the academic position "Associate Professor" in the field of higher education: 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, professional field: 3.8 Economics, scientific specialty "Economics and Management (Industry)", promulgation in SG No. 21/07.03.2023 for the needs of the Department of Industrial Business and Entrepreneurship at the D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics – Svishtov, only **Chief Assist. Dr. Emil Borislavov Nikolov** participated.

II. Basis for writing the opinion

This **opinion** is prepared based on article 5, paragraph. 1 and article 121, paragraph 1 and paragraph 2 of "Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at the Academy of Economics" (RDASAE), Order No 364 / 02.05.2023 of the Rector of the D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics - Svishtov,

based on the Decision of the Faculty Council at the Faculty of "Production and trade business" (Protocol No 8 / 26.04.2023), the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, The Rules for its implementation and the Rules for the Development of the Academic Staff in the D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics - Svishtov and held the first meeting of the scientific jury on 15.05.2023.

III. Personal characteristics of the candidate

Chief assistant Dr. Emil Borislavov Nikolov was born on 16.02.1982 in the town of Svishtov.

Education:

In 2000 Emil Borislavov Nikolov completed his secondary education in the specialty "Business – Administration" in SCHS "Dimitar Hadjivasilev" – Svishtov (diploma Series B-2000, No 005253, reg. No 5361/43 of 03.07.2000.)

In 2004 he became a Bachelor in "Business Administration" at the D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics – Svishtov (diploma Series CA – 2004, No 029926, registration No. 52065/20.10.2004.)

A year later – in 2005 he successively got the bachelor's degree again in the specialty "Business Administration " at the same university (diploma series SA – 2005, No 035926, reg. No. 56637 / 30.11.2005.).

In 2006 he was enrolled as a full-time PhD student at the Industrial Business and Entrepreneurship department of the D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics – Svishtov and in 2009 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).

In order to improve his qualifications and skills, Emil Nikolov has participated in a number of trainings and specializations, including: "Moodle Virtual Learning Environment", "Project Management", "Project Management with Microsoft Project", "Training for Trainers – Basic Course", "Application of

the Case Study Method in Training of Students in Economics", "Publication in Refereed Editions with Impact Factor", "Technology Transfer and Protection and Management of Intellectual Property", "Objects of Intellectual Property – Essential Aspects and Opportunities for Generating Economic Growth", "Basics of Programming with Java", etc.

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

Work experience:

Emil Nikolov's work experience started in 2006 when, while still a student in the master's degree, he started working as an Economist at "Svilosa" AD - Svishtov. After acquiring educational and scientific degree "PhD" in 2009 the candidate was appointed as an assistant in the Department of Industrial Business and Entrepreneurship of the D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics, and a year later (in 2010) he became Chief assistant professor. As of June 2023, the total work experience of the applicant is 14 years and 4 months, of which 13 years and 7 months as an assistant/chief assistant at the D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics. Since 2016 the candidate is a department Erasmus+ coordinator.

Projects:

After acquiring educational and scientific degree "PhD" Emil Nikolov has participated in six research projects funded by the state research grant, including one independent project, one project as a manager and four as a member of the team. He has also participated in a project for partial funding of a scientific forum.

Mobilities:

The applicant has participated in six short-term teaching mobilities under the Erasmus+ program (Croatia – 2 mobility, Moldova, Czech Republic, Montenegro, and North Macedonia) and one under the project BG05M2OP001-

2.016-0004-C01 "Economy Education in Bulgaria 2030" of the "NOIR" program, carried out in Romania.

Memberships:

Since 2021, Emil Nikolov has been a member of the Bulgarian Association of CSR Specialists and since 2023 he has been a member of the Management Board of the association.

IV. General (quantitative and qualitative) evaluation of teaching work

From the presented **official transcript** of the academic employment of chef assistant Emil Nikolov for the training of students in the EQD of Bachelor in the last five years it is established that it is above the approved for the Academy norm. For the last five years, the average annual number of hours of lecture work of Emil Nikolov is 611.14 hours at a norm of 500 hours. The workload by school year is as follows: 2018/2019 – 795 hours, 2019/2020 – 402 hours, 2020/2021 – 535 hours, 2021/2022 – 668.7 hours, 2022/2023 – 655 hours.

A mandatory element of the overall assessment of the academic and teaching work of each candidate for the academic position of "Associate Professor" is his participation in providing the learning process with quality lecture courses. In this aspect, the candidate participates in the development and teaching of **14 lecture courses - 8 lecture courses in the Bachelor's degree and 6 in the educational and qualification degree of Master**. These are: *Bachelor* (Enterprise Economics, Human Resource Management, Industrial Enterprise Competitiveness Management, Small Enterprise Management, Project Management in Industry, Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurship – Part One, Entrepreneurship – Part Two); *Master* (Corporate Management, Anti-crisis Corporate Management, Outsourcing Project Management, Knowledge Management, Innovation Entrepreneurship, Corporate Entrepreneurship).

These **quantitative and qualitative parameters** of the educational and teaching work of the candidate for the academic position of "Associate Professor" are not only sufficient, but **also give grounds to express a particularly good assessment of his professional level within the auditorium and outside the auditorium employment.**

V. General (quantitative and qualitative) evaluation of research and research activities

The quantitative characterization of research and research activity of Ch. assistant Dr. Emil Borislavov Nikolov was prepared based on data from the lists of publications submitted by the candidate for the academic position of Associate Professor. In numerical and structural terms, it is as follows: **total number of publications – 34**, of which **independent – 21**, and **joint publication – 13**. (studies – 7, articles – 2, reports – 4), publications in **Scopus and Web of Science** - **1** (report - Group D 6.1., publications in **English** - **2** (1 article - Group D 7.15. and 1 report - Group D 6.1.).

The candidate's preparedness for the competition in this section is also evidenced by the reference to the number of pages for participation. The candidate participates in the competition with **a total of 714** pages, distributed as follows: monograph – 184 pages, studies – 275 pages, articles – 95 pages, reports – 160 pages.

The publications of the candidate by type are as follows: monograph – 1, studies – 8, articles – 6, reports – 19. For the titles and bibliographic data of the monographic work and the equivalent publications in specialized scientific journals, and of the reports, Ch. assistant Dr. Emil Nikolov has certified in writing with the relevant references that they do not repeat the submitted for "PhD" degree.

The points from the publications collected by Ch. assistant Dr. Emil Nikolov according to the established criteria are **276.52** with a minimum of 200 points.

It is clear from the presented data that in quantitative terms the scientific publications of the candidate for the academic position "Associate Professor" exceed the minimal legal requirements in this regard. But no less important are the qualitative characteristics of the studies made. In this regard, I will focus on the qualities of the monographic study, which for me is a kind of synthesis of the scientific activity of the author so far.

Attention should also be paid to the positive qualities of the author's texts of Ch. assistant Dr. Emil Nikolov in the presented textbooks in the competition. In them, the author has managed based on generally accepted economic principles to outline the peculiarities of the environment and has presented views on the management of the individual elements subject to it. This is achieved thanks to a thorough individual professional training and practical application of didactic formulation for the movement of knowledge from the known to the unknown.

For example, the Academic textbook entitled "Project Management in Industry" (160 pages) was discussed and adopted at a meeting of the Department Council of the Industrial Business and Entrepreneurship Department (protocol No. 20/25 June 2019), after the election of two internal reviewers (protocol No. 9/4 February 2019), adoption of internal reviews (protocol No. 11/5 March 2019) and reflection of the reviewers' notes (Prof. L. Varamezov and Prof. A. Deneva).

These publications present the author not only as a capable university lecturer but also as a researcher.

The other scientific publications from the attached list of the competition are also in the field of industrial business. They explore current practical and applied problems of this important economic sector. Opportunities for its improvement and modeling in the context of the challenges facing the modern business environment are analyzed.

All this shows that the research activity in the field of industry of Ch. assistant Dr. Emil Nikolov has a diverse character and an ardent desire to cover the significant problems of the industrial business both in theoretical and practical – applied aspect.

The publications are mainly focused on the areas of corporate social responsibility and non-financial reporting, entrepreneurship, project management in industry, knowledge management and personnel training.

The topics discussed are up-to-date, thoroughly researched and authorly interpreted, which is grounds for **giving high appreciation to the research and research activity of the candidate for the academic position of Associate Professor.**

VI. Characterisation of scientific contributions

The contributions of Chief Assistant Dr. Emil Borislavov Nikolov can be divided into the following three directions: scientific; scientific and applied contributions of methodological nature and scientific and applied contributions of empirical nature. They are correctly defined and differentiated in the reference for scientific and applied scientific contributions in the publications and materials submitted for review by the candidate.

A) Scientific contributions:

1. Scientific contributions of a theoretical nature

The theory of corporate social responsibility is systematized and further developed in terms of its essence and historical development, characteristics, effects, principles, main theories, directions, taxonomy, initiatives and tools, and approaches to its evaluation. An author's definition of the essence of corporate social responsibility and an integrated model for its main and secondary directions for realization is proposed. A classification of the positive effects of CSR has been developed, including twenty-three possible effects, grouped into five directions

(marketing, human resources, finance, risk, and management). [Monography, Group D publications 7.5., 7.6., 7.7., 7.8., 7.9.].

Basic aspects related to the nature, motives, and forms of manifestation of corporate social irresponsibility are clarified. It is established that it cannot be inherently regarded as a lack of corporate social responsibility, so that an enterprise can be both socially responsible and socially irresponsible. Thirty main forms of manifestation of corporate social irresponsibility are systematized, depending on the stakeholders affected by their manifestation. [Group D publication 7.1.].

The scientific knowledge dedicated to the reporting of non-financial information is further developed by critically analyzing the research dedicated to it: nature, development, effects and barriers, structures, quality characteristics and auditing. The trend of transformation of non-financial reporting from a voluntary to a regulatory process is identified. [Monography, Group D publications 7.8., 7.11., 7.14., 7.15., 7.17., 9.2.].

The theory dedicated to company knowledge – its essence, meaning, types, processes, and models is further developed. [Group D publications 7.22., 7.23., 9.5., 9.6., 9.8.].

B) Scientific and applied contributions:

1. Scientific and applied contributions of methodological nature

A methodology for evaluation and analysis of the integration of non-financial reporting in business organizations has been developed. The methodology is based on publicly available data and information and is implemented as a sequence of six main stages [Monography, Group D publications 9.2., and 7.11.].

A sector-oriented methodological toolkit for assessing corporate social responsibility has been developed, reflecting the peculiarities of bicycle companies. [Group D publication 9.4.].

A conceptual visual model for the management of company knowledge in business organisations has been developed, including the following six main processes: diagnosis of available knowledge and of knowledge needs; knowledge acquisition; extraction and formalization of hidden knowledge; knowledge mapping; knowledge storage; dissemination of knowledge. [Group D publications 9.5., 9.6., 9.8., 7.22., 7.23.].

2. Scientific and applied contributions of empirical nature

The degree of dissemination and quality of non-financial reporting among Bulgarian business organizations are assessed. The process was studied in various sections – among the largest Bulgarian enterprises, among the largest state-owned companies, among the member companies of the UN Global Compact, among the most traded companies on the BSE, according to the reporting structure used. On this basis, problem areas are identified, and recommendations and solutions are defined. [Monograph, Group D publications 6.1., 7.3., 7.11, 7.12., 7.15., 7.17., 9.2.].

An author's industry-oriented methodology for assessing corporate social responsibility in bicycle companies in Bulgaria has been approbated (in six out of nine functioning enterprises). Their corporate social responsibility is assessed and their strengths and weaknesses in this area are identified. [Group D publication 9.4.].

The manifestation of corporate social responsibility among enterprises from different sectors and sectors of the Bulgarian economy – agricultural cooperatives, tourist enterprises, mobile operators – is studied and analyzed. [Group D publications 6.1., 7.3., 7.4., 7.5., 7.10., 9.2.].

The evolution over time of corporate social responsibility at European and national level has been studied, identifying milestones, initiatives, authors, and author studies. [Group D publications 7,6 and 7.8].

The degree of use of the Communication on Progress as a tool for disclosure of non-financial information by Bulgarian enterprises that are members of the UN Global Compact has been evaluated and analyzed. Existing problems have been identified and possible solutions proposed. [Monograph, Group D publications 7.11., 7.12., 9.2.].

The entrepreneurial attitudes and behavior of students from three universities in Bulgaria have been identified and the obstacles and opportunities for stimulating entrepreneurship among these individuals have been identified. [Group D publications 9.1. and 9.3.].

Important problems for Bulgarian enterprises in the field of staff training have been revealed and conclusions and recommendations have been formulated that can serve to improve the training process. [Group D publications 7.19., 7.21., 7.21. and 9.5.].

I accept the achievements thus formulated as significant for science and practice. The contributions are entirely the work of the candidate and are the result of consistent and purposeful activity.

VII. Academic renown

In the academic community and beyond chief assistant Dr. Emil Nikolov is known as a responsible person. Its ability to communicate professionally with both fellow lecturers, representatives of the practice and students is undoubtedly recognized and contributes to the high quality of its teaching and research activities.

The presented references for the citations of chief assistant Dr. Emil Borislavov Nikolov reveal that he has the necessary fame among the scientific community to occupy the position of "Associate Professor". The attached reference for the citations of the candidate counts a total of 16 citations, 4 of which are in 2 monographs (4 citations of 10 points – 40 points), and 12 citations in non-refereed journals with scientific review in 10 publications (12

citations of 5 points — 60 points). With minimum requirements of 50 points, **the candidate has a total of 100 points.**

In addition to the citations, as proof of good scientific recognition of the author among the scientific circles is his participation on the one hand in several scientific conferences in the country and abroad and on the other as a member of scientific project teams.

The above forms the **opinion that the applicant has a corresponding notoriety for acquiring the academic position of "Associate Professor".**

VIII. Weaknesses, critical remarks, recommendations

I do not register any significant weaknesses or omissions in the submitted materials of the competition.

My main recommendation to the candidate - Chief Assistant Dr. Emil Borislavov Nikolov is based on the experience gained as a lecturer and researcher in terms of collecting and analyzing statistical information, conducting scientific research, and publishing their results in national editions to add a little courage and to realize publications in refereed and indexed in world databases scientific journals.

IX. Summary assessment

In conclusion, the **materials presented** in the competition for occupying the academic position "Associate Professor" of the only candidate Chief Assistant Dr. Emil Borislavov Nikolov reveal that he is a built and established lecturer and researcher who closely connects the teaching, research and applied activities and **has covered in quantitative and qualitative terms the regulatory requirements** of the "Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act", the Regulations for its implementation and respectively the minimum national requirements for occupying the academic position "Associate Professor"

in the professional field 3.8 Economics and the "Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at the Academy of Economics".

The materials provided faithfully reflect the applicant's activities. They are confirmed by the relevant officials from the D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics – Svishtov.

All this gives me grounds to declare my positive assessment of the teaching and research activities of the candidate and my support, and I offer to the honorable members of the scientific jury Chief Assistant Dr. Emil Borislavov Nikolov to take the academic position "Associate Professor" in the field of higher education 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, professional field: 3.8 Economics, scientific specialty "Economics and Management (Industry)" to support the teaching and research work of the Department of Industrial Business and Entrepreneurship.

18/05/2023

Svishtov

The opinion was written by:

/Assoc. Prof. Sergey Naydenov, PhD/