

OPINION

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Scientific specialty: Economics and Tourism Management

member of the scientific jury for a competition announced by Academy of Economics "D. A. Tsenov" - Svishtov for the academic positions "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 "Economics and Tourism Management"

1. Presentation of the Candidate

For 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” at the Academy of Economics “D. A. Tsenov” – Svishtov, documents have been submitted by one candidate: Lyubomira Krasimirova Todorova.

2. Grounds for Writing the Opinion

This opinion is based on the decision of the first meeting of the scientific jury on the procedure, held on 02.03.2026.

The opinion has been prepared in accordance with Order No. 140 of 19.02.2026 issued by the Rector of the Academy of Economics “D. A. Tsenov” – Svishtov. Its content complies with the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for its Implementation and the internal regulations of the Academy. Structurally, the opinion consists of nine sections, including presentation of the candidate, grounds for being written, and conclusion, assessing the candidate’s research, teaching, and educational activities, as well as outlining the contributions, remarks, and recommendations.

3. Personal Characteristics of the Candidate

Lyubomira Krasimirova Todorova is the sole candidate in the competition.

At the time of application, she holds the academic position of Senior Assistant Professor (since 2019) with Doctor degree at the Academy of Economics “D. A. Tsenov” – Svishtov. She has been employed at the Department of “Economics and Management of Tourism” since 2016. In October 2016, she obtained the Educational and Scientific Degree “Doctor” in the doctoral program “Economics and Management (Trade)”. She holds a Master’s degree in “Banking Management” (2008–2009) and a Bachelor’s degree in “Finance” (2004–2008), both from the same institution - Academy of Economics “D. A. Tsenov” – Svishtov. Her professional CV demonstrates continuous specialization and qualification development in teaching economics, English language, and the organization and management of commercial enterprises. In addition to English, she speaks Russian and possesses competencies in Web 2.0 e-learning tools and online learning systems.

For the purposes of the competition, Senior Assistant Professor Dr. Todorova has submitted a complete set of documents in accordance with the national legislative framework and the internal regulations of the Academy, including: CV; diplomas; proof of academic position; certificate of professional experience; list of publications; report on fulfilment of minimum national requirements; citation report; report on original scientific contributions; teaching workload report; submitted scientific publications and their abstracts in Bulgarian and English; and an application referencing the official announcement in the State Gazette.

4. General Assessment of Teaching Activity

The submitted documents indicate a substantial teaching workload in disciplines relevant to the competition.

Dr. Todorova’s teaching activity aligns fully with the scope of the competition and spans several academic periods. It includes the development and delivery of lecture courses at the Academy of Economics “D. A. Tsenov” – Svishtov in disciplines such as: “Organization of Tour Guide Services”, “Organization and Management of Tourist Animation”, and “Organization and Technology of Tourist Activities and Leisure”. She has also contributed to the development of curricula in subjects including: “Excursion Preparation”, “Animation in Tourism”, “Creation of Animation Products and Services”, “Management of Animation in Tourism”, and “Specialized Types of Tourism”. These activities are documented in Certificate No. 1/09.02.2026 issued by the Center for Vocational Training.

For the academic year 2025/2026, she has been assigned nine lecture courses. Her teaching demonstrates a structured methodological approach to developing student

competencies and reflects an interdisciplinary integration of knowledge within the tourism sector.

5. General Assessment of Research Activity

An analysis of the submitted scientific works shows that Dr. Todorova's research focuses on several thematic areas:

- ✓ Research on contemporary ideas, concepts, and best practices related to innovation and sustainable development in tourism;

- ✓ Application of an original authorial approach to tour operator activities within the context of modern tourism management;

- ✓ In-depth research and analysis of topics related to improving efficiency, enhancing service quality, and increasing the level of personalization of tourism services;

- ✓ Development and validation of an analytical model for assessing the effectiveness of innovations in tour operator activities, integrating organizational, market, and consumer indicators to examine the relationships between implemented technological solutions, the quality of the tourist experience, and the competitive positioning of enterprises;

- ✓ Examination of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on tourism and identification of solutions for the development of the tourism sector in Bulgaria;

- ✓ and others.

A total of 28 publications are submitted, including one monograph, contributions to three collective monographs, and two studies relevant to the professional field 3.8 Economics, scientific specialty "Economics and Management (Tourism)".

A significant portion of her work has been presented at international and national scientific forums and published in indexed journals. It also includes the documents and examples of establishing the candidate as a researcher and university lecturer with positions.

The candidate meets the national scientometric requirements (pursuant to Art. 2b, para. 2 and 3 of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria), as well as the additional requirements of the Academy of Economics "D. A. Tsenov" – Svishtov for occupying the academic position of „Associate Professor“, achieving a total of 1114.50 points. These include 628.17 points from the candidate's publications and scientific activity, in fulfilment of the minimum national requirements", which exceeds the required minimum of 400 points.

Thematically, the publications of L. Todorova fully correspond to the profile of the announced competition. They offer up-to-date and sufficiently innovative approaches and solutions to the issues studied in the field of tourism.

In terms of their problem orientation, the works are focused on the application of technological innovations for the sustainable management of tourism organizations. They are structured into several distinct research areas and thematic directions, each contributing specific scientific and applied results. The candidate's primary research interest lies at the intersection of technological advancement and tourism, particularly in relation to their interpretation and application within the context of sustainable development.

Additionally, I express a positive evaluation of the submitted research, which addresses significant theoretical and practical issues related to the strategic application of innovations in the management of tourism destinations and organizations.

Dr. Todorova has participated in nine research projects connected to tourism, competitiveness, innovation, digitalization, entrepreneurship and seven academic mobility programs in European partner institutions (in Greece, Slovakia, Romania, Serbia, North Macedonia). She is also actively engaged in academic and professional communities, including membership in the Union of Scientists in Bulgaria and participation in editorial activities. She is member of the editorial board of the Journal of Tourism, Policy and Business (JTPB), SCIENTIFIC AND BUSINESS JOURNAL, DEPARTMENT "ECONOMICS OF TOURISM", UNIVERSITY OF NATIONAL AND WORLD ECONOMY. Additionally, she has practical experience as a consultant in a travel agency.

6. Scientific Contributions

The candidate's contributions, as outlined in her report, are accepted in full.

In terms of content, the publications of Senior Assistant Professor Dr. L. Todorova address contemporary issues in the management of tourism systems, destinations, and agencies. Their primary theoretical contributions lie in the exploration of both theoretical and applied aspects of digital transformation and the sustainable management of tourism organizations and destinations.

In summary, with regard to the contributions of the materials submitted for the competition, the following should be highlighted:

- the demonstrated applicability of modern theoretical models in the activities of tourism organizations, integrating personalization, digital tools, and user experience as key factors for market adaptability and sustainable positioning;

- the development of a systemic framework for interpreting innovation as a managerial and strategic tool in tourism;
- a well-argued authorial position on the interrelationships and interactions among key elements and factors influencing the development and market positioning of tourism organizations;
- the development of an analytical model for assessing the effectiveness of innovations in tour operator activities, based on organizational, market, and consumer indicators, and designed to trace the relationships between implemented technological solutions, the quality of the tourist experience, and the competitive positioning of enterprises.

7. Academic Recognition

The candidate demonstrates a satisfactory level of academic recognition, with a total of 12 citations in publications indexed in internationally recognized databases; all related to the competition area.

8. Weaknesses and Recommendations

No significant weaknesses are identified that would affect the overall positive assessment. It is recommended that Dr. Todorova continue her research in an in-depth and purposeful manner, especially on the application of new technologies in tourism, with greater emphasis on practical recommendations for the tourism industry, particularly in digital marketing and data-driven personalization.

9. Final Evaluation and Conclusion

The submitted materials fully comply with the requirements of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the internal regulations of the Academy of Economics “D. A. Tsenov” – Svishtov.

Based on the evaluation, it can be concluded that:

1. the candidate is the only applicant;
2. she holds a Doctoral degree;
3. she occupies the position of Senior Assistant Professor;
4. she meets all teaching and research requirements - she is assigned the necessary teaching and extracurricular workload in accordance with the regulations of the Academy of Economics “D. A. Tsenov” – Svishtov;
5. For the 2025/2026 academic year, she has been assigned a total of nine lecture courses;


6. She has authored publications relevant to the courses she teaches and directly related to the topic of the competition, including works related to “Economics of Tourism” (in Bulgarian and English), “International Tourism”, and “Tour Operator, Agent and Transport Activities”;
7. The candidate has a substantial body of scientific output beyond her doctoral dissertation, including one monograph (232 pages), one published book based on her defended doctoral dissertation, 12 publications in journals indexed in internationally recognized databases, 9 articles and conference papers published in non-refereed journals with scientific review or in edited volumes, 2 studies, and 3 contributions to collective monographs;
8. A total of 12 citations of the candidate’s work by other authors in publications indexed in internationally recognized databases are documented, according to the submitted report;
9. Overall, the evaluated publications contain a significant body of scientific and applied contributions that enrich and further develop knowledge in the field of tourism economics, with a particular focus on sustainable tourism management in the context of transformations in tour operator activities, digitalization, evolving consumer preferences, and increasing sustainability pressures on tourism services.

Conclusion

After a thorough review of the submitted documentation and scientific works, I conclude that the candidate has presented substantial and significant research beyond her doctoral dissertation.

In the works of L. Todorova there are original scientific and applied contributions that have practical applicability in the field of tourism economics. They contain original scientific and applied contributions with practical relevance. On this basis, I express my positive evaluation and recommend that the Scientific Jury and the Faculty of “Production and Commercial Business” vote in favour of awarding the academic position of “Associate Professor” to Senior Assistant Professor Dr. Lyubomira Krasimirova Todorova in the professional field 3.8 Economics, scientific specialty “Economics and Management (Tourism)” at the Academy of Economics “D. A. Tsenov” – Svishtov.

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Opinion prepared by: 
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