



## RECENTIONS

From: Prof. Dr. Vania Petrova Ivanova

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Professional field 3.8 Economics (Microeconomics, Macroeconomics, International Economics)

Subject: Competition for the academic post of Associate Professor (two places) in the field of higher education 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, professional field 3.8 Economics, scientific specialty "Political Economy," for the needs of the Department "General Theory of Economics", D.A. Tsenov Academy of Economics - Svishtov

Normative basis: according to the Rector's order № 475/12.06.2025

### 1. Short information about the competition

The competition for the academic post of Associate Professor (two places) in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional field 3.8 Economics, scientific specialty Political Economy, for the needs of the Department of General Theory of Economics was promulgated in the State Gazette, issue 32 of 15 April 2025.

There are three candidates. The submitted documents were prepared in accordance with the requirements of the LASDRB for the academic position of Associate Professor and the Regulations on the Conditions and Procedure for the Acquisition of Scientific Degrees and the Holding of Academic Positions at the D.A. Tsenov Academy of Economics – Svishtov. The submitted reference for the fulfilment of the minimum national requirements under Article 2b of the LASDRB for the scientific field of Economic, Social and Legal Sciences, professional field 3.8 Economics shows that the candidates not only fulfil, but also exceed the minimum required number of points (400 points) for holding the academic position of Associate Professor. In this review, each candidate's submission will be evaluated in turn, in alphabetical order.

### Candidate Alexandrina Borisova Alexandrova

#### 1. Personal presentation of the candidates

Candidate Superior asst. prof. Dr. Alexandrina Alexandrova is a tenured lecturer at D.A. Tsenov Academy of Economics - Svishtov. Alexandrina Alexandrova is a graduate of the D.A. Tsenov Academy of Economics – Svishtov in Finance. She obtained her PhD (according to diploma №2017015/06.04.2017) in finance, money circulation, credit and insurance in 2017. She has, as evident from the enclosed references, more than 8(eight) years of experience as a teacher and researcher in the Academy. At present, she is a Superior Asst. Prof. at the Department of General Theory of Economics at the D.A. Tsenov Academy of Economics - Svishtov. Since 2017 she has been a Researcher (since 2021 - Researcher R2) at the Institute for Scientific Research at the Academy of

Economics, and since 2024 he has been its Chief Coordinator. For the last five academic years, the candidate's teaching load exceeds 2000 hours. She has given lectures and tutorials in numerous subjects, mainly in the field of public and international finance. She also has extensive experience of participation in projects. She has led the research teams of two successfully completed projects on basic research for young scholars and postdocs, two international inter-university projects including the establishment of a scholarly network, and two EU-funded projects in the NGO sector with a focus on civic education and leadership.

The applicant's profile is suitable for the needs of this call. Both the educational and scientific degrees acquired and the extensive research experience of Dr. Alexandrina Alexandrova show her solid training and development in the subject of the announced competition. In summary, there is a candidate for the academic post of 'Associate Professor' with sufficient professional, research and practical experience in her field of expertise, meeting the requirements in accordance with Article 26(2) and (3) of the LASDRB in scientific area 3. "Social, Economic and Legal Sciences", PPPRAADB and Article 116 of the AE.

## **2. Fulfilling the requirements for the academic position**

According to the report on the fulfilment of the minimum national requirements under Art. 26 of the LASDRB for SF 3.8. Economics for the academic position of Associate Professor Dr. Alexandrina Alexandrova exceeds the quantitative criteria many times - with a minimum of 400 she has **1738 points** as follows:

Group A indicators- dissertation for the award of the PhD - 50 points;

Group B - habilitation thesis, monograph - 100 points;

Group G - monograph, including not presented as a main habilitation thesis and publications (studies, articles, reports, etc.) in scientific publications of different rank and type - 393 points;

Group D - citations and reviews in scientific publications - 1145 points;

Participation as a member of a scientific collective in 10 (ten) national and 2 (two) international scientific research projects is also presented separately in the competition materials. There is also a leadership of one national project.

All publications and project participations have not been evaluated in previous competitions for the scientific title of Assistant Professor and PhD.

The additional requirements stipulated in the Regulations of the AE have also been repeatedly exceeded, including textbooks and teaching aids issued for the needs of the educational process.

## **3. Quantitative and qualitative assessment (analysis) of the criteria and indicators for teaching work and compliance with the requirements.**

The documents provided demonstrate that the candidate has the necessary experience, practice and in-depth knowledge in teaching a wide range of subjects. Both in her capacity as a visiting assistant professor and as a full-time one, Alexandrina Alexandrova has over the years formed quite a diverse portfolio of courses, focusing mainly on public finance (budget and budgetary policy, tax policy, customs policy) as well as international finance (EU financial policy). From the submitted official report on the academic employment of Asst. Prof. Dr. Alexandrina Alexandrova for the study of students in Bachelor and Master degree programmes in the last five academic years, it is established that it is above the approved norm for the higher education institution.



She has participated in 5(five) textbooks and 2(two) studies guides published by an academic publishing house, which are directly related to the courses taught by Asst. Prof. Dr. Alexandrina Alexandrova courses in Economics, Macroeconomics, Tax Policy. The teaching load over the years is a serious testimony to the experience gained and the opportunities for developing new, modern courses. The expanding involvement of the Asst. Prof. Alexandrova in teaching courses such as Entrepreneurship, Institutional Economics, Investment testifies to the multidisciplinary nature of her training. The several teaching mobilities conducted show the candidate's ability to engage in the process of internationalization of teaching in higher education.

#### **4. Quantitative and qualitative assessment (analysis) of the criteria and indicators for research activity and compliance with the requirements.**

Dr. Alexandrina Alexandrova participated in the announced competition with a total of 53 publications, distributed as follows:

Monographs - 1 independent in Bulgarian, main habilitation work - "Financial Literacy in Bulgaria" published in 2025 (164 pages);

Studies published in scientific journals, refereed and indexed in world-known databases with scientific information - 3, co-authored;

Articles published in scientific journals, refereed and indexed in world-known databases of scientific information - 7, co-authored;

Studies, articles and reports published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or published in edited collective volumes - 36, of which 16 independent and 20 co-authored publications;

Chapters of collective monographs - 6

The majority of the publications, except for textbooks and collective monographs, are in English. This contributes to their internationalization and good citation rate (evident from the citation reference), as well as to the international recognition of the author. 73 of the citations are in journals referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information. H-index in scholar.google is 5.

From the presented data it is evident that in quantitative aspect the scientific publications of the candidate exceed the minimum legal requirements many times. Also important are the qualitative characteristics of the research done. The author thoroughly researches and analyzes a wide range of topics, demonstrating skills in the skillful handling of scientific concepts, striving for critical analysis of scientific judgments and adhering to a scientific style in the presentation.

Of the works presented, the most significant is the habilitation thesis on financial literacy in Bulgaria. The significance of this research and the importance of the generalizations and conclusions reached are very important in principle, but also in the context of contemporary reality, the development of many alternative forms of financial investments, the need to prevent growing cyberisms, and the need for proper financial education as early as in secondary education. The main hypothesis that the study proves is that financial literacy is a direct consequence of the quality, scope and accessibility of education throughout the life cycle. From the empirical research conducted, there is evidence of a correlation between higher educational attainment and better financial knowledge, confidence in managing personal finances and the ability to make rational financial decisions. In comparison with the EU, a serious lag in this area in Bulgaria is found and a set of key recommendations to overcome this knowledge deficit is proposed.

Based on the scientific publications submitted for peer review for compliance with the minimum national requirements for scientific area 3. "Social, economic and legal sciences", three main areas of scientific interests of ass. prof. Dr. Alexandrina Alexandrova.

*The first one is Public Finance, Public Sector Efficiency, Tax Policy and Fiscal Convergence in the EU.* In numerous publications (G7.7, G7.9, G7.14, G7.15, G6.5, G8.5, G 9.8) doing a comparative analysis of the differences and similarities in the institutional frameworks governing fiscal policy in the United States and the European Union, Dr. Alexandrina Alexandrova raises questions about the specific features and characteristics of the two institutionally different economic integration unions, as well as about fiscal centralization or decentralized fiscal discipline. The relationship between fiscal policy and public debt, an assessment of the impact that debt financing policy has on the economic system and effective debt management are part of the candidate's analyses in this thematic group. A good knowledge of the structure of public finances, the tax system, the methods for calculating taxes due, etc. has a significant impact on improving the fiscal capacity of a country. Publications related to the taxation of interest income, income taxation in the EU, tax harmonisation in the EU also fit into this plane of analysis. A special place is also occupied by the analysis of the identified instruments that the EU applies to counteract the negative effects of exogenous crises.

*The second one is Financial literacy, digitalisation, artificial intelligence.* Mainly the monographic habilitation thesis, but also a number of articles (G6.1, G6.2, G6.7, G7.5, G7.9) analyze various aspects of the impact of artificial intelligence and digitalization on the economic development of individual sectors, revolutionize traditional management approaches, and create prerequisites in the corporate environment for value creation and operational efficiency. The impact of innovation and digitalization on economic growth and competitiveness is analyzed, highlighting their importance as drivers of the modern economy. A special place is given to the application of AI in finance. This enriches knowledge and contributes to clarifying the nature of the latest financial instruments and their impact.

*The third is Regional Development, European Projects, Education and Labour Market.* Some of the publications submitted to the competition are related to the analysis of the use of European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) in Bulgaria and their impact on economic development. Best practices and challenges for the absorption of the funds, effects on the regional development of the Bulgarian Pridunavie, prospects for sustainable regional growth (including in the field of tourism) are identified. A special focus of the applicant's research is the labour market and in particular youth unemployment. An in-depth study of the readiness of student-economists for realization on the labor market in the conditions of digital transformation and the need for new skills and competencies has been conducted.

In the period 2017-2025, according to the attached reports, the asst. prof. Aleksandrova has actively participated in 10(ten) research projects (with the requirement according to RCPASDHAP of at least two), as well as in numerous educational mobility projects for teaching purposes. She has led one national project - Fiscal discipline and/or increasing the fiscal capacity of the Republic of Bulgaria?", № KP-06 PM35/5 of /09/2019, with the funding institution "Scientific Research" Fund at the Ministry of Education and Science "Competition for Funding of Basic Research of Young Scientists and Postdoctoral Researchers. The projects are oriented to current issues in the economy. The applicant has also been involved in the implementation of 2 (two) international research projects implemented by the Academy of Economics.

## **5. Synthesized assessment of the main scientific and applied contributions of the candidates**

The scientific and scientific-applied contributions claimed by asst. prof. Dr. Alexandrina Alexandrova and outlined in the Report correspond in content with the publications and materials submitted for review.

They can be synthesized mainly in the already outlined scientific areas of research as follows:

**-Contributions of a theoretical nature:**

- Identifying the determinants of financial literacy and highlighting the key role of digital competences.
- clarifying the relationship between financial literacy - sustainable investment and consumption - environmental transformation - social cohesion
- Identifying good practices and challenges in the absorption of EU structural funds

**- Contributions of a practical and applied nature:**

- The direct link between the educational attainment and the level of financial knowledge and confidence in managing personal finances has been empirically demonstrated.
- Suggestions for recommendations for a national financial literacy strategy
- Measures to promote digital transformation are proposed, as well as specific policies to adapt the Bulgarian economy to the new technological realities
- On the basis of an analysis of the causes of youth unemployment, mechanisms and policies are proposed to promote employment, increase the readiness of newly graduated economics students for realization on the labor market and the need for new skills and competencies synchronous with the ongoing transformation processes.

**6. Key critical comments and recommendations for each candidate individually**

I have no critical remarks. I recommend strengthening the author's independent publishing activity and focusing on a narrower range of issues, with an emphasis on financial literacy and digital literacy in particular. This will lead to even greater visibility of the candidate and establish him/her as an authoritative scholar in the field of financial issues. It would also be good if she could publish a stand-alone textbook on a specialised course that she teaches.

**7. Conclusion**

The quantity and quality of the research papers and evidence of the candidate's research activities submitted in this competition fully meet the minimum requirements of the Academic Staff Development Act in Bulgaria (LASDRB) and the Implementing Regulations of the LASDRB. Dr. Alexandrina Alexandrova convincingly demonstrates that in terms of content the subject matter and quality of the publications presented fully covers the field of the announced competition. The presented publications are oriented towards topical issues in economics and are developed with scientific depth in the subject matter and systematized author's views. No unauthorised use of other people's research was found and there was no evidence of plagiarism.

Therefore, I give my positive assessment on the candidacy of the senior associate professor Dr. Alexandrina Alexandrova to take the academic position of "Associate Professor" at the D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics - Svishtov.

**Candidate Taner Mustafov Ismailov**

**1. Personal presentation of the candidates**

Taner Ismailov is a graduate of D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics – Svishtov, major in "Financial Control". He obtained his Ph.D. in 2015. At the same time, he has acquired numerous professional qualifications and specializations, which allow him to be a fairly wide-ranging expert economist. He has evident from the attached references, over 13(thirteen) years of experience as a lecturer at the Academy where he successively progressed through honorary Assistant Professor, Assistant Professor and as of 2019, Senior Assistant Professor. For the last five academic years, the candidate's teaching load reached an average of 600 hours per year, with a norm of 400 hours. He has given lectures and tutorials in numerous subjects, mainly in the field of public finance, customs and tax policy, economics, and financial administration. Dr. Ismailov's research activities include publications, participation in scientific projects and events. He has also participated in a number of educational mobility projects for teaching purposes. The candidate's profile is suitable for the needs of this competition. Dr. Taner Ismailov's solid training and development in the subject matter of the competition is evident from both his educational and scientific degrees and his extensive research experience.

## **2. Fulfilment of the requirements for the academic post**

According to the report on the fulfilment of the minimum national requirements under Article 26 of the LASDRB for SF 3.8. Economics for the academic post of Associate Professor, Dr Taner Mustafaov Ismailov has repeatedly exceeded the quantitative criteria - with a minimum of 400 he has demonstrated **1095** points as follows:

- indicators of group A - dissertation for the award of the doctoral degree - 50 points;
- group B - habilitation thesis, monograph - 100 points;
- Group G - monograph, including the one not presented as the main habilitation thesis and publications (studies, articles, reports, etc.) in scientific publications of different rank and type - 275 points;
- Group D - citations and reviews in scientific publications - 670 points;

Participation as a member of a scientific collective in 10 (ten) scientific research projects is also presented separately in the competition materials. There is a leadership of one project. The additional requirements stipulated in the Regulations of the AE have also been repeatedly exceeded, including the publication of textbooks and studies guade for the needs of the educational process.

All publications and project participations have not been evaluated in previous competitions for the academic title of Assistant Professor and PhD.

## **3. Quantitative and qualitative evaluation (analysis) of the criteria and indicators of the teaching work and compliance with the requirements.**

From the submitted official report on the academic employment of the s. asst. prof. Dr. Taner Ismailov for the training of students in the Bachelor's and Master's degree over the last five academic years, it is established that he is above the approved norm for the higher education institution. The candidate has the necessary experience, practice and in-depth knowledge in teaching a wide range of subjects. From the submitted teaching references, it can be seen that Dr. Ismailov covers a fairly wide perimeter of academic disciplines and has taught lecture courses, either alone or as part of a team, in both specialised subjects (customs and customs policy, tax policy, economic conjuncture) and fundamental subjects such as microeconomics and macroeconomics. The attached documents show that, on average, the candidate taught about ten courses per year. This shows the potential and flexibility to prepare new courses and to broaden the range of competences, which is important in a highly changing environment and a continuous process of innovation of the taught disciplines.



He has contributed to 5(five) textbooks and 1(one) methodological manual published by an academic publishing house, directly related to the courses taught by s. asst. prof. Dr. Taner Ismailov.

Participation in multiple mobility projects proves the candidate's capacity, capabilities and willingness to engage in the process of internationalization of teaching.

#### **4. Quantitative and qualitative assessment (analysis) of research criteria and indicators and compliance with requirements.**

Dr. Taner Ismailov participated in the announced competition with a total of 27 publications, distributed as follows:

- Monographs - 1 independent in Bulgarian, main habilitation work (148.p.);
- Published book based on a defended dissertation - 1
- Articles published in scientific journals, refereed and indexed in world-known databases of scientific information - 6
- Studies published in scientific journals, refereed and indexed in world-known databases of scientific information - 2;
- Studies published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or published in edited collective volumes - 2,
- Articles and papers published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or published in edited collective volumes - 12, 8 of them co-authored publications;
- Chapters of collective monographs - 3.

Most of the publications, with the exception of the textbooks, are in English. This contributes to their internationalization and good citation (evident from the reference to citations), as well as to the international recognition of the author. 31 of the citations are in publications refereed and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information. H-index in scholar.google is 5 and in WoS - 2. This is undoubtedly an indicator of the significance of the scientific work and the contribution of the candidate, which further argues the readiness for the award of the scientific title "Associate Professor".

From the summary of the fulfilment of the minimum national requirements it is clear that the quantitative scientific metrics have been exceeded and with a minimum of 400 asc. Dr. Taner Ismailov proves 1095 points. This undoubtedly gives grounds to consider his application suitable and fulfilling the criteria. Also important are the qualitative characteristics of the research done. The author thoroughly researches and analyses a wide-ranging topic, demonstrating a skillful handling of scientific concepts, a striving for a critical analysis of scientific judgements and adheres to a scientific style in presentation.

Quite understandably, the monographic study on Sustainable Household Consumption in Bulgaria, in a volume of 148 pages, published in 2023 by the publishing house Ismailov, is the one with the greatest weight in the scientific output of Dr. Ismailov. ACCESS Press Publishing house. The monograph has been peer-reviewed by two referees and meets all the legal requirements. The significance of this study and the importance of the generalizations and conclusions reached are very important in principle, but also in the context of contemporary reality, when the development of many models and best practices for green transformation of the economy and its transformation into a circular and environmentally friendly, are mainly business-oriented and especially in energy, transport, industry. Sustainable practices and especially household attitudes towards such a transition remain less studied in the Bulgarian scientific literature. This monographic study therefore fills this gap and contributes to an understanding not only of the opportunities but also a critical analysis of the barriers, misunderstandings, lack of traditions and the need for incentives.

The works submitted for review in the competition by Assoc. Dr. Taner Ismailov can be systematized into three main thematic areas, where certain scientific and practical-applied contributions have been made.

The first area of research is **sustainable development** and related transformations of business models and consumer patterns and attitudes. In addition to the monographic work, numerous publications related to changes in particular sectors of the economy (energy, agriculture, tourism, financial sector) also refer here. Both the theoretical underpinnings of the environmental transition and the specific barriers and challenges in Bulgaria are analysed, with occasional assessments of the effectiveness of implemented policies and recommendations for improvement.

The next area of the candidate's research is **fiscal and financial stability** in national and comparative perspective. It analyses and evaluates the effectiveness of the Bulgarian fiscal system, analyses the European and American fiscal management frameworks in comparative terms and draws conclusions on similarities and differences between them, in the context of the importance of fiscal sustainability. The financial literacy-fiscal capacity relation is also explored, demonstrating the importance of good financial awareness. Another aspect in the study of financial and banking stability is the impact of bank size on bank performance and insolvency in the aftermath of the 2009 global crisis. Stress testing methodologies in the face of an external shock as well as possible measures to strengthen financial stability and manage systemic risk are tested.

Some of the peer-reviewed publications focus on **labour market analysis, youth unemployment and income inequality**. The link between the acquisition of work experience by labour market entrants - labour market exclusion and the deepening of income inequalities is explored. Publications on the social and cultural dimensions of youth unemployment are also placed in this context, as well as highlighting the development of small and medium-sized businesses and the role of entrepreneurship as an accelerator of economic development.

## **5. Synthesized evaluation of the main scientific and applied contributions of the candidates**

The scientific and applied contributions claimed by s. asst. prof. Taner Ismailov, PhD and outlined in the Reference correspond in content with the publications and materials submitted for review.

They can be synthesized mainly in the already outlined scientific areas of research as follows:

### **-Contributions of a theoretical nature:**

- Clarification of the theoretical foundations of the concept of estuarine consumption
- Evaluating the effectiveness of the policy and institutional environment in support of sustainable consumption in Bulgaria
- Identify the financial literacy - carbon footprint relationship and its complex non-linear nature
- Evidence on the role of small businesses as a factor in overcoming income inequality

### **- Contributions of a practical and applied nature:**

- Proposed a 7R marketing mix for the dairy industry to increase profitability through the application of sustainable business models
- Barriers are identified and some solutions are proposed in order to increase the effectiveness of sustainable consumption policies
- Developed with methods to innovatively support lip-smacking practices in agriculture
- Analyzed the financial literacy - fiscal capacity relationship in Bulgaria and justified the importance of financial awareness for active participation in fiscal relations



- A model for assessing the effectiveness of the Bulgarian fiscal system is constructed.

## **6. Main critical remarks and recommendations to each candidate individually**

The recommendations to the candidate are mainly for future research work. Focusing on a specific problem and studying it in detail and in depth would establish Dr. Taner Ismailov as a specialist in his chosen field. The pioneering research in the field of sustainable consumption that he is doing is an important and still little explored field in our country. Serious and multifaceted interpretation of these issues, analysis of households' attitudes towards the implementation of circular patterns in consumption, sustainable practices in waste collection and responsible consumption are possible tracks of further research that could make Dr. Ismailov a leading researcher in the field of sustainable consumption.

## **7. Conclusion**

The quantity and quality of the scientific papers and evidence of the candidate's research activities submitted in this competition fully meet the minimum requirements of the Academic Staff Development Act in the Republic of Bulgaria (LASDRB) and the Regulations for the Implementation of the LASDRB. Dr Taner Ismailov convincingly demonstrates that, in terms of content, the subject matter and quality of the submitted publications fully cover the field of the announced competition. No unauthorised use of other people's research was found and there was no evidence of plagiarism.

Therefore, I give my positive assessment of the application of Dr. Taner Ismailov to take the academic position of Associate Professor at the D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics - Svishtov.

## **Candidate Tania PlamenovaTodorova**

### **1. Personal presentation of the candidates**

Tania Tododorova received her higher education at the D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics - Svishtov and holds a Bachelor's degree in IER and a second degree in Accounting and Control and a Master's degree in International Business and Management. She defended his dissertation on "Efficiency of Public Expenditure" and in 2012 received his PhD.

She has been on a basic contract since 2006 and has successively passed through all the steps in the scientific hierarchy - assistant, senior assistant. Since 2012 she has been a senior assistant professor in the Department of General Theory of Economics, and since 2016 she has been the scientific secretary of the department for 8 years. Total work experience in the specialty is more than 18 years, as evidenced by the attached certificates.

For the last five academic years, the candidate's teaching load exceeds 2000 hours. She has given lectures and exercises in numerous subjects, mainly in the field of micro and macroeconomics in Bulgarian and English, International economics and comparative economic systems. She also has experience of participation in projects. She has led the research team of one successfully completed project and participated as a team member in two other research projects.

The candidate's profile is suitable for the present competition. Both the educational and scientific degrees acquired and the extensive teaching experience of Dr. Tania Tododorova show her solid training and development in the subject of the announced competition. In summary, there is a candidate for the academic post of Associate Professor with sufficient professional, research and practical experience in her field of expertise, meeting the requirements in accordance with Article 26(2) and (3) of the LASDRB in scientific area 3. "Social, Economic and Legal Sciences", PPPRAADB and Article 116 of the AE.

## **2. Fulfillment of the requirements for the academic position**

According to the report on the fulfilment of the minimum national requirements under Art. 26 of the LASDRB for SF 3.8. Economics for the academic position of Associate Professor, Dr. Tania Plamenova Todorova has repeatedly exceeded the quantitative criteria - at a minimum of 400 she proves **1088.33** points as follows:

Indicators of group A - dissertation for the award of PhD - 50 points;

group B - habilitation thesis, monograph - 100 points;

Group G - monograph, including those not presented as the main habilitation thesis and publications (studies, articles, reports, etc.) in scientific publications of different rank and type - 328.33 points;

Group D - citations and reviews in scientific publications - 610 points;

Participation as a member of a scientific collective in 2 (two) scientific research projects and leadership of one successfully completed project are also presented separately in the competition materials. The additional requirements stipulated in the AE Regulations have also been repeatedly exceeded, including the publication of textbooks and teaching aids for the needs of the educational process.

All publications and project contributions have not been evaluated in previous competitions for the title of Assistant Professor and PhD.

## **3. Quantitative and qualitative evaluation (analysis) of the criteria and indicators of the teaching work and compliance with the requirements.**

From the submitted official report on the academic employment of chief asst. Dr. Tania Todorova's academic workload of students in the Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes over the last five academic years is evident that it exceeds the approved norm for the higher education institution. The candidate has the necessary experience, practice and in-depth knowledge in teaching a wide range of subjects. From the submitted teaching activity reports it is evident that Dr. Todorova covers mainly the basic academic disciplines (Microeconomics, Macroeconomics, Economics). She has taught lecture courses on her own or as part of a team and several specialized courses (Comparative Economic Systems, Applied Economics, Modern Economic Theories, Entrepreneurship).

The long teaching experience has allowed the candidate to systematize, prepare and present both individual and team lecture materials. She has been actively involved in compiling textbooks and collections of tests and assignments designed to support the learning process. She has contributed to 5 (five) collective textbooks and 3 (three) methodological manuals published by an academic publishing house, directly related to the courses taught by s. Asst. prof. Dr. Tania Todorova courses. Separately, two stand-alone textbooks for distance learning for the needs of the Higher School of Agribusiness and Regional Development, as well as stand-alone textbooks with lecture courses in Economic Theories, Microeconomics and Macroeconomics are presented.

The attached report also shows 6 (six) participations for Erasmus+ teaching purposes, which demonstrates the Academy's willingness and ability to expand its international activities.

## **4. Quantitative and qualitative assessment (analysis) of the criteria and indicators for research activities and compliance with the requirements.**

Dr. Tania Todorova participated in the announced competition with a total of 30 publications, distributed as follows:

- Monographs - 1 independent in Bulgarian, main habilitation thesis (176.p.), ed. "Macros", 2016;
- Published book based on defended dissertation - 1

- Studies published in scientific journals, refereed and indexed in world-known databases with scientific information - 0
- Articles published in scientific journals, refereed and indexed in world-known databases of scientific information -2;
- Studies published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or published in edited collective volumes -4, , of which 3 publications co-authored;
- Articles and papers published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or published in edited collective volumes - 22,
- Chapters of collective monographs -0.

Some of the publications (8) are in English. This contributes to their internationalization and good citation (evident from the citation reference), as well as to the international recognition of the author. 28 of the citations are in refereed journals and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information. All of them are on one article from 2023. H-index in scholar.google is 2.

This is undoubtedly an indicator of the significance of the scientific work and the contribution of the candidate, which further argues the readiness for the award of the scientific title "Associate Professor".

From the summary of the fulfilment of the minimum national requirements it is clear that the quantitative scientific metrics have been exceeded and with a minimum of 400 Dr. Tania Tododrova proves 1088,33 points. This undoubtedly gives grounds to consider her application suitable and fulfilling the criteria. Also important are the qualitative characteristics of the research done. The author thoroughly researches and analyses a wide-ranging topic, demonstrating a skillful handling of scientific concepts, a striving for a critical analysis of scientific judgements and adheres to a scientific style in the presentation.

Quite understandably, the monographic study on "Public Revenue and Economic Growth" has the greatest weight in Dr. Todorova's scholarly output. The importance of this research stems both from the fiscal challenges posed by the demographic crisis, slowing economic growth rates, pressures for harmonisation within the EU, albeit in the absence of fiscal union, and the imperative of a maximum 3% budget deficit. At the same time, optimising the tax system and ensuring the competitiveness of the economy in global terms make tax revenue issues particularly topical. The focus of the study is on the growth-budget balance relationship and public revenue restructuring. The analysis covers Bulgaria and the other newly acceded EU countries in a comparative perspective and on the basis of empirical data for the period 2006-2015. The conclusions point to the need to increase efficiency in collection, to shift from direct to indirect taxes and from distortionary to non-deformative taxes.

The submitted for reviewing in the competition works of asst. prof. Dr. Tania Tododrova can be systematized in two main thematic areas, where certain scientific and practical contributions are made.

The first area is **public finances**. Public revenues in Bulgaria are examined in detail and compared with other newly acceded EU countries, looking for interdependence with economic growth. The impact of the budget balance on growth is analysed for selected EU countries and relevant conclusions on the effects on economic activity are drawn. The issues of tax policy, public revenue optimisation, its dynamics and elasticity as well as the effects on macroeconomic stability are prominent. Public finances are examined in great detail, from different angles, both at home and in the EU countries analysed, in order to highlight their role for growth.

Although far less covered in some of the publications submitted for review, the topic of the readiness of **higher education** to respond to the needs of business, the challenges of sustainable development and the objectives of the European Strategy Europe 2020 is also present.



## **5. Synthesized assessment of the main scientific and applied contributions of the candidates**

The scientific and scientific-applied contributions indicated by Dr. Tanya Todorova and outlined in the Reference correspond in content with the publications and materials submitted for review. 13 scientific contributions have been claimed, most of which are rather scientific results of the empirical analyses. The contributions are mainly in the already outlined scientific area of research. The following contributions could be distinguished:

### **- Theoretical:**

- Analysis of the role of public expenditure as an instrument of stability, fiscal discipline and growth and determination of the degree of interdependence between expenditure and growth.
- Clarifying the role of "big governments" in slowing economic growth and the prevailing low efficiency of public spending
- Analysis of the balanced budget concept and its feasibility in the European countries studied.

### **- Applied:**

- Defining the potential opportunities for reducing the share of public spending in Bulgaria and their functional and economic restructuring in order to achieve higher efficiency
- Econometric assessment of the growth - public revenue relationship in order to optimize tax policy and transition from progressive to proportional taxation based on empirical data in the period up to 2015.
- The paper proposes ways to achieve higher efficiency of the revenue side of the budget by moving from distortionary to non-deformative taxes.

## **6. Main critical remarks and recommendations to each candidate individually**

The main criticism of the submission relates to the updating of the empirics and, on this basis, the conclusions drawn from the analyses of revenue and public expenditure. All publications are based on public finance data for the countries studied up to 2015. The restoration of budgetary discipline, the policy of expenditure restraint and the pursuit of a balanced budget were completely abandoned during the COVID pandemic, the rise in energy prices and the compensation of businesses and households in a number of European countries. The change in the external environment has necessitated a rethink of fiscal policy models, a temporary change in the SGP rules, new measures to increase the competitiveness of European industry. All of this has not found a proper place in the candidate's academic writings, with relatively few publications dated after 2020. Even the published book based on the thesis in 2023 covers the period 2000-2010. The very important issue of public finances for any macroeconomic stability requires continuous updating, all the more so in the context of a dynamically changing environment. Therefore, my first recommendation relates to the need to update the analysis and, on the basis of the methodology already approbated by the candidate, analyse the situation, efficiency and effects on public revenue growth and expenditure optimisation.

My second recommendation is to strengthen Dr Todorova's publication activity in foreign journals and publications in journals indexed in world databases. This will make her analyses visible and recognisable and will help to establish her as an expert in the field of public finance. Of the 30 publications presented, only 5(16%) are in foreign journals. The concentration of publications only in local, departmental publications does not contribute much to the visibility

of the results. It would also be good to increase participation in collective research projects of the candidate.

## 7. Conclusion

The quantity and quality of the research papers and evidence of the candidate's research activities submitted in this competition fully meet the minimum requirements of the Academic Staff Development Act in the Republic of Bulgaria (LASDRB) and the Implementing Rules of the LASDRB. Dr. Tania Todorova shows that, in terms of content, the subject matter and quality of the submitted publications fully cover the field of the announced competition. No unauthorised use of foreign research was found and there was no evidence of plagiarism.

Therefore, I give my positive assessment of the candidature of Dr. Tanya Todorova to take the academic position of Associate Professor at D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics - Svishtov.

## GENERAL CONCLUSION ON THE ANNOUNCED COMPETITION FOR TWO POSITIONS FOR THE ACADEMIC POSITION "ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR" at D. A. TSENOV ACADEMY OF ECONOMICS - Svishtov.

From the thorough review of the quantitative and qualitative indicators of the three candidates participating in the competition for Associate Professor the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. All three participants in the competition fulfil the national minimum requirements.
2. All three meet the additional requirements of the D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics - Svishtov.
3. As there are two places advertised in the Official Gazette, the ranking of the candidates will be made on a comparative basis on the basis of the indicators set out in Table 1.

	Alexandrina Alexandrova	Taner Ismailov	Tania Tododorova
Number of publications in journals indexed in world databases (Scopus, WoS)	10	8	2
Number of citations in publications indexed in world databases	73	31	28
Number of participants in international and national projects	13	10	3
Total points in Group G	393,10	274,67	328,33
Publications abroad (% of total)	45	74	16

From the documents provided, the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the publications submitted for review, the following conclusion can be drawn :

Senior Asst. prof. Alexandrina Alexandrova, PhD and Senior Ass. Prof. Taner Ismailov exceed the minimum national requirements for the academic position of Associate Professor, and in terms of content the subject matter and quality of the publications submitted fully cover the field of the announced competition. No unauthorised use of foreign research was found and there was no evidence of plagiarism. Therefore, I confidently express my positive opinion on the candidatures of Dr. Alexandrina Borisova Alexandrova and Dr. Taner Mustafov Ismailov to occupy the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the Department of "General Theory of Economics" of the D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics - Svishtov.

Date 26 July 2025 / Sofia

Signature:  
(Prof. Vania Ivanova, PhD)