

REVIEW

From:

Prof. Dr. Penka Dimitrova Shishmanova
Scientific Specialty: Political Economy
D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics – Svishtov

Subject:

Competition for occupying the academic position of "**Associate Professor**" (two positions) in the scientific specialty Political Economy, professional field 3.8 Economics, higher education area 3. Social, Economic, and Legal Sciences, for the needs of the Department of General Theory of Economics, announced in the State Gazette, issue 32 dated April 15, 2025.

1. Grounds for Writing the Review

The review is prepared in accordance with the decision of the Faculty Council of the "Finance" faculty (Protocol №11/11.06.2025), Order №475/12.06.2025 of the Rector of the D. A. Tsenov Academy, the decision of the first meeting of the Academic Committee dated 19.06.2025, and pursuant to Art. 122, para. 1 of the Regulations for the Development of Academic Staff at "D. A. Tsenov" Academy of Economics.

2. Information about the Candidates

Three candidates are participating in this competition (listed alphabetically):

Chief Assistant Dr. Alexandrina Borisova Alexandrova
Chief Assistant Dr. Taner Mustafov Ismailov
Chief Assistant Dr. Tanya Plamenova Todorova

All three candidates are lecturers in the Department of General Theory of Economics, Finance Faculty, at the D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics – Svishtov.

3. Personal Profiles of the Candidates

3.1 Chief Assistant Dr. Alexandrina Alexandrova

Dr. Alexandrina Alexandrova obtained a bachelor's degree in finance and a second specialty in Accounting and Control in 2012 and 2013 respectively. Between 2013–2014, she completed master's degrees in both specialties. In 2017, following the successful defense of her dissertation

titled "Optimization of the Tax System in the Republic of Bulgaria", she was awarded a PhD (Diploma №2017015/06.04.2017) in the scientific specialty Finance, Money Circulation, Credit and Insurance (Finance). She is currently enrolled in a master's program in Law at Angel Kanchev University of Ruse.

Her academic career began in 2014 as a non-permanent assistant in the Department of Finance and Credit. After brief interruptions – during which she held and continues to hold various positions (recognized researcher [R2] and Chief coordinator at the Research Institute of the Academy, authorized representative of NACID for the Academy, contact person for the Bulgarian Higher Education Rating System, external evaluator at HRDC and ESI Funds, among others) – she became an assistant in the Department of General Theory of Economics in 2022, and a Chief assistant in 2023.

Dr. Alexandrova has over 10 years of experience and 22 participations in international, national, and internal scientific projects since her PhD defense, including leadership roles. She has also participated in 8 mobility-related projects and completed 8 international mobility exchanges for teaching and training under Erasmus+ and other programs. She is fluent in English and Russian, has independent proficiency in Spanish, and basic knowledge of German. She possesses excellent digital and computer skills, as well as strong social and organizational competencies.

3.2 Chief Assistant Dr. Taner Ismailov

Dr. Ismailov completed his secondary education in 2000 and then enrolled at the D. A. Tsenov Academy, where he obtained his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Economic and Financial Control in 2004 and 2005 respectively. In 2012, he became a full-time PhD student in the Department of General Theory of Economics, and in 2015, he successfully defended his dissertation titled "Income Inequality in Bulgaria and Opportunities for Small Business Development", earning a PhD (Diploma №2015011/25.03.2015) in Political Economy. Between 2015 and 2017, he completed a Master's program in Turkish Philology: Language Services for Tourism and Business, at the University of Shumen "Ep. Konstantin Preslavski". Over the years, he has acquired various professional qualifications in judicial expertise, insurance, customs documentation, etc.

Dr. Ismailov began his professional career as a student and has held operational, consulting, and managerial roles in various business entities. Since 2012, he has been active in teaching and research activities at the Academy, holding positions as non-permanent lecturer (2012–2015) in the Department of General Theory of Economics, assistant (2015–2019), and Chief assistant (since 2019) in the Department of Finance and Credit, returning in 2023 to the Department of General Theory of Economics.

He has participated in 10 international, national, and institutional projects as coordinator, expert, mentor, or academic advisor. He also participated in 6 Erasmus+ KA1 mobility projects for

training and teaching. He is fluent in Turkish, independently proficient in English and German, and possesses excellent computer, communication, and organizational skills.

3.3 Chief Assistant Dr. Tanya Todorova

Dr. Todorova completed secondary education in 1998, then began her Bachelor's studies in Accounting and Control and International Economic Relations at the D. A. Tsenov Academy. After graduation, in 2003, she continued with a Master's in International Business and Management at the same institution. Between 2005–2012, she was a PhD candidate in the Department of General Theory of Economics, with a dissertation titled "Efficiency of Public Expenditures in the Bulgarian Economy (Macroeconomic Aspects)". Upon successful defense in 2012, she earned a PhD (Diploma №2012040/22.10.2012) in Political Economy.

She began her career briefly in the business sector, then became an assistant in the department in 2006. From 2009–2011 she served as Senior Assistant, and since 2012 as Chief Assistant in the same department. From 2016 to 2020, she was an Associate Professor at UARD – Plovdiv, before being released.

Dr. Todorova has participated in 5 institutional projects – 3 research-focused and 2 related to organizing academic forums. One of them was led by her independently. She also took part in 5 Erasmus+ KA1 mobility projects for teaching, completing 5 short-term teaching mobilities. She is fluent in English and has independent knowledge of German. She possesses good computer skills and declares good communication, managerial, and organizational competencies.

4. Quantitative and Qualitative Evaluation Based on Teaching Criteria and Compliance with Requirements

4.1 Chief Assistant Dr. A. Alexandrova

Dr. Alexandrova has a total professional experience of 8 years, including 5 years as a researcher and recognized researcher (R2), and 3 years as an assistant and Chief assistant at the D. A. Tsenov Academy. Prior to her academic appointments, she served 5 years as an adjunct lecturer, making her total teaching experience in the specialty 8 years.

According to the academic workload records provided, she has averaged over 580 teaching hours annually over the last five academic years, exceeding the required 400 hours. She delivers lectures and seminars in core economic and financial subjects such as Microeconomics, Macroeconomics, Institutional Economics, Investments, Budget and Budgetary Policy, Pricing and Price Policy, including in English.

She has developed a total of 12 lecture courses – 5 in co-authorship for bachelor's and master's level students, and 7 qualification and certification courses with structured syllabi (including 3 in

English for bachelor's students at the Baltic International Academy in Latvia and 4 for trainees in the Academy's Professional Training Center). She is also a co-author of 5 academic textbooks published between 2019–2025 by the Academy's publishing house, all of which had two internal peer reviewers. Additionally, she contributed to the creation of 2 study aid books for undergraduate students.

This information demonstrates that Dr. Alexandrova not only meets but exceeds the quantitative teaching requirements. The variety of developed courses and taught disciplines—both within and beyond her core specialty, and in multiple languages (including English and Spanish)—present her as a lecturer with broad theoretical and specialized training, with interests and experience in teaching across diverse academic fields. She shows potential for continued development and professional growth.

4.2 Chief Assistant Dr. T. Ismailov

Dr. Ismailov has a total of 19 years of professional experience, 13 of which are in the field, as a non-permanent lecturer, assistant, and Chief assistant in the Finance Faculty at the Academy. For the last five academic years, he has recorded over 580 teaching hours annually – above the 400-hour threshold set in Regulations for the Development of Academic Staff at "D. A. Tsenov" Academy of Economics.

He has experience teaching both general and specialized economic and financial disciplines such as Economics, Microeconomics, Macroeconomics, Public Finance and Budget, Financial Management of Human Resources, Customs and Tariff Policy, etc., to bachelor's and master's students, some of which are conducted in English.

He has created 9 lecture courses – 5 in co-authorship for undergraduate and graduate students, and 4 independently for trainees in the Academy's Center for Postgraduate and Elective Education. Between 2021–2025, he co-authored and published 5 academic textbooks with two internal reviewers and 1 study aid book.

Based on this information, it is evident that Dr. Ismailov exceeds the quantitative teaching criteria and has also extended his educational engagement beyond the conventional student body. This affirms his status as an active and promising educator, with high professional standards and commitment to both academic instruction and other socially significant educational initiatives.

4.3 Chief Assistant Tanya Todorova

Ms. Todorova has a total professional experience of 22 years, 18 of which are in the field, all at the D. A. Tsenov Academy. Over this period, she has held the academic roles of assistant, senior assistant, and Chief assistant within the Finance Faculty, Department of General Theory of Economics.

Her average annual workload over the past five years is more than 540 teaching hours, exceeding the required 400 per Regulations for the Development of Academic Staff at "D. A. Tsenov" Academy of Economics.. Throughout her academic career, she has taught foundational and specialized economic disciplines – Microeconomics and Macroeconomics (including in English), Economics, Comparative Economic Systems, Applied Economics, Methodology of Economic Research, etc. – primarily to undergraduate students.

She has developed 5 lecture courses, including 4 for bachelor's students (3 of which were independently developed) and 1 for master's students (based on a co-authored textbook with O. Markov). Between 2015–2025, she published 9 textbooks, 5 in collaboration with department colleagues and 4 independently (tailored to the teaching needs at UARD). During the same period, she also published 3 study aids books, 2 of which were solo efforts (also related to the period of employment at UARD).

The data shows that Dr. Todorova also exceeds the teaching-related criteria. She is a well-prepared and experienced lecturer whose work focuses primarily on student teaching. However, there is no evidence of involvement in broader academic activities, such as with other student categories or initiatives. While her independently published textbooks are a positive feature, they primarily served the needs of another institution (UARD) and do not align with the established traditions of the General Theory of Economics department, which emphasizes teamwork and curriculum alignment with the department.

5. Quantitative and Qualitative Evaluation Based on Research Criteria and Compliance with Requirements

5.1 Chief Assistant Dr. A. Alexandrova

According to the compliance report with the national minimum and internal institutional requirements, Dr. Alexandrova has accumulated the following points under the quantitative criteria: Group A – Dissertation work: 50 points, Group B – Habilitation work (monograph): 100 points, Group C – Publications: 393.10 points (*minimum required: 200*), Group D – Citations: 1145 points (*minimum required: 50*), Group E: 654.10 points, Total of 2342.20 points (*minimum required: 400*). Some of the publications were duplicated or incorrectly listed, so they were not considered in the review. Also, the citation report under Group D underestimated the actual citation count. Despite these inaccuracies, the achieved quantitative results far exceed the thresholds set in Art. 2b, paras. 2 and 3 of the Act on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for its application.

Dr. Alexandrova has submitted 53 scientific works for this competition. These include: 1 monograph, 14 articles, 21 research reports, 11 studies, and 6 chapters in co-authored monographies. Her scholarly output includes both solo and co-authored works, with 10 of them (3

studies, 4 articles, and 3 papers) published in journals indexed in Scopus and Web of Science – meeting the requirement for at least one such publication.

Overall, her scientific output is impressive in volume and solid in structure. The number of internationally indexed publications demonstrates high quality, scholarly rigor, and global visibility.

Her research interests span a broad spectrum of economic issues, structured into key areas: Financial literacy, Public finance and fiscal convergence, Socio-economic development, labor market, education, tourism, regional development, Artificial intelligence and its applications, Banking, EU funds, and project management.

Given her education and experience in two departments, it's logical that her research bridges financial and macroeconomic topics. Her habilitation work, "Financial Literacy in Bulgaria", examines the role of financial literacy in society from both micro- and macroeconomic perspectives. She explores how individuals' ability to understand and manage personal finances influences economic behavior and stability. At the macro level, financial literacy is framed as a driver of national economic sustainability.

Her study is based on an extensive theoretical and empirical foundation, including own original survey. She analyzes the global, European, and national state of financial literacy with a strong focus on its link to education. A key conclusion is that Bulgaria suffers from a "critical lag" in financial literacy and in institutionalizing financial education. She proposes specific government policy measures and a national strategy to improve outcomes in this area.

Building on her interest in education, she addresses the labor market and how acquired skills influence employability. She emphasizes the importance of partnerships between educational institutions and the business sector, investigates labor market dynamics, employer expectations, and youth unemployment, and explores regional development and tourism potential in Bulgaria and Europe.

In public finance and fiscal convergence, she analyzes Bulgaria's tax system and European trends, evaluating how fiscal policies impact economic growth and proposing measures for fiscal sustainability and macroeconomic balance.

The candidate demonstrates an active scholarly interest in contemporary and forward-looking topics like digitalization and artificial intelligence in economic sectors. These studies expand her profile and reflect her responsiveness to contemporary societal challenges.

Her work is multidisciplinary in nature, stands out for its topical relevance and analytical rigor, it is well-grounded in theory and is empirically substantiated. Her research aims to identify and propose viable solutions.

5.2 Chief Assistant Dr. T. Ismailov

According to the quantitative data submitted by Dr. Ismailov, and in compliance with Art. 2b, paras. 2, 3, and 5 of the Act on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, his results are: Group A – Dissertation work: 50 points, Group B – Habilitation work (monograph): 100 points, Group C – Publications: 274.67 points (*required: 200*), Group D – Citations: 670 points (*required: 50*), Group E – Additional work: 348.32 points, Total of 1442.99 points (*minimum required: 400*) There are a few instances of duplicate listings and a minor correction (4 points) due to technical errors. Despite this, the total score substantially exceeds the minimum required.

For the competition, Dr. Ismailov submitted 27 publications, including: 2 monographs (habilitation and a published book based on his defended dissertation), 3 chapters in co-authored monographies, 4 studies, 7 articles, 11 research reports. Of these, 8 (2 studies, 2 articles, 4 research papers) are indexed in Scopus or Web of Science. His output is substantial, well-balanced in structure, and of high quality – nearly one-third of his publications are in leading databases, reflecting strong international academic presence.

His research spans: Macroeconomic equilibrium and disequilibrium (household consumption, income inequality, poverty, youth unemployment), Finance and fiscal policy, Ecology, tourism, sustainability, Entrepreneurship, SMEs, and insurance markets. It is noteworthy that, following the defense of his doctoral dissertation in the field of Political Economy, he has continued to engage with issues of micro- and macroeconomics – despite working in a different department – further developing them within the context of the challenges of sustainable development.

His habilitation monograph investigates household consumption through the lens of sustainability, analyzing Bulgarian household attitudes toward adopting sustainable practices. His methodology combines national statistics, academic literature, and own custom survey. Based on this, a detailed analysis of households' attitudes toward sustainable consumption has been conducted, which – when combined with the in-depth theoretical research presented in the first chapter – provides a solid foundation for a number of well-reasoned evaluations, conclusions, and forecasts on the issues under consideration. The results include robust empirical analysis, leading to conclusions that households are willing to adopt sustainability practices, but low awareness and income levels are limiting factors.

He identifies the "external impulse syndrome" - a belief that sustainability initiatives should come from external actors (e.g., government), not individuals. As not deeply explored in this monograph, he indicates plans to study this phenomenon further, demonstrating consistency and intellectual ambition.

The research on macroeconomic instability, with a focus on poverty, social exclusion, and youth unemployment, is distinguished by a well-structured and socially engaged approach. These studies put forward the argument that the low standard of living and limited opportunities for professional

realization among younger generations represent persistent obstacles to sustainable development. In this context, the author substantiates the need for balanced and equitable policies and proposes solutions to address the identified challenges.

His work also addresses tourism, energy security, sustainable agriculture, digitalization, and green investment mechanisms. He highlights the importance of innovation and environmental policy integration.

Another research pillar is fiscal topics – financial stability, banking sector development, tax policy, fiscal capacity – at national and international levels. His publications blend theory with empirical analysis and argue for effective discretionary fiscal policy, limiting misuse, and reinforcing financial stability.

Dr. Ismailov's scientific contributions are thematically diverse and practically oriented toward sustainability and stability. He shows strong interest in contemporary economic challenges and interdisciplinary research.

5.3 Chief Assistant Dr. T. Todorova

The compliance report for Dr. Todorova shows: Group A – Dissertation work: 50 points, Group B – Habilitation work (monograph): 100 points, Group C – Publications: 328.33 points (*required: 200*), Group D – Citations: 610 points (*required: 50*), Group E – Additional work: 244.66 points, Total of 1332.99 points (*minimum required: 400*). Several of her publications were duplicates and excluded from the review. Still, her total exceeds the required threshold more than threefold.

She submitted 30 publications for this competition: 2 monographs (habilitation and one based on her dissertation), 4 studies, 7 articles (2 in Scopus/WoS), 17 research reports. Her work's volume is sufficient, though over half are conference papers—suggesting high activity and engagement, but these types of publications generally carry lower academic weight in contribution assessments.

Dr. Todorova's scholarly work is focused on issues of public finance, with a particular emphasis (in the context of this competition) on public revenues. Examined through various lenses, scopes, and time periods, these studies reflect the candidate's commitment and effort to explore the selected topic in a multifaceted and comprehensive manner. In the analyses provided, the effects of public revenues are logically linked to economic growth and the government's fiscal policy. The author's academic interests also encompass topics such as education, foreign trade, inequality, and integration, which are ultimately addressed within the context of public finance.

The candidate's focus on public revenues represents a natural continuation of her research on public expenditures and their efficiency, as presented in her doctoral dissertation and related publications. In her main habilitation work, titled "Public Revenues and Economic Growth", the aim is to investigate the interdependence between these two macroeconomic indicators and to

assess the extent to which tax policy contributes to the socio-economic development of 12 European countries. For this purpose, a large volume of data spanning a ten-year period (2005–2016) was selected and systematized according to various criteria, and a comparative analysis of the selected countries was conducted. The study concludes with recommendations for improving the efficiency of public finance and optimizing its structure.

However, it is worth noting that the data, trends, analyses, comparisons, and some of the conclusions presented in this work are no longer current, as the habilitation study was published nine years ago (in 2016). As such, it does not reflect the impact of more recent developments, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, which caused significant disruptions to fiscal policies and fundamentally altered approaches to promoting economic growth. It should also be noted that the same habilitation work was used by the candidate to participate in and win a previous competition (held on 02.09.2016 at another higher education institution) for the academic position of Associate Professor, as recorded in the NACID registry and on the university's website. While this may be permissible under the relevant regulatory framework, I consider it to be academically inappropriate.

In her other areas of publication, Dr. Todorova employs a similar methodology – using empirical data relevant to the topic (such as developments in education at various levels, export and import volumes, etc.) to present current conditions and trends, identify challenges, and reach conclusions regarding the need for more efficient resource allocation. In nearly all of the publications, the issues are ultimately framed in terms of public revenues or expenditures, their efficiency, and their role in achieving economic growth.

It should be further noted that many of the candidate's publications contain significant textual similarities (verbatim repetition of text), as well as compilations of paragraphs reused from earlier works, with identical conclusions and recommendations. Such repetition of the same ideas, analyses, and findings diminishes the overall quality of the candidate's scholarly work and creates the impression of either a depletion of original ideas or a lack of effort toward conceptual advancement and academic development.

6. Consistency of Research Contributions with Those Declared by the Candidates

6.1 Chief Assistant Dr. A. Alexandrova

In her summary of scientific and applied contributions, Dr. Alexandrova organizes her achievements into 7 points corresponding to the main areas of her research activity. While the content accurately reflects her results, the formulations tend to be overly descriptive and detailed, which somewhat obscures the core scholarly contributions. Considering this, and the fact that research reviews typically assess both theoretical and practical significance, her main contributions can be synthesized as follows:

Theoretical Contributions: A comprehensive analysis of the factors influencing financial literacy, with a particular focus on education, Examination of the interconnections between fiscal policy, digitalization, and economic development, Identification of key challenges in adapting tax systems to the digital economy and understanding the impact of emerging technologies on labor markets and sustainable development.

Applied Contributions: Concrete recommendations for promoting financial literacy among Bulgarian citizens and improving the effectiveness of the National Financial Literacy Strategy, Proposals for ensuring fiscal sustainability and enhancing the coordination of tax policies within the EU to achieve greater fiscal convergence, Suggestions for optimizing the management of European funds, Practical measures to support youth employment and improve economic competitiveness through digital transformation and the adaptation of the economy to Industry 4.0, Contextual analysis of the opportunities and risks associated with blockchain technologies, cryptocurrencies, and artificial intelligence.

6.2 Chief Assistant Dr. T. Ismailov

Dr. Ismailov presents his scientific and applied contributions in a 5-point summary, aligned with the main thematic directions of his research. These points accurately represent his scientific achievements. Although not excessively detailed, the summary could benefit from more precision and conciseness.

Among them, the following theoretical contributions stand out: Clarification of the concept of sustainable consumption and the factors that determine it, Critical reflection and analysis of various fiscal policy instruments, Exploration of interdisciplinary links between financial literacy, carbon footprint, and sustainable development. In terms of applied contributions, the candidate's more significant achievements can be summarized as follows: Policy recommendations to promote sustainable consumer practices among households, Design and implementation of a model for evaluating the effectiveness of the Bulgarian fiscal system, Identification of innovative mechanisms in the energy sector and green technologies, Justification of the role of small businesses in reducing youth unemployment and social exclusion, while simultaneously increasing income and stimulating economic growth.

6.3 Chief Assistant Dr. T. Todorova

In her contribution report, Dr. Todorova lists 13 research achievements in a generalized manner, without structuring them under specific criteria. While they adequately reflect her work on the relationship between public finance and economic growth, the statements could be more concise and focused. In their current form, some read more like conclusions than clear scholarly contributions, and others overlap significantly, explaining their high total number. After refinement, her contributions can be categorized as follows:

The more significant scientific and theoretical contributions include: A literature review on the mechanisms of fiscal influence, Analyzed interrelation between public revenues and economic growth, including elasticity coefficient calculations, Comparative analysis of EU countries and an econometric study to determine the correlation between budget balances and economic growth. Applied Contributions: Recommendations for restructuring and enhancing the efficiency of public revenues and expenditures, A well-supported argument for achieving balanced budgets through reduced public spending and the adoption of the "small government" concept.

7. Academic Visibility characteristic of the Candidates

Based on the citation records, it is clear that all three candidates are sufficiently recognized within the academic community. Their published research and results are of interest to numerous scholars across various scientific fields.

- 7.1 Dr. Alexandrova has demonstrated the highest level of visibility in the research community. She provides evidence of a total of 88 citations, including: **73** in scientific journals indexed in Scopus and Web of Science, 5 in monographs and collective works with scholarly peer review and 10 in non-indexed journals with academic peer review. This results in a total of 1195 points (minimum required: 50). Although, likely out of modesty, the candidate has not itemized all of their citations outside Scopus and Web of Science, which, as of the time of writing this review, amount to 170 according to the author's personal Google Scholar profile.
- 7.2 Dr. Ismailov is also well-recognized in academic circles. He reports a total of 71 citations, including: **31** in journals indexed in Scopus and Web of Science, 1 in a peer-reviewed monograph, 39 in non-indexed but peer-reviewed journals. This gives him a total of 670 points, exceeding the required 50.
- 7.3 In this context, Dr. Todorova's academic recognition is based on a total of 48 citations: **28** in Scopus and Web of Science journals, 18 in peer-reviewed monographs or collective works, 2 in non-indexed peer-reviewed journals. These amount to a total of 610 points, again far above the minimum requirement of 50.

8. Critical Notes and Recommendations

- 8.1 There are no significant critical remarks regarding Dr. Alexandrova's work, I would rather offer two recommendations. In my opinion, she should consider narrowing the thematic scope of her research in order to achieve greater specialization and consistency in her academic work. On a technical level, my advice is to approach future application procedures with greater attention to detail and precision in documentation.
- 8.2 No substantial critical comments are noted regarding Dr. Ismailov's work too. A suggestion is made for him to continue focusing his efforts on the topic of sustainable development, which has already become a successful thematic direction in his research. In this regard, it would be appropriate for him to consider developing a monograph on the subject and designing a course

that could contribute to the creation of a new Master's degree specialization within the department.

8.3 Several critical remarks are addressed to Dr. Todorova's work. The above described repeated use of identical text from her previous research in many of her current publications is not a good practice and does not meet established academic standards. Although her research output is sufficient in volume, it is dominated by conference research reports, and her habilitation monograph is outdated, failing to reflect significant contemporary developments. In this sense, she is encouraged to leverage her potential to develop new, relevant research that expands and enriches her current scholarly focus. It is advisable for these studies to be published in prestigious academic journals, preferably those indexed in global databases, in order to strengthen her academic reputation and secure independent scholarly recognition.

9. Summary Conclusion and Opinion

Taking into account the presented data, facts, and supporting documents with evidence, it can be stated that all three candidates meet the requirements of the Act on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for its application, and specifically Article 116 of Regulations for the Development of Academic Staff at "D. A. Tsenov" Academy of Economics., and deserve a positive evaluation for appointment to the academic position of "Associate Professor." Given the fact that this competition includes more than one candidate for a single position, it seems appropriate and fair to also consider some additional indicators in accordance with Article 124 of Regulations for the Development of Academic Staff at "D. A. Tsenov" Academy of Economics.

The summarized information on the fulfillment of the specified basic and additional criteria is contained in the following table:

Candidates	Chief Assistant Dr. Alexandrina Alexandrova	Chief Assistant Dr. Taner Ismailov	Chief Assistant Dr. Tanya Todorova
Criteria			
I. Requirements under Art. 116 of Regulations for the Development of Academic Staff at "D. A. Tsenov" Academy of Economics			
Compliance with the minimum national requirements (Art. 2b, para. 2 and 3 of Act on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for its application)	Total points: 2342.20	Total points: 1438.99	Total points: 1332.99
No proven plagiarism according to legal procedure	Declaration signed, no proven plagiarism	Declaration signed, no proven plagiarism	Declaration signed, no proven plagiarism

Minimum 5 academic years in the field with avg. 400 teaching hours/year	8 years, over 580 teaching hours average per year	13 years, over 580 teaching hours average per year	18 years, over 540 teaching hours average per year
Participation in at least 2 research, educational, or applied projects; or at least 1 national or 1 international project	30 participations in international, national, and university-level projects, including 8 mobility-related	16 participations, including 6 mobility-related	10 participations: 5 university projects and 5 mobility-related
Published solo academic textbook or co-authorship in at least 2 academic textbooks	Co-author of 5 textbooks and 2 manuals	Co-author of 5 textbooks and 1 manual	9 textbooks (5 co-authored, 4 solo – UARD), 3 manuals (2 solo)
Developed a lecture course (solo or co-authored) for students or PhD candidates	8 courses for students (5 co-authored in core and specialized subjects, 3 solo for Baltic Academy students)	9 courses (5 co-authored, 4 solo for learners at Continuing Education Center at the Academy)	5 courses (3 solo-developed for undergraduate students)
At least 1 publication in Scopus/WoS	10	8	2
No repetition of publications used for acquiring PhD or for 'Chief Assistant' position	No duplication identified	No duplication identified	No duplication identified
II. Requirements under Art. 124 of Regulations for the Development of Academic Staff at "D. A. Tsenov" Academy of Economics (Evaluation by Additional Indicators)			
Involvement in teaching activities, incl. lecture courses in foreign languages or practice-based training outside the Academy	4 courses in English for BA students; 3 courses for Baltic Academy students; 3 courses in foreign languages at Academy's Training Center	4 courses in English; English courses under Erasmus+ KA1; Expert lecturer in Project 2024-1-BG01-KA210-YOU-000251044	4 English-language courses taught to BA students
Published teaching materials not listed under Art. 116, point 5	–	–	–
Work with students and PhD candidates incl. joint project work	Participated in 8 projects (2021–2025)	4 projects (2024–2025); Supervised MA students for 3 academic years	–
Participation in research projects	17	10	3
Presentations at national and international academic forums	21	11	17
Membership in respected creative/professional organizations	1	2	–

Scientific and applied research developments	–	–	–
Practical application of research results / other intellectual property	–	–	–
Scientific publications (print and electronic) in international journals	22	20	5

The information in the table reveals that the strongest performance – both quantitatively and qualitatively – is that of candidate Dr. A. Aleksandrova. Dr. T. Ismailov also demonstrates a convincing performance, with results that are of a high standard, though to some extent slightly behind those of the previous candidate. The third participant, Dr. T. Todorova, also shows a solid performance, meeting the regulatory requirements and achieving notable results, which, however, comparatively fall behind the other two candidates. Given this, the ranking of the three candidates in the competition is as follows:

1. Chief Assistant Dr. Aleksandrina Aleksandrova
2. Chief Assistant Dr. Taner Ismailov
3. Chief Assistant Dr. Tanya Todorova

As two positions are announced in the competition, I give a positive assessment and confidently express my opinion that the academic position of “Associate Professor” should be awarded to Chief Assistant Dr. Aleksandrina Aleksandrova and Chief Assistant Dr. Taner Ismailov. I believe they best meet the high standards of the department, represent it with dignity, and will contribute significantly to its continued successful development.

July 30, 2025

Svishtov

Reviewer: ...

/Prof. P. Shishmanova/