

OPINION

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Professional field 3.8. Economics

Academic specialty „Political Economy“

Regarding: contest for the academic position of Associate Professor (two positions), announced by AE "D. A. Tsenov" – Svishtov in the area 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 Economic Theory, published in State Gazette, issue 32 of 15 April, 2025.

1. Presentation of the candidates participating in the contest

For participation in the contest for the academic position of Associate Professor (two positions) in the scientific specialty "Political Economy" announced for the needs of the Department of General Economic Theory at AE "D. A. Tsenov" – Svishtov, the following three candidates have submitted their documents:

- Senior Assistant Professor Dr. Alexandrina Borisova Alexandrova – lecturer at the Department of General Economic Theory and chief coordinator at the Institute for Scientific Research at AE "D. A. Tsenov" – Svishtov;
- Senior Assistant Professor Dr. Taner Mustafov Ismailov – lecturer at the Department of General Economic Theory at AE "D. A. Tsenov" – Svishtov;
- Senior Assistant Professor Dr. Tanya Plamenova Todorova – lecturer at the Department of General Economic Theory at AE "D. A. Tsenov" – Svishtov.

2. Grounds for writing the opinion

The opinion was prepared in accordance with Order No. 475/12.06.2025 of the Rector of AE "D. A. Tsenov" and the Decision of the first meeting of the scientific panel held on 19.06.2025. It has been developed in compliance with the Act on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for its application, and the Regulations for the Development of Academic Staff at "D. A. Tsenov" Academy of Economics.

3. Personal characteristics of candidates

1. *Senior Assistant Professor Dr. Alexandrina Alexandrova* holds bachelor's degrees in Finance and in Accounting and Control from AE "D. A. Tsenov" – Svishtov, obtained in 2012 and 2013, respectively. In 2013 and 2014 she completed two master's programs at the same academy – in Financial Management and in Accounting and Auditing in Non-Financial Enterprises, respectively. She is currently studying in a master's program in Law at Ruse University "Angel Kanchev". In 2016 she received a certificate of professional qualification as a teacher from the Center for Postgraduate and Voluntary Training at the AE. From 2013 to 2017 she was a doctoral student in the doctoral program "Finance, Money Circulation, Credit, and Insurance (Finance)" at the AE, where in 2017 she received her PhD degree with a dissertation

titled "Optimization of the tax system in the Republic of Bulgaria" (Diploma No. 2017015 of 06.04.2017). During the periods 2014-2017 and 2020-2022, she was a part-time Assistant Professor at the Department of Finance and Credit at the AE. From 2022 to 2023 Dr. Alexandrova was a full-time Assistant Professor, and since 2023 she has been a Senior Assistant Professor in the Department of General Economic Theory. Since 2017 she has been a recognized research fellow (R2), and since 2024, she has been a chief coordinator at the Institute for Scientific Research at the AE. She is a foreign language teacher at the Vocational Training Center and a secretary of the Academy's Council of Scientific Secretaries. She is designated as a contact person for the Bulgarian Higher Education Rating System and as an authorized representative of the National Center for Information and Documentation for the AE. She is a founder of the Alliance for Sustainable Regional Development – Rousse, where she works as a "Development" manager. She is actively involved in evaluation, management, and expert activities related to research, international, and infrastructural projects funded by the Ministry of Education and Science, ESFR, Erasmus+, INTERREG, NSF, Human Resources Development OP and Science and Education for Smart Growth OP, participating in 24 projects. She has carried out 11 international exchanges for teaching and training at universities in Latvia, Vietnam, Italy, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Portugal, Armenia, Cyprus, and Ukraine. She has a total of around 60 publications in Bulgarian and English. She has participated in 34 national and international scientific forums. She is fluent in English, Russian, Spanish, and German.

2) *Senior Assistant Professor Dr. Taner Ismailov* got his bachelor's degree in Economic and Financial Control from the AE "D. A. Tsenov" – Svishtov. In 2005 he obtained a master's degree in Financial Control from the same academy. From 2012 to 2015 he was a full-time doctoral student at the Department of General Economic Theory. During his doctoral studies he completed specialized training courses in Web 2.0 tools for e-learning, Research methodology, Applied informatics, and Judicial expertises. In 2015 he received a PhD degree with a dissertation topic "Income inequality in Bulgaria and opportunities for small business development" (Diploma No. 2015011 of 25.03.2015). In 2017 he completed a master's degree programme in Turkish Philology: Language Training for Business and Tourism at Konstantin Preslavsky University of Shumen. In the period 2019-2022 he acquired professional qualifications in "Distribution of Insurance Products", "Introduction to Insurance", "Customs Documentation", "Teacher in Economics" and "Pricing of Insurance Services" at the AE. From 2012 to 2015 he was a part-time lecturer, from 2015 to 2019 – an Assistant Professor, and since 2019 he has been a Senior Assistant Professor at the academy. Prior to that, he held administrative and technical positions at Leo Express EOOD (LLPC), Dimitrovgrad, and Bulcargo OOD (LLC), as a credit consultant and manager at Easy Asset Management AD (JSC), Sofia, and as a manager at Creditbul EAD (SPJSC), Sofia. From 2012 to 2013 he was a manager at Micro Credit EAD (SPJSC), Sofia. Since 2020 Dr. Ismailov has been an assistant broker at Musala Insurance Broker OOD (LLC). Since 2024 he has been an evaluator at the National Science Fund of the Ministry of Education and Science. He is a co-founder and a full member of the Alliance for Sustainable Regional Development – Rousse. He is a lecturer in two disciplines at the Center for Postgraduate and Continuing Education at the AE. In the period 2020-2023 he was the academic supervisor of six master's students. He has participated in 14 research and educational projects. He has taken part in eight mobility programs for teaching at universities in Turkey, Ukraine, Romania, etc. He has a total of 44 publications in Bulgarian and English. He has taken part in 14 national and

international scientific forums. He is a member of the Union of Scientists in Bulgaria. He speaks English, Turkish and German.

3) *Senior Assistant Professor Dr. Tanya Todorova* holds bachelor's degrees in International Economic Relations and in Accounting and Control from the AE "D. A. Tsenov". In 2003 she obtained a master's degree in International Business and Management from the same academy. From 2005 to 2012 she was a doctoral student at the Department of General Economic Theory. In 2012 she defended her dissertation entitled "The effectiveness of public expenditure in the Bulgarian economy (Macroeconomic aspects)" (Diploma No. 2012040 of 22 October 2012). From 2006 to 2009 she was an Assistant Professor, from 2009 to 2011 – a Senior Assistant Professor, and since 2011 – she has been a Chief Assistant Professor at the same department. Before joining the academy, she worked as a business secretary at Svilosa AD (JSC), Svishtov. From 2016 to 2020 she was an Associate Professor at the Department of Finance of the Higher School of Agribusiness and Regional Development in Plovdiv. From 2016 to 2020 Dr. Todorova was a scientific secretary of the Department of General Economic Theory at the AE. She holds certificates for acquired competences in Management of International Research Projects, Training of PhD Supervisors, Moodle Virtual Learning Environment, and Creating Professional Presentations with Microsoft PowerPoint. According to her CV, she is an author or co-author of over 50 scientific publications and over 30 textbooks and study guides. She has been a leader of one research project and a member of the teams of three research projects funded by the Institute for Scientific Research at the AE. She has also been involved in two projects for partial funding of a scientific forum, with one of them being ongoing. She has carried out six teaching mobilities under the Erasmus+ programme at universities in Italy, the Netherlands, Morocco, Portugal, Spain and Czech Republic.

4. General quantitative and qualitative assessment of educational and teaching activities

All candidates in the contest meet the mandatory requirements for teaching experience, published academic literature, and developed academic courses according to Article 116, as well as some of the additional requirements related to teaching activities, in accordance with Article 124 of the Regulations for the Development of Academic Staff at the AE. The specific results for each of them are as follows:

➤ *Senior Assistant Professor Dr. Alexandrina Alexandrova* has held academic positions at the academy for 3 years, 3 months, and 13 days at the time of starting the procedure. At the same time, she has 4 years, 10 months, and 1 day of working experience at the Institute for Scientific Research at the AE. From the 2013/2014 academic year to the 2016/2017 academic year and from the 2019-2020 academic year to the 2021/2022 academic year she was a part-time Assistant Professor. Her average annual work load over the last 5 academic years, including both part-time and full-time teaching, exceeds the minimum required by the regulations (400 teaching hours) by more than 30%. She is co-author of 5 textbooks on subjects related to the contest, which is 2.5 times more than what's needed. She also participates in author teams that have published two teaching manuals. She has developed teaching materials for courses of a fundamental nature such as Macroeconomics, Economic Theories, and Financial Policy of the EU for the bachelor's degree programs, and Economics (Microeconomics and Macroeconomics) and Tax Policy for the master's degree programs. She has taught courses in Microeconomics, Macroeconomics,

Entrepreneurship, Intermediate Macroeconomics, Institutional Economics, Tariffs and Tariff Policy, Introduction to Finance, Public Finance, Corporate Finance, Financial Analysis, Investment Intermediation, Capital Markets, Budget and Budget Policy, Tax Policy, Techniques of Taxation, Global and Regional Regulation, Economic Conjuncture, Prices and Pricing Policy, Pricing Management, Financial and Tax Administration, Debt Management, Financial Management of Human Resources. In accordance with Article 124 of the Regulations for the Development of Academic Staff, Senior Assistant Professor Alexandrova has pointed out that the last two courses are also taught in English. She has provided evidence of meeting other additional criteria, such as having delivered a total of 122 lectures and developed teaching content in English for the courses in Personal Finances, European Tax Systems, European Tax Policy, and Financial Analysis at the Baltic International Academy in Latvia. It has also been proven that she has prepared teaching materials and programs for the courses in Organization of Labor and Communication and Foreign Language (foreign language for professional purposes – English) and has taught certification courses in Spanish A1 and Spanish B1 at the Vocational Training Center. An important element of the candidate's activity, which falls within the scope of the additional criteria, is working with students and doctoral students on 10 research, educational, and creative projects.

➤ *Senior Assistant Professor Dr. Taner Ismailov* has 10 years of experience as a full-time lecturer at the AE. Prior to that, he worked for five semesters as a part-time Assistant Professor. The report on his academic activity over the last 5 academic years shows that his average annual teaching load is about 46% higher than the minimum number of hours required by the Regulations for the Development of Academic Staff at "D. A. Tsenov" Academy of Economics. He has participated in the teams of authors of 5 textbooks on fundamental and specialized academic disciplines, which is 2.5 times higher than the threshold number of participations. He was also involved in writing one teaching manual. He has prepared teaching materials for the courses in Macroeconomics, Economic Theories, and Tariffs and Tariff Policy at the bachelor's level, and in Economics (Microeconomics and Macroeconomics) and Tax Policy at the master's level. He has taught courses in Microeconomics, Macroeconomics, Bulgarian Economy, Economics, Institutional Economics, Tariffs and Tariff Policy, Customs Regimes, Cost-Benefit Analysis, Introduction to Finance, Efficiency Management in the Public Sector, Public Finance and Budget, Budget and Budget Policy, Economics of Social Security, Organization and Management of Social Security, Tax Policy, Techniques of Taxation, Global and Regional Regulation, State Regulation in Economics, Aggregate Expenditure in the National Economy, Economic Conjuncture, Labor Market and Unemployment, Information Society, Innovation and Innovation Policy, Prices and Pricing Policy, Pricing Management, Personal Finance, Financial Administration and Regulation of Social Activities, Financial and Tax Administration, Debt Management, Financial Management of Human Resources, Master's Practicum in Digital Economy. Four of these disciplines – Economics, Techniques of Taxation, Debt Management and Financial Management of Human Resources – are also taught in English, which demonstrates compliance with some of the additional criteria of the AE for the academic position of "Associate Professor". Lectures have also been developed on the courses in Finance and Financial Relations, Pricing, Sustainable Household Consumption, and Limitations and Opportunities for the Development of Eco-Entrepreneurial Business for the needs of the Center for Postgraduate and Voluntary Training at the AE. Information is given on 8 mobility programs abroad with the

purpose of teaching, specifying that lectures in English were conducted in 6 academic disciplines. Commitment to students and doctoral students has been reported, including the implementation of 6 projects with their participation.

➤ *Senior Assistant Professor Dr. Tanya Todorova* has been working at the AE for 18 years, 6 months, and 20 days, counting as of May 21, 2025. Her teaching load over the past five years has exceeded the minimum number of hours set out in the Regulations for the Development of Academic Staff at the AE by approximately 23%. She is an author of four individual textbooks and five co-authored textbooks on fundamental and one specialized academic discipline, which is theoretically 6.5 times higher than the mandatory requirements under Article 116 of the same regulations. However, since the individually published textbooks are also included in the report on additional requirements under Article 124 of the regulations, the excess under Article 116, which is based solely on collective textbooks, amounts to 2.5 times. The candidate in the contest also has two individual teaching manuals and one participation with two chapters in a third collective teaching manual. She has submitted information on four courses developed and taught at the bachelor's degree level - in Microeconomics, Applied Economics, Comparative Economic Systems, and Methods of Economic Research, as well as one course at the master's degree level - in International Economics. However, it is clear from the report on academic workload by disciplines that she also taught courses in Macroeconomics, Economics (Microeconomics and Macroeconomics), Economic Conditions, Contemporary Economic Theories, and Entrepreneurship. According to the same report, she teaches courses in Microeconomics and Macroeconomics in English, and according to the information on the fulfillment of additional requirements, she has developed and teaches other courses in English, such as Economic Theories and Applied Economics.

5. General quantitative and qualitative assessment of scientific studies and research activities

The three candidates in the contest have scientific publications and research activities that meet the minimum national requirements and the internal rules of the AE. Their specific results can be summarized as follows:

➤ *Senior Assistant Professor Dr. Alexandrina Alexandrova* has submitted 60 publications for review, 20 of which she has written individually and 40 as a co-author. In terms of structure, they include: 1 monograph; 7 articles and reports published in scientific journals, referenced and indexed in world-renowned scientific information databases; 10 articles and 18 reports in non-referenced journals with scientific review or in edited collective volumes; 3 studies published in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world-renowned scientific information databases; 8 studies published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or in edited collective volumes; 6 chapters in collective monographs, 5 university textbooks, and 2 university teaching manuals. From a content perspective, the most important publication is the monograph, which is dedicated to an interesting and under-researched issue in Bulgarian economic literature. All other publications are also relevant and address some of the key challenge for economic science. The large number of articles and studies published in Scopus and Web of Science deserves high praise, which is indicative for the high level of scientific research of the candidate. The work on educational literature also makes a good impression, with the author's contribution being most significant in the textbooks on the Financial policy of the EU and the Tax policy. The total

number of points for Group G under the Regulations for the implementation of the Act on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria is 393.09, which exceeds the minimum national requirements by almost two times. 25 of the publications were published abroad, and about 1/3 of them are reports presented at international and national scientific forums. The candidate combines his high teaching and publishing activity with participation in 18 national and 9 international research projects (the difference with what is stated in the documents stems from the classification of mobility programs as national rather than international projects), as well as with the management of 1 national and 2 international projects. The total number of points from the project activity is then 560, and from the published textbooks and teaching manuals – 54.13, with the total result for group E of the minimum national requirements being 614.13.

➤ *Senior Assistant Professor Dr. Taner Ismailov* has participated in the contest with 33 publications, 7 of which were individual and 26 in co-authorship. They are structured as follows: 2 monographs, one of which is a habilitation work and the other is a published book based on the dissertation; 4 reports and 2 articles published in scientific journals, referenced and indexed in world-renowned scientific information databases; 12 articles and reports in non-referenced peer-reviewed journals or in edited collective volumes; 2 studies published in scientific journals, referenced and indexed in world-renowned scientific information databases; 2 studies published in non-refereed journals with scientific review or in edited collective volumes; 3 chapters from collective monographs, 5 university textbooks, and 1 university teaching manual. A key role among them is played by the habilitation work, which examines an important issue for economic theory and practice relating to the application of the concept of sustainability to household consumption. The issues analysed in the other publications are also of considerable interest in economic science. An important achievement of the author is the large number of publications in Scopus and Web of Science, all of which have been published abroad. The candidate's significant participation in scientific forums, as well as the fact that most of his publications are in foreign journals, can also be considered as very positive. The total number of points for Group G under the Regulations for the Implementation of the Act on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria is 274.67, which exceeds the minimum national requirements by 37.3%. Dr. Ismailov is a head of a national research project and a participant in 13 national and 2 international research and educational projects (the difference with what is stated in the documents stems from the definition of mobility programs as national rather than international projects). The total number of points for Group E is then 318.32, with 265 coming from project activity and 53.32 from published teaching resources.

➤ *Senior Assistant Professor Dr. Tanya Todorova* has submitted 42 publications for participation in the contest, 31 of which are individual and 11 are co-authored. Their structure is as follows: 2 monographs, one of which is a habilitation work and the other is a published book based on the dissertation; 22 articles and reports published in scientific journals, referenced and indexed in world-renowned scientific information databases; 12 articles and reports in non-referenced peer-reviewed journals or edited collective volumes; 4 studies published in non-referenced peer-reviewed journals or edited collective volumes; 9 university textbooks and 3 university teaching manuals. The most important among them is the habilitation work, which examines the relationship between public revenue and economic growth, characterised by its significant importance and ongoing relevance. A large part of the other publications are related to

the study of the same relationship, while the rest are devoted to other contemporary challenges and are mainly of a macroeconomic nature. The candidate meets the internal requirements for publications in refereed and indexed journals and demonstrates high activity in participating in scientific forums. The total number of points in Group G of the Regulations for the Implementation of the Act on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria is 328.33, exceeding the minimum national requirements by 64.2%. The fact that Dr Todorova is the author of a significant amount of educational literature, including individual textbooks, makes a very good impression. This brings the total score for Group E of the national requirements of 244.66 points. The specific internal requirements of the AE for the academic position have been met, as evidence of leadership in 1 and participation in 2 university research projects has been provided.

6. Characterization of the scientific contributions

The most important scientific contributions of the three candidates in the contest can be summarised in the following way:

➤ Senior Assistant Professor Dr. Alexandrina Alexandrova

- the state of financial literacy has been assessed and its determinants have been identified, the leading role of education has been empirically proven, the main weaknesses of the Bulgarian education system have been highlighted, and recommendations have been made for the key elements of a national strategy for financial literacy;
- the importance of digital financial literacy as part of overall financial literacy is emphasized, the relationship between financial literacy, economic development, and carbon footprint is characterized, and the impact of financial literacy on broader financial inclusion, economic stability, and sustainable development is analysed;
- the most important challenges for fiscal convergence in the EU are outlined, the effectiveness of tax incentives and their impact on investment and job creation are assessed, and the significance of implicit tax rates on labor and consumption for fiscal policy and economic dynamics is examined;
- the impact of artificial intelligence, innovation, and digitalization on economic growth and competitiveness was investigated, the impact of blockchain technology and cryptocurrencies on the financial system was discussed, and the applications of artificial intelligence in the financial sector that stimulate economic inclusion and increase digital financial literacy were explored;
- the problem of youth unemployment in Bulgaria and the EU is analysed, the specific measures to reduce it are outlined, and the willingness of economics students to enter the labor market in the context of digital transformation is described;
- the importance of climate change as a factor in the development of tourism has been highlighted, the impact of climate on the tourism potential of the region along the Danube River in Bulgaria and Romania has been assessed, and the opportunities for better positioning of Bulgaria as a tourist destination have been outlined.

➤ Senior Assistant Professor Dr. Taner Ismailov

- the theoretical foundations and practical approaches for using the concept of sustainable consumption have been clarified, the degree of its application in Bulgaria has been established,

and an assessment has been made of the effectiveness of policies and the institutional environment in supporting sustainable consumption in the country;

- the growing global interest in ecologically friendly dairy products is highlighted and a 7P marketing mix for dairy processing companies is applied, representing a practical solution for improving customer relations, optimising resources and increasing profitability;
- a model for assessing the effectiveness of the fiscal system in Bulgaria has been tested, the framework for its management has been examined, taking into account the fiscal constraints adopted in Bulgarian legislation, and the link between fiscal capacity and financial literacy has been clarified;
- the economic, social, and cultural dimensions of youth unemployment are highlighted, its negative effects on the labor market are outlined, and it is demonstrated that the lack of options to gain professional experience at an early age often creates opportunities for permanent exclusion from the labor market;
- methods for innovative support of SMEs aimed at sustainable development of the agricultural sector have been developed, and the ESG factors and the impact of capital on the sources of financing companies have been characterized, using Asian companies as an example;
- the relationship between the size of credit institutions and their financial condition and performance has been analyzed, proving that this relationship is strong or moderate, and the applicability of bank stress test methodologies for early warning of bank insolvency has been analysed.

➤ *Senior Assistant Professor Dr. Tanya Todorova*

- the main theoretical views on the role of taxes as a fiscal instrument and their importance for macroeconomic stabilisation are systematised, and the possibility of optimising public revenues in terms of their impact on economic growth is characterised;
- based on empirical analysis, trends in the dynamics of public revenues in Bulgaria and other new EU member states are identified, ways to achieve greater efficiency are argued, and the restructuring of taxes from distortionary to non-distortionary is justified;
- based on the calculated elasticity coefficients of tax revenues to GDP and the constructed econometric model, the type, direction, and strength of the relationship between tax revenues and economic growth are revealed, and the need to increase tax collection and restrict the gray economy is substantiated;
- the conclusion is drawn that higher budget deficits in the new EU member states do not promote but rather hinder economic growth, and it is recommended that these deficits should be reduced by increasing taxes, widening the tax base, or cutting public spending;
- the conclusion is made that public spending is inefficient in countries with "big governments," the ways to reduce it are described, and recommendations for increasing its efficiency are formulated;
- the link between public spending and economic growth is discussed, and a shift from unproductive to productive economic activities and from running and transfer spending to investment spending is proposed.

7. Academic prominence

The scientific research of all three candidates is well known to the professional community, as evidenced by the number of citations by other authors, which significantly exceed the minimal national requirements.

➤ *Senior Assistant Professor Dr. Alexandrina Alexandrova* has provided a list of the following citations: 33 citations in Web of Science and 40 in Scopus, 5 citations in monographs and collective volumes with scientific review, and 10 citations or reviews in non-refereed journals with scientific review. Due to the simultaneous citation of some of the publications in both world-renowned peer-reviewed databases, I will not comment on the specific total number of citations and points under Group D of the national requirements. However, it should be emphasized that this number is impressive, which is a very serious attestation for the quality of the candidate's research output.

➤ *Senior Assistant Professor Dr. Taner Ismailov* presented evidence of 31 citations in Web of Science and Scopus, 1 citation in a monograph, and 39 citations or reviews in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals. The total number of points in Group D of the national requirements amounts to 670, which is 13.4 times more than the required minimum number. These results are indicative of the high visibility of the candidate's publications in specialized, including highly rated, editions in Bulgaria and abroad;

➤ *Senior Assistant Professor Dr. Tanya Todorova* has provided a list showing that she has 28 citations in Web of Science and Scopus, 18 citations in peer-reviewed monographs and collective volumes, and 2 citations or reviews in non-peer-reviewed journals. However, the report for the first group does not provide evidence that all citing publications are in the two global databases, and it is apparent from its content that some of them should be classified as publications in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals. Some of the citing publications in the second group are also articles in journals and should therefore be included in the third group. Due to this peculiarity, the total number of citations for all groups remains the same, but their actual structure is different. It is therefore not possible to comment on the total number of points for group D of the national requirements, although it is clear that it exceeds the required minimum many times over.

8. Weaknesses, critical comments, and recommendations

Certain critical comments and recommendations can be made to the candidates in the contest. Some of the critiques—such as the presence of a certain degree of repetition in the texts of some publications and the insufficiently clear formulation of some of the contributions—can be addressed to all three. Along with these critiques, there are also certain weaknesses and recommendations that are specific to each of the applicants.

➤ *Assoc. Prof. Dr. Alexandrina Alexandrova* has a very wide range of scientific interests, which is combined with teaching diverse courses and extremely high project activity. Although this can be seen as a positive thing and evidence of her high capacity, it does not allow greater concentration on particular scientific topics and may be at the expense of the research depth. It is therefore recommended that she narrow her scientific portfolio in the future. The second criticism is that the large number of co-authored publications and the difficulty in distinguishing her scientific contributions from those of other colleagues do not allow the emphasis of her own

scientific achievements. Therefore, in the next stages of her academic career, she should strive to more clearly define her own professional profile, without compromising her very good teamwork skills.

➤ Similar critical remarks to those made to the previous candidate can be directed at Senior Assistant Professor Dr. Tamer Ismailov, albeit to a different degree. He also has a broad, though relatively smaller, range of scientific interests, as well as a large number and significantly heterogeneous range of taught disciplines. This is most likely related to his considerable practical experience in some of the specific subject areas and, in this sense, can be considered logical and justified. Nevertheless, it is advisable for him to consider the possibility of narrowing his scope of specialization in the future scientific research. This will also enable him to prepare more individual publications, which will contribute to a stronger highlighting of his own scientific results and professional profile.

➤ A critical remark can be made to *Senior Assistant Professor Dr. Tanya Todorova* for her very distinct focus on the topic of public revenue and public expenditure. This is not a weakness in principle if it is related to deepening research, adding new perspectives, and/or improving research methodology, rather than applying identical or similar logical schemes. Therefore, it is recommended that in the future, the candidate should work in these directions or focus on other thematic areas. This will enable her to publish more articles in scientific journals, including those referenced and indexed in global databases, at the expense of reducing the currently dominant relative share of publications in scientific conference proceedings. Another critical remark is that the results of the candidate's most cited articles, including those in global databases, are not included in the list of her scientific contributions, which creates uncertainty about their recognition.

9. Overall assessment

Based on all of the above, I give my positive overall assessment of the readiness of all three candidates for the academic position of "associate professor." The reason for this is that the materials they submitted for the contest significantly exceed the minimum national requirements in the the Act on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for its implementation and fully meet the internal mandatory and additional requirements according to the Regulations for the Development of Academic Staff at AE "D. A. Tsenov".

Since there are more candidates in the contest than announced positions, and given their comprehensive performance based on scientific research activities, including publications in refereed and indexed journals, teaching activities, project activity, citations, and the assessment of scientific contributions and results, I think they should be ranked in the following way:

- 1) Senior Assistant Professor Dr. Alexandrina Alexandrova
- 2) Senior Assistant Professor Dr. Taner Ismailov
- 3) Senior Assistant Professor Dr. Tanya Todorova.

On the basis of this ranking, I propose to the distinguished scientific panel to vote for the election of Senior Assistant Professor Dr. Alexandrina Borisova Alexandrova and Senior Assistant Professor Dr. Taner Mustafaov Ismailov to the academic position of "Associate

Professor" in professional field 3.8 Economics, scientific specialty "Political Economy" at the Academy of Economics AE "D. A. Tsenov", – Svishtov.

31.07.2025 r.

/Assoc. Prof. Dr. Stela Raleva/