



## REVIEW

Bx. № PA20-364/04.03.2026r.

Regarding the competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the field of higher education 3. "Social, Economic and Legal Sciences", professional field 3.9 "Tourism", scientific specialty "Economics and Management (Tourism - Tourist Resources, Travel Agencies, Travel Guide, Entertainment Business)"

### 1. General information

**Reviewer:** Assoc. Prof. Genka Ivanova Rafailova, PhD, Department of Foreign Languages and Communication in Tourism at the College of Tourism – Varna at the University of Economics – Varna, field of higher education 3. "Social, Economic and Legal Sciences", professional field 3.9 "Tourism", scientific specialty "Economics and Management (Tourism)"

This review has been prepared based on **Order No RD 06-201/22.12.2025** of the Rector of the University of Economics-Varna for the appointment of a scientific jury and Report of the first meeting of the scientific jury for the election of a chairman and reviewers of the competition, held on **16.02.2026**.

The review has been prepared in accordance with the Higher Education Act (HEA), the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LDASRB) and the Regulations for its Implementation (RILDASRB), and the Rules for Academic Growth at the University of Economics-Varna (PRAS).

### 2. Information about the competition

The competition has been announced in the State Gazette No. 104 /5.12.2025 for the needs of the Department of Tourism at the College of Tourism – Varna at the University of Economics – Varna, in the field of higher education 3. "Social, Economic and Legal Sciences", PN 3.9 "Tourism", scientific specialty "Economics and Management (Tourism - Tourist Resources, Travel Agencies, Travel Guides, Entertainment Business)".

### 3. Candidate for the competition

The only candidate who has submitted documents for participation in the competition is Chief Assistant Dr. Ilin Pavlinov Dimitrov, PhD, from the Department of Tourism at the College of Tourism - Varna at the University of Economics - Varna.

The applicant has deposited documents and materials in accordance with the LDASRB, RILDASRB, and PRAS.

The candidate fulfills the minimum national requirements for Associate Professor in the field of higher education, in which the competition has been announced according to Art. 2b, paragraphs 2 and 3 of the LDASRB. Chief Assistant Ilin Dimitrov, PhD, meets the requirements in Art. 101 of the PRAS at the University of Economics-Varna and covers the additional quantitative requirements of the University of Economics-Varna under Art. 26, paragraph 5 of the LDASRB.

### 4. Data about the candidate (personal characteristics):

Chief Assist. Dr. Ilin Dimitrov has a long and distinguished professional and academic career, closely related to the development of tourism in the region of Varna and the country.



The candidate, after graduating from the Geo Milev Language High School with intensive study of the German language in the city of Dobrich, continues his education and gradually acquires all educational degrees:

- Professional Bachelor - "Tourism" in 2005 at the College of Tourism - Varna at the University of Economics - Varna;
- Master's degree in Company Management and Controlling in 2008 at the Academy of Economics "D.A. Tsenov" Svishtov;
- PhD in Economics and Management (Tourism) in 2018 at the University of Economics - Varna after defending a dissertation on the topic: "Improving the quality of the animation product in seaside hotels".

After direct involvement in tourism from 2016 to 2021 as the owner and manager of the company "Star Fox Team" Ltd., the candidate works as

- part-time lecturer and assistant professor at the College of Tourism - Varna at the University of Economics - Varna from 2013 to 2019;
- Director of the Center for Careers, Entrepreneurship, and Marketing at the University of Economics-Varna from 2020 to 2021;
- Member of Parliament in the 47th National Assembly, Chairman of the Committee on Tourism from 2021 to 2022;
- Minister of Tourism at the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria from 2022 to 2023;
- Secretary for Education, Culture, Tourism, and Religion at the Administration of the President of the Republic of Bulgaria from 2022 to 2025;
- Chief Assistant Professor at the College of Tourism - Varna at the University of Economics - Varna from 2025 to date.

Chief Assistant Ilin Dimitrov, PhD, is Chairman of the Varna Chamber of Tourism in the period 2020-2021, and a member of several editorial boards (IDEA, etc.), he has been awarded several awards, including the BAT Tourism Development Contribution Award in 2023.

Within the framework of his academic activity, Chief Assistant Ilin Dimitrov, PhD, has developed and taught the discipline "Animation in Tourism", has led the disciplines "Introduction to Tourism", "Tour Guide", "Travel Agencies and Transport in Tourism", etc., has organized traveling seminars and training practices, participated in the College Council, student admission campaigns, student scientific sessions, etc. His research interests and publication activities are in areas such as animation in tourism, balneo, spa, and medical tourism, specialized types of tourism, etc.

The applicant has a proficiency in English, German, and Russian at levels B1 and B2.

## 5. Description of scientific papers -

Chief Assistant Ilin Dimitrov, PhD, participated in the competition with 16 publications according to the attached list in the volume of 450 pages. The presented scientific works, summarized in Table 1, include 1 monograph (habilitation work), 3 studies (3 in English). 7



articles (1 in English), 4 reports, and a book based on a dissertation, all of which are independent. One of the articles was published in the world database Scopus.

**Table 1 "Number and types of peer-reviewed publications"**

<b>№</b>	<b>Type of publication</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Volume in pages</b>	<b>Share in the total number of pages.</b>
1.	Monograph	1	112	24,9 %
2.	Studios	3	85	18,9 %
3.	Scientific articles	7	78	17,3 %
4.	Reports	4	29	6,4 %
5.	Other editions	1	136	30,2 %
<b>Total:</b>		<b>16</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>100 %</b>

The structure of scientific publications is balanced as the shares of their number of pages are in favor of monographic publications - a book based on a dissertation, 30.2% (136 pages), and a monograph as a habilitation work, 24.9% (112 pages). Studies and scientific articles have similar shares - 18.9% (85 pages) and 17.3% (78 pages).

The candidate participates in the competition with a monographic work on the topic "Medical and Spa Tourism in Bulgaria", with a volume of 112 pages, published in 2025 by a publishing house at the Academy for National and Information Security, Plovdiv. The monograph was reviewed by two habilitated persons, discussed, and proposed for publication by the primary unit of the Department of Tourism at the College of Tourism - Varna at the University of Economics-Varna. The scientific work presents an in-depth study of the opportunities for the development of health, medical, and spa tourism in Bulgaria, the current and potential restrictions, guidelines, and policies for its stimulation and implementation with a higher economic, social, and environmental effect.

In quantitative terms, the publications correlated by the number of points exceed the minimum national requirements according to the LDASRB and the additional quantitative requirements of the University of Economics-Varna, according to the PRAS, presented in Table 2.



**Table 2 "Quantitative requirements for publications for occupying the academic position of "Associate Professor" according to the LDASRB and PRAS of the University of Economics-Varna, and the number of points declared by the candidate.**

Groups of indicators	Number of points in the order of the (Art. 26, paragraphs 2 and 3 of the Law of Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria)	Number of points according to the requirements of the University of Economics-Varna, PRAS, based on Article 26, paragraph 5 of the Law of Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria	Number of points declared by the applicant
Group A	50	50	50
Group B	-	-	-
Group B	100	100	100
Group D	200	200, incl. Scientific reports - 30 Scientific articles and studies - 80	250, incl. scientific reports - 40 Scientific Articles and Studies - 95
Group D	50	50	55

In terms of quality, the publications of Chief Assistant Ilin Dimitrov, PhD, present in-depth research on current problems and issues in three thematic areas - the development of medical, health and spa tourism, incl. after the Covid-19 pandemic; management of personnel for tourism, incl. through the involvement of staff from third parties and the effective management of destinations and territories of recreational importance. They are distinguished by excellent quality of the language used and the style of the exhibition.

## 6. Identification of contributions

The research work of the candidate, which is carried out in the fields of "Health, Medical and Spa Tourism", "Personnel Management in Tourism" and "Effective Management of Destinations and Territories of Recreational Importance", is distinguished by the following scientific and applied contributions:

- Contributions in the field of Health, Medical and Spa Tourism**, publications from the list No 6.1, 9.3, 10.4, 11.1, 16.6, and 20.4

The main contributions in this field are contained in the independent monographic work "Medical and Spa Tourism in Bulgaria", ed. 2026. It outlines and summarizes the theoretical aspects of health, medical, and spa tourism, makes a detailed analysis of the factors and conditions - resources, regulatory framework, policy, base, etc., for the implementation of



these specialized types of tourism in the country, and an assessment of the competitiveness of Bulgaria in the European context for their development has been made.

In the studies, articles, and reports related to the topics of health, medical, and spa tourism, the candidate expands the theoretical foundations of these types of tourism and their social, economic, and environmental importance, outlines the challenges and trends in their development, formulates guidelines for their stimulation and key areas that can provide competitive advantages to the Bulgarian tourism industry. Particularly noteworthy is the synthesis of the results of research on medical publications and studies in the tourism sector in order to propose specific treatment and recovery programs to support the development of medical and health tourism in Bulgaria.

## 2. Contributions in the field of "Human Resources Management in Tourism", publications 8.2, 13.3, and 19.2

In this field, the candidate's scientific contributions are a thorough study of the training of personnel in tourism, which is carried out in the educational sector in the country - quality, regulatory framework, methods, and importance. Programs and approaches in various universities in Bulgaria and Europe have been studied and analyzed. Strategies have been prepared to improve the quality of the educational process in the country for the purpose of training personnel for the tourism sector.

An important contribution is the in-depth study of the problems related to staffing in the tourism industry in Bulgaria against the backdrop of a demographic crisis and insufficient attractiveness of the industry for professional career and commitment. In this aspect, the conditions (legal framework, etc.), the mechanisms and prospects for attracting personnel from third countries outside the EU, the potential problems, and guidelines for the implementation of this selection are analyzed.

## 3. Contributions in the field of "Effective management of destinations and territories of recreational importance", publications from the list No 7.1, 12.2, 14.4, 17.7, 18.1, and 20.3

In this field, the candidate's significant scientific contributions are the analysis of the possibilities for implementing digital solutions in tourism products and the study of specific marketing tools for the promotion of the tourist destination.

Flags from a scientific point of view are the published results of a study of the pace and trends of recovery of the tourism sector after the Covid-19 pandemic, and the guidelines for its balanced and effective implementation are derived.

A contribution in this field is the in-depth study of the effective governance of beaches in the country as strategic territories for the implementation of sea and recreational tourism, as well as for improving the quality of the offered tourist product through the development of responsible tourism.

The candidate declares 3 citations of scientific articles in scientific journals, refereed and indexed in the world database Scopus (45 points) and 2 citations in non-refereed journals with scientific peer-review (10 points), included in the NACID list.



## 7. Participation in scientific projects and scientific forums.

The candidate declares participation in scientific conferences and round tables organized by the College of Tourism - Varna at the University of Economics - Varna, the Department of Economics and Organization of Tourism at the University of Economics - Varna, the College of Tourism at the Burgas State University "Asen Zlatarov", the Agricultural University - Plovdiv, the University of National and World Economy and others. Chief Assistant Ilin Dimitrov, PhD, has participated in his capacity as Chairman of the Tourism Committee at the National Assembly, Minister of Tourism, and Secretary of Education, Culture, Tourism, and Religion at the Presidency of the Republic of Bulgaria in numerous forums, congresses, and meetings of international nature, during which he presented reports, opinions, proposals, etc. He is an active participant in the Black Sea Tourism Forum Varna, the Competition in Professions organized by high schools of tourism in Bulgaria, the events dedicated to the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the College of Tourism - Varna at the University of Economics - Varna, and the Department of Economics and Organization of Tourism at the University of Economics - Varna, etc.

The candidate is a member of 3 editorial boards of the magazines IDEA, "Careers", and Çankırı Karatekin Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi.

## 8. Teaching work

The candidate has carried out active teaching activity mainly at the College of Tourism - Varna at the University of Economics - Varna as a part-time lecturer, assistant professor and chief assistant. In the period 2015-2017 he has conducted a total of 293 classroom hours - lectures and seminar exercises on "Animation in Tourism" and "Introduction to Tourism" as a full-time lecturer. From 2019 to 2022, he taught "Animation in Tourism" as a part-time lecturer, with a total classroom workload of 374 hours. In the academic year 2025 - 2026, as a Chief Assistant, he leads the disciplines "Introduction to Tourism", "Guided Touring", "Technology of Service in Travel Agencies", "Introductory Route Practice", a total of 247 classroom hours. His active social activities and participation in tourism management at the state level, as well as the development of policies and measures to support the development of tourism, especially in the period during and after the Covid-19 pandemic, do not allow him to carry out teaching mobility and prepare textbooks and teaching aids. Chief Assistant Ilin Dimitrov, PhD, however, supports the career development of students, the implementation of internships and summer internships, the provision of training with a software product with application in the restaurant industry, etc.

## 9. Plagiarism

The candidate submits scientific papers in which, according to the statutory procedure, the presence of plagiarism, incorrect citation of other people's works and improper use of data are not detected.

## 10. Questions, criticisms and recommendations

As a lecturer of the candidate during his studies at the College of Tourism - Varna at the University of Economics-Varna, Head of the Department of Tourism in the period 2008-2015 and Director of the College, I have direct observations of his career as a lecturer,



researcher, public figure and administrative staff, which gives me grounds to give an excellent assessment of all his work. Despite the extremely high-quality research work and high-level expertise, I recommend the candidate to continue to publish more actively in refereed and indexed journals in world databases, co-authored with Bulgarian and foreign scientists. In this way, his knowledge and expertise will be able to become known to the academic community, public institutions, and the tourism industry on an international scale and will contribute even more to the development of tourism science and education.

## 11. Conclusion

Based on submitted documents and achievements from academic and social activities, Ilin Dimitrov, PhD, meets all external regulatory requirements under the Law of Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, as well as the internal regulatory framework under the Academic Regulations of the University of Economics-Varna for occupying the academic position of Associate Professor.

The candidate has acquired a PhD degree and has held the positions of "Assistant" and "Chief Assistant" at the College of Tourism - Varna at the University of Economics-Varna, as well as a part-time lecturer.

For the competition, 16 scientific publications have been declared and accepted for evaluation, which include an independent monograph and a habilitation work.

Five citations of the candidate's publications by Bulgarian authors were reported, 3 of which are in articles in the world database Scopus.

Ilin Dimitrov has many years of teaching experience in disciplines that are directly related to the field of competition.

The applicant meets the minimum national requirements under Article 2b, Paragraphs 2 and 3, according of the Law of Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, He declares a total of 485 points with a minimum of 430 points required from the groups as follows: Group A (80 points achieved with a minimum number of 80), Group B (100 points achieved with a minimum of 100 points), Group G (250 points achieved with a minimum of 200 points) and Group D (55 points achieved with a minimum number of 50).

Ilin Dimitrov fulfills the quantitative criteria for additional requirements on the basis of Art. 2b, paragraph 5 of Law of Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, at the University of Economics-Varna pursuant to Article 101, item 5 of the PRAS of the University of Economics-Varna, declaring 135 points out of the required 110.

No plagiarism has been established in accordance with the statutory procedure.

The results of research, teaching and expert activities of Chief Assistant Ilin Pavlinov Dimitrov, PhD, give me grounds to give a positive assessment and to offer him for the academic position of Associate Professor for the needs of the Department of Tourism at the College of Tourism - Varna at the University of Economics - Varna, in the field of higher education 3. "Social, Economic and Legal Sciences", professional field 3.9 "Tourism", scientific specialty "Economics and Management (Tourism - Tourist Resources, Travel Agencies, Tour Guide, Entertainment Business).

4.03.2026  
Varna

Prepared the review  
/Assoc. Prof. Dr. Genka Ratailova/

Заличена информация съгласно  
ЗЗЛД и регламент (ЕС) 2016/679

## REVIEW

**by competition for the academic position "Associate Professor" ,  
announced by University of Economics - Varna**

### 1. General information

*Prepared the review:* **Prof. Mariyana Bozhinova, PhD**, "D. A. Tsenov" Academy of Economics - Svishtov, scientific specialty "Economics and Management"

*Reason for writing the review:* Order of the Rector of the University of Economics - Varna, No. RD 06-201/22.12.2025 and Decision of the meeting of the scientific jury from 16.02.2026

### 2. Competition contest details

The competition was announced in SG No. 104/05.12.2025, for the needs of the Department of Tourism at the College of Tourism at the University of Economics - Varna, in field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional field 3.9 Tourism, scientific specialty "Economics and Management (Tourism - Tourist Resources, Travel Agencies, Tour Guiding, Entertainment Business)".

### 3. Competition candidate

The only candidate in the competition is **Chief Assist. Prof. Ilin Pavlinov Dimitrov, PhD**, lecturer in the Department of Tourism at the College of Tourism at the University of Economics - Varna. From the submitted documents for the competition, it is evident that he meets the minimum national requirements for an Associate Professor in the field of higher education in which the competition is announced, under Art. 2b, para. 2 and 3 of the Act on the Development of the Academic Staff of the Republic of Bulgaria. Chief Assist. Prof. Ilin Dimitrov, PhD, also meets the additional quantitative requirements of the University of Varna under Art. 2b, para. 5 of the Act on the Development of the Academic Staff of the Republic of Bulgaria, and meets the requirements in Art. 101 of the Regulations

for the Development of the Academic Staff at the University of Varna. In accordance with the national minimum requirements, according to the Act on the Development of the Academic Staff of the Republic of Bulgaria (Art. 2b) and the Regulations for its implementation (Art. 1a, para. 1), candidates for the academic position of "Associate Professor" in professional fields in scientific field 3. Social, economic and legal sciences must have a minimum of *400 points*, and Ilin Dimitrov, PhD has a total of *455 points*. He also exceeds the quantitative requirements for occupying the requested academic position of Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at the University of Varna, forming *135 points*, with a minimum of *110 points*.

#### **4. Candidate data**

Chief Assist. Prof. Ilin Dimitrov, PhD graduated from the specialty "Organization and Management of the Hotel and Restaurant", Professional Bachelor's Degree, in 2005, at the College of Tourism - Varna and specialty "Company Management and Controlling", Master's Degree, in 2008, at the "D. A. Tsenov" Academy of Economics - Svishtov. In 2022 he obtained a PhD in the scientific specialty "Economics and Management of Tourism" at the University of Economics - Varna.

The candidate in the competition has 13 years of teaching experience (part-time and full-time lecturer) at the College of Tourism at the University of Varna, and since 2025 he has held the academic position of "Chief Assistant Professor".

Ilin Dimitrov, PhD was Director of the Center for Careers, Entrepreneurship and Marketing at the University of Varna (in 2020-2021). He has extensive managerial and organizational experience in public administration and government, as Secretary for Education, Culture, Tourism and Clergy of the President of the Republic of Bulgaria (2023-2026), Minister of Tourism (2022-2023), Member of Parliament and Chairman of the Tourism Committee in the 47th National Assembly (2021-2022). All this is proof of his recognition and authority. For his active work, Ilin Dimitrov, PhD has received a number of important awards: Tourism Personality of the Year Award - Destination journal, 2022; Balkan Minister of Tourism Award, PATWA, ITB Belin, 2023; Award for Contribution to the Development of Tourism - BAT, 2023; Doctor Honoris Causa of the Karatekin University in the city of Çankara.

Ilin Dimitrov, PhD is a member of the Varna Tourist Chamber, and in 2020-2021 he was Chairman of the Board of Directors.

### 5 . Description of scientific works after the last procedure

In the competition for academic position "Associate Professor" Ilin Dimitrov, PhD has presented *16 scientific publications*, including 2 monographs, 3 studies, 7 scientific articles and 4 scientific papers. It is noteworthy that all publications are independent, and *1 publication* (scientific article) is in an edition indexed *in Scopus*. The total volume of the presented publications is *440 pages* (Table 1).

Table 1.

**SUMMARY TABLE OF PUBLICATIONS SUBMITTED TO THE  
COMPETITION  
of Chief Assist. Prof. Ilin Dimitrov, PhD**

No	Type of posts	Independent		Co-authored		Total	
		Number	Page	Number	Page	Number	Page
1.	Monographs	2	248	-	-	2	248
2.	Studios	3	85	-	-	3	85
3.	Scientific articles	7	78	-	-	7	78
4.	Scientific papers	4	29	-	-	4	29
5.	Textbooks and study aids	-	-	-	-	-	-
6.	Other publications	-	-	-	-	-	-
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>440</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>440</b>

The main directions in the scientific research activity of the candidate for associate professor are indicated in the attached reference for scientific contributions, and I accept them. I positively assess that all publications of Ilin Dimitrov, PhD are included in the indicated areas, which correspond to the topic of the announced competition. This focus contributes to the candidate's in-depth research in the field of the competition. In this regard, the main areas, with the numbers of the publications attached to them from the List of Publications, can be systematized as follows:

1. Research on the problems of the medical and SPA tourism in Bulgaria (Nos. 6.1.; 9.3.; 10.4.; 11.1.; 16.6.; 20.3.).

2. Studies examining COVID-19 and its effect on the tourism sector (Nos. 10.4.; 11.1.; 14.4.; 21.4.).

3. Scientific publications on the problems of the animation product and improving its quality (Nos. 7.1.; 12.2.; 15.5.; 17.7.; 18.1.).

4. Research focused on human resources and education in the tourism sector (Nos. 6.1.; 8.2.; 13.3.; 19.2.).

In most of the publications of Ilin Dimitrov, PhD, the results are related not only to scientific achievements, but are also directly aimed at the applied aspects of the management of tourism enterprises and the tourism sector in the context of medical and SPA tourism, tourist animation and human capital in tourism.

The main monographic (habilitation) thesis *"Medical and SPA Tourism in Bulgaria"* (2025, 112 pages) advocates the seeing that medical and SPA tourism have the opportunity and potential to become the backbone of the tourism industry in Bulgaria and should be addressed and given the necessary attention. The purpose of the monographic work is to study modern medical and SPA tourism in Bulgaria in the rapidly changing geopolitical and economic conditions of today's world and the degree of competitiveness and integrativity with other subspecies - primarily with recreational sea and mountain tourism.

In terms of content, the monograph theoretically "clarifies" and further develops the statements about the essence and characteristics of medical and SPA tourism, about the concepts of "balneology tourism", "health tourism", "therapeutic tourism", about the classification of health tourism. Medical and SPA trends in the Bulgarian tourism industry are studied, based on a historical review of the development of medical tourism in Bulgaria and the status of SPA in modern health tourism in our country. Strategic perspectives for the development of Bulgarian SPA tourism are outlined. An analysis of regulatory documents and institutional practices related to medical and SPA tourism is carried out. The resources and zoning of medical and SPA tourism are studied. The management of the medical and SPA tourism industry in Bulgaria is discussed. The professional

training and qualification of human resources for medical and SPA tourism is analyzed.

The topic is undoubtedly relevant in the current conditions of tourism development, the increased interest of consumers and their requirements for medical and SPA tourism both in the world and in Bulgaria.

The list of publications shows that the candidate has presented a total of 2 monographs (one is the habilitation work, and the other is a book based on his dissertation) in the field of tourism business and tourism policy. The monographs are tied to the thematic areas, derived from the point of view of the developed problems and the obtained scientific and scientific-applied results and contributions.

Synthesized about the performance of the quality indicators by the candidate in the competition, it can be said that the scientific publications of Ilin Dimitrov, PhD, are written in clear scientific language and comply with Art. 112, para. 2 from a linguistic and stylistic point of view. They demonstrate professional competence and contain original authorial achievements, which determine the candidate's appropriate place in scientific circles.

*In summary, it can be claimed that the scientific production in quantitative and qualitative terms is in full compliance with the minimum national requirements in area 3. "Social, economic and legal sciences", according to Art. 2b, para. 2 and 3 of Act on the Development of the Academic Staff of the Republic of Bulgaria (ADASRB) and fully meets the conditions for occupying the academic position "Associate Professor", according to Art. 24, paragraph 1 of the ADASRB, art. 53, para. 1 of the Regulations for implementing the Act on the development of the academic staff of the Republic of Bulgaria and the requirements of the Regulations for the development of the academic staff at UE-Varna.*

## **6. Identification of contributions in research work**

The presented scientific production contains undeniable contributions, which I group into two groups: theoretical/scientific and scientific-applied. Among the more significant ones, I can mention the following:

*First*, the existing knowledge about: Existing knowledge has been supplemented about: health, medical and SPA tourism and modern management

models in the sector; about the quality of the animation product, through developed models for its calculation and a matrix for assessing the impact on the environment; about the specifics of human resources in medical and SPA tourism (*theoretical/scientific contributions*).

*Second*, a review and assessment of national resources, legislative framework and human capital related to medical and SPA tourism was carried out, as well as an assessment of the competitiveness of Bulgaria as a destination for these types of tourism in a European and global context. An analysis of the possibilities for treating rheumatological diseases through the use of balneology and SPA procedures, under the health insurance fund and their financing was carried out. An analysis of the degree of recovery of the tourism sector from COVID-19, the speed and pace of tourist return was carried out, enriching the understanding of tourist movement with the possibility of assessing land and air transport. Animation programs and products in seaside hotel complexes were analyzed as a function of multiple researched factors, on the basis of which proposals were made for their improvement. A formula for accurate calculation of the quality of the animation product was derived through a questionnaire survey and in-depth interviews. The state of education in the tourism sector and the main sources of personnel were analyzed, and models and mechanisms for improving university programs in tourism education were proposed. The bottlenecks and critical points in the supply chain of employees from abroad have been investigated, and a number of improvements in this area have been proposed (*scientific-applied contributions*).

According to a report presented by Ilin Dimitrov, PhD, *5 credible citations* of his works in publications have been identified, 2 of which are in *Scopus*.

*The candidate's scientific contributions are mainly for the enrichment of existing knowledge, for the improvement of management policy and practice in the field of medical, balneo and SPA tourism, tourist animation and human resources in the tourism sector.*

## **7. Participation in scientific projects and scientific forums**

From the submitted references it is evident that Chief Assist. Prof. Ilin Dimitrov, PhD actively participates in international, national and university forums, at 4 of which he has presented scientific reports.

A positive finding is Dimitrov's, PhD membership in the editorial boards of 3 journals, 1 of which is foreign.

## **8. Teaching work**

From the report prepared by the College of Tourism at the University of Economics-Varna, it is evident that for the last academic year (2025/2026) Ilin Dimitrov, PhD has a total classroom workload in the Professional Bachelor's Degree Program of 247 hours, of which 150 hours of lectures, and for the entire period as a lecturer - 1319 hours.

He lectures and leads seminars in the academic disciplines "Animation in Tourism", "Introduction to Tourism", "Tour Guiding" and "Technology of Service in Travel Agencies" at the College of Tourism - Varna at the University of Economics-Varna. The specified academic disciplines fall exactly within the scope of the announced competition.

The candidate actively works with students in the field of animation in tourism and their career development.

*In summary, the educational and teaching activities of the candidate are in compliance with the requirements of the Regulations for the development of the academic staff at UE-Varna.*

## **9. Plagiarism**

The candidate in the competition has submitted a declaration of the accuracy of the information provided in the competition, the originality of the publications and the non-infringement of copyright. There is no information received about the presence of plagiarism in the scientific works of Ilin Dimitrov, PhD.

## **10. Questions, critical notes and recommendations**

I have no significant critical remarks. My recommendation to Ilin Dimitrov, PhD, is to concentrate his efforts on publishing his scientific research in refereed scientific publications with Impact Factor and Impact Rank, indexed in the world scientific databases Scopus and Web of Science.

## 11. Conclusion

Chief Assist. Prof. Ilin Dimitrov, PhD participated in the competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" with a sufficient volume of quality scientific publications and has many years of experience in scientific and teaching activities. In his scientific research, he demonstrates thoroughness, innovation and analytical thinking, and they contain scientific and applied scientific contributions. The candidate meets the requirements for occupying the academic position "Associate Professor" in the scientific specialty "Economics and Management (Tourism - Tourist Resources, Travel Agencies, Tour Guiding, Entertainment Business)", specified in art. 24 of Act on the Development of the Academic Staff of the Republic of Bulgaria, in art. 53 of the Regulations for implementing the *ADASRB* and in the Regulations for the development of the academic staff at UE-Varna.

The above grounds me with conviction to propose to the members of the scientific jury **Chief Assist. Prof. Ilin Pavlinov Dimitrov, PhD**, to be **elected** to the academic position "**Associate Professor**" in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional field 3.9. Tourism, scientific specialty "Economics and Management (Tourism - Tourist Resources, Travel Agencies, Tour Guiding, Entertainment Business)" at the Department of Tourism at the College of Tourism at the University of Economics - Varna, for which I will vote **positively**.

03/03/2026

Reviewer:

Заличена информация съгласно  
ЗЗЛД и регламент (ЕС) 2016/ 679

/Prof. Mariyana Bozhinova, PhD/