



REVIEW

I. General Information

By: Assoc. Prof. Desislava Borislavova Serafimova, PhD, University of Economics – Varna, Department of Management and Administration, Professional Field 3.7 Administration and Management, Scientific Speciality "Social Management"

Regarding: This review has been issued pursuant to Order No. RD 06-149/14.09.2026 of the Rector of the University of Economics – Varna, in connection with an announced competition for the academic rank of "Associate Professor," and in accordance with a decision of the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Management at the University of Economics – Varna.

II. Details Regarding the Competition

The announced competition is for the academic position of "Associate Professor" in:

- Scientific field: "3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences"
- Professional area: 3.7. "Administration and Management"
- Scientific speciality: "Social Management (Management – Organizational Design and Entrepreneurship)"
- Department of "Management and Administration," Faculty of "Management" at the University of Economics – Varna

The announcement for the competition was published in the „State Gazette“, Issue 65/17.07.2026

III. Candidate for the Competition and Candidate Details

The sole participant in the competition is **Chief Assistant Professor Dr Katya Ivanova Vladova**, a full-time faculty member in the Department of Management and Administration at the University of Economics – Varna (UE–Varna).

Chief Assistant Professor Dr Vladova completed her higher education at UE–Varna in 1996, earning a Master's degree with a double specialization in "Marketing and Management" and "Banking," graduating with honours. In 2009, she was awarded the educational and scientific degree of "Doctor" (PhD) in the professional field of "Administration and Management" (specialization: "Social Management"), which corresponds to the scientific field of the announced competition for the academic rank of "Associate Professor." She has held the academic position of "Chief Assistant Professor" since 2005. Her total professional experience in teaching and research spans 28 years and 2 months. Her research interests lie in the field of management, specifically focusing on corporate governance, competitive dynamics, organizational design, and entrepreneurship.

Alongside her academic career, Chief Assistant Professor Dr Katya Vladova possesses extensive, long-standing practical experience in the tourism sector, having held both operational and managerial positions within a large international company. Assistant Professor Dr. Katya Vladova is proficient in English, Russian, German, and Spanish, which enables her to successfully participate in

international scientific and educational projects and to teach students in a multicultural educational environment.

IV. Fulfilment of the formal requirements for holding the academic position of "Associate Professor"

A candidate for the academic position of "Associate Professor" must meet the minimum national requirements outlined in Art. 2b, paragraphs 2 and 3 of the Act on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ADASRB), as well as the additional quantitative requirements of the University of Economics – Varna (UE–Varna) pursuant to Art. 2b, paragraph 5 of the ADASRB, and the requirements of Art. 101 of the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at the University of Economics – Varna. A systematization of the formal requirements and the candidate's quantitative performance regarding these requirements is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Quantitative presentation of the candidate's fulfilment of the formal requirements for holding the academic position of "Associate Professor"

No	Requirements for candidates for the academic position of "Associate Professor"	Min points	Presentation of the candidate in the competition procedure for the academic position of "Associate Professor"	Points
/1/	/2/		/3/	
	MINIMUM NATIONAL REQUIREMENTS			
Group A	To hold a "Doctor" educational and scientific degree in the relevant or a related field	50	Chief Assistant Professor Dr Katya Vladova holds a PhD degree in Social Management, awarded on December 14, 2009	50
Group B	Monograph – an independent habilitation work	100	A monograph titled "Dynamic Capabilities and Organizational Flexibility of Business Organizations (Based on the Example of High-Category Hotels in Bulgaria)" has been published by the "Nauka i Ikonomika" (Science and Economics) publishing house at the University of Economics – Varna.	100
Group G	To have presented other original scientific publications – monographs (excluding the habilitation thesis), studies, articles, and papers.	200	A total of 24 other research works are presented (including 4 publications refereed and indexed in Scopus and WoS, 1 of which is single-authored; 15 articles and papers in non-refereed publications, 12 of which are single-authored; and 5 teaching aids).	208,3
Group D	Citations or reviews in scholarly publications refereed and indexed in Scopus and WoS, or in non-refereed journals subject to scholarly peer review; citations in monographs and edited volumes subject to scholarly peer review.	50	The candidate in the competition for the position of Associate Professor presents evidence of 9 citations of her publications. 6 of the citations are in publications refereed and indexed in Scopus and WoS (90 points); 3 of the citations are in non-refereed publications (monographs and edited volumes) that have undergone scientific peer review (30 points).	120
Group E	The candidates must have published educational materials, participated in or led international or national projects, and worked with doctoral students.	-	Participation in 1 national and two international scientific projects	55
Total	MINIMUM NATIONAL REQUIREMENTS	400		533,3
	ADDITIONAL QUANTITATIVE REQUIREMENTS OF IU – VARNA			
Group J	Monograph – an independent habilitation work	100	A monograph titled "Dynamic Capabilities and Organizational Flexibility of Business Organizations (Based on the Example of High-Category Hotels in Bulgaria)" has been published by the "Nauka i Ikonomika"	100

			(Science and Economics) publishing house at the University of Economics – Varna.	
	Total Group Z	55		165
Group Z	Studies, articles, or reports published in scientific journals refereed and indexed in Scopus and WoS (30/n points)	40	Four publications are presented, refereed and indexed in Scopus and WoS, one of which is single-authored.	75
	Citations in scientific publications refereed and indexed in Scopus and WoS (15 pts.)	15	Presence of 6 citations of the candidate's publications in journals refereed and indexed in Scopus and WoS	90
Group I	Participation in a national (15 pts) or international (20 pts) project; leadership of a national (30 pts) or international (40 pts) project	15	Participation in 1 national and two international scientific projects	55
Art. 101 (2b)	To have held an academic position (assistant, chief assistant) at a higher education institution for at least 2 years.		The candidate has a 28-year academic career in the Department of Management and Administration at the University of Economics – Varna, where she has served as Assistant and Chief Assistant. Records of teaching workload indicate that, over the last two academic years, she has had a teaching load involving both lectures and semester exercises for students in Bachelor's (706 hours) and Master's (288 hours) degree programs.	
Total	ADDITIONAL QUANTITATIVE REQUIREMENTS OF IU – VARNA	170		320

The documents and statements submitted by the candidate demonstrate that the minimum national requirements, pursuant to Art. 2b, paragraphs 2 and 3 of the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ADASRB), have been met. Furthermore, the candidate has satisfied the additional quantitative requirements set by the University of Economics – Varna (UE-Varna) under Art. 2b, paragraph 5 of the ADASRB, as well as the requirements of Art. 101 of the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at UE-Varna. The submitted declaration indicates that the candidate meets and significantly exceeds the required minimum number of points across the indicator groups for the higher education field 3: "Social, Economic, and Legal Sciences." While the minimum national requirement is 400 points, the candidate, K. Vladova, presents 533.3 points. Of particular note are the results in indicator groups "Z" and "I" – part of the additional quantitative requirements in the UE-Varna regulations – which pertain to publication activity, scientific citations in Scopus and WoS, and participation in projects; in these areas, the candidate's achievements far exceed the minimum required values. Specifically, against a minimum requirement of 55 points for group "Z" (publications and citations in scientific journals refereed and indexed in Scopus and WoS), the candidate, Chief Assistant Professor K. Vladova, reports 165 points. Against a minimum requirement of 15 points for Group "E" (participation in national and international projects), the candidate, K. Vladova, reports 55 points.

Based on the submitted documents, I conclude that the minimum national requirements – as outlined in Article 2b, paragraphs 2 and 3 of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ZRASRB) – have been met, as have the additional quantitative requirements of the University of Economics – Varna (pursuant to Article 2b, paragraph 5 of the ZRASRB) and the requirements outlined in Article 101 of the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at the University of Economics – Varna.

V. General description and assessment of the scientific works presented following the defense of the dissertation

5.1. Structural and quantitative characteristics of the scientific publications

Chief Assistant Professor Dr K. Vladova is participating in the competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" with a body of scientific and educational-methodological work comprising 25 titles, excluding publications derived from her dissertation. These are structured as follows: 1 monograph (4%), 9 articles (36%), 10 conference papers (40%), 3 textbooks (12%), and 2 teaching aids (8%).

Approximately two-thirds of Chief Assistant Professor Dr K. Vladova's research works are published in Bulgarian (16 items, or 64%), while 9 are in English (36%). The majority of the submitted publications were authored independently (14 items, or 56%), while 11 items (44%) were co-authored.

According to the candidate's information, the total volume of scientific and educational-methodological output is 1,551 pages, distributed as follows: a monograph (156 pages), scientific articles (70 pages), scientific papers (81 pages), and textbooks and teaching aids (1,244 pages). The candidate's declared personal contribution to the educational-methodological output amounts to 159 pages. The total volume of scientific publications is 307 pages.

5.2. Presentation of a monographic work or equivalent publications in specialized scientific journals

The monograph by Chief Assistant Professor Dr K. Vladova, titled "Dynamic Capabilities and Organizational Agility of Business Organizations (Based on the Example of High-Category Hotels in Bulgaria)," was published in 2026 by the "Science and Economics" University Press at the University of Economics – Varna. Spanning 156 pages, the work is structured into an introduction, four chapters, a conclusion, appendices, and a bibliography.

The monograph addresses a topical issue in the field of strategic management: the role of dynamic capabilities in enhancing organizational agility and achieving sustainable competitive advantages. The chapters systematically examine: (1) the evolution of the concept of dynamic capabilities, their nature, and their role in organizational management; (2) the interrelationships among entrepreneurial orientation, dynamic capabilities, organizational agility, and sustainable competitive advantages; (3) the development of a conceptual model to investigate these relationships, along with its operationalization; and (4) the empirical testing of the model within high-category hotels in Bulgaria, followed by the derivation of practical recommendations.

The systematization of theoretical frameworks, the development of an integrated conceptual model, and the effort to empirically validate it are particularly noteworthy. To analyze the collected data, the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) method was employed, allowing for the investigation of the dependencies posited within the model. The results obtained support the formulated research hypotheses regarding the positive influence of entrepreneurial orientation on dynamic capabilities, and of dynamic capabilities on organizational flexibility and sustainable competitive advantages.

In my view, this monograph constitutes a logically coherent and methodologically sound study that contributes to the development and application of the concept of dynamic capabilities within the management of business organizations. Its scientific and practical significance lies primarily in the potential to utilize the proposed model and the derived recommendations for enhancing management practices within a dynamic and competitive business environment.

5.3. Content characteristics, thematic focus, and assessment of other research works and publications evaluated as a collective body

An analysis of the 20 scientific publications submitted for the competition – including the monograph discussed above – allows for the identification of four main thematic areas:

First area – Dynamic capabilities, organizational competencies, innovation, and the competitiveness of business organizations (Nos. 4, 6, 7, 8, 14, 15, 17, and 18). This is the primary focus of the candidate's research, encompassing studies on the nature and development of dynamic capabilities and their role in shaping organizational competencies, fostering innovation, and enhancing competitiveness. Particular attention is given to the application of this concept within the tourism and hospitality sector. The monograph (No. 4) builds upon previous work by integrating entrepreneurial orientation, dynamic capabilities, organizational flexibility, and sustainable competitive advantages into a conceptual model that has been subjected to empirical testing. The thematic coherence of the research and the effort to link theoretical concepts with specific managerial challenges are highly commendable.

Second area – Managing the growth and development of small and medium-sized enterprises (Nos. 10, 11, 12, 13, 20, and 22). These publications address the factors, prerequisites, and constraints affecting enterprise growth, with a specific focus on tour operator firms in Bulgaria. The research examines growth models and determinants, challenges in firm development, and the impact of the economic crisis on business operations. It also includes a comparative analysis of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Bulgaria and Austria. The scientific and practical value of these studies lies in the use of empirical research to identify the factors that shape enterprise development, as well as in the exploration of ways to improve managerial decision-making.

The third area of focus concerns the competitive behaviour and competitiveness management of enterprises (items 9, 16, 19, and 23). These studies cover competitive behaviour and the dynamics of competition within the fast-food sector, the financial aspects of competitiveness among tourism firms, and the role of corporate resources in establishing competitive advantages within the dairy industry. These publications are practically oriented and contribute to clarifying the relationships between an organization's resource characteristics, the competitive environment, and the potential for achieving competitive advantages.

The fourth area of focus covers process management and organizational effectiveness (items 5 and 21). This area is more limited in scope, comprising two publications that address distinct topics: publication No. 5 presents a comparative analysis of process maturity assessment models and their potential application in the public sector, while publication No. 21 examines issues related to time management in the workplace. Although less prominent, this area of focus expands the thematic scope of the research to include the improvement of organizational processes and management practices.

Educational and methodological materials (Nos. 24–28). The five educational publications presented – developed in co-authorship – cover the fields of entrepreneurship, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and planning and forecasting. These align with the candidate's core teaching activities and contribute to the educational and methodological resources for courses in management disciplines.

The submitted scholarly work demonstrates thematic consistency and the evolution of the candidate's research interests within the fields of organizational theory, strategic management, growth management, competitiveness, and entrepreneurship. A central focus is placed on research into dynamic capabilities and organizational flexibility, which are most comprehensively developed in the monograph. It is my assessment that the scholarly and educational/methodological output of Chief Assistant Professor Dr Katya Vladova aligns with Professional Field 3.7 "Administration and Management," the scientific specialty "Social Management," and the specific focus of the announced competition for the position of Associate Professor – "Management: Organizational Design and Entrepreneurship."

5.4. Citations of the scientific publications submitted for the competition in national and international literature

According to the record provided by the candidate, Chief Assistant Professor Dr Katya Vladova, a total of **9 citations** of her scientific publications have been identified: **6 in publications refereed and indexed in Scopus and Web of Science**, and 3 in other peer-reviewed scientific publications.

The international impact of the research is linked to three of the candidate's publications. The highest number of citations (5) relates to the co-authored article "*Comparative Analysis of Selected Process Maturity Assessment Models Applied in the Public Sector*" (No. 5), published in 2023 in the „Business Process Management Journal“. It has been cited in studies focusing on process maturity, business process agility, e-government, and the quality assessment of process models. This demonstrates interest in the publication's findings across several interconnected research fields.

The paper "*Dynamic Capabilities and the Development of Organizational Competences*" (No. 17) has also been cited in an article in the journal „Sustainability“ which examines the role of organizational competencies in the development of ESG criteria within the industrial sector. Furthermore, the article "*Dynamic Capabilities as Innovation Sources*" (No. 7) has been cited in three international scientific publications addressing dynamic innovation capabilities, international competitiveness, and export performance during an economic crisis.

These citations attest to the international recognition of some of the candidate's research work and indicate that her findings have been utilized in subsequent studies. It is particularly noteworthy that the scholarly response encompasses both the subject matter of dynamic capabilities and organizational competencies, as well as process management. In my view, the identified citations attest to the academic visibility of – and interest in – the research output of Chief Assistant Professor Dr Katya Vladova, while simultaneously highlighting opportunities for the further expansion of her international academic presence.

VI. Evaluation of the candidate's teaching work with students

Chief Assistant Professor Dr Katya Vladova has extensive teaching experience at the University of Economics – Varna. According to the records submitted for the last two academic years, she has completed a total of 994 hours of classroom teaching: 706 hours at the Bachelor's degree level (362 hours in 2024/2025 and 344 hours in 2025/2026) and 288 hours at the Master's degree level (125 and 163 hours, respectively). This teaching workload includes conducting lectures and seminar exercises.

The candidate's teaching activities cover subjects such as "Organizational Design," "Management," "Entrepreneurship" and "Corporate Governance," among others, which align with the thematic focus of the announced competition. Chief Assistant Professor Dr Katya Vladova delivers lectures and seminars in some of these disciplines in Bulgarian, English, and Russian.

Chief Assistant Professor Dr K. Vladova serves as a mentor and supervisor for student teams within the University of Economics – Varna Accelerator. She is also involved in the work of the Student Scientific Research Committee within the Department of Management and Administration.

Furthermore, she has engaged in international teaching activities under the Erasmus+ program at universities in Austria and Spain.

The candidate's participation in the development of five teaching aids in the fields of entrepreneurship, small and medium-sized enterprises, and planning and forecasting – which contribute to the educational and methodological support of the training process – merits a positive assessment.

In my view, the data presented regarding teaching load, subjects taught, work with students, and educational-methodological activities justify a positive evaluation of the teaching work of Chief Assistant Professor Dr Katya Vladova. Her teaching experience and professional qualifications meet the requirements for the academic position of "Associate Professor" for the announced competition.

VII. Identification of the candidate's scientific contributions

Based on an analysis of the publications submitted for the competition and the summary of the candidate's contributions, I consider that the scientific results of Chief Assistant Professor Dr Katya Vladova can be summarized as follows:

1. Scientific contributions

- Theoretical concepts regarding the dynamic capabilities of organizations – and their role in the development of organizational flexibility, innovation potential, and competitiveness within a dynamic business environment – have been enriched and systematized (publications No. 4, 6, 7, 8, 14, 15, 17, and 18).
- An integrated conceptual model of the interrelationships between entrepreneurial orientation, dynamic capabilities, organizational flexibility, and sustainable competitive advantages has been developed. The role of entrepreneurial orientation as a prerequisite for the development and activation of dynamic capabilities has been substantiated (publication No. 4).
- Theoretical concepts concerning the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) have been further developed through an examination of the interplay between entrepreneurial behavior, internal organizational resources, managerial decisions, and external environmental factors (publications No. 10–13).

2. Scientific-applied contributions

- An empirical validation of the integrated conceptual model was conducted using structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). Relationships between entrepreneurial orientation, dynamic capabilities, organizational flexibility, and sustainable competitive advantages were identified and analyzed within the context of high-category hotels in Bulgaria (publication No. 4).
- Research instruments have been developed and applied to measure dynamic capabilities, entrepreneurial orientation, and organizational flexibility, creating opportunities for further empirical and comparative research (Publication No. 4).
- Based on empirical research, factors and constraints affecting the growth, competitive behavior, and development of enterprises across various sectors of the Bulgarian economy have been identified (Publications Nos. 9–13, 16, 19, 20, 22, and 23).
- A comparative analysis of models for assessing process maturity in the public sector has been conducted, contributing to the systematization of approaches for evaluating and improving organizational processes (Publication No. 5).

3. Practical Contributions

- Guidelines and recommendations have been formulated for developing dynamic capabilities and organizational flexibility, fostering innovation, and sustaining competitive advantages, with specific applicability to the hospitality and tourism sector (Publications Nos. 4, 8, 14, 15, and 18).
- Teaching materials, practical exercises, and case studies have been developed in the fields of entrepreneurship, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and planning and forecasting; these contribute to a practical focus in education and the development of managerial competencies among students (Publications Nos. 24–28). In summary, I view the aforementioned contributions as the outcome of consistent research activity in the fields of organizational theory, strategic management, and entrepreneurship. I attribute the greatest scientific significance to the integrated conceptual model developed and its empirical validation, as presented in the monograph. It is my assessment that the scientific, applied-

scientific, and practical results achieved by Chief Assistant Professor Dr Katya Vladova possess both theoretical and practical significance and align with the thematic focus of the announced competition.

VIII. Participation in scientific projects and scientific forums

The submitted documents demonstrate that Chief Assistant Professor Dr Katya Vladova possesses experience in participating in and implementing national and international projects focused on organizational management, competitiveness, entrepreneurship, and innovation.

Notable examples include the research project "Competitive Dynamics (Organizational and Management Aspects)" (NIR-21/2008); the international project "Expansion Bulgaria," carried out in collaboration with the German company Quelle GmbH—in which the candidate held a leadership role; and the TANDEM+ project (Transformation, Acceleration, Networking, Development, Entrepreneurial Education and Mentoring), funded by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), in which she participated as an expert.

The candidate's scholarly activity is also reflected in her presentations at national and international academic forums. These include the International Conference on Management and Industrial Engineering (ICMIE) in Bucharest, as well as various scientific conferences organized by Bulgarian universities and research institutions. Her presentations have addressed topics such as dynamic capabilities, organizational competencies, innovation, competitiveness, and the management of enterprise growth.

I view Chief Assistant Professor Dr Katya Vladova's involvement in research projects and academic forums positively. Such engagement contributes to the development of her research expertise and professional network, while also facilitating the dissemination of her research findings to the national and international academic community.

IX. Plagiarism

Based on my review and analysis of the scientific works submitted by Chief Assistant Professor Dr Katya Vladova for this competition, I have found no evidence of plagiarism, improper use or citation of others' research, or obvious discrepancies in the reported research results. The publications utilize and cite scientific sources relevant to the subject matter under discussion.

I am not aware of any established violations of academic ethics or proven instances of plagiarism in the candidate's scholarly output. Consequently, I have no objections regarding adherence to the principles of academic integrity in the works submitted for this competition.

X. Questions, critical remarks, and recommendations

I have no significant critical remarks regarding the scientific output presented by Chief Assistant Professor Dr Katya Vladova. As a recommendation for her future research activities, I would suggest expanding empirical studies on dynamic capabilities and organizational agility to other economic sectors. This would facilitate comparative analysis and allow for broader generalization of the findings. Furthermore, it is advisable to continue publishing in reputable international scholarly journals – specifically those indexed and abstracted in Scopus and Web of Science – to enhance the international visibility and citation impact of her research.

These recommendations are constructive in nature and do not alter my positive assessment of the candidate's scientific achievements.

I would like to pose the following **question** to the candidate:

To what extent is the conceptual model developed – covering the interrelationships between entrepreneurial orientation, dynamic capabilities, organizational agility, and sustainable competitive advantage – applicable to sectors other than the hospitality industry?

XI. Conclusion

Based on an analysis of the submitted documents, the scientific and educational-methodological output, and the teaching activities of Chief Assistant Professor Dr Katya Vladova, I conclude that the candidate meets both the minimum national requirements and the additional requirements set by the University of Economics – Varna for the academic position of "Associate Professor."

The submitted scholarly works contain scientific, applied-scientific, and practical contributions in the fields of organizational theory, strategic management, and entrepreneurship. I particularly value the research findings regarding dynamic capabilities, organizational flexibility, and sustainable competitive advantages, as well as the empirical grounding of this work. The candidate's scientific output, international publication record, and extensive teaching experience align with the professional field and scientific specialty of the announced competition.

In light of the above, I offer a positive assessment and recommend that the esteemed members of the Scientific Jury support the appointment of Chief Assistant Professor Dr Katya Ivanova Vladova to the academic position of "Associate Professor" within Professional Field 3.7 "Administration and Management," specializing in "Social Management (Management – Organizational Design and Entrepreneurship)," at the Department of Management and Administration, University of Economics – Varna.

27.10.2026 r.
Varna

The review is prepared by:
(Associate Professor D. Serafimova, PhD)

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

REVIEW

By: *Prof. Galina Georgieva Kurteva, PhD*, scientific specialty "*Social Management*", Professor in professional field **3.7. Administration and Management**, Burgas Free University -

Regarding: *competition for the academic position of Associate Professor* in the field of higher education **3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences**, professional field **3.7. Administration and Management**, scientific specialty "*Social Management (Management – Organizational Design and Entrepreneurship)*" at the University of Economics – Varna, announced in State Gazette No. 65/17.07.2026.

1. Information about the competition

The competition has been announced to meet the needs of the *Department of Management and Administration* within the *Faculty of Management* at the University of Economics – Varna. I am participating as a member of the Scientific Jury for the competition pursuant to Order No. 06-149/14.09.2026 issued by the Rector of the University of Economics – Varna.

2. Information about the candidate in the competition

One candidate is participating in the announced competition for Associate Professor in the scientific specialty "*Social Management (Management – Organizational Design and Entrepreneurship)*" at the University of Economics – Varna — *Chief Assistant Professor Katya Ivanova Vladova, PhD*, from the *Department of Management and Administration* within the *Faculty of Management* of the same higher education institution. The documentation submitted for the competition complies with the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (Art. 2b, paras. 2 and 3) and its Implementing Regulations (Art. 1a, para. 1), as well as with the conditions for holding the academic position of *Associate Professor* at the University of Economics – Varna, as defined in the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at the University (Art. 101 of the RDAS – UE – Varna).

The candidate, Chief Assistant Professor Katya Vladova, holds a Bachelor's and a Master's degree in the specialties "Marketing and Management" and "Banking" from the University of Economics – Varna, obtained in 1996. In the period 2001–2003 she studied at the University of St. Gallen, Switzerland; the Swiss Institute for Small Business and Entrepreneurship, and holds a diploma for managers in small and medium-sized enterprises (KMU Diplom HSG, *Diplom fuer Fuehrungskraefte in Klein- und Mittelunternehmen*). In 2009 she defended her dissertation titled "Factors for the Growth of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (the case of tour operator companies in Bulgaria)" and obtained the educational and scientific degree *Doctor* in scientific specialty 05.02.20 "Social Management" (Higher Attestation Commission – Sofia, Scientific Commission 16, Protocol No. 13 of 13.10.2009).

Katya Vladova is a member of the Union of Scientists – Varna, section "Economic Sciences". She speaks and uses English, German, Russian, and Spanish.

3. Fulfilment of the requirements for holding the academic position

The report submitted by Chief Assistant Professor Katya Ivanova Vladova regarding compliance with the minimum national requirements and the requirements of the University of Economics – Varna shows that the total minimum number of points required for holding the position of *Associate Professor* has been exceeded by almost 20%, while all specific requirements in the individual sections are also fulfilled. The overperformance with respect to the additional requirements of the University of Economics – Varna is likewise substantial (over 120%).

Group of Indicators	Minimum Requirements for Associate Professor in accordance with the Implementing Regulations of the Academic Staff Development Act and the requirements of University of Economics – Varna	Fulfillment of the Requirements for Associate Professor by Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Katya Vladova
I. National Minimum Requirements in Accordance with ASDA (Art. 2b, Para. 2) and its Implementing Regulations (Art. 1a, Para. 1)		
A Indicator 1	50	50
B Indicator 2	-	
C Indicator 3	100	100
D Sum of Indicators 4-10	200	208,3

E Sum of Indicators 11-13	50	120
Total for Section I	400	478,3
II. Additional Requirements for University of Economics – Varna in Accordance with ASDA (Art. 2b, Para. 5) and its Implementing Regulations (Art. 1a, Para. 2-3)		
G Sum of Indicators 23	100	100
H Sum of Indicators 24-26	55	210
I Sum of Indicators 28-33	15	68
Total for Section II	170	378

4. Evaluation of the Submitted Scientific Works

4.1. General Characteristics of the Publications

For participation in the competition for “Associate Professor”, Chief Assistant Professor Katya Vladova, PhD, presents the following publications:

- **Monographs – 1** (Vladova, K. *Dynamic Capabilities and Organizational Flexibility of Business Organizations (the case of high-category hotels in Bulgaria)*. Varna: Univ. Publ. “Science and Economics”, 2026, 156 pp.; ISBN (print) 978-954-21-1227-3)

- **Articles and papers published in scientific journals referenced and indexed in Scopus and Web of Science – 4**, of which one is a single-authored publication.

- **Articles and papers published in non-referenced peer-reviewed journals or in edited collective volumes – 15**, three of which are co-authored.

- **University textbooks and teaching aids – 5**, in which the candidate is a co-author.

The publications do not duplicate those submitted for obtaining the educational and scientific degree “Doctor”, and no plagiarism established under the legally prescribed procedure is known to me in her scientific works.

All publications with which Chief Assistant Professor Katya Vladova participates in the competition for “Associate Professor” fall within the thematic areas of the announced competition in professional field 3.7 Administration and Management. The emphases in her scientific works can be systematized into three research domains: **entrepreneurship, organizational design and flexibility**, and **strategic business management** (with a clearly expressed focus on the tourism sector). The submitted publications possess the necessary scientific depth and fully meet the qualitative requirements for conducting scientific research and obtaining corresponding results. Publications by the candidate are published in journals indexed in Scopus and Web of Science (5 items).

Alongside this, the ability of Chief Assistant Professor Katya Vladova to appropriately inform the scientific community about her research work should be positively evaluated. Some of her publications are cited in the works of other researchers (9 citations), which is an attestation of the positive reception of her theses and research results. Authors of publications in journals indexed in Scopus and Web of Science have referred to two of her publications (6 citations). This confirms the significance of the scientific and applied results of her research in terms of enriching knowledge in the studied fields, further developing them, and ensuring applicability for other applied studies.

The habilitation work submitted by Chief Assistant Professor Katya Vladova for the competition is titled *"Dynamic Capabilities and Organizational Flexibility of Business Organizations"*, Varna: Publishing House "Science and Economics", 2026, ISBN 978-954-21-1227-3. The monograph comprises 156 pages and presents a study of a current and significant problem for the management of contemporary business organizations, arising from the unstable and highly competitive environment in which they operate. The emphasis is placed on the interrelation between dynamic capabilities and resources that are difficult for competitors to imitate, entrepreneurial orientation, and organizational flexibility, with the aim of achieving sustainable competitive advantages in a dynamic external environment.

The author develops the thesis that the dynamic capabilities of business organizations increase their organizational flexibility and ability to create sustainable competitive advantages, with entrepreneurial orientation being a key prerequisite in this process. To study and evaluate the relationship between dynamic capabilities, organizational flexibility, and the results achieved by the organization, Chief Assistant Professor Katya Vladova develops a conceptual model based on the study, analysis, and systematization of various literary and informational sources (books, articles, reports, regulations, normative documents, statistical studies, reports of state institutions, strategic documents, official and specialized websites). The presented bibliography contains a total of 110 sources, all focused on the researched problem. They are used appropriately and cited correctly. A positive impression is made by the author's ability to conduct scientific selection and demonstrate critical attitude toward external viewpoints and concepts when structuring her own opinion to prove the main thesis of the monograph.

In the course of the monographic study, Dr. Katya Vladova:

- Systematizes theoretical views on the dynamic capabilities of organizations, compares different perspectives on the concept, as well as types of organizational capabilities and their relation to sustainable competitive advantages. Based on this, she clarifies the essence and significance of dynamic capabilities in organizational management.

- Substantiates the relationship between dynamic capabilities, entrepreneurial orientation, and organizational flexibility for achieving sustainable competitive advantages by business organizations.

- Develops a conceptual model of the relationship between dynamic capabilities, organizational flexibility, and achieved results. The proposed conceptual model includes entrepreneurial orientation as a prerequisite for the development of dynamic capabilities and organizational flexibility as a function of their development.

- Tests the proposed conceptual model in one of the most competitive and structurally significant sectors for the country — the hotel industry. The study includes high-category hotels in the Black Sea region of Bulgaria, based on the author's assumption that they possess more resources forming the basis of dynamic capabilities and therefore exhibit them to a greater extent compared to lower-category hotels. The author correctly justifies the choice of PLS-SEM for processing empirical data and validating the proposed conceptual model.

- Based on the study of theoretical concepts and the results of the empirical research, the author proposes well-argued recommendations and guidelines for developing the dynamic capabilities of organizations.

My overall assessment of the monographic study by Chief Assistant Professor Katya Vladova is that it presents an in-depth examination of various concepts of dynamic capabilities of organizations, thereby contributing to the development of interdisciplinary knowledge and complex approaches in the strategic management of contemporary organizations.

In conclusion, I can summarize that the review of the scientific publications submitted for the competition by Chief Assistant Professor Katya Vladova gives me grounds to highly evaluate their scientific content, their practical usefulness in terms of the achieved research results, and their full compliance with the requirements for holding the academic position "Associate Professor".

4.2. Evaluation of Scientific and Applied Contributions

A large part of the statements, ideas, and achieved results from the scientific and applied research of Chief Assistant Professor Katya Vladova can be accepted as contributions to the development of management science and practice. The contributions can be systematized into three groups:

Contributions of Theoretical Nature

1. **Theoretical enrichment of the concepts of dynamic capabilities and organizational flexibility** – Systematization and comparison of the main theoretical directions regarding dynamic capabilities; defining and clarifying the significance of organizational flexibility under conditions of high dynamism, uncertainty, and digital transformation. Publications: 4, 6, 8, 14, 15, 18

2. **Author's conceptual models** – Models of the interrelation between entrepreneurial orientation, dynamic capabilities (sensing, seizing, transforming), organizational flexibility, and sustainable competitive advantages; conceptual model for SME growth emphasizing the role of the entrepreneur/manager and their proactive actions. Publications: 1, 2, 3, 4

3. **Theoretical substantiation of entrepreneurial orientation** (proactiveness, innovativeness, risk-taking) as a key micro-foundation for activating dynamic capabilities and overcoming “path dependence” in business organizations. Publications: 4, 5, 6, 7, 8

4. **Theoretical enrichment of the concepts of competitive advantages and competitive dynamics** – analysis of competitive behavior and business processes aimed at increasing organizational efficiency and competitiveness. Publications: 8, 9, 17, 18

Scientific-Applied Contributions

1. **Empirical testing and validation of models** – Application of PLS-SEM and SmartPLS for factor and regression analysis; empirical testing and validation of conceptual models for SME growth. Publications: 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8

2. **Methodologies and survey instruments** – Development of author's questionnaires and scales for latent variables: dynamic capabilities, environmental turbulence, entrepreneurial orientation, organizational flexibility; providing tools for future sectoral and comparative studies. Publications: 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 15, 16, 17

3. **Sectoral analyses and integrated methodologies** – Analysis of key sectors in Bulgaria and entrepreneurial activity; combining traditional theories of firm growth with

contemporary concepts such as Design Thinking and process maturity models. Publications: 4, 11, 12, 13, 17, 18

Applied Contributions

1. **Development of teaching and practical materials** – Creation of teaching aids, case studies, practical guides, and tests integrated into the courses “Entrepreneurship and SMEs”, “Entrepreneurship”, and “Planning and Forecasting”. They support the practical application of entrepreneurial concepts through business idea analysis, business plan development, and entrepreneurial strategy formulation. Publications: 24, 25, 26, 27, 28

2. **Managerial recommendations for hospitality and tourism** – Definition of specific managerial guidelines for managers of high-category hotels and tour operator companies aimed at improving managerial mechanisms and organizational practices in the sector. Publications: 24, 25, 26, 27, 28

3. **Organizational skills and innovative competitive advantages** – Identification of critical organizational skills for building and maintaining innovative forms of competitive advantage in the tourism and hospitality sector. The role of dynamic capabilities in implementing innovations, enhancing reputation, and ensuring long-term sustainability is substantiated. Publications: 4, 5, 14, 15, 16

The authorship of the described results with contributory character is beyond doubt, as in addition to their detailed description in the publications, Chief Assistant Professor Katya Vladova has provided empirical results from practical studies wherever possible. I accept the candidate's claims for scientific and applied contributions, which are formulated correctly and concisely and reflect the results of her research work.

5. Evaluation of Research and Teaching Activity

5.1. Evaluation of Participation in Research and Creative Projects

The candidate for the position of “Associate Professor”, Chief Assistant Professor Katya Vladova, PhD, has participated as an expert in: • **2 international projects** (2021 and 2023), funded by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology within the Initiative for Building Innovation Capacity in Higher Education. • **1 national project**, funded by the University of Economics – Varna (2008).

She was the leader of the research project “*Expansion Bulgaria*” (01.10.2005 – 30.04.2006, “Quelle” Ltd., Nuremberg, Germany).

Katya Vladova has participated in numerous trainings and specializations aimed at improving her professional skills and acquiring new knowledge in business management, organizational design, and entrepreneurship (Council of Europe; Association for Cultural and Tourist Exchange; Austrian Development Cooperation Agency; National Tourism Council – Belgrade, Serbia; Oxford Business School; IESE Business School, Barcelona, Spain; University of Cologne, Department of Organizational Management; Vienna University of Economics and Business, Austria; Institute for Small Business Management; International Summer Academy for Small Business Management).

Her experience as **Hotel Contracting Manager / Product Manager** (2003–2021) supports the generation of ideas, their scientific investigation, and their practical validation.

5.2. Evaluation of Teaching Activity

Katya Vladova has been a lecturer at the University of Economics – Varna since 1996. Over time she has consecutively held the academic positions of Assistant and Senior Assistant in the Department of Business Management. At present, she is Chief Assistant Professor in the Department of Management and Administration.

She has been a lecturer (Assistant) at the University of Cologne, Faculty of Economics, Business Administration and Social Sciences, Department of Organizational Management (academic year 2002/2003). She has also been a visiting lecturer at partner universities of the University of Economics – Varna under the Erasmus+ programme — Vienna University of Applied Sciences (Austria), University of Cádiz (Cádiz, Spain), University of Valencia (Spain).

Chief Assistant Professor Katya Vladova teaches undergraduate students in the following management disciplines: Entrepreneurship, Management (in Bulgarian and Russian), Corporate Governance, Organizational Design, Entrepreneurship and SMEs. Her classroom workload for the academic years 2024/2025 and 2025/2026 totals 706 hours.

For Master’s degree students, Chief Assistant Professor Katya Vladova teaches (lectures and seminars) the courses: International Entrepreneurship (in English), Business Strategies and Growth (in English), Entrepreneurial Opportunities (in English), Flexibility and Change

Management in Organizations (in English). Her teaching workload in Master's programmes over the past two years amounts to 288 hours.

All academic disciplines and courses taught by Chief Assistant Professor Katya Vladova fall within the professional field in which the competition is announced.

Chief Assistant Professor Katya Vladova is a member of the author teams of five textbooks, two of which are directly related to the subject matter of the courses she teaches.

Regarding her work with students, her contribution as a mentor and team leader in the Accelerator of the University of Economics – Varna should be noted, as well as her participation as a member of the Student Research Creativity Committee at the Department of Management and Administration.

Based on the above, I consider that the research and teaching activity of Chief Assistant Professor Katya Vladova is unequivocally related to the subject of the competition. She possesses the necessary qualifications, has teaching experience, and is fully prepared to hold the academic position of Associate Professor at the University of Economics – Varna.

6. Critical Remarks and Recommendations

I have no substantial critical remarks regarding the research and teaching activity of the candidate in the competition.

The achieved scientific results, the presence of practical knowledge, and the accumulated professional experience give me grounds to recommend that Chief Assistant Professor Katya Vladova direct her efforts towards forming teams for the development of national and international projects in the field of organizational design and entrepreneurship.

I recommend that the candidate, Dr. Katya Vladova, further deepen her research activity in the field of SME growth management and make targeted efforts to publish more works in reputable foreign peer-reviewed and indexed journals, which would ensure greater recognition and visibility in the scientific community.

Regarding her future teaching activity, I consider it appropriate that she develop and publish independent teaching materials (textbooks and manuals) in the disciplines she teaches.

CONCLUSION

The documents and materials submitted by Chief Assistant Professor Katya Ivanova Vladova meet all the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LDASRB), the Implementing Regulations of the LDASRB, and the corresponding Regulations of the University of Economics – Varna.

The candidate has presented a sufficient number of scientific works published after the materials used for obtaining the educational and scientific degree “Doctor”. The publications and studies are competent, innovative, and scientifically sound. The results achieved by Chief Assistant Professor Katya Vladova in her teaching and research activity comply with the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at the University of Economics – Varna for the application of the LDASRB.

All this gives me grounds to provide a positive evaluation of the research and teaching activity of Chief Assistant Professor Katya Vladova.

With full conviction, I propose that the candidate, Chief Assistant Professor Katya Ivanova Vladova, be elected to hold the academic position of **Associate Professor** in professional field **3.7 Administration and Management**, scientific specialty “**Social Management (Management – Organizational Design and Entrepreneurship)**” at the University of Economics – Varna.

22.10.2026 / Burgas

Signature:

(Prof. Galina Kurteva, PhD)

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