ИКОНОМИЧЕСКИ УНИВЕРСИТЕТ ВАРНА
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REVIEW

by Prof. Evgeni Petrov Stanimirov, PhD, University of Economics – Varna, concerning the competition for the academic position of Associate Professor in professional field 3.7 "Administration and Management", scientific specialty "Social Management (Human Resource Management - Talent Management and Leadership)"

1. General Information

This review has been prepared pursuant to a decision of the academic jury appointed by Order No. RD 06-153/15.09.2026 and the decisions taken at its first meeting, held on 28.09.2026. The assessment is based on the documents submitted by the candidate for the competition, including the list and abstracts of publications, the statement of scientific and applied scientific contributions, scientometric reports, academic curriculum vitae, and evidence of teaching and expert activities.

2. Information about the Competition

The competition was announced in the State Gazette, issue No. 65 of 17.07.2026, for the needs of the Department of Management and Administration at the University of Economics - Varna. The competition profile encompasses human resource management, talent management and leadership.

3. Candidate in the Competition

The sole candidate is Chief Assistant Professor Petar Krasimirov Petrov, PhD. By a decision dated 28.09.2026, we, the members of the academic jury, established that he meets the minimum national and quantitative requirements for the academic position of Associate Professor in the professional field of the announced competition (pursuant to Article 2b, paragraphs 2 and 3, of the Academic Staff Development Act), as well as the requirements of the University of Economics - Varna (pursuant to Article 2b, paragraph 5, of the same

Act). This decision is the starting point for the present review, which is not limited to assessing quantitative compliance with the competition requirements.

4. Information about the Candidate

Petar Petrov is a graduate of the University of Economics - Varna (UE-Varna): he earned bachelor's degrees in Marketing and Business Administration and, in 2009, a master's degree in Management. In 2019, he obtained the educational and scientific degree of Doctor in professional field 3.7 with a dissertation entitled "The Relationship between Work Values and Attitudes towards Human Resource Management Activities (The Case of Airport Operators)". Since 2019, he has held the position of Chief Assistant Professor at UE-Varna. His previous professional experience includes work as an assistant professor and part-time lecturer, as well as expert activities related to accreditation and the management of electronic and distance learning at the university. Since 2021, he has been the coordinator of the university's business accelerator.

This professional trajectory demonstrates the accumulation of experience at the intersection of academic teaching, institutional management and business engagement - areas that correspond to the subject of the competition.

5. Description and Assessment of Scientific Works

The submitted report on compliance with the minimum national requirements under Article 2b, paragraphs 2 and 3, of the Academic Staff Development Act for the academic position of Associate Professor in professional field 3.7 "Administration and Management" demonstrates that the candidate exceeds the cumulative quantitative requirements under Section I, National Minimum Requirements, pursuant to the Academic Staff Development Act (Article 2b) and its Implementing Regulations (Article 1a, paragraph 1). The required minimum is 400 points, while the candidate has accumulated 619.99 points.

The competition documents include the necessary reports substantiating the above-mentioned points declared for compliance with the minimum national requirements under

Article 2b, paragraphs 2 and 3, of the Academic Staff Development Act for the academic position of Associate Professor.

The works submitted for review comprise 31 publications totaling 1,014 pages. These include four monographs (two of them single-authored), totaling 628 pages; one study of 25 pages; eight articles (153 pages); 17 conference papers (179 pages); and one contribution to a textbook (19 pages). Twelve publications are single-authored (613 pages), and 19 are co-authored (401 pages).

Three publications are indexed in Scopus and Web of Science. Fifteen publications appear in journals or other outlets included in the national reference list maintained by NACID.

A total of 27 citations have been recorded for 12 of the publications. All publications are subject to peer review and relate to the topic of the announced competition.

The central place in the submitted body of work is occupied by the single-authored habilitation monograph "Talent Management in an Academic Environment" (Varna, University Publishing House "Science and Economics", 2026, 301 pages). It examines the applicability of the concept of talent management to higher education and aims to develop a conceptual model for the systematic management of student talent through cooperation among the university, academic staff, students and business.

I positively assess the distinction between different approaches to talent and the treatment of the university as an ecosystem in which human potential management requires coordination of educational, research and organizational practices. This provides an appropriate conceptual foundation for the scientific specialty of the competition. Contributions can be identified in several areas of the monograph:

First. At the theoretical and methodological level, the author critically analyzes a substantial body of literature on talent management and develops and substantiates a conceptual model for talent management in an academic context.

*Secon*d. In terms of practical application, evidence of good talent-management practices across various dimensions at leading universities is synthesized. Conclusions are drawn regarding the attitudes and readiness of the three target groups surveyed to establish

a talent-management system. Specific recommendations are formulated for developing sustainable mechanisms for identifying, developing and realizing talent, taking account of the particular characteristics of Bulgarian higher education institutions.

Other significant works include the single-authored monograph "Work Values and their Role in Human Resource Management" (2021), which extends the research line initiated in the doctoral dissertation. In the international collective volume "Hidden Champions in Rising Economies" (Springer, 2026), the candidate co-authored the chapter "Hidden Champions of Bulgaria" with Assoc. Prof. D. Serafimova, PhD. A collective monograph on the intercultural and educational bridge between community cultural centers (chitalishta) and museums (2023) is also presented. The remaining publications address work values, employee satisfaction, leadership, intercultural competence, entrepreneurship, university–business interaction and the assessment of institutional effectiveness.

I positively assess the thematic continuity between the research on work values and human resource management and the more recent line of research on talent management in an academic environment.

6. Contributions to the Candidate's Research Work

Based on the submitted statement and the substantive focus of the works, I consider the following groups of contributions to be the most significant:

First. *In the field of talent management:* systematization and critical analysis of perspectives on talent; development of an integrated conceptual model for talent management in the academic community; and substantiation of a methodology for diagnosing the attitudes of students, faculty members and business representatives towards talent. The applied scientific value lies in the recommendations for institutional policies and tools for monitoring student development.

Second. *In human resource management: exam*ination of the relationships between work values and practices for attracting, selecting, evaluating, remunerating, developing and retaining personnel; assessment of the links between organizational change and employees' attitudes towards management practices; and investigation of the determinants of job

satisfaction. It is positive that these studies focus on employee perceptions and behavior rather than solely on formal management mechanisms. This makes the recommendations formulated for the development of internal organizational systems considerably more appropriate.

Third. *In leadership and intercultural competence: systematization* of leadership approaches and contemporary tools for developing and assessing leadership competencies; investigation of relationships between leadership styles and team effectiveness; examination of adaptation during international student mobility; systematization of metrics for assessing intercultural differences; and formulation of recommendations for optimizing international assignment policies. At the practical level, an applied model for developing intercultural communication competence and leadership skills has been developed.

Fourth. In *entrepreneurship and university–business relations: participation* in a team developing a model for a sustainable partnership network; participation in a team formulating rules for maintaining the sustainable operation of the university–business network; identification of the principal reasons for changes in entrepreneurial activity; and enrichment of the theory of niche leadership.

Fifth. *In higher education management: d*evelopment of proposals for key indicators of institutional effectiveness in higher education institutions; analysis of interactive methods for e-learning; and identification of the relationship between the education system and labor-market demand for information and communication technology specialists. The applied nature of the research stands out in these areas.

I assess the contributions predominantly as the enrichment, systematization and adaptation of scientific approaches, combined with specific empirical and applied developments.

7. Participation in Research Projects and Scientific Forums

The submitted contracts and certificates document participation in international and national initiatives, including: Erasmus+ PROMINENCE, EIT HEI TANDEM+, a project to build an intercultural and educational bridge between community cultural centers and

museums, as well as expert and consultancy activities. Evidence is provided of participation in scientific forums, roundtables and international intensive programs, including Dukenet and Erasmus+ formats during 2023–2026.

Particularly valuable for the candidate's profile is the connection between project activities, international cooperation and the practical application of entrepreneurial and leadership competencies.

8. Teaching Activities

The academic curriculum vitae and teaching workload reports outline a diverse range of teaching activities at bachelor's and master's levels. The principal bachelor's-level courses include: Human Resource Management, Intercultural Competence and Leadership, Research Methods, Online Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurial Marketing, Human Resource Management in the Public Sector, and International Human Resource Management and Quality. At master's level, the candidate teaches courses such as: Startup Consulting and Digital Technologies in Education Management. Some teaching is delivered in English. In the last two years alone, he has delivered 445 teaching hours at bachelor's level and 484 hours at master's level.

Twenty certificates documenting successfully completed courses have been submitted. Among them, I would highlight "Innovative Educational Technologies" in 2022 and participation in the TANDEM+ International Training Programme. These facts demonstrate an effort to update pedagogical approaches and provide internationally oriented education. The candidate's teaching profile is substantially aligned with the scientific specialty of the competition.

9. Other Activities

The candidate has served as Deputy Director of the Center for Electronic and Distance Learning, an accreditation expert and coordinator of the university's business accelerator. Mentoring activities within ABLE Mentor and expert commitments involving training and consultancy are documented. These activities demonstrate organizational cooperation skills

and a contribution to the university's practical environment, without conflating them with scientific results in the strict sense.

10. Plagiarism

The submitted set of documents contains no grounds for establishing plagiarism. This review does not constitute an independent technical check for textual similarities.

11. Questions, Critical Remarks and Recommendations to the Candidate

*First. I*n the future development of the talent-management model, validation on a broader basis should be sought. This would allow the results to be interpreted more reliably without being constrained by the specifics of a particular institutional environment.

Second. It would be advisable to develop a system for subsequently measuring the impact of the proposed policies—for example, on student participation, competence development and transition to professional employment.

Third. In view of the candidate's methodological and international experience, I recommend even more active publication in internationally refereed journals.

12. Conclusion

The submitted materials present a candidate with consistent academic development, a thematically coherent body of scientific publications, teaching experience and active project and expert engagement. The habilitation monograph "Talent Management in an Academic Environment" is directly relevant to the competition profile and contains conceptual and applied scientific developments with potential use in the management of higher education institutions. A decision of the academic jury has confirmed compliance with the applicable minimum national and university quantitative requirements.

On the basis of the above assessment, I give a positive opinion and propose that the esteemed academic jury support the election of Chief Assistant Professor Petar Krasimirov Petrov, PhD, to the academic position of Associate Professor in professional field 3.7 "Administration and Management", scientific specialty "Social Management (Human

Resource Management - Talent Management and Leadership)", for the needs of the University of Economics - Varna.

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26.10.2026

Reviewer:

/Prof. Evgeni Stanimirov, PhD/