



REVIEW

Вх. № PA20-1373/10.08.2026г.

for the competition for the academic position of Associate Professor in the scientific field 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, professional field 3.8 Economics, scientific specialty Economics and Management (Competitiveness and Sustainability of Trade).

1. General Information

Reviewer: Prof. Dr. Donka Dimitrova Zhelyazkova, University of Economics – Varna, Department of Economics and Management of Trade and Services, Professional Field 3.8 Economics, Scientific Specialty Economics and Management (Transport Logistics).

Basis for the Review: This review has been prepared pursuant to Order No. RD 06-125/02.07.2026 of the Rector of the University of Economics – Varna appointing the Scientific Jury, issued in accordance with Article 4 in conjunction with Article 25 of the Academic Staff Development in the Republic of Bulgaria Act, Article 7(2) and Article 106(3) and (4) of the Regulations for Academic Staff Development at the University of Economics – Varna, and the decision of the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Business, Minutes No. 36/26.06.2026. The review relates to the announced competition for the academic position of Associate Professor in Professional Field 3.8 Economics, Scientific Specialty Economics and Management (Competitiveness and Sustainability of Trade), for the needs of the Department of Economics and Management of Trade and Services, published in State Gazette, Issue No. 44 of 14 May 2026.

2. Information on the Competition

The competition is for the academic position of Associate Professor in Scientific Field 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, Professional Field 3.8 Economics, Scientific Specialty Economics and Management (Competitiveness and Sustainability of Trade). The competition was announced in the State Gazette, Issue No. 44 of 14 May 2026, to meet the staffing needs of the Department of Economics and Management of Trade and Services at the University of Economics – Varna.

3. Candidate in the Competition

Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Yulia Nikolaevna Hristova, is the sole applicant in the present competition for the academic position of Associate Professor in Scientific Field 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, Professional Field 3.8 Economics, Scientific Specialty Economics and Management (Competitiveness and Sustainability of Trade), announced in the State Gazette, Issue No. 44 of 14 May 2026, for the needs of the Department of Economics and Management of Trade and Services at the University of Economics – Varna.

The candidate satisfies the minimum national requirements for appointment to the academic position of Associate Professor in Scientific Field 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, in which the competition has been announced, in accordance with Article 2b, paragraphs 2 and 3 of the Academic Staff Development in the Republic of Bulgaria Act and its Implementing Regulations. Specifically, the candidate has declared the required 50 points under Indicator Group A; has submitted an independent monograph meeting the requirements of Indicator



Group B (100 points); has accumulated a total of 227.5 points under Indicator Group G, exceeding the required minimum of 200 points; and has declared citations amounting to 60 points under Indicator Group D, surpassing the minimum requirement of 50 points. On this basis, it may be concluded that the candidate exceeds the overall quantitative evaluation in almost all groups of scientometric indicators reflecting her research achievements.

Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Yulia Nikolaevna Hristova, also fully satisfies all the requirements set forth in Article 101 of the Regulations for Academic Staff Development at the University of Economics – Varna, which stipulates that candidates for the academic position of Associate Professor must meet the following criteria:

The candidate successfully defended her doctoral dissertation entitled "A Study of the Competitiveness of New Automobile Retail Enterprises in Bulgaria" and was awarded the educational and scientific degree of Doctor (PhD) in 2014.

The candidate held the academic position of Assistant Professor from 2011 to 2015 and has served as Chief Assistant Professor in the Department of Economics and Management of Trade and Services at the University of Economics – Varna since 2015. Accordingly, she has nearly fifteen years of academic teaching experience.

The candidate has submitted a monograph that does not duplicate the topic of her doctoral dissertation. The monograph, entitled "Recommercialisation in the Context of the Circular Economy," was published in 2025 by the Science and Economics Publishing House, Tsani Kalyandzhiev Library series, and was reviewed by Professor Dr. Evgeni Petrov Stanimirov, and Professor Dr. Velina Ivancheva Kazandzhieva.

The candidate meets the minimum national requirements for appointment to the academic position of Associate Professor, in accordance with Article 2b, paragraphs 2 and 3 of the Academic Staff Development in the Republic of Bulgaria Act.

The candidate also satisfies the institutional requirements for appointment to the academic position of Associate Professor at the University of Economics – Varna pursuant to Article 2b, paragraph 5 of the Academic Staff Development in the Republic of Bulgaria Act, as evidenced by her scientific papers and scholarly articles.

There is no legally established evidence of plagiarism in the candidate's scholarly publications.

4. Information on the Candidate (Personal Profile)

The candidate, Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Yulia Nikolaevna Hristova, holds the educational and scientific degree of Doctor (PhD), awarded following the successful defence of her doctoral dissertation entitled "A Study of the Competitiveness of New Automobile Retail Enterprises in Bulgaria" on 20 June 2014, as certified by Diploma No. 041, issued on 1 September 2014.

Throughout her academic career, Chief Assistant Professor Hristova has taught a wide range of courses at both the Bachelor's and Master's degree levels. Over the years, she has delivered courses in Competition and Competitiveness and Competitiveness of the Trading Business, which correspond directly to the subject area of the announced competition. It should also be noted that the candidate possesses expertise in several related fields, providing a solid foundation for her teaching activities in courses such as Fundamentals of Trade, Business Economics, Sales Management, Services Trade, Marketing Research in an Omnichannel Environment, and others.

Alongside her teaching responsibilities, the candidate has participated in five research and development projects, two of which were research projects that resulted in the publication of



co-authored scholarly monographs. Furthermore, during the period 2016–2021, she served as the principal supervisor of a full-time doctoral student who completed the programme with the right to defend the dissertation. She continues to collaborate with the doctoral candidate on the completion of the dissertation entitled "Effects of Consumer Positioning on Life Insurance Trading Enterprises in Bulgaria."

Chief Assistant Professor Hristova's research interests focus on the competitiveness and sustainable development of the trading business; the transformation of trade in the context of digitalisation and omnichannel business models; automobile markets and the competitive environment in the automotive sector; recommercialisation and the circular economy in trade; and related topics. These research interests are clearly reflected in her scholarly publications.

5. Description of the Scholarly Publications

The candidate participates in the competition for the academic position of Associate Professor in Professional Field 3.8 Economics, Scientific Specialty Economics and Management (Competitiveness and Sustainability of Trade) with a total scholarly output comprising 1,051 standard pages. This includes 280 pages in the principal habilitation monograph entitled "Recommercialisation in the Context of the Circular Economy"; 185 pages in a published book based on the successfully defended doctoral dissertation; 34 pages in co-authored monographs; 75 pages of scholarly studies (59 pages authored independently and 16 pages co-authored); 39 pages of scholarly articles (34 pages authored independently and 5 pages co-authored); 66 pages of conference papers (54 pages authored independently and 12 pages co-authored); and 372 pages of university textbooks and teaching materials prepared entirely in co-authorship.

In her principal habilitation monograph, Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Yulia Nikolaevna Hristova, sets out the following research objective: to conceptualise the essence, significance, and specific characteristics of recommercialisation; to identify the current state, development trends, and principal effects of product resale in retail trade within the European Union; to investigate the consumer determinants influencing the purchase of previously owned products in Bulgaria; and, on this basis, to formulate key directions for the further development of recommercialisation.

The objective of the monograph is successfully achieved through five logically structured and self-contained chapters.

The first chapter defines the conceptual dimensions of recommercialisation by examining, from a theoretical perspective, the role of reuse strategies within the circular economy model and the evolution of the concept of recommercialisation.

The second chapter identifies the determinants and models of consumers' intention to purchase second-hand goods. The author classifies the existing research models into two broad categories—general and specific—and devotes a separate section to the development of a conceptual model for analysing the determinants of purchase intention in the secondary market. The third chapter presents the methodological framework and indicators for analysing the development of the second-hand goods market. It includes a comparative analysis of second-hand retail trade across the European Union and investigates the relationship between income levels and sales of second-hand goods in EU Member States.

The fourth chapter, entitled "Application of the PLS-SEM Model for Assessing Consumers' Intention to Purchase Second-Hand Goods in Bulgaria and Its Determinants," systematises the research methodology for examining consumers' purchase intentions and demonstrates the application of the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) approach.



The chapter identifies the key determinants of consumer purchase intention in the Bulgarian secondary market and evaluates the relationships between these determinants and consumer behaviour using the PLS-SEM analytical framework.

The fifth and final chapter outlines the principal challenges and future prospects for the development of recommercialisation in Bulgaria. Particular attention is devoted to the prerequisites and conditions necessary for its advancement, as well as to the economic, technological, environmental, and social opportunities associated with the expansion of recommercialisation within the Bulgarian economy.

In the concluding section of the monograph, the author states that the research objectives have been achieved and the proposed hypotheses have been confirmed. The final paragraph outlines directions for future research on recommercialisation, emphasizing the need for more comprehensive investigations into the legal framework of the circular economy, particularly the reuse strategy, as well as existing and potential public policies aimed at promoting the resale of goods.

A significant scholarly achievement of the candidate is the publication of three single-authored papers and one co-authored paper in journals indexed and abstracted in Scopus and the Web of Science:

10.2. Hristova, Y. (2025). Competitive Convergence and Digitalization in Bulgarian Retailing. *Economic Studies (Ikonomicheski Izsledvania)*, 34(4), 36–58. ISSN (Print): 0205-3292; ISSN (Online): 0205-3292.

11.3. Hristova, Y., & Stoyanov, M. (2024). Income Elasticity and Trends in Second-Hand Goods Sales. *Economic Studies (Ikonomicheski Izsledvania)*, 33(7), 119–141. ISSN (Print): 0205-3292.

12.4. Hristova, Y. (2022). Life Insurance Penetration Drivers in Bulgaria. *Economic Studies (Ikonomicheski Izsledvania)*, 31(6), 98–119. ISSN (Print): 0205-3292; ISSN (Online): 0205-3292.

13.5. Hristova, Y. (2021). Sustainability of Competitive Positioning and Challenges for Intermediaries in the New Car Market in Bulgaria. *Upravlenets / The Manager*, 12(3), 67–80. ISSN (Online): 2686-7923.

The list of publications also includes four scholarly articles and nine conference papers, with a total length of 105 standard pages, addressing contemporary issues related to retail trade, the second-hand goods market, automotive business management, business competitiveness, digital technologies as a source of competitive advantage, the competitive positioning of life insurance companies, omnichannel retailing as a driver of competitive advantage, and other topics. These publications correspond, to varying degrees, to the scientific specialty in which the competition for the academic position of Associate Professor has been announced.

From a substantive perspective, the publications submitted by Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Yulia Nikolaevna Hristova, reflecting her research activities, are fully consistent with the thematic scope of the announced competition.

6. Identification of the Scientific Contributions

In the statement submitted by Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Yulia Nikolaevna Hristova, the scientific contributions are classified into two main categories: theoretical and methodological contributions and scientific and applied contributions.



From a theoretical and methodological perspective, the candidate has further developed and enriched the theoretical and methodological foundations of competitiveness in trade; expanded the concept of recommercialisation as an independent economic phenomenon and a strategic instrument of the circular economy; and developed and empirically validated an original methodology for investigating the secondary goods market and consumer attitudes towards sustainable trade.

From a scientific and applied perspective, the candidate has conducted empirical research on competitiveness and its key determinants, both with respect to the trade sector as a whole and, more specifically, within the markets for new automobiles and life insurance products in Bulgaria and the European Union. In addition, she has examined and validated consumer attitudes towards the purchase of second-hand goods and has applied an analytical framework for the assessment of the secondary market.

According to the Statement of Identified Citations, the candidate reports a total of 22 citations, of which 16 refer to the article:

Hristova, Y. (2019). The Second-Hand Goods Market: Trends and Challenges. *Izvestia Journal of the Union of Scientists – Varna, Economic Sciences Series*, 8(3), 62–71. ISSN (Print): 1314-7390; ISSN (Online): 2603-4085.

This citation record demonstrates the considerable interest of the scholarly community in research on the second-hand goods market and reflects the international recognition of the author's contribution to this field of study.

Two of the reported citations originate from journals indexed and abstracted in Scopus. Furthermore, the candidate's Scopus profile indicates that she has established an international academic presence, as evidenced by an h-index of 1, based on four indexed publications and two citations.

7. Participation in Research Projects and Scientific Forums

The candidate in the announced competition for the academic position of Associate Professor has participated in five projects, two of which are research projects focusing on current issues in the field of trade, namely:

"Development of Trade in Bulgaria – Current State, Problems and Challenges" (2012 – 2014);
"Impact of Trade Digitalisation on the Economic Development of Bulgaria and the Regions" (2018 – 2020).

Two of the projects were designed to support the development of doctoral dissertations. The first project, carried out during the period 2011 – 2012, was entitled "A Study of the Competitiveness of Automobile Market Traders in Bulgaria (Based on the Example of the Five Dealers with the Largest Market Share)" and contributed to the preparation of the candidate's doctoral dissertation.

The second project, implemented during the period 2018 – 2019, was entitled "Effects of Consumer Positioning of Enterprises Trading Life Insurance Products in Bulgaria" and supported the development of the doctoral dissertation of full-time PhD student Pavlina Peeva. In 2023, Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Yulia Nikolaevna Hristova, also participated in a project supporting the organisation and funding of the international scientific conference entitled "Trade 5.0 – Digitalisation and/or Humanisation," organised by the Department of Economics and Management of Trade and Services.



8. Teaching Activities

A comparative analysis of the teaching workload reports for the 2021/2022 academic year and the most recent 2025/2026 academic year demonstrates that the candidate's workload has increased from 330 to 369 hours. During this period, Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Yulia Nikolaevna Hristova, has delivered instruction in eight courses in both full-time and distance-learning formats, with a total classroom teaching load of 699 hours (518 hours of seminar classes and 181 hours of lectures).

The courses taught by the candidate to students enrolled in both full-time and distance-learning programmes include Investment and Financial Management, Fundamentals of Trade, and Specialised Seminar. Within the full-time study format, she also conducts seminar classes in two additional courses: Sales Management and Sales and Advertising Management.

In order to provide students with appropriate educational resources, Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Hristova has contributed as a co-author to the development of two chapters of a textbook in Fundamentals of the Trading Business, as well as to two teaching manuals in Fundamentals of the Trading Business and Competition and Competitiveness.

The candidate regularly organises meetings and public lectures with representatives of business practice for students from various study formats in the programmes Economics and Trade and Omnichannel Trading Business.

She consistently supports students in their academic development by serving as a scientific supervisor and reviewer of bachelor's theses and master's theses. This is evidenced by her record of 22 supervised theses and 20 reviewed graduation theses over the years. In addition, she has served as the academic supervisor of full-time PhD student Pavlina Peeva, who has completed her doctoral programme with the right to defend her dissertation and has finalised her doctoral research.

9. Plagiarism

There is no legally established evidence of plagiarism in the candidate's scholarly works.

10. Questions, Critical Remarks, and Recommendations to the Candidate

A topic currently attracting considerable attention within the academic community is related to the emergence of artificial intelligence and its application in the preparation of scholarly works. In this regard, it would be valuable for the candidate to share her experience and perspective on this issue. To what extent can artificial intelligence be considered a useful tool, and to what extent might it represent a potential barrier to the utilisation of human intellectual capabilities? I have no critical remarks regarding the candidate; however, I would like to make several recommendations.

My first recommendation is that, with a view to broadening her research horizons, the candidate should further strengthen her publication activity through more co-authored research works. Such collaboration would encourage the diversification of her scientific interests, promote engagement with researchers from other fields of knowledge, and facilitate the identification of interdisciplinary connections beyond her current research areas.

My second recommendation is that the candidate should increase her participation in research projects, which would contribute to enhancing her visibility within the international academic community through a greater number of publications in reputable scientific journals. Such



involvement would also provide opportunities for collaborative work with colleagues whose research interests are situated in other scientific fields but are related to studies on competitiveness.

In this respect, the participation of Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Yulia Nikolaevna Hristova, in international teaching mobility programmes under Erasmus+ would be particularly beneficial, as such initiatives provide opportunities for cooperation with colleagues from other universities, both in terms of teaching activities and joint scientific publications.

I wish the candidate continued success in the active development of her academic and research activities.

11. Conclusion

The review of the professional achievements of Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Yulia Nikolaevna Hristova, demonstrates that she meets both the Minimum National Requirements for Appointment to the Academic Position of Associate Professor in the professional field in which the competition has been announced, pursuant to Article 2b, paragraphs 2 and 3 of the Academic Staff Development in the Republic of Bulgaria Act, as well as all requirements stipulated in Article 101 of the Regulations for Academic Staff Development at the University of Economics – Varna.

Based on the above, I recommend that the esteemed members of the Scientific Jury vote **"FOR" of the appointment of Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Yulia Nikolaevna Hristova**, to the academic position of Associate Professor in Professional Field 3.8 Economics, Scientific Specialty Economics and Management (Competitiveness and Sustainability of Trade), for the needs of the Department of Economics and Management of Trade and Services at the University of Economics – Varna.

10 August 2026
Varna

Prepared by:
(Prof. Dr. Donka Zhelyazkova)

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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, professional field 3.8. Economics, scientific specialty "Economics and Management (Commerce)"

Reason for writing the review: Order of the Rector of the University of Economics - Varna, No. RD 06-125/02.07.2026 and Decision of the meeting of the scientific jury from 17.07.2026

2. Competition contest details

The competition was announced in SG No. 44/14.05.2026, for the needs of the Department of "Economics and Management of Commerce and Services" (EMCS) at the University of Economics - Varna, in field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional field 3.8 Economics, scientific specialty "Economics and Management (Competitiveness and Sustainability of Trade)".

3. Competition candidate

The only candidate in the competition is **Chief Assist. Prof. Yulia Nikolaevna Hristova, PhD**, lecturer in the Department of "Economics and Management of Commerce and Services" at the University of Economics - Varna. From the submitted documents for the competition, it is evident that she 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. Yulia Hristova, 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 Yulia Hristova, PhD has a total of *437,5 points*. She 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 *587,5 points*, with a minimum of *170 points*.

4. Candidate data

Chief Assist. Prof. Yulia Hristova, PhD graduated from the specialty "Economics of Commerce", Bachelor's Degree, in 2008 and specialty "Commercial Business", Master's Degree, in 2009, at the University of Economics - Varna. In 2014 she obtained a PhD in the scientific specialty "Economics and Management (Commerce)".

The candidate in the competition has 15 years of teaching experience at the University of Varna, and since 2015 she has held the academic position of "Chief Assistant Professor".

Yulia Hristova, PhD was a member of the Council for Electronic and Distance Learning at the University's Center for Electronic and Distance Learning (2016-2019), a CQE associate (2017-2019), a member of the Faculty of Economics (2011-2019), and a quality assurance officer at the Department of "EMCS" (2017-2019).

Yulia Hristova, PhD is a member of the Union of Scientists in Bulgaria - Varna branch and of the Territorial Organization of Scientific and Technical Unions - Varna.

The candidate has a total of *31 scientific publications* and participation in the teams of 4 scientific research projects.

5. Description of scientific works after the last procedure

In the competition for academic position "Associate Professor" Yulia Hristova, PhD has presented *24 publications*, including 4 monographs, 4 studies, 4 scientific articles, 9 scientific papers and 3 textbooks. Of these 24 works, *14 are independent* (2 of them are monographs), and *4 publications* (3 independent and 1 - in co-authorship) are in issues indexed in *Scopus and Web of Science*. The total volume of the presented publications is *1051 pages* (Table 1).

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 almost all publications of Yulia Hristova, 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.

Table 1.

SUMMARY TABLE OF PUBLICATIONS SUBMITTED TO THE COMPETITION

of Chief Assist. Prof. Yulia Hristova, PhD

N o	Type of posts	Independent		Co-authored		Total	
		Number	Page	Number	Page	Number	Page
1.	Monographs	2	465	2	34	4	499
2.	Studios	3	59	1	16	4	75
3.	Scientific articles	3	34	1	5	4	39
4.	Scientific papers	6	34	3	12	9	66
5.	Textbooks and study aids	-	-	3	372	3	372
6.	Other publications	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Total:	14	612	10	439	24	1051

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 trade competitiveness, including the market of new cars and life insurance products in Bulgaria and the EU (Nos. 9.1.; 10.2.; 12.4.; 13.5.; 14.6.; 15.7.; 16.1.; 18.3.; 19.4.; 20.1.; 21.2.; 22.3.; 23.4.; 24.5.; 25.6.; 26.7.; 27.8.; 28.9).

2. Studies focused on current issues of circular economy recommercialization and sustainable consumption patterns (Nos. 8.1.; 11.3.; 17.2.).

In most of the publications of Yulia Hristova, PhD, the results are related not only to scientific achievements, but are also directly aimed at the applied aspects of economics and management of commercial enterprises in the context of competitiveness and sustainability, digitalization and modern forms of trade.

The main monographic (habilitation) thesis *"Recommercialization in the context of the circular economy"* (2025, 280 pages, Science and Economics Publishing House, UE - Varna and reviewers Prof. Evgeni Stanimirov, PhD and Prof. Velina Kazandzhieva, PhD) defends the thesis that the implementation and expansion of recommercialization is a significant prerequisite for promoting sustainable consumer behavior and increasing the role of trade as a sector of the economy, as well as the transition from the business models built so far to those of the future - the "circular", "sustainable", "fully utilizing" economic behavior.

In terms of content, the monograph theoretically clarifies and further develops the statements about the essence, place and functions of recommercialization within the framework of the ten "R" strategies of the circular model. It is considered as a key strategy for realizing the goals of the circular economy. The main subjects of the primary

and secondary markets are clearly defined and the resale process is analyzed. The determinants of the intention to purchase second-hand goods are studied. The proposed conceptual author's model of recommercialization, which unites economic, hedonistic, critical and ecological motives, perceived risk and trust, is of high value. The empirical part of the monographic work also deserves high praise. Through comparative statistical and correlation analysis, the development of retail trade in second-hand goods in 25 EU Member States for the period 2010–2022 has been assessed, and through a survey among 707 Bulgarian consumers and the application of a PLS-SEM model, the interrelationships between determinants and the intention to purchase second-hand goods have been studied. Significant direct and indirect effects between the constructs in the model have been derived, which confirms the complex nature of the consumer decision. The results of the study are the basis for systematizing the main challenges facing the development of recommercialization in Bulgaria and outlining opportunities - economic, technological, environmental and social - for unleashing the potential of the secondary market.

The topic is undoubtedly relevant in the current conditions of retail development, the circular economy, and the changed demands of consumers both in the world and in Bulgaria.

From the list of publications it is established that the candidate presents a total of 4 monographs - 2 independent (one is a habilitation work, and the other is a book on the dissertation) and 2 collective in the field of commercial business and commercial management. 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. The collective monographic works correspond to topics from the list of research projects. In this way, the contribution of Yulia Hristova's participation in scientific projects can also be proven by publishing the results in monographic works.

Synthesized about the performance of the quality indicators by the candidate in the competition, it can be said that the scientific publications of Yulia Hristova, 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 her a worthy 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 theoretical and methodological statements for: competitiveness in trade through the integration of the market-based, resource-based and dynamic approach have been supplemented, and its organic connection with sustainability in the conditions of digitalization and a transforming competitive environment has been deduced; recommercialization as an independent economic phenomenon, a strategic tool of the circular economy and its importance for the formation of sustainable consumption models; the methodology for researching the secondary goods market and consumer attitudes towards sustainable trade, with which the factors shaping the demand and development of trade in second-hand goods in a national and European context have been identified (*theoretical/scientific contributions*).

Second, an empirical study of competitiveness and its key determinants has been conducted in general on trade as an economic activity and in particular on the market of new cars and life insurance products in Bulgaria and the EU. Based on its results, specific guidelines and tools for generating competitive advantages have been derived. The second important empirical study focuses on consumer attitudes towards purchasing second-hand goods and a toolkit for analyzing the secondary market has been proposed. In this regard, the role of economic, environmental and social factors in the development of recommercialization as a mechanism for extending the life cycle of products and forming sustainable consumption patterns in Bulgaria and the EU countries has been substantiated. (*scientific-applied contributions*).

According to a report presented by Yulia Hristova, **22 credible citations** of her works have been identified in national and foreign publications, with *19 of the citations* being in publications indexed in *Scopus and Web of Science*, which is impressive.

Scientific contributions are mainly for the enrichment of existing knowledge, for the improvement of economic and management policy and practice in the field of commercial business, in the context of competitiveness and sustainability.

7. Participation in scientific projects and scientific forums

From the submitted references it is evident that Chief Assist. Prof. Yulia Hristova, PhD actively participates in national and university forums, as well as in the teams of 4 national research projects, one of which she is the leader – to support the dissertation work of the doctoral student supervised by her.

It is important to note that the candidate's participation in research projects corresponds to the topic of the competition, as two projects have ended with the publication of two collective monographs, in which Yulia Hristova, PhD has one independent chapter each.

The candidate in the competition registered participation in 9 scientific forums, at which she presented scientific papers.

8. Teaching work

From the reports prepared by the "Academic activity and students" Department and the "Masters" Sector at UE-Varna, it is clear that for the reported period (2021/2022 and 2025/2026 academic years) Yulia Hristova, PhD has a *total classroom workload* in the Bachelor's Degree Program of 699 hours and 48 hours - in the Master's Degree Program.

She has delivered *cycles of lectures on a number of academic disciplines*: "Fundamentals of Trade", "Sales Management", "Trade in Services", "Competition and Competitiveness" and "Investment and Financial Management" - in the Bachelor's Degree Program, and in the Master's Degree Program - "Competitiveness of Commercial Business" and "Marketing Research in an Omnichannel Environment". She leads seminars in the above and other academic disciplines.

She has developed (co-authored) curricula in the academic disciplines: "Fundamentals of Trade", "Competition and Competitiveness", "Sales Management", "Trade in Services", "Competitiveness of Trade Business", "Marketing Research in an Omnichannel Environment" and "Investment and Financial Management".

From the presented documents, Yulia Hristova, PhD has *written 3 textbooks (co-authored)* as part of her teaching activities.

The candidate actively works with students as a supervisor of graduate students, mentoring students in preparing reports for participation in student scientific forums, tutoring students in the specialty "Economics and Commerce", etc. She has provided scientific supervision to 22 graduate students and has prepared 20 reviews of theses of students in the Bachelor's and Master's degree programs. It is important to note that Yulia Hristova, PhD is the scientific supervisor of one PhD student, who was dismissed with

the right to defend. She was also an academic mentor for the Student Practices project - phase 1 under OP BG05M20P001-2.002-0001 "Science and Education for Smart Growth" 2014-2020. She periodically organizes meetings and public lectures with representatives of practice for students of the specialties "Economics and Commerce" and "Omnichannel Commercial Business".

Yulia Hristova, PhD participated in a number of *courses, trainings and specializations* (with attached documents from them), organized by the EU-Varna and other institutions, on innovative educational technologies, on the basics of programming with Python, for internal auditors of QMS ISO 9001:2015, on training methodology, etc. She also participated in working groups for the preparation of self-assessment reports for institutional and program accreditation of the EU-Varna.

In summary, the educational and teaching activities of the candidate are in full 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 Yulia Hristova, PhD.

10. Questions, critical notes and recommendations

I have no significant critical remarks. My recommendation to Yulia Hristova, PhD, are to continue her efforts on publishing her scientific research in refereed scientific journals with Impact Factor and Impact Rank, indexed in the world scientific databases Scopus/Web of Science, and to increase its participation in scientific forums and teaching mobility abroad.

11. Conclusion

Chief Assist. Prof. Yulia Hristova, PhD participated in the competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" with a large volume of quality scientific works and has many years of experience in scientific and teaching activities. In her research, she demonstrates thoroughness, innovation and analytical thinking, and these include scientific and scientific-applied contributions. The candidate fully meets the requirements for occupying the academic position "Associate Professor" in the scientific

specialty "Economics and Management (Competitiveness and Sustainability of Trade)", 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. Yulia Nikolaevna Hristova, PhD**, to be **elected** to the academic position "**Associate Professor**" in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional field 3.8. Economics, scientific specialty "Economics and Management (Competitiveness and Sustainability of Trade)" at the Department of "Economics and Management of Commerce and Services" at the University of Economics - Varna, for which I will vote **positively**.

20/08/2026

Reviewer:

/Prof. Mariyana Bozhinova, PhD/

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