



REVIEW

From Assoc. Prof. PhD Darina Nedelcheva Dimitrova-Markovska

On the competition for the academic position of "Associate professor" in the professional field 3.6 "Law", scientific speciality "Administrative Law and Administrative Process"

1. General information

- Review prepared by: Assoc. Prof. PhD Darina Nedelcheva Dimitrova-Markovska, "Legal Studies" Department, Faculty of Finance and Accounting, University of Economics - Varna;

- Basis for preparing a review: decision of a Scientific Examining Jury appointed by order of the Rector of the University of Economics – Varna № ПД 06-21/26.01.2026.

2. Information about the competition: The competition for the academic position of "associate professor" in the field of higher education 3, professional field 3.6 "Law", scientific specialty "Administrative Law and Administrative Process" was announced in State Gazette No. 104/05.12.2025 and on the website of UE-Varna for the needs of the "Legal Studies" Department at the Faculty of Finance and Accounting.

3. Candidates in the competition: Within the announced deadline for the competition, two candidates submitted their application documents:

3.1. Dr. Diana Rumenova Dimitrova

Dr. Diana Dimitrova meets the minimum national requirements and the additional quantitative requirements of UE-Varna for the academic position of "associate professor" in professional field 3.6. "Law."

3.2. Dr. Zhivka Stoyanova Mateeva

Dr. Zhivka Mateeva meets the minimum national requirements and the additional quantitative requirements of UE-Varna for the academic position of "associate professor" in professional field 3.6. "Law."

1. The first participant in the competition is Dr. Diana Rumenova Dimitrova

4. Information about the candidate (personal characteristics):

Diana Dimitrova completed her secondary education at the First Language High School "Hristo Kabakchiev" in Varna, in a class with German language instruction. In 1999, she



graduated with a master's degree in law from the Ruhr University in Bochum, Germany. Since 2017, she has held a PhD in Administrative Law and Administrative Procedure after successfully defending her dissertation on the Legal Regime of Public Procurement Contracts.

Her professional career began in 2004 as a specialist in practice – legal advisor in banking institutions and lawyer. From 2010 to 2013, she worked as an honorary assistant in the "Legal Studies" Department at the University of Economics in Varna. In 2013, after winning a competition for assistant professor, she became a member of the academic staff of the department, and in 2017 she took up the academic position of "senior assistant professor" in "Administrative Law and Administrative Process". She combines her scientific and teaching work with the position of legal advisor at UE-Varna (2019-2021) and work in practice as a lawyer (2008-2019).

In addition, Dr. Diana Dimitrova has other professional achievements: deputy head of department from 2024 to present; member of the Commission for the Recognition of Higher Education Acquired in Foreign Higher Education Institutions from 2019 to present; member of the Ethics Commission (secretary) 2019-2024; Member of the General Assembly of UE Varna; Coordinator of the Mediation Center from 2020 to present; Member of the Mediation Council from 2020 to present; Member of over 25 working groups formed by order of the rector to update internal acts and other tasks; Certified mediator with additional specialization in commercial mediation, registered in the Unified Register of Mediators at the Ministry of Justice under number: 20190531001; Participation in public procurement committees at UE Varna.

Member of prestigious scientific organizations in Bulgaria and abroad: Union of Scientists – Varna and Society of Juridical and Administrative Sciences - Bucharest, Romania. Possesses language skills at the highest level. Proficient in German, English, and Russian – level C2 and C1.

This shows that, in addition to her 16 years of experience as a university lecturer, Senior Assistant Professor Diana Dimitrova has extensive administrative and practical experience. From the very beginning of her academic career, her research interests have been clearly focused on administrative law – public procurement and education management.

I would like to briefly share my personal impressions of Dr. Diana Dimitrova. We have been working together for the past 10 years on several academic disciplines – Administrative Law and Procedure, Organization of Judicial Administration, and Fundamentals of Law. She possesses exceptional professionalism, a sense of responsibility, and the ability to work in a team. In this sense, I find her desire for professional growth to be entirely natural.

5. Description of scientific works:

Dr. Diana Dimitrova participated in the competition with 53 publications outside of her dissertation: 4 monographs – 2 as a single author (including 1 habilitation) and 2 co-authored



(chapters from collective monographs); 4 studies – 2 as a single author and 2 co-authored; 11 scientific articles – 5 as a single author and 6 co-authored; 25 scientific reports – 15 as a single author and 10 co-authored; 8 textbooks/teaching aids – 1 as a single author and 7 co-authored; 1 publication of the type "other authorial products". The scientific publications do not repeat those submitted for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree "doctor".

According to group of indicators "G" at a national minimum of 100 points for professional field 3.6. Law, the total number of points for the candidate is 489.9. According to the additional quantitative requirements for the academic position of "associate professor" at the University of Economics – Varna, with a minimum of 80 points for scientific articles and studies, and a minimum of 30 points for scientific reports, Dr. Diana Dimitrova has 146.6 points for scientific articles and studies, and 208.8 points for scientific reports, respectively. With regard to the scientific publications submitted in the competition, Dr. Diana Dimitrova exceeds several times both the minimum points required by national regulations and the additional quantitative requirements of the University of Economics – Varna.

The main scientific work submitted for review and evaluation in the competition documentation is a habilitation monograph on "The National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency as a specialized state body for quality assurance of higher education," published in 2025 by the Science and Economics Publishing House of the University of Economics – Varna.

As a member of the department, I had the opportunity to participate in the discussion of the monograph project. Even then, I noted the merits of this work. The topic of the study is relevant and significant. The monograph is the first comprehensive study of its kind on the National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency (NEAA) as a specialized body for assessment, accreditation, and quality control of activities under Article 6 of the Higher Education Act. In terms of structure, the work consists of an abstract, introduction, three chapters, conclusion, bibliography, and appendices, with a total volume of 232 pages. The structure is balanced, logically organized, and relevant to the topic of the study. The introduction correctly states the objectives of the study and the relevance of the scientific problem.

Chapter One examines the legal framework of the NEAA as a specialized state administration body, as well as its structure, from a historical comparative law perspective. The type of body is defined according to known classifications, and its interaction with bodies assigned functions in the field of higher education is examined. A comparative legal study with other countries is also conducted. Chapter Two is devoted to the powers of the NEAA bodies. The legal framework governing the powers of the agency's management bodies and auxiliary bodies is examined. The procedures for accreditation and evaluation of projects and the types of control are also analyzed. Chapter Three examines the acts of the NEAA's management bodies, adopted within the scope of their powers, establishing their legal nature. Judicial control of the acts is also examined.

Based on the analysis in the individual sections, summaries, conclusions, and proposals for improving the legislation have been made. The author demonstrates a good knowledge of the



subject matter. In developing the topic, 113 books, studies, articles, and reports, as well as 20 Internet sources, have been examined and conscientiously cited. The cited literature is relevant to the research problem.

The monograph is devoted to a topical and significant issue in the field of administrative law. The research is original and of great importance for administrative law theory. It is written in clear and accessible language with the necessary doctrinal level and academic rigor, correctly clarifying and defining the basic terms and concepts of the subject matter and providing the relevant legal analysis. The monograph is topical and in line with the latest changes in the regulatory framework of administrative law on the issues studied.

As a result of the research, conclusions and summaries have been made, which can be used in legal doctrine and in the practice of judicial bodies. The monograph is of theoretical importance, as there is no comprehensive scientific study of the powers and acts of the NEAA as a specialized state body and, accordingly, its place and role in ensuring the quality of higher education in Bulgaria. Its practical significance is justified by the possibility of assisting higher education institutions in the course of the procedures conducted before the agency and the NEAA itself in the conduct of its activities. The presented monograph has its scientific and practical value. The work contains original contributions and has a comprehensive structure. In this sense, it meets the requirements for a monograph.

As for the other publications, six were printed in international publications abroad, and the rest were printed in Bulgarian publications included in the National Reference List of Contemporary Bulgarian Scientific Publications with Scientific Review. All scientific publications are written in the required academic style. However, the publications in established legal editions deserve the highest praise, which is an indicator of the author's good reputation among the academic community of lawyers both in Bulgaria and abroad:

➤ **2 studies:** 1) Dimitrova, D. Pravna uredba i tendentsii na digitalnite obrazovatelni uslugi vav visshite uchilishta. Norma: pravnoto spisanie, Sofia: Siela Norma AD, 2024, 2, 87-113; 2) Dimitrova, D. Struktura i pravomoshtia na Natsionalnata agentsia za otsenyavane i akreditatsia - retrospektiven analiz i savremenna pravna uredba. Norma: pravnoto spisanie, Sofia: Siela Norma AD, 2022, 11, 22-57.

➤ **4 articles:** 1) Dimitrova, D. Otrazhenie na chlenstvoto na Bulgaria v ES varhu razvitiето na balgarskoto zakonodatelstvo v oblastta na obshtestvenite porachki. Nauchni trudove na Institutata za darzhavata i pravoto, Sofia: BAN, XVI, 2017, 176 - 190; 2) Dimitrova, D. Vavezhdane na zadalzhitelna sadebna mediatsia v Bulgaria i dobri evropeyski praktiki. De Jure, Veliko Tarnovo: VTU Sv. Sv. Kiril i Metodiy, 14, 2023, 2 (27), 234-248; 3) Dimitrova, D. The Inspectorate to the Supreme Judicial Council as Body of the Judiciary with Control Functions in Bulgaria. Perspectives of Law and Public Administration, Bucharest: ADJURIS. International Academic Publ., 13, 2024, 4, 518-527; 4) Dimitrova, D. Novoto pravomoshtie na Ministerskia savet da predlaga zakrivane na visshi uchilishta, koito „trayno ne osashtestvyavat ucheben protses“. Norma, Sofia: Siela Norma AD, 2025, 8, 28-46.



➤ **4 conference papers:** 1) Dimitrova-Markovska, D., Dimitrova, D. Prilozhimost na mediatsiyata pri razreshavane na sporove, svarzani s prava na potrebiteli. Sadebnata mediatsia - problemi, predizvikatelstva, perspektivi: Sbornik nauchni izsledvania ot mezhdunarodna nauchna konferentsia, gr. Veliko Tarnovo, 8 noemvri 2024 g., V. Tarnovo: Faber, 2025, 162-174; 2) Dimitrova, D., Dimitrova, D. Possibilities for the Use of Artificial Intelligence in the Activities of the Judiciary: [Електронен ресурс]. Adapting to Change Business Law Insights from Today's International Legal Landscape: Contributions to the 13th Intern. Conference: Challenges of Business Law in the Third Millennium, November 17, 2023, Bucharest, Bucharest: ADJURIS. International Academic Publ., 2024, 245-258; 3) Andreeva, A., Dimitrova, D. Administrativnonakazatelna otgovornost na vazlozhatelya pri narushavane na reda za provezhdane na obshtestveni porachki. Aktualni problemi na pravnoto regulirane na biznesa: Nauchna konferentsia, organizirana po povod 80-godishninata ot rozhdenieto na prof. d-r Lyuben Karanikolov i prof. d-r Emil Zlatarev i 70-godishninata ot rozhdenieto na prof. d-r Zlatka Sukareva, 30 noemvri 2017, Sofia: [Sbornik dokladi], Sofia: Izdatelski kompleks - UNSS, 2019, 70-76; 4) Dimitrova, D. Noviyat zakon za obshtestvenite porachki - problematika i harmonizatsia s evropeyskoto zakonodatelstvo. Varhovenstvoto na zakona - predpostavka za razvitie na biznesa i za ikonomicheski rastezh, Sofia: UNSS, 2016, 389-395.

Publishing in journals referenced and indexed in world-renowned scientific information databases is a priority for UE Varna. Four of the publications with which Diana Dimitrova is participating in the competition are indexed in Scopus and/or Web of Science:

➤ Andreeva, A., Yolova, G., Dimitrova, D. Artificial intellect: Regulatory Framework and Challenges Facing the Labour Market. CompSysTech '19: 20-th International Conference on Computer Systems and Technologies, 21 - 22 June 2019, University of Ruse, Bulgaria: Proceeding, New York: ACM [Association for Computing Machinery] Digital Library, 2019, 74 - 77.

➤ Andreeva, A., Yolova, G., Dimitrova, D. On the Boundary Between Rest Time and Working Hours in a Digital Environment. Digital Economy, Business Analytics, and Big Data Analytics Applications: Conference proceedings, Cham: Springer Publ., 2022, 733-739. - (Book Ser. Studies in Computational Intelligence; 1010).

➤ Dimitrova, D., Dimitrova, D., Koleva, V. Educational Needs of the Judicial Administration in the Context of Digitalization. Стратегии на образователната и научната политика = Strategies for Policy in Science and Education: Научно списание, София: Аз Буки, 32, 2024, 4, 395-419.

➤ Dimitrova, D. The Inspectorate to the Supreme Judicial Council as Body of the Judiciary with Control Functions in Bulgaria. Perspectives of Law and Public Administration, Bucharest: ADJURIS. International Academic Publ., 13, 2024, 4, 518-527.



6. Identification of contributions to the candidate's research work:

The scientific publications submitted by Dr. Diana Dimitrova for participation in the competition for the position of "associate professor," after assuming the academic position of senior assistant professor, highlight the following scientific and applied scientific contributions:

➤ Monographic work – „The National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency as a specialized state body for ensuring the quality of higher education.“ Varna: Nauka i ikonomika, 2025, 232. - (Bibl. Prof. Tsani Kalyandzhiev; Kn. 103), ISBN 978-954-21-1192-4, is the first comprehensive study of its kind on the NEAA as a specialized body for evaluation, accreditation, and quality control of activities under Article 6 of the Higher Education Act, addressing a highly topical issue with a view to improving the quality of higher education in Bulgaria. The problems arising from our legislation related to the organization, structure, and legal status of the NEAA, as well as the legal regime governing its activities, are numerous and concern all higher education institutions in the country, their teaching staff, and the students who are educated there. This justifies the need for such work, which will theoretically enrich administrative law doctrine.

➤ A large part of the articles and reports are in the field of public law, in particular administrative law, and are devoted to issues analyzing various aspects of public procurement, the judiciary, the control exercised by state authorities over higher education institutions, contracting authorities, employers, the judiciary, etc. harmonization of national legislation with that of the EU, and the influence of European legislation on national legislation.

➤ Increased interest in the latest issues related to digitization and AI, with research conducted on various aspects of their nature, stages of development, and impact on the activities of public institutions and their reflection on legal institutions, the risk of violating the rights of parties, and the need to acquire new knowledge and skills.

➤ Research in the field of education management as part of administrative law, special section – the need to update provisions and requirements and the role of higher education.

➤ Scientific interest in mediation (in its public law aspects) is reflected in research into its application in education, in the resolution of disputes related to consumer rights, as well as in referrals from courts to mediation and the introduction of mandatory "court mediation."

Dr. Diana Dimitrova is recognized as an author of scientific publications. Her scientific works have been cited by both Bulgarian and foreign authors, which shows that she is known to the academic community not only in Bulgaria but also abroad. The total number of points in indicator group "D" – citations – is 650, with a national minimum of 50 points.

7. Participation in scientific projects and scientific forums:

I highly appreciate the results achieved by Dr. Diana Dimitrova in scientific research projects:

➤ Head of Research Project 57/2022 "Legal Relations and Status of Persons in the Judiciary in the Context of Digitalization" with the following results: 1 monograph, 2 studies



(one indexed in Web of Science), 1 article, and 3 reports at international conferences (two indexed in Web of Science)

➤ Member of the team of a project funded by the Scientific Research Fund with AD No. KP-06-N45/7 2020 on "Digitization and digital competences – trends and innovative practices in higher education and the labor market" with the following results: 2 monographs and 16 articles and reports, 4 of which are indexed in Web of Science or Scopus

Dr. Diana Dimitrova was the head of the organizing committee of two scientific conferences organized by the "Legal Studies" Department:

➤ Head of the organizing committee of NPF-KS25-01-LBCS/2025: National Scientific Conference "Law and Business in Contemporary Society" with the result of a collection of reports to be published (ISSN 2603-5073)

➤ Head of the organizing committee of NPK 223/2018 National Conference "Law and Business in Contemporary Society" with a published collection of reports as a result (ISSN 2603-5073)

Dr. Diana Dimitrova has participated as a member of the organizing committees of all other scientific conferences held by the "Legal Studies" Department, as well as the National Scientific Conference "Mediation in Various Public Spheres" held by the University Center for Mediation. She has been the editor of scientific conference proceedings.

Among the scientific forums that Senior Assistant Professor Diana Dimitrova has participated in organizing and conducting, the specialized conferences in the field of administrative law stand out:

➤ Member of the organizing committee of the National Round Table "15 Years of Administrative Justice in Bulgaria - Problems and Prospects," held on June 15, 2022, at the University of Economics - Varna by the "Legal Studies" Department and the Administrative Court of Varna, resulting in the publication of conference proceedings (ISBN 978-954-21-1122-1)

➤ Member of the organizing committee of the National Scientific Round Table "Administrative Law - Contemporary Trends in Justice and Doctrine," held on April 20, 2018, in implementation of a cooperation agreement between the University of Economics – Varna and the Administrative Court – Varna and a cooperation agreement between the University of Economics – Varna and the Institute for the State and Law at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, resulting in the publication of conference proceedings (ISBN 978-954-21-0972-3)

➤ Member of the organizing committee of the Round Table "Personal Data Protection and Digitization - Challenges and Prospects," held on October 1, 2021, at the University of Economics - Varna, "Legal Studies" Department and the Research Institute at the University of Economics - Varna, resulting in a published conference proceedings (ISBN 978-954-21-1002-3)

➤ Member of the organizing committee of the National Scientific Conference "Protection against Discrimination: Legal Framework, Problems, and Trends," held on June 8, 2018, at the University of Economics – Varna by the "Legal Studies" Department in partnership



with the Institute for the State and Law at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and the Commission for Protection against Discrimination. The conference was organized within the framework of Activity 7 "Organization of national and international scientific forums for the dissemination of scientific output by doctoral students, postdoctoral researchers, and lecturers" of the project "Investments in the training of students, doctoral students, postdoctoral researchers, and lecturers – a guarantee for a better future." The project is funded by the Operational Program "Science and Education for Smart Growth," co-financed by the European Union through the European Structural and Investment Funds, with the result being published conference proceedings (ISBN 978-619-241-005-6)

Dr. Diana Dimitrova's achievements in the scientific research community are evidenced by her registrations in a number of scientific databases:

- Registration in Google Scholar with over 250 citations, h-Index 8, I 10– index 6 – <https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=Oi3C0KcAAAAJ&hl=bg>
- Registration in Web of Science with 5 citations, h-Index 1 - <https://www.webofscience.com/wos/author/record/AAD-4311-2019>
- Registration in Scopus with 7 citations, h-Index 2 - <https://www.scopus.com/authid/detail.uri?authorId=57211226387>

Dr. Diana Dimitrova is a member of the Editorial Board of the periodical publication „The Mediation in the Different Public Spheres“ (ISSN 2738-8794).

8. Teaching work:

Dr. Diana Dimitrova has extensive teaching experience – she is a member of the teams for fundamental and special legal disciplines at bachelor's and master's degree level. A report on her teaching workload over the last two academic years has been submitted, showing that she has an annual workload of 40 teaching hours in the discipline of Administrative Law and Procedure.

High marks deserve the teaching of English in the following academic disciplines: Principles of Law, International Trade Law, Labor and Social Security Law, Business Law.

Dr. Diana Dimitrova's pedagogical training has also been recognized by other higher education institutions in Bulgaria:

- Bases of Law in English, lectures, from 2024 to present, Bachelor's degree, Varna Free University "Chernorizets Hrabar";
- Introduction to Law in English, lectures, 2017, Bachelor's degree, University of Sheffield program at the Higher School of Insurance and Finance, Sofia.

International teaching experience is an advantage for candidates according to the Regulations for the Development of Academic Staff at UE-Varna. Dr. Diana Dimitrova has participated in teaching mobility under the Erasmus+ program:

1. University of Dubrovnik, Croatia in 2025;



2. University of Florence, Italy in 2024;
3. National Distance Education University Madrid, Spain in 2023;
4. Baku Business University, Azerbaijan in 2019;
5. Catholic University of Leuven, Brussels, Belgium in 2017;
6. Participation as a lecturer in the Russian-Bulgarian Online Summer School 2021 "Law and Economics in Partnership between Russian and Bulgarian Universities".

The educational training of the candidate in the competition should also include the developed curricula for the academic disciplines taught by Dr. Diana Dimitrova. The involvement in the preparation of educational documentation indicates active participation in the teaching activities of the department.

In order to support the educational process, Dr. Diana Dimitrova is the author/co-author of educational literature published by the department – she is participating in the competition with 8 textbooks and teaching aids, 3 of which are in the field of the competition:

- Dimitrova, D., Mateeva, Zh., Dimitrova, D. *Administrativno pravo i protses*. Varna: Nauka i ikonomika, 2020, 228., ISBN(pechatno) 978-954-21-1022-4, Dyal parvi glava 4 i dyal втори глави 1, 3, 4 i 5;
- Dimitrova, D., Toncheva, R., Dimitrova, D. *Organizatsia na sadebnata administratsia (zadachi, kazusi, testove)*. Varna: Nauka i ikonomika, 2022, 127., ISBN(pechatno) 978-954-21-1114-6, Zadachi 5,8,11,14,17,20,23,26,29 i 38, testove 1-15;
- Dimitrova-Markovska, D., Dimitrova, D. *Administrativno pravo i protses: Zadachi, kazusi, testove [za studentite ot UE - Varna]*. Varna: FIL, 2025, 96., ISBN(pechatno) 978-954-9741-80-3, ISBN(onlayn) 978-954-9741-81-0, gl. as. d-r Diana Dimitrova – razdeli: 4, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16; izpolzvana literatura.

9. Plagiarism:

The check performed with StrikePlagiarism.com did not reveal any plagiarism in the habilitation monograph. The other publications submitted for the competition were checked by the editorial boards of the editions in which they were printed. No reports of plagiarism were received.



10. Questions, critical comments, and recommendations to the candidate:

My critical comment to Dr. Diana Dimitrova is that the large number of co-authored publications does not allow her scientific contribution to stand out clearly enough. I would recommend that in the future she focus her efforts on more independent publications in specialized legal journals. This will contribute to her even greater recognition as an author among the Bulgarian legal community.

II. The second participant in the competition is Dr. Zhivka Stovanova Mateeva

4. Information about the candidate (personal characteristics):

Zhivka Mateeva graduated in 1999 with a Bachelor's degree in Business Management – Corporate Security Management from VFU Chernorizets Hrabar University, and went on to earn a master's degree in Border Control and Corporate Security from the same university in 2005. Her interest in law arose at a later stage and in 2003 she obtained a Master's degree in Law from VFU "Chernorizets Hrabar". Since 2016, she has held a doctoral degree in Administrative Law and Administrative Procedure after successfully defending her dissertation on Administrative Law Protection of Personal Data.

Dr. Zhivka Mateeva's professional career began as an employee in the administration of VFU "Chernorizets Hrabar" (1999–2007). She joined the University of Economics–Varna in 2009 as an assistant professor in "Civil and Family Law." After defending her doctoral dissertation in 2016, she took up the academic position of senior assistant professor. In addition to her research and teaching work, she has held the position of Data Protection Officer since 2018.

Dr. Zhivka Mateeva is a member of the Union of Scientists – Varna. Her proficiency in English is at level B1, and in Spanish at level A1, which does not allow her to use either language for professional purposes.

Although Zhivka Mateeva defended her doctoral dissertation in administrative law and has declared her scientific interests in the field of "Administrative Law and Administrative Procedure," her professional career has been unstable and inconsistent. I dare say this because I have known her since 2007, when she started working in the department as an honorary assistant. Her research interests have varied over the years from civil and family law to commercial law and administrative law. This migration between private and public law does not allow for the development of the necessary professional expertise.

5. Description of scientific works:

Dr. Zhivka Mateeva declares that she is participating in the competition with 42 publications in addition to those in her dissertation: 4 monographs – 1 as a single author



(habilitation) and 3 co-authored (chapters from collective monographs); 1 as a single author study; 8 scientific articles – 6 as a single author and 2 co-authored; 24 scientific reports – 19 as a single author and 5 co-authored; 5 textbooks/teaching aids co-authored.

A check in the Register of Academic Positions at the National Center for Information and Documentation shows that publication No. 11.4: Mateeva, Zh. (2016) *Problemat za publichnostta na lichnite danni v proizvodstvoto po nesastoyatelnost na banka*, *Godishnik na BSU*, Burgas: BSU, tom 34, s. 131-144, is an "article in magazines and series" and not a study.¹

Scientific publications do not repeat those submitted for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree of "doctor". However, the publication—article No. 12.1: Mateeva, Zh. (2024) *Pravna priroda na aktovete na natsionalnia organ po zashtita na lichnite danni. Ikonomicheski i sotsialni alternativi*, Sofia: Izd. kompleks UNSS, br. 3, s. 95-110, is a paraphrase of material from her doctoral dissertation (pp. 101–118)². Indeed, this is a previously unpublished part of the dissertation, but publishing parts of the dissertation eight years after its defense is, to put it mildly, frivolous. This indicates a lack of creativity. A person participating in a competition for first habilitation must present new and original scientific works that demonstrate their growth as a scientist after obtaining their doctoral degree.

For group of indicators "G" (articles and reports; chapters from collective monographs) with a national minimum of 100 points for professional field 3.6. Law, the total number of points declared by the candidate is 396.67. With regard to the scientific publications presented in the competition, Dr. Zhivka Mateeva exceeds the minimum points required by national regulations. However, given that publication No. 11.4 is a scientific article and not a study, the actual number of points in indicator group "G" is 391.67.

According to the additional quantitative requirements for the academic position of "associate professor" at the University of Economics – Varna, with a minimum of 80 points for scientific articles and studies, and a minimum of 30 points for scientific reports, Dr. Zhivka Mateeva declares 85 points for scientific articles and studies, and 215 points for scientific reports, respectively. Given that the publication listed under No. 11.4 is an article and not a study, the actual number of points under the additional quantitative requirements for the academic position of "associate professor" at the University of Economics – Varna is the minimum required 80 points.

The main scientific work submitted for review and evaluation in the competition documentation is a monograph on "Administrative and legal aspects of public enterprises – non-commercial companies", published in 2024 by the publishing house "Science and Economics" at the University of Economics - Varna. The submitted work has a total volume of 194 pages. In terms of structure, it consists of a summary, abbreviations used, an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, appendices, and references.

¹ <https://ras.nacid.bg/dissertation-preview/44100> (24.02.2026)

² <https://ras.nacid.bg/dissertation-preview/44100> (24.02.2026)



As a member of the department, I had the opportunity to participate in the discussion of the monograph project. Even then, I expressed my reservations that the work needed serious revision and that it was not appropriate to submit it to the scientific publishing house of the University of Economics – Varna.

The introduction on page 18 states that "the uncertain future of public enterprises—non-commercial companies—in the next few years led the author to choose this topic." The reader is left with the logical question: does it make sense to write scientific research on something with an unclear and uncertain future? It is illogical to argue the relevance of the topic with the unclear future of public enterprises – non-commercial companies. What is the relevance of such scientific research?

In structural terms, §3.2. State policy in the field of public enterprises from Chapter Three would perhaps be better placed at the beginning of the work. It makes no sense for state policy to be considered at the end. Its place is at the beginning, since state policy is the starting point that determines the regulatory framework. It would be most logical for state policy to be examined together with the historical development of the regulatory framework for public enterprises. For the sake of completeness, Chapter Three could examine the judicial review of administrative acts issued by the management bodies of public enterprises – non-commercial companies.

In §2.1. Functions as the subject of assignment to public enterprises – non-commercial companies and their relationship to other concepts in the field of administrative law from Chapter Two, foreign doctrinal opinions are presented, but there is a lack of real analysis and authorial participation. The material discussed in §3.1. Management and administration of state property as a form of state participation in economic activity from Chapter Three is not relevant to the topic of the study. I find this to be a weakness because it creates the impression of sections developed for their own sake with a view to increasing the volume of the monograph.

During the discussion of the draft monograph, I made substantive comments on some closed or transformed state-owned enterprises—the State Oil Company and the Bulgarian-German Center for Vocational Training. The presentation gives the false impression that these state-owned enterprises still exist and are considered alongside other state-owned enterprises. In this regard, the entire department made recommendations for editing the work. I see that minor changes have been made—in some places in the text, it is only indicated in brackets that the relevant legal texts have been repealed. If these closed or transformed state-owned enterprises are considered retrospectively with a view to a historical review of the legislation, other state-owned enterprises that existed until recently should also be mentioned, e.g. the "Service Provision Center" under the Ministry of Interior Act. Unfortunately, the monograph takes a rather casuistic approach, examining individual state-owned enterprises in excessive detail.



Another problem identified is conceptual in nature – the scope and subject matter of the study are too broad, as they include 18 state-owned enterprises and dozens of legislative acts regulating their operation. These enterprises were established under various legislative acts, serve different aspects of state policy, and accordingly have diverse functions. It is recommended that the object and subject of the study be narrowed down. For example, only those state-owned enterprises that serve similar aspects of state policy and have identical functions should be examined in a separate monographic study; or only those state-owned enterprises whose management bodies issue administrative acts should be examined in a separate monographic study. In this case, the topic is not well defined – the study constantly "juggles" with too many objects and subjects of research. This excessive diversity of objects and subjects of research calls into question the scientific contribution.

However, the most serious problem is the fact that public enterprises – non-commercial companies – are not institutions of administrative law. According to the established understanding in legal doctrine, they are private law entities³. The assignment of certain public functions to specific legal entities does not automatically make them subjects of public law⁴. The current legislation stipulates that of the 18 state-owned enterprises examined, only two (under the Forestry Act and the Railway Transport Act) are allowed to issue administrative acts, and this is rather an exception. I have serious reservations as to the extent to which a monograph on state-owned enterprises established under Article 62(3) of the Commercial Act could be used for participation in this competition. I find that this is a subject that falls outside the scope of administrative law.

As for the other publications, five were printed in international editions abroad, and the rest were printed in Bulgarian editions included in the National Reference List of Contemporary Bulgarian Scientific Publications with Scientific Review.

One report has been published in a peer-reviewed journal indexed in a world-renowned scientific information database - Web of Science:

➤ Mateeva, Z. Control in the Sphere of Personal Data Protection Exercised by the Inspectorate to the Supreme Judicial Council. 5th International Conference on Advances in Education and Social Sciences, 21 - 23 October 2019, Istanbul, Istanbul: Oocrint Publ., 2019, 95 - 100.

The fact that all articles and reports published after taking up the academic position of "senior assistant professor" have been published in economic publications makes a negative impression. It should be borne in mind that law is a regulated profession. The publication of scientific articles in specialized legal journals and participation with reports in scientific

³ Georgiev, A. Praven režim na publichните predpriyatia v Bulgaria. Sofia: Siela, 2021 g., s. 127 i sl.; Gerdzhikov, O. Uchebnik po targovsko pravo. Chast parva. Targovtsi. Sofia: IK „Trud i pravo“, 2021 g., s. 433.

⁴ Zlatareva, M. Nestopanski organizatsii s publichnopravni funktsii. Targovsko pravo, 2000, № 3 s. 265 – 272.



conferences organized by law faculties is a sign of the author's belonging to the scientific legal community.

6. Identification of contributions to the candidate's research work:

The scientific articles and reports submitted by Dr. Zhivka Mateeva for participation in the competition for the position of "associate professor," after assuming the academic position of "senior assistant professor" highlight the following scientific and applied scientific contributions:

- Systematization and classification of the powers of specialized administrative bodies, as well as the functions of entities outside the system of state authorities;
- Analyzing practical problems arising in the enforcement of normative acts, the regulation and improvement of administrative processes in various public sectors and areas;
- Research on the nature and significance of control/supervision of compliance with normative acts, the mechanisms for its implementation, and the application of administrative liability in the relevant area of application;
- Clarifying and analyzing judicial review of administrative acts with a view to emphasizing the importance of administrative justice in ensuring compliance with and enforcement of legislation and the effective protection of citizens' rights and legitimate interests;
- Formulating conclusions and summaries with a theoretical and practical focus, critical analysis of practice, and proposals for regulatory changes.

As I already mentioned in the previous point, I have serious reservations about the scientific contribution to administrative law doctrine of the monographic study on the topic of "Administrative and legal aspects of public enterprises – non-commercial companies"; ISBN 978-954-21-1175-7", by Zhivka Mateeva.

Dr. Zhivka Mateeva is recognized as the author of scientific articles and reports published in specialized economic publications. The total number of points in indicator group "D" – citations – is 465, with a national minimum of 50 points.

7. Participation in scientific projects and scientific forums:

Dr. Zhivka Mateeva actively participates in research projects:

- Research project at the University of Economics No. 49/2021 on "Personal data protection in higher education";
- Research project at the University of Economics No. 50/2021 on "Management and legal aspects of innovation and sustainability in times of crisis";
- Research project at the University of Economics No. 137/2015 on "Commercial insolvency – legal and economic theoretical and applied aspects".



Despite the demonstrated activity in research projects, the competition documentation does not mention the results of Dr. Zhivka Mateeva's participation in these projects. It should be noted that the research project "Commercial Insolvency – Legal and Economic Theoretical and Applied Aspects" is on a commercial law topic, i.e., it is outside the scope of this competition.

Dr. Zhivka Mateeva reports on her participation in the organizing committees of a number of scientific forums held by the "Legal Studies" Department:

➤ Project manager - scientific events - at the University of Economics No. NPK 200/2017 on "The role of law in the modern economy";

➤ Participation in the organizing committee of the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th National Conference "Law and Business in Contemporary Society," 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025.

8. Teaching work:

Dr. Zhivka Mateeva has many years of teaching experience – she is a member of the teams for fundamental and special legal disciplines. The information on her teaching workload over the last two academic years shows that she has a symbolic workload of 10 teaching hours per year for the discipline "Administrative Law and Procedure." A large part of her teaching load consists of courses in private law branches – Civil Law and Procedure (65 hours), Family and Inheritance Law (30 hours), which reflects her academic interests in these areas of private law.

The educational training of the candidate in the competition should also include the developed curricula for the disciplines taught by Dr. Zhivka Mateeva. The involvement in the preparation of educational documentation indicates active participation in the teaching activities of the department.

In order to support the educational process, Dr. Zhivka Mateeva is the author/co-author of educational literature published by the department – she is submitting 5 textbooks and teaching aids for participation in the competition. However, in violation of the instructions given by NACID (with Registration No. 20-00-433 of 04.07.2025, sent to all higher education institutions), Dr. Zhivka Mateeva submitted three consecutive editions of the same teaching aid on the Fundamentals of Law to the competition⁵. Thus, Dr. Mateeva actually participates in the competition with three textbooks and teaching aids, only one of which is in the field of the competition: Dimitrova, D., Mateeva, Zh., Dimitrova, D. *Administrativno pravo i protses*.

⁵ In cases where the candidate for an academic position is the author of the first and second revised editions of a book, monograph, textbook/teaching aid, only one of the editions may be evaluated in the scientometric indicators. The use of a second revised edition of a monograph as a new monographic work when applying for a higher academic position is not permitted. The same rule applies to the second edition of textbooks/teaching aids.



Varna: Nauka i ikonomika, 2020, 228., ISBN(печатно) 978-954-21-1022-4, Dyal parvi glava 4 i dyal втори глави 1, 3, 4 i 5.

9.Plagiarism:

The check performed with StrikePlagiarism.com did not reveal any plagiarism in the habilitation monograph. The other publications submitted for the competition were checked by the editorial boards of the editions in which they were printed. No reports of plagiarism were received.

10. Questions, critical comments, and recommendations to the candidate:

Dr. Zhivka Mateeva has no clearly expressed scientific interests in the field of administrative law, and her participation in this competition is formal.

The designation of one of the articles as a study and the presentation of three consecutive editions of the same teaching aid indicate that the candidate has treated the competition superficially and dismissively.

The documents submitted are not accurately compiled (some are signed, others are not; they are not arranged systematically; some of the files of the publications submitted are poor-quality photos taken with a phone), which makes it difficult to navigate and familiarize oneself with the documents. This demonstrates a disrespectful attitude toward the scientific jury.

11.CONCLUSION:

11.1.Dr. Diana Rumeno

Dr. Diana Dimitrova meets and exceeds several times over both the minimum national requirements and the additional quantitative requirements of UE-Varna for the academic position of "associate professor" in professional field 3.6. "Law." In addition to her 16 years of experience as a university lecturer, Dr. Diana Dimitrova has extensive administrative and practical experience. She possesses exceptional professionalism, a sense of responsibility, and the ability to work in a team.

The presented habilitation monograph on "The National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency as a Specialized State Body for Quality Assurance in Higher Education" is devoted to a topical and significant issue in the field of administrative law. The studies, articles, and reports published in established legal editions deserve high praise, which is an indication of the author's good reputation among the academic community of lawyers.

Publication in journals referenced and indexed in world-renowned scientific information databases is a priority for UE-Varna. Four of the publications with which Dr. Diana Dimitrova participates in the competition are indexed in Scopus and/or Web of Science. International



teaching activity is an advantage for the candidate according to the RDAS of UE-Varna. Dr. Diana Dimitrova has carried out teaching mobility under the Erasmus+ program in 6 countries both within and outside the EU.

Dr. Diana Dimitrova has a significant contribution to the discipline of "Administrative Law and Process" with an annual workload of 40 teaching hours. Her teaching of English in a number of academic disciplines deserves high praise. In order to support the teaching process, Senior Assistant Professor Dr. Diana Dimitrova is the author/co-author of the teaching materials published by the department – she participates in the competition with 8 textbooks and teaching aids, 3 of which are in the field of administrative law.

I highly appreciate the results achieved by Dr. Diana Dimitrova in scientific research projects, one of which was funded by the Scientific Research Fund. Among the scientific forums she has participated in organizing and conducting, the specialized conferences in the field of administrative law stand out.

An indicator of Dr. Diana Dimitrova's achievements in the scientific research community are her registrations in a number of scientific databases: Google Scholar with over 250 references (citations), h-Index 8, I 10– index 6; Web of Science with 5 citations and h-Index 1; Scopus with 7 citations and h-Index 2. Senior Assistant Professor Dr. Diana Dimitrova is a member of the Editorial Board of the periodical "Mediation in Different Spheres of Society" with ISSN 2738-8794.

Dr. Diana Dimitrova's scientific interests are clearly stated in the field of administrative law. The positive assessments of the quality of her scientific publications, the identified contributions to her scientific research work, the high results achieved in scientific projects and scientific forums, and her rich teaching experience give me reason **to PROPOSE that Dr. Diana Rumeno va Dimitrova** be appointed to the academic position of "associate professor" in professional field 3.6 "Law," scientific specialty "Administrative Law and Administrative Procedure."

In the final session, **I WILL VOTE IN FAVOR** and call on the scientific jury to vote in favor of the candidacy of **Dr. Diana Rumeno va Dimitrova**.

11.2. Dr. Zhivka Stovanova Mateeva

After reviewing the materials submitted for the competition, I accept that Dr. Zhivka Mateeva meets the minimum national requirements in quantitative terms. Although she also meets the additional quantitative requirements of UE Varna for the academic position of "associate professor," her scientific output is at the minimum of the required 80 points. The designation of one of the articles as a study and the presentation of three consecutive editions of the same teaching aid indicate that the candidate has treated the competition superficially and dismissively.



Dr. Zhivka Mateeva's professional career has been unstable and inconsistent, and she has not demonstrated the necessary level of growth as a scholar since obtaining her doctoral degree. I have serious reservations about the presented habilitation thesis "Administrative and Legal Aspects of Public Enterprises - Non-Commercial Companies" both in terms of structure and substance (lack of real analysis and author's participation). I find that the subject matter of the habilitation monograph is outside the scope of administrative law. Despite the identification of some scientific contributions in the articles and reports of Dr. Zhivka Mateeva, the main scientific work - a monograph on "Administrative and legal aspects of public enterprises - non-commercial companies" is not particularly relevant and contains sections that have been developed for the sake of increasing its volume. The object and subject of the study are too broadly defined, which calls into question its scientific contribution.

Dr. Zhivka Mateeva has a large number of citations and is recognized as an author of publications in economic journals, but she is little known to the scientific legal community. All of her articles and reports since taking up the academic position of "senior assistant professor" have been published in economic journals. It should be noted that law is a regulated profession. Publication in specialized legal publications is a sign of the author's affiliation with the academic community of lawyers.

Despite the demonstrated activity in research projects, the competition documentation does not mention the results of Dr. Zhivka Mateeva's participation in these projects.

Dr. Zhivka Mateeva's teaching work focuses mainly on subjects in the field of private law (civil law, civil procedure, family law, inheritance law), while she has a symbolic workload of 10 teaching hours per year in the subject "Administrative Law and Procedure."

The lack of clearly expressed scientific interests in the field of administrative law and the imprecise compilation of documents indicate insufficient motivation to participate in this competition.

In view of the above, I consider that Dr. Zhivka Stoyanova Mateeva is not ready to occupy the academic position of "associate professor" in professional field 3.6 "Law," scientific specialty "Administrative Law and Administrative Procedure." I would advise her to develop her potential with a view to participating in the next habilitation competition.

Date: 7.03.2026

Varna

JURY MEMBER:

/Assoc. Prof. PhD Darina Dimitrova-Markovska/

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

TO THE SCIENTIFIC JURY

Appointed in connection with a competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" in Professional Field 3.6 Law (Administrative Law and Administrative Process), announced by the University of Economics – Varna

ИКОНОМИЧЕСКИ УНИВЕРСИТЕТ ВАРНА

Вх. № PA20-390/09.03.2026г.

REVIEW

by Prof. Olga Borislavova Borisova, PhD, Faculty of Law at Varna Free University "Chernorizets Hrabar"

1. Information regarding the competition In the announced competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" in Professional Field 3.6 Law, scientific specialty Administrative Law and Administrative Process at the University of Economics – Varna, published in the *State Gazette*, issue 104/05.12.2025, there are two candidates: Dr. Diana Dimitrova, Chief Assistant Professor at the Department of Legal Sciences of the University of Economics – Varna (Ref. No. RD20-158/30.01.2026) and Dr. Zhivka Matecva, Chief Assistant Professor at the Department of Legal Sciences of the University of Economics – Varna (Ref. No. RD 20-190/04.02.2026). I am participating as a member of the Scientific Jury pursuant to Order No. RD06-21/26.01.2026.

2. The first participant in the competition is Diana Dimitrova

2.1. She holds a Master of Laws degree from the Ruhr University Bochum, Germany, which implies a solid foundation in comparative law and mastery of foreign legal systems. The candidate holds the educational and scientific degree of "Doctor" (PhD), acquired in 2017 at the Faculty of Law of Varna Free University "Chernorizets Hrabar" in the scientific specialty of the competition – Administrative Law and Administrative Process – for the defense of a doctoral dissertation titled "Legal Regime of the Public Procurement Contract." Since 2017, she has been a Chief Assistant Professor at the Department of Legal Sciences at the University of Economics – Varna. Her total output of 66 publications (including 4 monographs and book chapters, 4 studies, 16 articles, and 3 textbooks) exceeds the standard requirements for academic promotion. Her publications are indexed in prestigious international databases such as Web of Science and Scopus.

Dr. Dimitrova demonstrates leadership skills as a principal investigator of scientific projects (e.g., NP 57/2022) and as an active team member in projects funded by the "Scientific Research" Fund. She conducts lectures and seminars across a wide range of disciplines directly related to the profile of the competition: "Administrative Law and Process," "Public Procurement," and "Judicial Administration." She has successfully implemented lecture courses in English at UE-Varna and in international programs. She has completed numerous teaching mobilities under the Erasmus+ program at prestigious universities in Italy, Belgium, Spain, Croatia, and Azerbaijan.

Dr. Dimitrova's linguistic proficiency is exceptional and defines her as a cosmopolitan scholar with a European profile. She combines expert command of the German language (C2 level), acquired through academic training in Germany, with high professional competence in English (C1 level), in which she actively teaches legal disciplines. Her excellent command of the Russian language further broadens her comparative law horizons. Her long-standing experience as an

attorney-at-law, legal counsel, and legal consultant in banking institutions adds the necessary practical value to her theoretical background. She holds the position of Deputy Head of Department and serves as the Coordinator of the Mediation Center, which attests to her professional trust and organizational authority. She is a registered certified mediator in the Unified Register of the Ministry of Justice.

2.2. For participation in the specified competition Diana Dimitrova has submitted the following works: Monographs: *The National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency as a specialized state body for ensuring the quality of higher education*. Varna: Nauka i ikonomika, 2025, (Bibl. Prof. Tsani Kalyandzhiev ; Book 103)., ISBN(print) 978-954-21-1192-4 (independent); *Legal regime of the public procurement contract*: [Book based on a defended dissertation]. Varna: FIL, 2024, ISBN(print) 978-954-9741-69-8; chapter three „Digitalization in the judiciary“ pp. 50-68 and chapter seven „Legal relations of the employees in the administration of the judiciary“ pp. 140-156 in the monograph *Legal relations and status of persons in the judiciary in the conditions of digitalization*. Varna: Nauka i ikonomika, 2025, ISBN(print) 978-954-21-1197-9 (in co-authorship); Chapter two. *Digitalization in the sphere of higher education* pp. 59-88 in the monograph *Legal aspects of digitalization in the sphere of higher education and in labor relations*. Varna: Znanie i biznes, 2024, (Monogr. bibl. Znanie i biznes ; Book 25)., ISBN(online) 978-619-210-077-3 (in co-authorship); studies: *Structure and powers of the National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency - retrospective analysis and modern legal framework*. Norma: legal journal, Sofia : Ciela Norma AD, 2022, 11, 22-57., ISSN(print) 1314-5126, ISSN(online) 1314-5118 (independent); *Human resource management in the judicial administration in the conditions of digitalization - managerial and legal aspects*. Scientific works. University of National and World Economy, Sofia : Publ. complex UNWE, Year 63, 2023, 5, 33-69., ISSN(print) 0861-9344, ISSN(online) (in co-authorship); *Educational Needs of the Judicial Administration in the Context of Digitalization. Strategies for Policy in Science and Education : Scientific journal*, Sofia: Az Buki, 32, 2024, 4, 395-419., ISSN(print) 1310-0270, ISSN(online) 1314-8575 (in co-authorship); *Legal regulation and trends of digital educational services in higher education institutions*. Norma: legal journal, Sofia: Ciela Norma AD, 2024, 2, 87-113., ISSN(print) 1314-5126, ISSN(online) 1314-5118 (independent); articles and reports: *Control for compliance with the order during the conduct of public procurement in R Bulgaria*. Proceedings of the Union of Scientists - Varna. Ser. Humanities, 2017, 1, 14 - 19., ISSN(print) 1310-63761 (in co-authorship); *Reflection of Bulgaria's membership in the EU on the development of Bulgarian legislation in the field of public procurement*. Scientific works of the Institute for State and Law, Sofia : BAS, XVI, 2017, 176 - 190., ISSN(print) 1314-6459 (independent); *Specifics in the legal regime of public procurement conducted by the higher education institutions in Bulgaria*. Izvestia Journal University of Economics - Varna, Varna: Nauka i ikonomika, 62, 2018, 1, 58 - 73., ISSN(print) 1310-0343, ISSN(online) 2367-6949 (in co-authorship); *Violations of labor legislation - ground for removal from public procurement*. Izvestia. Journal University of Economics - Varna, Varna: Nauka i ikonomika, 63, 2019, 1, 25 - 39., ISSN(print) 1310-0343, ISSN(online) 2367-6949 (in co-authorship); *Computer Technology and Ehealth. Trends and Regulatory Framework*. Economics and Law, Blagoevgrad: South-West Univ. Neofit Rilski Publ. House, 2, 2020, 1, 43 - 48., ISSN(print) 2682-972X / (in co-authorship); *Digitalization in the judiciary and educational needs*. Izvestia. Journal University of Economics - Varna, Varna: Nauka i ikonomika, 65, 2021, 4, 409-424., ISSN(print) 1310-0343, ISSN(online) 2367-6949(independent); *Role of the Higher Economic Education for the Development of Economic Activity in Varna*. Izvestiya. Journal of Economics, Management and Informatics, University of Economics – Varna, 67, 2023, 1, 24-40., ISSN(online) 2367-6957 (in co-authorship); *Introduction of mandatory judicial mediation in Bulgaria and good European practices*. De Jure, Veliko Tarnovo: VTU St. St. Cyril and Methodius, 14, 2023, 2 (27), 234-248., ISSN(print) 1314-2593, ISSN(online) 2367-8410 (independent); *The Inspectorate to the Supreme Judicial Council as*

Body of the Judiciary with Control Functions in Bulgaria. Perspectives of Law and Public Administration, Bucharest: ADJURIS. International Academic Publ., 13, 2024, 4, 518-527., ISSN(online) 2601-7830 (independent); On the connection between secondary and higher education in the specialty „Judicial administration“ in the Republic of Bulgaria. Vocational Education: Bulgarian Journal of Educational Research and Practice, Sofia: Az-buki, 26, 2024, 1, 45 - 60., ISSN(print) 1314-555X, ISSN(online) (in co-authorship); The new power of the Council of Ministers to propose closure of higher education institutions which „permanently do not carry out educational process“. Norma, Sofia: Ciela Norma AD, 2025, 8, 28-46., ISSN(print) 1314-5126, ISSN(online) 1314-5118 (independent); Applicability of mediation in resolving disputes related to consumer rights. Judicial mediation - problems, challenges, perspectives: Collection of scientific research from an international scientific conference, Veliko Tarnovo, 8 November 2024, V. Tarnovo: Faber, 2025, 162-174., ISBN(print) 978-619-00-1911-4 (in co-authorship); Possibilities for the Use of Artificial Intelligence in the Activities of the Judiciary: [Electronic resource]. Adapting to Change Business Law Insights from Today's International Legal Landscape: Contributions to the 13th Intern. Conference : Challenges of Business Law in the Third Millennium, November 17, 2023, Bucharest, Bucharest: ADJURIS. International Academic Publ., 2024, 245-258., ISBN(online) 978-606-95862-3-5 (in co-authorship); Teaching Law Disciplines in the Digital Age - a Symbiosis Between E-Learning Materials and Relation to Legal Practice. INTCESS 2023 - 10th International Conference on Education & Education of Social Sciences, 23-25 January 2023, Istanbul, Turkey: Hybrid Conference : Proceedings, Istanbul: Ocerint Publ., 2023, 191-196., ISBN(online) 978-605-72065-0-3 (in co-authorship) Higher Education in Programme "Judicial Administration"- a Prerequisite for Effective Justice. Proceedings of ADVED 2023- 9th International Conference on Advances in Education, Online Conference 16-17 October 2023, Istanbul : Ocerint Publ., 2023, 17-24., ISBN(online) 978-605-72065-3-4 (in co-authorship); Role of NACID in the system of higher education in Bulgaria. 15 years of administrative justice in Bulgaria - problems and perspectives : Collection of reports from a national round table, 15 June 2022, Varna : Nauka i iekonomika, 2022, 154-162., ISBN(print) 978-954-21-1122-1 (independent); Digital administrative services provided by higher education institutions to students - challenges and good practices of UE-Varna. 15 years of administrative justice in Bulgaria - problems and perspectives: Collection of reports from a national round table, 15 June 2022, Varna : Nauka i iekonomika, 2022, 111-122., ISBN(print) 978-954-21-1122-1 (in co-authorship); On the Boundary Between Rest Time and Working Hours in a Digital Environment. Digital Economy, Business Analytics, and Big Data Analytics Applications: Conference proceedings, Cham: Springer Publ., 2022, 733-739. - (Book Ser. Studies in Computational Intelligence; 1010)., ISSN(print) 1860-949X, ISSN(online) 1860-9503, ISBN(print) 978-3-031-05257-6, ISBN(online) 978-3-031-05258-3 (in co-authorship); Referral to mediation by the courts – trends and perspectives. Mediation in different social spheres : Collection of reports from a National scientific conference, 11 May 2022, Varna: Nauka i iekonomika, 2022, 145-158., ISSN(print) 2738-8794 (independent); Mediation as an academic discipline in higher education institutions. Mediation in different social spheres : Collection of reports from a national scientific conference, Varna : Nauka i iekonomika, 2021, 185-195., ISSN(print) 2738-8794, ISSN(online) 2738-8794 (independent); The new standard contractual clauses for transfer of personal data between EU member states and countries outside the EU. Protection of personal data and digitalization - challenges and perspectives: Collection of reports [from a round table held at UE - Varna, 1 October 2021], Varna: Nauka i iekonomika, 2021, 106-115., ISBN(print) 978-954-21-1002-3 (independent); The place of the prosecutor's office in the judiciary. Law and business in modern society: Collection of reports from the 4th national scientific conference, 22 October 2021, Varna: Nauka i iekonomika, 2021, 247-258., ISSN(print) 2603-5073, ISSN(online) 2603-5073 (independent); New legal framework for administrative cooperation between EU member states for increasing consumer protection. Quality and certification of products : Collection of reports from an international scientific-practical conference, dedicated to

100 years from the establishment of UE - Varna, Varna: Nauka i iekonomika, 2020, 46 - 55., ISBN(print) ISBN 978-954-21-1035-4(in co-authorship); Safe and healthy working conditions - commitment of the employer and compliance control. Economic science, education and real economy: development and interactions in the digital age : Collection of reports from a jubilee international scientific conference in honor of 100 years from the founding of UE - Varna: Vol. 4., Varna: Nauka i iekonomika, 4, 2020, 219 - 230., ISBN(print) 978-954-21-1040-8 (independent); The gray economy – current measures for counteraction in the Labor Code. Law and business in modern society : Collection of reports from the 3rd National scientific conference, 13 November 2020, Varna : Nauka i iekonomika, 2020, 270 - 277., ISSN(print) 2738-7488 (independent); Good practices in the application of mediation in the sphere of higher education. Mediation in different social spheres: Collection of reports from a national round table, 4 November 2020, Varna: Nauka i iekonomika, 2020, 29 - 37., ISBN(print) 978-954-21-1055-2 (independent); The new changes in the APC – a step towards more effective administrative justice. Law and business in modern society: Current legal challenges in the economy: Collection of reports, 9 November 2018, Varna: Nauka i iekonomika, 2019, 413 - 424., ISSN(print) 2603-5073, ISSN(online) 603-5073 (independent); Educational Systems and the Need to Review Traditions in Order to Respond to Labour Market Demands. Internationalization of Higher Education in Azerbaijan and Ways of Increasing its Competitiveness: Materials of International Scientific-practical Conference Dedicated to the 96th Birthday Anniversary of Nationwide Leader Heydar Aliyev, 2 - 3 May, 2019. , Baku: Biznes University Press. Online at <https://mpr.aub.uni-muenchen.de/93606/> MPRA Paper No. 93606, posted 2 May 2019 11:26 UTC, 2019, 54 - 58. ., ISBN(print) 978-9952-37-226-7 (in co-authorship); Administrative-penalty liability of the contracting authority in case of violation of the order for conducting public procurement. Current problems of the legal regulation of business : Scientific conference, organized on the occasion of the 80th anniversary from the birth of Prof. Dr. Lyuben Karanikolov and Prof. Dr. Emil Zlatarev and the 70th anniversary from the birth of Prof. Dr. Zlatka Sukareva, 30 November 2017, Sofia: [Collection of reports], Sofia: Publishing complex - UNWE, 2019, 70-76., ISBN(print) 978-619-232-191-8 (in co-authorship); Artificial intellect: Regulatory Framework and Challenges Facing the Labour Market. CompSysTech '19 : 20-th International Conference on Computer Systems and Technologies, 21 - 22 June 2019, University of Ruse, Bulgaria : Proceeding, New York : ACM [Association for Computing Machinery] Digital Library, 2019, 74 - 77., ISBN(print) 978-1-4503-7149-0 (in co-authorship); Modern role of the "General Labor Inspectorate" Executive Agency for protection of the rights of the parties in labor relations. Law and business in modern society: Collection of reports from the 2nd National scientific conference, 8 November 2019, Varna: Nauka i iekonomika, 2019, 71 - 82., ISSN(print) 2603-5073, ISSN(online) 2603-5073 (independent); The national platform for electronic awarding - a step in the process of harmonization with European requirements. Administrative law - modern trends in justice and doctrine : Collection of reports from a national round table, 20 April 2018, Varna: Nauka i iekonomika, 2018, 137 - 148., ISBN(print) 978-954-21-0972-3 (independent); Normative measures against forms of discrimination in conducting public procurement. Protection against discrimination : legal framework, problems and trends: Collection of reports from a national scientific conference, 8 June 2018, Varna: Steno, 2018, 153-161., ISBN(print) 978-619-241-005-6 (independent); Transposition of European norms in the sphere of public procurement in the Bulgarian legislation. Economy in the changing world - national, regional and global dimensions : IPS - 2017 : Collection of reports from VIII international scientific conference, 12 May 2017: Vol. 2, Varna : Nauka i iekonomika, 2, 2017, 117-122., ISBN(print) 978-954-21-0928-0, ISBN(online) 978-954-21-0928-0 (independent); Public procurement - legislative mechanism for lawful expenditure of public funds. The role of law in the modern economy : Collection of reports from a national scientific round table, 3 November 2017, Varna: Nauka i iekonomika, 2017, 172 - 182., ISBN(print) 978-954-21-0949-5, ISBN(online) 978-954-21-0949-5 (independent); The new Public Procurement Act - problems and harmonization with European legislation. The rule of law - a

prerequisite for business development and for economic growth, Sofia: UNWE, 2016, 389-395 (independent); textbooks and teaching aids: Foundations of law. Varna : Nauka i iekonomika, 2025, 296., ISBN(print) 978-954-21-1196-2, Part one chapter 9 and part two chapter 8 (in co-authorship); Administrative law and process. Varna : Nauka i iekonomika, 2020, 228., ISBN(print) 978-954-21-1022-4 Part one chapter 4 and part two chapters 1, 3, 4 and 5 (in co-authorship); Organization of judicial administration (tasks, cases, tests). Varna : Nauka i iekonomika, 2022, 127., ISBN(print) 978-954-21-1114-6 Tasks 5,8,11,14,17,20,23,26,29 and 38, tests 1-15 (in co-authorship); Foundations of law: Tasks, cases, tests. Varna: Nauka i iekonomika, 2025, 132., ISBN(print) 978-954-21-1186-3 Part one chapter 9 and part two chapter 8 (in co-authorship); Criminal law and criminal process: Tasks, schemes, cases, tests [for the students of UE - Varna]. Varna : Nauka i iekonomika, 2025, 128., ISBN(print) 978-954-21-1188-7 Tasks 36-47, schemes 20-24, cases 33-35, tests 2,5,7,10,14 and 16 (in co-authorship); Mediation in higher education : A short handbook. Varna: Nauka i iekonomika, 2021, 45., ISBN(print) 978-954-21-1094-1 (in co-authorship); Administrative law and process: Tasks, cases, tests [for the students of UE - Varna]. Varna: FIL, 2025, 96., ISBN(print) 978-954-9741-80-3, ISBN(online) 978-954-9741-81-0, sections: 4, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16; references (in co-authorship); International Trade Law. Tasks, cases, tests. Varna: FIL, 2025, p. 75, ISBN 978-954-9741-82-7 (independent); Specialty „Judicial administration“ a profession with many opportunities: A short handbook for application in specialty „Judicial administration“ in University of Economics - Varna: [Electronic resource]. Varna: FIL, 2023, 57., ISBN(online) 978-954-9741-54-4 (in co-authorship);

For participation in the competition for the academic position of „Associate Professor“, Chief Asst. Prof. Dr. Diana Dimitrova presents a scientific production impressive in both volume and quality, including a total of 53 scientific works realized after the defense of the doctoral degree. The total volume of the presented works amounts to 1422 standard pages, which categorically exceeds the minimum national and university requirements.

Among the candidate's scientific production, a special place is occupied by the habilitation work presented by her – the monograph „The National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency as a specialized state body for ensuring the quality of higher education“. Dr. Dimitrova's monographic work represents the first of its kind complex and in-depth legal study of the National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency (NEAA). In the conditions of dynamic legislative changes and increased public interest in the quality of higher education, the author offers a current and critical analysis that fills a significant gap in the Bulgarian administrative law doctrine. The work is distinguished by a high degree of theoretical maturity and exceptional practical applicability. In the first chapter, the author demonstrates impressive research precision by tracing the evolution of the regulatory framework in a historical and comparative legal aspect. An original periodization of the development of the legislation regulating the NEAA is derived. The author successfully defines the place of the Agency in the system of state bodies by analyzing in detail its interaction with other institutions in the sector. The study of foreign models allows Dr. Dimitrova to propose working solutions for optimizing the Bulgarian model, based on the best European practices. The second chapter is dedicated to the powers of the bodies of the NEAA and is key to understanding the operational activity of the Agency. The author performs a detailed classification and systematization of the functions and competence of the management and auxiliary bodies. I positively assess the conclusions regarding the need for more stable evaluation criteria in order to minimize the subjective factor. The proposals for a clearer legislative distinction of the functions of the Chairperson of the Accreditation Council are a valuable contribution to the improvement of the organizational structure. In the third chapter, the work reaches its doctrinal culmination, analyzing the legal essence of the acts issued by the NEAA. The author distinguishes the internal administrative acts. This analysis has fundamental practical significance for determining the scope

of judicial review. The thorough examination of judicial practice is impressive, giving the study a solid evidentiary basis. The habilitation work contains a number of theoretical and scientific-applied contributions:

- The legal status of the NEAA as a specialized body has been clarified and an innovative systematization of its acts has been proposed.
- The use of the dialectical and critical-analytical method allows the author to go beyond the limits of dry commentary and offer a vision for development.
- The work concludes with specific and reasoned proposals for legislative changes aimed at building a stable regulatory framework synchronized with European quality standards.
- The comparative tables and organograms attached at the end of the work are extremely useful for higher education institutions and administrative bodies in the process of accreditation. For participation in the competition, additional scientific production from the candidate is also presented, which impresses with its volume, thematic diversity, and depth.

The monograph *Legal regime of the public procurement contract* : [Book based on a defended dissertation]. Varna: 2024, 239 pp. ISBN (print) 978-954-9741-69-8 is the first of its kind complex study of the public procurement contract in the Bulgarian legal doctrine. An original periodization of the development of the institute is derived on two levels – a European retrospective study and a study of the genesis in Bulgaria. The author performs a detailed classification of the sources and a comparative legal study with related institutes, including in German law. The contributory thesis that the public procurement contract has a mixed character with prevailing elements of an „administrative contract“ is defended.

In the monograph „Legal relations and status of persons in the judiciary in the conditions of digitalization“ - Varna: Nauka i ikonomika, 2025, 204 pp. ISBN (print) 978-954-21-1197-9, the author has prepared Chapter three „Digitalization in the judiciary“ (pp. 50-68) and Chapter seven „Legal relations of the employees in the administration of the judiciary“ (pp. 140-156). The study is innovative in outlining the legal relations in the judicial system through the prism of digitalization. Dr. Dimitrova analyzes the legal status of various categories of persons (magistrates, employees, administrative bodies) and substantiates the needs for doctrinal unification in the application of norms in conditions of electronic governance. A contribution is represented by the proposed model for adaptability of the legal mechanism to digitalization in order to achieve „effective and working judicial stability“.

In the monograph „Legal aspects of digitalization in the sphere of higher education and in labor relations“, Varna: Znanie i biznes, 2024, 174 pp. ISBN (online) 978-619-210-077-3, the author has prepared Chapter two „Digitalization in the sphere of higher education“ (pp. 59-88). The work offers a comprehensive analysis of the impact of the Fourth Industrial Revolution on educational processes. The author examines the legal framework and policies at the European and national level, emphasizing the necessity of adapting the legislation to mass digitalization.

The study „Structure and powers of the National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency – retrospective analysis and modern legal framework“, Norma, 2022, No. 11, pp. 22-57. ISSN 1314-5126 enriches the doctrine through the systematization of the functions and competence of the NEAA. Trends in the development of control over the quality of higher education are derived.

In the study „Legal regulation and trends of digital educational services in higher education institutions“, Norma, 2024, No. 2, pp. 87-113. ISSN 1314-5126 the author defines the legal essence of digital services and conducts her own empirical study of students' attitudes, which is a valuable

contribution to the practical optimization of administrative processes in higher education institutions.

The study „Educational Needs of the Judicial Administration in the Context of Digitalization“, 2024, No. 4, pp. 395-419. ISSN 1310-0270 published in the prestigious database Web of Science, identifies the educational deficits of the judicial administration for working in a digital environment through interdisciplinary methods (surveys, interviews).

In the study „Human resource management in the judicial administration in the conditions of digitalization – managerial and legal aspects“, Scientific Works of the UNWE, 2023, book 5, pp. 33-69. ISSN 0861-9344 the connection between the management of personnel and the legal regulation of the Judiciary Act in conditions of digitalization is analyzed.

The article „Violations of labor legislation – ground for removal from public procurement“, Izvestia of the University of Economics – Varna, 2019, No. 1, pp. 54-68. ISSN 1310-0343 analyzes the legal consequences of non-compliance with labor norms on the participation in procedures under the Public Procurement Act.

In the article „On the Boundary Between Rest Time and Working Hours in a Digital Environment. In: European Union's New Challenges“, Springer, Cham, 2022. ISSN 1860-949X the „right to disconnect“ and the boundary between working time and rest during remote work are examined.

The article „Artificial intellect: Regulatory Framework and Challenges Facing the Labour Market“, ACM Digital Library, 2019. ISBN 978-1-4503-7149-0 is one of the first analyses in Bulgaria of the legal challenges that Artificial Intelligence poses to the labor market.

The article „The new power of the Council of Ministers to propose closure of higher education institutions“, Norma, 2025, No. 8, pp. 56-78. ISSN 1314-5126 presents a critical analysis of a current mechanism for state control over higher education institutions.

The article „Introduction of mandatory judicial mediation in Bulgaria and good European practices“, De Jure journal, 2023, No. 2, pp. 195-202. ISSN 1314-2593 substantiates the benefits of mediation for unloading the judicial system.

The article „The national platform for electronic awarding – a step in the process of harmonization with European requirements“, 2018, ISBN 978-954-21-0972-3 examines the digitalization of the process of awarding public procurement.

The scientific production of Chief Asst. Prof. Dr. Diana Dimitrova is distinguished by exceptionally high quality, originality, and relevance. The candidate successfully combines traditional legal dogmatics with modern technological and managerial trends, which establishes her as a leading expert in the field of administrative law and administrative process.

2.3. Chief Assistant Professor Dimitrova meets the national minimum requirements for holding the academic position of "Associate Professor" at the University of Economics – Varna in accordance with the current legislation.

The requirements of Art. 53, Para. 1 of the Regulations for Application of the Act on Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (RAASRB) regarding the acquired "Doctor" (PhD) degree and the necessary pedagogical training have been fulfilled.

The high scientific status of the author and the significance of her contributions are unequivocally confirmed by the provided citation report, which demonstrates broad recognition within the academic community.

As evident from the submitted documents, Chief Assistant Professor Dimitrova accumulates the following required points across all groups of indicators set forth in the RAASRB, as follows: under Group A – dissertation for the award of the educational and scientific degree of "Doctor" – 50 points; under Group V – habilitation work (monograph) – 100 points; under Group G – scientific publications – 489 points; under Group D – citations – 650 points.

3. The second participant in the competition is Zhivka Mateeva

3.1. The academic path of Dr. Zhivka Mateeva is an example of the consistent building of expertise in the field of legal sciences. She completed her higher education at Varna Free University "Chernorizets Hrabar", where she acquired a Master's degree in "Law" in 2003, and two years later, in 2005, successfully completed a second Master's degree in the specialty "Border Control and Corporate Security". She deepened her research training at the Institute for State and Law at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. There, in 2016, she defended a doctoral dissertation on the topic "Administrative Law Protection of Personal Data". Her professional career is closely linked to the University of Economics – Varna, where she has progressed from Assistant to Chief Assistant Professor (from 2016 to the present). Within the framework of her teaching activities, she is a lead lecturer in key disciplines such as "Administrative Law and Process", "Access to and Protection of Information", and "Administrative Law Protection of Personal Data". The scientific production of Dr. Mateeva is impressive in its scale and includes a total of 49 publications, including 4 monographs, 13 articles, and 25 scientific reports. Her research focus on the legal protection of information is further supported by her practical role as a Data Protection Officer at UE-Varna. Dr. Mateeva also demonstrates significant project activity. She participates in a number of research projects, including those focused on the legal aspects of personal data protection in higher education and innovations in times of crisis. Her role as a project manager for scientific events dedicated to the place of law in the modern economy deserves special attention.

3.2. For participation in the competition, Zhivka Mateeva has submitted the following works: Monographs: "Administrative Law Aspects of Public Enterprises - Non-Commercial Companies", Varna: Nauka i ikonomika, Prof. Tsani Kalyandzhiev Library, Book 96, 194 pp.; ISBN 978-954-21-1175-7, 2024 (independent); "Personal Data Protection in the Sphere of Higher Education: Legal and Managerial Aspects", Varna: Nauka i ikonomika, 198 pp.; ISBN: 978-954-21-1171-9, 2024 (in co-authorship); Managerial and Legal Aspects of Innovation and Sustainability in Times of Crisis. Varna: Nauka i ikonomika, 126 pp., (pp. 43-58); ISBN: 978-954-21-1167-2; Managerial and Legal Aspects of Innovation and Sustainability in Times of Crisis. Varna: Nauka i ikonomika, 126 pp., (pp. 43-58); ISBN: 978-954-21-1167-2, 2024 (in co-authorship); Commercial Insolvency - Legal and Economic Theoretical-Applied Aspects, Varna: Nauka i ikonomika, 354 pp., (pp. 216-262); ISBN: 978-954-21-0950-1, 2018 (in co-authorship); articles and reports: The Problem of Personal Data Publicity in Bank Insolvency Proceedings, BFU Yearbook, Burgas: BFU, vol. 34, pp. 131-144; ISSN: 1311-221-X, 2016 (independent); Legal Nature of the Acts of the National Personal Data Protection Authority. Economic and Social Alternatives, Sofia: UNWE Publishing Complex, issue 3, pp. 95-110; ISSN 1314-6556, 2024 (independent); Protection of Persons of Personal Data

Before the National Supervisory Authority. Eastern Academic Journal, Burgas: Miracle – A Ltd., 3, September 2020, pp. 39-49, ISSN (online) 2367-7384, 2020 (independent); The New Legal Framework for Public Enterprises. Izvestia Journal of the Union of Scientists - Varna. Economic Sciences Series, vol. 9, № 2, pp. 103-110, ISSN 1314-7390, 2020 (independent); Principles of Personal Data Protection. Audit: Scientific-Practical Journal, Baku: Baku Business University, vol. 28, № 2 – 2020 Special Issue, pp. 95-104, ISSN 2616-4310, 2020, (independent); Administrative Control and Administrative-Penalty Liability for Consumer Protection. Izvestia of the University of Economics - Varna, Varna: Nauka i iekonomika, vol. 64, № 1 - 2020, pp. 36 – 53, ISSN 1310-0343, 2020 (in co-authorship); Supervisory Activity of the National Personal Data Protection Authority under the New Legislative Provisions of the Applicable Legislation. Izvestia of the University of Economics - Varna, Varna: Nauka i iekonomika, vol. 63, № 1- 2019, pp. 53-70, ISSN 1310-0343, 2019 (independent); Employers as Personal Data Administrators - specifics and requirements in the context of the information society, GLOBALIZATION, the State and Individual – Varna: Varna Free University “Chernorizets Hrabar”, Special number № 2 (18) - 2018, pp. 139 -147, ISSN 2367-4555, 2018 (in co-authorship); Legal Characteristics of the New "Single System Operator" State Enterprise According to the Electronic Government Act, Economics and Finance. Scientific journal, Dnipropetrovsk: FOP Drobyazko Svitlana Igorivna, № 3- 2018, pp. 4-13, ISSN 2311-3413, 2018 (independent); Control in the Sphere of Personal Data Protection Exercised by the Inspectorate to the Supreme Judicial Council. ADVED 2019- 5th International Conference on Advances in Education and Social Sciences 21-23 October 2019- Istanbul, Turkey, pp. 95-100, ISBN 978-605-82433-7-8, 2019 (independent); The New Body for Policy Implementation in the Field of Electronic Governance, Information Society and Information Technology, and Network and Information Security. Law and Business in Modern Society: Collection of Reports from the 5th National Scientific Conference, October 12, 2022, Varna: Nauka i iekonomika, 2023, pp. 396-406, ISSN 2603-5073, 2023 (independent); Personal Data Protection in Higher Education - Bulgaria's Experience. INTCESS 2023 - 10th International Conference on Education & Education of Social Sciences, 23-25 January 2023, Istanbul, Turkey : Hybrid Conference: Proceedings, Istanbul: Ocerint Publ., pp. 102-108, ISBN 978-605-72065-0-3, 2023 (in co-authorship); Compliance with the Principle of Accountability by the Higher Education Institutions - Administrators of Personal Data in Bulgaria. 8th International Conference on Advances in Education and Social Sciences : ADVED 2022, 10-12 October, 2022, Istanbul, Turkey: [Online], Istanbul: Ocerint Publ., pp. 50-58, ISBN 978-605-06286-8-5, 2022 (in co-authorship); Judicial Control over Decisions and Refusals to Provide Access to Public Information. 15 years of administrative justice in Bulgaria - problems and perspectives: Collection of reports from a national round table, June 15, 2022, Varna : Nauka i iekonomika, 2022, pp. 140-153, ISBN 978-954-21-1122-1, 2022 (independent); Code of Conduct Regarding the Protection of Personal Data in Higher Education - Criteria and Procedures for Approval. INTCESS 2022 - 9th International Conference on Education & Education of Social Sciences, 17-18 January 2022, Besiktas, Turkey : Online Conference : Proceedings, Istanbul : Ocerint Publ., 2022, pp. 531-538, ISBN 978-605-06286-4-7, (independent); Legal Nature and Role of the New State Agency for Research and Innovation in the Republic of Bulgaria. 7th International Conference on Advances in Education, 18 - 19 October 2021, Istanbul, Istanbul: Ocerint Publ., 2021, pp. 47-53, ISBN 978-605-06286-5-4, (independent); Notification of Personal Data Security Breaches. Law and Business in Modern Society: Collection of Reports from the 4th National Scientific Conference, October 22, 2021, Varna: Nauka i iekonomika, 2021, pp. 259-269, ISSN 2603-5073, (independent); Essence of the Right to Protection of Personal Data. Protection of Personal Data and Digitalization - Challenges and Perspectives: Collection of Reports [from a round table held at UE - Varna, October 1, 2021], Varna: Nauka i iekonomika, pp. 96-105, ISBN 978-954-21-1002-3, 2021 (independent); Essence of Control over the Protection of Classified Information Carried Out by the State Commission on Information Security. Law and Business in Modern Society: Collection of Reports from the 3rd National Scientific Conference, November 13,

2020, Varna: Nauka i iekonomika, pp. 263 – 269, ISSN 2738-7488, 2020 (independent); Judicial Appeal against Actions of a Personal Data Controller or Processor. Economic science, education and real economy: development and interactions in the digital age: Collection of Reports from a Jubilee International Scientific Conference in honor of 100 years from the founding of UE – Varna, Varna: Nauka i iekonomika, vol. 4, 2020, pp. 231 – 241, ISBN 978-954-21-1040-8, 2020 (independent); Judicial Control of the Decisions of the National Personal Data Protection Supervisory Authority. Law and Business in Modern Society: Collection of Reports from the 2nd National Scientific Conference, Varna: Nauka i iekonomika, 2019, pp. 83-90, ISSN 2603-5073, (independent); Conditions for Lawful Personal Data Processing by Data Controllers as per the General Data Protection Regulation. Globalization, the State and the Individual: International Scientific Journal: Conference Edition 2019, Varna: Free University "Chernorizets Hrabar", pp. 13-20, ISSN 2367-4555, 2019 (independent); Specific Nature of the New Profession „Data Protection Officer” in the Context of Digitalization. International Cluster Policies: Bulgarian-Chinese Forum: Collection of Reports from an International Conference, Varna: Nauka i iekonomika, 2019, pp. 112-122, ISBN 978-954-21-0997-6, 2019 (independent); Processing of Special Categories of Data as per Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (General Data Protection Regulation). Law and Business in Modern Society: Current Legal Challenges in the Economy: Collection of Reports from the 1st National Scientific Conference, November 9, 2018, Varna: Nauka i iekonomika, pp. 404-412, ISSN 2603-5073, 2019 (independent); The Performance of Public Functions by the "Single System Operator" State Enterprise as an Object of Delegation of Power. Administrative Law - Modern Trends in Adjudication and Doctrine: Collection of Reports from a National Round Table, April 20, 2018, Varna: Nauka i iekonomika, pp. 186 – 199, ISBN 978-954-21-0972-3, 2018 (independent); On the New "Service Provision Center" State Enterprise under the Ministry of Interior Act. The Role of Law in the Modern Economy: Collection of Reports from a National Scientific Round Table, Varna: Nauka i iekonomika, pp. 117 – 126, ISBN 978-954-21-0949-5, 2017 (independent); Administrative-Penalty Liability under the New Public Procurement Act. Legal Science and Business – Together for Sustainable Economic Development: Collection of Reports from a National Scientific Round Table, October 21, 2016, Varna: Nauka i iekonomika, 2016, pp. 215 – 228, ISBN 978-954-21-0913-6, 2016 (in co-authorship); New Amendments to Art. 64 of the Bank Insolvency Act and Personal Data Protection. The Rule of Law - a Prerequisite for Business Development and Economic Growth: Scientific Research in Memory of Prof. Dr. Boris Landzhev: Collection of Reports from a Scientific Conference, Sofia: UNWE Publishing Complex, 2016, pp. 396-401, ISBN 978-954-644-848-4, 2016 (independent); Guarantees for the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Personal Data of Participants in Public Procurement. Theory-Practice Interaction: Key Problems and Solutions: Jubilee Scientific Conference with International Participation, 24-25 June 2011, Burgas: BFU, vol. 2, pp. 183-191, ISBN 978-954-9370-79-9, 2011 (in co-authorship); Legal Aspects of Accreditation. Challenges Facing Higher Education and Scientific Research in Times of Crisis: [Coll. Reports]: Internat. Conf., 25 - 26 June 2010. Burgas: BFU, vol. 3, 2010, pp. 522-527, ISBN 978-954-9370-72-0, 2010 (independent); Public Procurement as a Means of Presenting Bulgaria as an Attractive Tourist Destination. Tourism and Sustainable Development of Society: Internat. Sci.-Pract. Conf., dedicated to the 45th anniversary of the founding of the College of Tourism - Varna : Coll. Reports, Varna: Nauka i iekonomika, 2009, pp. 333-340, ISBN 978-954-21-2424-7, 2009 (independent); Violations in the Stages of Public Procurement Management. Scientific Conference of Young Researchers: Collection of Reports, Varna: Nauka i iekonomika, pp. 61-68, ISSN 1313-3993, 2009 (independent); Food Waste in the Context of Circular Economy. [Electronic resource]. Agribusiness and Rural Areas - Economics, Innovation and Growth : Collection of Reports from a Scientific and Practical Conference, with International Participation, Organized on the Occasion of 35 years Since the Founding of the Department of Agricultural Economics, at the University of Economics - Varna, in Cooperation with the Association of Agricultural Producers in Bulgaria, June 13, 2025, Varna: Nauka i iekonomika, pp. 340-348, ISBN

978-954-21-1199-3, 2025 (in co-authorship); textbooks and teaching aids: Administrative Law and Process. Varna: Nauka i ikonomika, 2020, 228 pp. (pp. 28-42; pp. 87-106; pp. 204-222), ISBN (print) 978-954-21-1022-4, 2020 (in co-authorship); Foundations of Law. Varna: Nauka i ikonomika, 296 pp. (pp. 97-106; pp. 135-143), ISBN (print) 978-954-21-1196-2, 2025 (in co-authorship); Foundations of Law: Tasks, cases, tests. Varna : Nauka i ikonomika, 2025, 132 pp. (pp. 41-48; pp. 65-73), ISBN (print) 978-954-21-1186-3 (in co-authorship); Foundations of Law (tasks, cases, tests). Varna: Nauka i ikonomika, 2014, 267 pp., ISBN (print) 9780-954-21-0743-9 (in co-authorship); Foundations of Law (tasks, cases, tests). Varna: Nauka i ikonomika, 2010, 217 pp., ISBN (print) 978-954-21-0494-0 (in co-authorship);

The habilitation work presented by the candidate – the monograph "Administrative Law Aspects of Public Enterprises – Non-Commercial Companies" is a study that examines public enterprises – non-commercial companies (under Art. 2, Para. 1, Item 3 of the PEA) entirely from an administrative law perspective. The author's main thesis is that these enterprises are a specific form of state participation in economic activity, in which they combine economic functions with authoritative powers, remaining under constant state supervision. The first chapter focuses on clarifying the concept of "public enterprise" and distinguishing it from similar legal entities. A legislative inclusion of a definition for "public enterprise – non-commercial company" is proposed to reflect its hybrid essence. The second chapter examines public functions as an object of assignment and the administrative acts issued by the management bodies of the enterprises. The types of functions are systematized according to their substantive content and the field of public life (transport, environment, forestry, etc.). It is proven that when performing public functions, these enterprises act as administrative bodies, issue individual administrative acts, and exercise administrative coercion on behalf of the state. The grounds for assigning public functions to entities outside the system of state bodies and their compatibility with the principles of a free market economy are examined. The third chapter considers the legal relationship between the state and the enterprise regarding the provided property and the role of the Public Enterprises and Control Agency. The author clarifies the functions of the Agency as a coordinator and supervisory body, emphasizing the specifics of this supervision, which is primarily financial and organizational.

Although a very good analysis of national law has been made, the presentation would be enriched by a broader comparative review of the experience of other EU member states with similar legal traditions (for example, Germany or France). This would provide an even stronger basis for the proposed legislative changes.

The scientific and scientific-applied contributions in the presented habilitation work can be systematized in several main directions:

- For the first time, a complex administrative law construction of public enterprises – non-commercial companies is built under the conditions of the current PEA.
- An in-depth analysis of judicial practice and national legislation has been performed, revealing the interdisciplinary nature of the legal status of these entities.
- The use of the comparative legal method allows for highlighting the advantages and risks in assigning state tasks to economic entities.
- The work offers specific guidelines and legislative proposals for the restructuring of these enterprises.

In addition to the main habilitation work, the candidate has attached additional scientific production, which covers a wide range of legal issues and complements the understanding of her professional interests.

The monograph "Personal Data Protection in the Sphere of Higher Education (Legal and Managerial Aspects)", which was prepared in co-authorship, is a timely and well-structured work that successfully combines legal analysis with the administrative needs of educational institutions. Practical models are proposed for organizing data protection, risk management, and the role of the data protection officer. Issues such as online learning, electronic registers, student recruitment campaigns, and archive storage are discussed.

The second chapter of the monograph "Managerial and Legal Aspects of Innovation and Sustainability in Times of Crisis", developed by Chief Asst. Prof. Dr. Zhivka Mateeva, is dedicated to the legal framework and institutional mechanisms for promoting innovation. The chapter explores innovation not only as an economic phenomenon but also as an object of specific legal regulation. The author emphasizes the need for an adequate regulatory base to guarantee the sustainability of innovation processes. The author proves that the new institutional framework is a key component of the reform in the research sector in Bulgaria.

In the article "The Problem of Personal Data Publicity in Bank Insolvency Proceedings", the conflict between the principle of publicity of the Commercial Register and the right to personal data protection is analyzed. The need for a balance between the transparency necessary for the security of commercial turnover and the protection of the privacy of individuals is explored.

The article "Legal Nature of the Acts of the National Personal Data Protection Authority", published in the journal "Economic and Social Alternatives" (issue 3, 2024), is a current study focused on the administrative law status and powers of the Commission for Personal Data Protection (CPDP). The author examines the legal nature of the acts issued by the CPDP in the context of its expanded functions. An important emphasis is placed on the new role of the Commission as a central body for external whistleblowing under the Act on the Protection of Persons Reporting or Publicly Disclosing Information on Breaches.

The article "Protection of Persons of Personal Data Before the National Supervisory Authority" (published in Eastern Academic Journal, issue 3, 2020) examines the mechanisms for administrative protection of the rights of individuals in Bulgaria. The study makes a clear link between the specific regulation of personal data and the general rules of the Administrative Procedure Code.

The article "Administrative Law Aspects of Public Enterprises in Bulgaria", published in the journal "Izvestia of the Union of Scientists – Varna" (2020), examines the specifics of enterprises that are not purely commercial companies but perform tasks of public interest delegated by the state. Changes in the method of selecting management bodies and the increased state supervision through the new institutional structure are discussed.

The article "Principles of personal data protection", published in the scientific-practical journal "Audit" (issue 2, 2020), explores the fundamental pillars upon which the modern legal framework for information privacy is built. The work outlines how principles determine the rules for data collection, processing, and storage, emphasizing their role in establishing better control over personal information.

The article "Administrative Control and Administrative-Penalty Liability for Consumer Protection", published in the journal "Izvestia of the University of Economics – Varna" (vol. 64, No. 1, 2020), prepared in co-authorship, analyzes the role of the state as a guarantor for consumer rights.

The article "Protection of Personal Data of Workers and Employees in the Digital Era", published in the scientific journal "Globalization, the State and the Individual" (issue 2, 2018), prepared in co-authorship, reflects the important transition to the application of GDPR, which makes it key to understanding modern standards for information security at the workplace.

The article "The New Body for Policy Implementation in the Field of Electronic Governance, Information Society and Information Technology, and Network and Information Security" examines the institutional changes in the state administration of Bulgaria related to the creation of the Ministry of Electronic Governance.

The article "Judicial Control over Decisions and Refusals to Provide Access to Public Information" analyzes the right to judicial protection against the acts of the administration under the Access to Public Information Act. The necessity of discussing legislative changes to unify practice is pointed out, as the lack of cassation control sometimes leads to contradictory decisions.

In the article "Legal Nature and Role of the New State Agency for Research and Innovation in the Republic of Bulgaria", the author examines the legal nature and functions of the State Agency for Research and Innovation created in 2020.

The article "Essence of Control over the Protection of Classified Information Carried Out by the State Commission on Information Security" considers the State Commission on Information Security as a key specialized body that exercises external administrative control over all structures working with classified information.

The publications submitted for review, including the main habilitation work, fully correspond to the regulatory criteria. For the most part, the works offer original scientific contributions with a pronounced applied value. Their relevance is confirmed by their direct link to the dynamics of judicial practice and modern social requirements.

3.3. Dr. Mateeva meets the national minimum requirements for holding the academic position of "Associate Professor" at the University of Economics – Varna in accordance with the current legislation.

There is full compliance with the criteria of Art. 53, Para. 1 of the Regulations for Application of the Act on Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (RAASRB) regarding the "Doctor" educational degree and the required teaching experience. The candidate's authority in scientific circles and the value of her creative achievements are objectified in the attached citation report, which is a clear indicator of a high level of recognition.

As evident from the submitted documents, Chief Assistant Professor Mateeva accumulates the following required points across all groups of indicators set forth in the RAASRB, as follows: under Group A – dissertation for the award of the educational and scientific degree of "Doctor" – 50 points; under Group V – habilitation work (monograph) – 100 points; under Group G – scientific publications – 397 points; under Group D – citations – 465 points.

4. In conclusion, on the basis of Art. 26, Para. 3 in connection with Art. 26, Para. 1 of the ASDRB, I consider that Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Diana Dimitrova satisfies to a higher degree the requirements for holding the academic position of "Associate Professor" at the University of Economics – Varna.

The motivation for the proposed decision is based on the following circumstances:

From the documents presented by the candidates, it is established that Dr. Dimitrova and Dr. Mateeva satisfy the requirements of Art. 24, Para. 1 of the ASDRB for holding the academic position of "Associate Professor". I have not identified plagiarism in the publications presented by them. On the basis of the peer-reviewed scientific publications by both candidates, I believe they deserve a positive assessment.

In such a case, they must be ranked. According to Art. 27, Para. 3 of the ASDRB, the primary evaluation criterion is the results from the reports on the fulfillment of the minimum national requirements under Art. 2b, Para. 2 and Para. 3 of the ASDRB, respectively Art. 1a, Para. 1 of the Regulations for Application of the Act.

The scientometric indicators from groups "A" and "V" of the two candidates are equal by definition, as they reflect the possession of a doctoral degree and a published habilitation work. From the reports presented by the two candidates, it is established that Diana Dimitrova has 489 points for the indicators in group "G" (publications), while Zhivka Mateeva has 397 points. Regarding the indicators in group "D" (citations), Diana Dimitrova has 650 points, and Zhivka Mateeva has 465 points. The overall evaluation of the candidacies reveals a significant differentiation in scientific achievements, with the parameters of one of the candidates clearly dominating in a comparative plan.

Regarding teaching activity, I give preference to Diana Dimitrova. Dr. Zhivka Mateeva started her activity as an assistant at the University of Economics in 2009, assuming the position of "Chief Assistant Professor" in 2016. This path shows long-standing loyalty to the institution and a gradual accumulation of experience. For her part, Dr. Diana Dimitrova began her career as an assistant in the Department of Legal Sciences at the University of Economics in 2013. The exceptionally high intensity of her development is striking – she rose to "Chief Assistant Professor" in 2017, only four years after her initial appointment. This shortened transition period is an indicator of ambition, high scientific productivity, and rapid adaptation to the requirements of the academic staff.

In the submitted reports on teaching workload, it is noteworthy that in recent years of the candidates' development, a significant discrepancy in volume is observed. During the 2023/2024 academic year, Diana Dimitrova realized a significant workload of 262 hours in the bachelor's degree, supplemented by 56 hours in master's programs. For the same period, the data for Zhivka Mateeva indicate a significantly lower workload of 95 hours, with a lack of engagement with students from master's programs. During the 2024/2025 academic year, Diana Dimitrova reinforced her profile in the field of the competition by quadrupling her lecture hours in Administrative Law and Process (from 10 to 40 hours). Although Zhivka Mateeva shows a high total workload of 275 hours for the same period, her lectures in Administrative Law remain at only 10 hours. A decisive advantage for the academic profile of Diana Dimitrova is provided by her activity outside the standard curriculum of the University of Economics - Varna. Since 2024, she has expanded the scope of her expertise by conducting lectures in English in "Foundations of Law" at Varna Free University "Chernorizets Hrabar". Particularly prestigious is her participation in teaching a University of Sheffield program at the Higher School of Insurance and Finance. This involvement in international educational structures proves that Diana commands modern pedagogical methods applicable on a global scale and possesses a linguistic capacity that is of vital importance.

A valuable indicator of a candidate's readiness for habilitation is also their contribution to providing the educational process with literature. In this direction, Diana Dimitrova demonstrates a

quantitative and qualitative advantage. She is an author and co-author in the preparation of 8 textbooks and teaching aids, whose total authored volume amounts to 365 pages. These indicators testify to serious expertise in systematizing legal matter and methodological support for students. For comparison, the educational production of Zhivka Mateeva covers 5 textbooks and teaching aids with a total volume of 214 pages. While valuable, this contribution is secondary to the volume realized by Diana Dimitrova, which places the latter in a more favorable position regarding the sharing of academic experience with learners through printed editions.

5. Given the above, I propose the following ranking of the candidates in the competition:

- **First place** – Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Diana Dimitrova;
- **Second place** – Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Zhivka Mateeva.

Following the logic of the comparative analysis performed and on the basis of Art. 26, Para. 3 of the ASDRB, I propose to the scientific jury to take a decision by virtue of which Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Diana Dimitrova be elected to hold the academic position of "Associate Professor" at the University of Economics – Varna in the field of higher education 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, professional field 3.6 Law, in the scientific specialty "Administrative Law and Administrative Process".

Review prepared by: Заличена информация съгласно
ЗЗЛД и регламент (ЕС) 2016/ 679

Prof. _____