

REVIEW

on the competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor"
announced by the University of Economics – Varna

1. General

Information

This review has been prepared by Prof. PhD. Stoyan Andreev Stoyanov, a faculty member at the University of Economics – Varna. The basis for providing an opinion on the competition is Order No. RD 06-24/28.01.2025 of the Rector of the University of Economics – Varna for the appointment of the Scientific Jury and the decision from the first meeting of the Scientific Jury on 07.02.2025.

2. Competition

Details

The competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" was announced in the scientific field 3. Social, Economic, and Legal Sciences, professional field 3.8. Economics, scientific specialty "Economics and Management (Investments and Public Procurement)." The competition announcement was published in the State Gazette, issue No. 100 of 26.11.2024. The competition was announced by the Faculty of Business at the University of Economics – Varna, for the needs of the Department of "Business, Investments, and Real Estate."

3. Candidate

for

the

Competition

The sole candidate in the competition is Chief Assistant Professor PhD Sevdalina Ivanova Hristova. She obtained her Master's degree from the University of Economics – Varna in 2000, specializing in "Construction Economics." In 2005, she earned the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the scientific specialty "Economics and Management (Construction)" after successfully defending her doctoral dissertation on "The Real Estate Market in Bulgaria." Professionally, she began her career in early 2001 as an accountant in commercial companies and subsequently continued in practice as a senior expert and chief expert in the General Directorate "Programming of Regional Development" at the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works (MRDPW), holding these positions until 2005. On 01.07.2011, she commenced her engagement at the University of Economics – Varna as the Head of the "Project Management" sector. In 2009, she began her teaching career at the University of Economics – Varna, successively in the Department of "Agricultural Economics" and the Department of "Construction Economics." She has developed her academic career as an assistant and chief assistant professor, ultimately earning her doctoral degree in economics.

4. General Description of the Submitted Scientific Works Following the Last Procedure

For the competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor," Chief Assistant Professor PhD Sevdalina Hristova participates with the required number of

scientific publications—31 in total, with a cumulative volume of 918 standard pages. The structure of the submitted publications is as follows: three monographs, one of which is single-authored; one co-authored study; 11 scientific articles, six of which are co-authored. Some of these articles have been published in journals indexed in Scopus; 16 conference papers published in proceedings of national and international scientific conferences, including six co-authored ones.

The primary focus of the publications submitted for the competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" is on monographic works, some of which have received particular attention in this review.

I. Monograph

9.1. Hristova, S. (2023). *Effective Public Procurement*, Varna: Science and Economics, 184 pages. – (Prof. Tsani Kalyandzhiev Library; Book 88), ISBN 978-954-21-1157-3

In this work, the author highlights that the effective use of limited public funds is crucial for the successful implementation of various economic and social policies, as a significant portion of these funds is allocated through public procurement. The study explores the effectiveness of public procurement, which entails the expenditure of public funds for goods, services, or construction projects. The efficiency of public procurement is reflected in the "value for money" concept. Based on the reviewed literature on its essence, the main factors influencing it have been identified: the quality of the technical specifications, the chosen evaluation criteria for bids, and the level of transparency in the procedure. The study proposes that the effectiveness of public procurement should be assessed based on the level of competition achieved, which can be measured through a set of indicators, the primary one being the "number of submitted bids." Several opportunities for improving procurement efficiency have been identified, stemming from a correct understanding and application of the fundamental and additional principles of public procurement. The principle of free competition is argued to be the leading factor in ensuring procurement efficiency. The principle requiring further clarification in the regulatory framework is the principle of proportionality.

In the empirical analysis of the state and trends of the public procurement market in Bulgaria, emphasis is placed on Bulgarian small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The results indicate a low level of competition and inadequate SME representation. Two primary barriers hinder SME participation in the market: high selection criteria and large contract values. The key tool recommended for overcoming these barriers is "dividing the procurement subject into separate lots." The study suggests that contracting authorities should increase the application of this approach, as it would allow the inclusion of new market participants, including SMEs.

A second tool discussed in the study, particularly applicable to standardized goods and services, is centralized procurement, which can lead to significant public savings through economies of scale.

Regarding procurement efficiency, the study examines both the advantages and disadvantages of these two instruments. It is expected that more frequent use of lot-

based procurement and centralized procurement will increase competition in the Bulgarian public procurement market, thereby enhancing procurement efficiency and ultimately improving the effectiveness of public funds utilization.

II. Monograph

Development of Construction in Bulgaria in the Context of the New Programming Period 2014-2020, Varna: Science and Economics, 232 pages. (Chapter IV. European Funding as a Tool for Enhancing the Competitiveness of Construction Enterprises, pp. 135-177), ISBN 978-954-21-0971-6

This monograph examines the relationship between spatial planning policy and construction, development policies and strategies for the construction sector, the application of a sustainable approach to construction development, European funding as a tool for enhancing the competitiveness of construction enterprises, and modeling indicators for evaluating public procurement proposals in construction.

Chapter IV focuses on European funding as a tool for enhancing the competitiveness of enterprises in the construction sector. The author effectively reveals the opportunities provided by European funding and how firms, including construction companies, can benefit from these funding sources.

III. Monograph

Development of the Competitiveness of the Bulgarian Economy 2007-2013 and the Importance of Grant-Funded European Resources for the Investment Activity of Enterprises in the Sector. Tonkova, E., Hristova, S., Petrov, D. (2015). Development of Local Potential for Socio-Economic Growth of Regions, Varna: STENO, 112 pages. (Chapter III. Project Funding as a Tool for Developing Local Potential and the Growth of Bulgarian Municipalities, pp. 48-69 and Appendix No.1, pp. 97-108), ISBN 978-954-449-856-6

This monographic study presents new aspects of local potential development by incorporating approaches, models, platforms, and modules aimed at fostering socio-economic growth in territorial units.

The summarized publications and the full list of presented works demonstrate the candidate's extensive knowledge, professionally analyzed, leading to well-founded, practically applicable systems of measures for optimizing public procurement mechanisms to enhance their efficiency.

IV. Articles and Reports

The candidate's articles and reports cover a wide range of topics, including the effectiveness of public procurement, investment strategies, and regional economic development. Several publications are indexed in Scopus, demonstrating the recognition of the candidate's research at an international level. The articles focus on evaluating procurement efficiency, the impact of European funding, and the development of regional economic potential. The applied research approach provides practical recommendations for improving investment management and public

procurement

practices.

5.Citation

Activity

The candidate's scientific contributions have received recognition in the academic community, as evidenced by citations in various scientific publications. The candidate meets the required citation indicators for the academic position of "Associate Professor." The citations highlight the relevance and applicability of the candidate's research in the field of economics and management.

6.Teaching

and

Administrative

Activities

Chief Assistant Professor PhD Sevdalina Hristova has significant teaching experience at the University of Economics – Varna. She has developed and taught courses in investment management, public procurement, and regional development. The candidate has also participated in various administrative activities, including project management and curriculum development, contributing to the advancement of the educational and research processes at the university.

7.Participation

in

Scientific

and

Applied

Projects

The candidate has actively participated in numerous scientific and applied projects, focusing on economic development, investment policy, and public procurement efficiency. The projects demonstrate her ability to apply theoretical knowledge to real-world economic challenges. Her involvement in projects funded by European and national programs further strengthens her expertise and research credibility.

8.Conclusion

Based on the analysis of the scientific, teaching, and administrative activities of Chief Assistant Professor PhD Sevdalina Hristova, I conclude that she fully meets the requirements for the academic position of "Associate Professor." Her scientific contributions, teaching experience, and project involvement demonstrate a high level of competence and expertise in the field of economics and management.

I strongly support the appointment of Chief Assistant Professor PhD Sevdalina Hristova to the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the professional field 3.8. Economics, scientific specialty "Economics and Management (Investments and Public Procurement)."

University of Economics – Varna
25.03.2025
Stoyanov

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

Prof. PhD Stoyan Andreev

OPINION

from Prof. Dr. Rumen Nikolaev Kalchev, University of Economics - Varna,
professional field 3.8. Economics, scientific specialty "Economics and
Management (Human Resources in Construction)"

Basis for preparation: The opinion was prepared on the basis of Order for the appointment of a scientific jury of the Rector of UE-Varna No. RD-06-24/28.01.2025 and the decision from the first meeting of the scientific jury, held on 07.02.2025.

Information about the competition: The competition for the academic position "associate professor" is in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional field 3.8. Economics, scientific specialty "Economics and management (investments and public procurement)". It is announced for the needs of the department "Business, Investments, Real Estate" at the Faculty of Economics of the University of Economics - Varna. The competition announcement was published in the State Gazette, iss 100/26.11.2024.

Candidate for the competition: Candidate for the competition is Chief Assist. Prof. Dr. Sevdalina Ivanova Hristova. The candidate fulfills the minimum national requirements for the academic position "associate professor" in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences according to Art. 2b, para. 2 and 3 of LDASRB, the additional quantitative requirements of IU-Varna according to Art. 2b, para. 5 of the RALDASRB and meets the requirements specified in Art. 101 of the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at UE-Varna.

Data on the candidate: Chief Assist. Prof. Sevdalina Hristova is a graduate of the University of Economics - Varna. In 1999 she obtained a bachelor's degree in "Economics and Construction Management", in 2000 - Master's degree in "Construction Economics", and since 2005 holds a PhD in the scientific specialty 05.02.18 Economics and Management.

The professional biography of Chief Assist. Prof. Hristova is impressive. From 14.09.2009 until now, she worked at the University of Economics - Varna, initially as an assistant, and from June 2010 as chief assistant. After 2005 holds management and expert positions in various organizations and departments - Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works, University of Economics - Varna as head of the "Project Management" sector, Association "Union of Tour Guides in Bulgaria", Municipality of Varna, National Revenue Agency.

The research interests of the associate professor candidate are in areas such as: procurement process and public procurement, European projects and grant funding, investment and economic development, local government and development, residential real estate market.

My personal opinion is that the candidate's personal characteristics fully correspond to the profile of the scientific specialty "Economics and Management (Investments and Public Procurement)", for which the "associate professor" competition is announced.

Description of the scientific works: The total number of publications of Chief Assist. Prof. Dr. Sevdalina Ivanova Hristova, with whom she participated in the competition for "docent" is 31. Of them, 16 (52%) are independent, and 15 (48%) - in co-authorship. The large share of joint publications shows the

candidate's ability to work in a team. The total volume of scientific production is 918 pages. Eight (26%) of the publications are abroad, which is proof of the candidate's presence in the international scientific community. The diversity of scientific production includes:

- Monographs - 3 (1 independent and 2 co-authored) with a total volume of 262 pages;
- Studies – 1 in co-authorship with the volume of personal participation 25 pages;
- Scientific articles – 11 (5 independent and 6 co-authored) with a total volume of 171 pages;
- Scientific reports – 12 (8 independent and 4 co-authored) with a total volume of 149 pages;
- Textbooks and study aids – 1 independent and 3 co-authored with a total volume of 311 pages.

The assessment of the scientific production presented at the competition shows that the volume of monographs, studies, articles and scientific reports is 607 pages. (66%), which is an expression of the accumulated research experience and knowledge, and is also proof of the maturity and preparedness of the candidate for associate professor. The submitted works meet the required quantitative criteria for the academic position of "associate professor" according to the LDASRB, RALDASRB and the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at UE-Varna. All publications are included in indexing, referencing and evaluation systems, as well as in the national reference list maintained by NACID, one is indexed in SCOPUS, and 3 in Web of Science.

The candidate in the competition has an independent monographic work with the title "Effective awarding of public contracts", which was published in a specialized scientific publication.

Getting acquainted with the scientific research of Chief Assist. Prof.Dr.Hristova, I was convinced that they are in-depth, theoretically argued and with a practical focus. Evaluating the qualities of the publications, I consider that they fully correspond to professional direction 3.8. Economics, scientific specialty "Economics and Management (Investments and Public Procurement)", and their level from a linguistic and stylistic point of view is high.

The monographic work "Effective public procurement" was published in the specialized scientific publishing house "Science and Economics" at the University of Economics - Varna, it was discussed in the "Business, Investments, Real Estate" department and by the editorial board of the monographic library "Prof. TsaniKalyandzhiev", it has been peer-reviewed by two qualified persons and, in my opinion, solves an essential scientific applied problem at a high modern level, i.e. fulfills the requirements of Art. 112, para. 2 of the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at the University of Economics - Varna.

Dentification of contributions: The main scientific interests and contributions of the candidate for the academic position "Associate Professor" are concentrated in three main areas: public procurement, European funding and European projects, investment attraction and development of local potential. The monograph "Effective public procurement" has the character of a habilitation work. It occupies a central place among the publications. In it and in other

publications, in my opinion, some more important contributions can be highlighted, in which both theoretical and practical aspects are intertwined:

1. The effectiveness of the public procurement process in Bulgaria has been studied in a theoretical and practical-applied aspect. In this regard, the understanding of the effectiveness of the public procurement process as the main tool for spending public funds and funds provided by European funds and programs has been improved, the factors affecting the effectiveness of public procurement are identified, the system of indicators for evaluating the effectiveness of a specific public procurement is supplemented, and concrete measures are proposed to improve the legal and institutional environment of the public procurement market in the context of increasing the efficiency of the procurement process.

2. The influence of European funding on the development of the "Construction" sector has been studied in a theoretical and practical-applied aspect. The importance of European funds and programs for improving the investment potential of construction enterprises has been studied and evaluated. The main mechanisms by which these funds contribute to increasing the competitiveness of enterprises from the sector have been analyzed.

3. The relationship between project financing and the quality of higher education in Bulgaria has been studied. European funds have been studied as a factor for the modernization of the educational infrastructure and the promotion of scientific research. Proposals for optimizing the mechanisms for the distribution of funds during the program period 2021-2027 are substantiated. Specific areas for improving the qualifications of teachers have been identified.

4. Some theoretical and practical-applied aspects of risk management in European projects have been studied. The theoretical framework for the nature of risk in the context of project planning has been enriched and supplemented. A systematic classification of the risks of European projects is proposed. The specific risks related to the implementation of European projects to increase the energy efficiency of buildings have been analyzed in detail. The factors that contribute to high risk in the implementation of European projects have been investigated. Based on the analysis, practical measures are proposed for their management, etc.

5. A theoretical and practical-applied study of established practices for attracting investments and developing local potential was made. The importance of project financing as a mechanism for the development of local potential and the effective use of available resources is argued. Modern approaches to attracting investment are explored, including the use of high technology and digital platforms. The practices of the municipal authorities in Bulgaria have been analyzed and concrete measures have been proposed to improve local investment policies, etc.

From the presented reference, 20 citations of 6 scientific publications are visible, which can be evaluated positively from the point of view of the significance of the research and the popularity of the candidate for associate professor.

Participation in scientific projects and scientific forums: The candidate for associate professor participated after 2015 as a member of the scientific teams in the implementation of 4 research projects, financed with funds from the state budget for the financing of scientific activity inherent to state higher education

institutions. In addition, over the years she participated as an expert and coordinator in 8 project management teams mainly related to the provision of educational services, co-financed with EU funds. She is a member of the editorial boards of the magazine "Human Resources & Technologies = HR & Technologies", magazine with reports of the international scientific and practical conference "Construction entrepreneurship and real estate" and participates in the organizing committee of the conference.

What has been presented so far shows that the candidate for the competition has the necessary activity and achievements for the occupation of the academic position "Associate Professor".

Teaching work: The teaching work of Chief Assist. Prof. Sevdalina Ivanova Hristova can be characterized as diverse and to a large extent corresponding to her scientific interests. At the "Bachelor" she leads lectures and/or exercises on the disciplines "Project Management", "European Funds and Projects", "Construction Tendering", "Local Government and Business", "Prices and Pricing", "Investment and the Investment Process", "Construction Enterprise Financing", "Academic Research". At the Master's she teaches the disciplines "European and national programs and funds", "Public procurement", "Contracts and Procurement", "Basics of Project Management", "Business Negotiations", "Management of International Programs and Projects". The total classroom load for the period 2021/22 and 2023/24 is 696 hours, reduced to exercises in "Bachelor" and 83 hours in "Master". In his teaching practice she uses modern teaching methods. Chief Assist. Hristova actively works with students by participating in examination committees, conducting scientific supervision and

reviewing bachelor's and master's theses, practical training of students, organizing tutoring meetings, etc.

Chief Assist. Prof.Hristova has published one independent teaching aid and co-authored two textbooks and one manual for seminar classes. All her texts are of a high standard.

The above shows that the candidate for the competition has extensive teaching experience and a high degree of preparation for the occupation of the academic position of "associate professor".

Plagiarism: I found no evidence of plagiarism in the materials submitted for evaluation.

Critical Notes and Questions:Chief Assist. Prof.SevdalinaHristova is an established teacher with extensive practical experience, and therefore I can make a recommendation to her future activity to continue publishing in indexed and referenced publications, including and abroad for further scientific and academic growth.

CONCLUSION

The analysis made of the qualifications, research and teaching activities of Chief Assist. Prof. Dr. SevdalinaIvanovaHristova, her professional development and scientific achievements in the field of investment management and public procurement give me reason to give a positive assessment of the candidate's overall activity.Article 24 of the LDASRB, Article 53 of the RALDASRB and the requirements of the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at IU-Varna for occupying the academic position "Associate Professor" have been fulfilled.

On the basis of the above, I propose to the esteemed members of the Scientific Jury for the competition to choose Chief Assist. Prof. Dr. Sevdalina Ivanova Hristova in the academic position of "Associate Professor" in professional field 3.8. Economics, scientific specialty "Economics and Management (Investments and Public Procurement)".

Varna, 21. 03. 2025

Member of the Scientific Jury:

(Prof. Dr. Rumen Kalchev)

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

OPINION

by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Dragomir Zelchev Stefanov

regarding the results and contributions of Chief Assist. Prof. Dr. Sevdalina Ivanova Hristova, candidate in the competition for acquiring academic position "Associate Professor" in PF 3.8 Economics, scientific specialty "Economics and Management" (Investments and Public Procurements), promulgated in State Gazette, issue 100 from 26.11.2024

1. General information.

The opinion was prepared by: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Dragomir Zelchev Stefanov, full-time lecturer in the "Real Estate" Department at the Business Faculty of UNWE-Sofia, scientific specialty "Economics and Management".

Grounds for giving the opinion: Order of the Rector of UE-Varna No. RD-06-24/28.01.2025, Varna for the appointment of the scientific jury and Decision of the scientific jury dated 7.02.2025 for the appointment of reviewers and prepare opinions.

2. Contest details.

The competition for acquiring academic position "Associate Professor" in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences under PF 3.8 Economics, scientific specialty "Economics and management" (Investments and public procurement) has been announced for the needs of the "Business, Investments, Real Estate" Department at Faculty of Economics of University of Economics-Varna in the State Gazette, issue 100 from 26.11.2024. On its announcement **all the requirements of the LDASRB have been met.**

3. Competition candidate.

The only candidate in the competition **Chief Assist. Prof. Dr. Sevdalina Ivanova Hristova fulfills the minimum national requirements** for acquiring academic position "Associate Professor" (based on Art. 2b, p. 2 and 3 of the LDASRB) and the requirements for acquiring academic position "Associate Professor" of UE-Varna (based on art. 2b, p. 5 of the LDASRB). The candidate meets the requirements in Art. 101 of the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of UE-Varna.

4. Candidate details.

Sevdalina Hristova successively completed her bachelor's (1999), master's (2000) and doctorate (2004) degrees at the UE-Varna in majors led by "Economics and Construction Management" Department (now called "Business, Investments, Real Estate"). From 2009 until now, she has been sequentially an Assistant Professor (2009-2010) and a Chief Assistant Professor (2010 until now), first in the Department of "Agrarian Economics" (until 2013), and then in the "Business, Investments, Real Estate" Department, and in the period 2011-2015 she was also the head of the "Project Management" sector at the UE- Varna. She has also worked as an accountant and chief expert at the National Revenue Agency.

5. General description of the presented scientific works.

Chief Assist. Prof. Dr. Sevdalina Hristova systematically and successfully publishes her scientific research in Bulgarian and English, both independently and in co-authorship with other prominent authors. She participates in the competition with 31 scientific publications in a total volume of 918,1 pages of personal participation. Among them – 1 independent and 2 co-authored monographs, 1 study (co-authored), 11 scientific articles (5 of them independent), 12 reports from scientific conferences (8 of them independent) and 4 textbooks and teaching aids (one of them independent). Of these publications, 9 have been published abroad – 4 articles and 5 scientific reports.

The content and thematic focus of the candidate's submitted publications show full compliance between her profile and the requirements of the competition. Most of the publications are directly related to the scientific specialty of the competition and examine various aspects of investing in public and private real estate, as well as organizing public procurements. There are a number of publications related to the financing of projects through various EU mechanisms, including European programs and structural funds. There are two articles dedicated to the career development of teachers and the improvement of the quality of higher education in the country. Two other publications aim to reveal the opportunities for developing local tourism potential through financing from EU funds. The author has dedicated one publication to problems related to the volume and structure of FDI in Bulgaria and measures to increase the energy efficiency of the building stock.

In general, all the candidate's scientific publications are in the field of economics and real estate management with an emphasis on the forms of financing and analysis of investments, organizing and conducting public procurement procedures, and meeting the profile of the announced competition.

The main monograph of Chief Assist. Prof. Dr. Hristova was published in 2023 on the topic of **"Effective Awarding of Public Procurements"**. In it, the author advocates the thesis that the main factors on which the effectiveness of procurement depends are the quality of the technical specification, the selected criterion for evaluating the offers and the level of openness of the procedure. A proposal is made to judge the effectiveness of public procurements by the achieved level of competition, which can be assessed through a system of indicators, the main of which is "number of submitted offers". In the empirical analysis of the state and trends of the public procurement market in Bulgaria, an emphasis is placed on Bulgarian small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The results of the study show a low level of competition and their inadequate performance, indicating two main barriers preventing the participation of SMEs in the market: high selection requirements and the large value of contracts. The author identifies as the main tool that is appropriate to use to overcome these barriers "dividing the subject of the procurement into separate items" and recommends that contracting authorities strengthen its application. Secondly, another tool is indicated that is applicable mainly to standardized goods and services, namely centralized procurement, in which serious savings of public funds can be achieved based on realized economies of scale. In view of the effectiveness of the procurement, the positive aspects and their shortcomings of both instruments are examined. It is pointed out that the more frequent application of the award of contracts with

separate items and centralized procurement can increase the level of competition in the public procurement market in Bulgaria, which in turn can reflect on the effectiveness of the procurement, and hence lead to an increase in the effectiveness of the use of public funds.

In other works, the author examines the financing of higher education in Bulgaria in the context of the claim that its quality is one of the critical factors for increasing the competitiveness of the Bulgarian economy and the development of regions, and the focus is on the opportunities for using European funds and programs. The analysis is based on data for two programming periods (2007-2013 and 2014-2020). It has been established that the funds for higher education in Bulgaria are significantly below the average level for the European Union, and funding through European programs is a significant, but insufficiently effectively used source. The author recommends stimulating academic staff to participate in projects by reducing bureaucratic obstacles and better managing the processes for absorbing funds. Recommendations are also offered for improving access to European funding, including preserving the competitive principle, removing territorial restrictions and reducing the maximum amounts of aid for individual projects. According to the author, these measures, together with the creation of permanent teams for project activities in universities, could increase the efficiency of the use of European funds and contribute to better quality higher education and economic growth.

In another article, Dr. Hristova makes a comparative review of the opportunities for financing projects of Bulgarian municipalities from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) under the "Regional Development" Operational Program and the "Regions in Growth" Operational Program in the context of the development of local tourism potential. The article focuses on the opportunities for the development of local tourism potential through EU funding. A review of the implemented projects financed under operational programs of the Municipality of Burgas is carried out.

6. Identification of scientific contributions

In the attached to the competition documents reference on the scientific and scientific-applied contributions of the candidate, Dr. Sevdalina Hristova indicates five groups of contributions, namely:

1) *First, scientific-theoretical and scientific-applied research related to the efficiency of the public procurement process in Bulgaria.* In this direction, the understanding of the essential characteristics of the efficiency of the public procurement process has been deepened. The three main factors that influence this efficiency have been identified and a system of evaluation indicators has been proposed. Inadequate representation of SMEs has been noted and the barriers preventing their participation have been identified, and specific measures have been proposed to improve the legal and institutional environment of the public procurement market;

2) *Second, regarding the influence of European funding on the development of the Construction sector,* the significance of European funds and programs for improving the investment potential of construction companies has been studied and assessed. The main mechanisms through which these funds contribute to increasing the competitiveness of enterprises in the sector are analyzed. Key steps for successful application and improving the quality of project proposals are formulated;

3) *Third, contributions to the study of the relationship between project financing and the quality of higher education in Bulgaria.* European funds are studied as a factor for the modernization of educational infrastructure and the promotion of scientific research. The effect of the project financing received during the previous programming periods on improving the quality of higher education in Bulgaria and the development of the physical environment is assessed;

4) *Fourth, a study of established practices for attracting investments and developing local potential.* Good practices of successful project interventions that promote the development of tourism as a key sector for economic growth are selected and the relationship between investments in high technologies and the competitiveness of the local and national economy is studied, with “direct” economic and “transfer” social effects being deduced;

5) *Fifth, a study of some aspects of risk management in European projects.* A systematic classification of the risks of European projects is proposed: internal and external. Special attention is paid to the risks of the planning and implementation stages of the funded projects.

I largely accept the contribution nature of the presented scientific and scientific-applied contributions.

The candidate in the competition has also attached a reference of the open citations, containing 20 citations of 6 different publications, two of which are independent.

7. Participation in scientific projects and scientific forums

Chief Asst. Prof. Dr. Sevdalina Hristova has participated in four scientific research projects, financed by the state budget through the UE-Varna, three of which have been successfully completed, and one of them is ongoing. The topics of the projects are directly related to the topic of the competition for “Associate Professor”, namely public procurements, investment management and project financing.

Hristova has been an expert or coordinator on another 8 projects, co-financed with EU and EEA funds under the OP “Human Resources Development”, “Science and Education for Smart Growth”, “Regional Development”, “Competitiveness”, etc., implemented by the UE-Varna. She was a member of two editorial boards of the scientific journals “Human Resources & Technologies = HR & Technologies” and “Construction Entrepreneurship and Real Property”.

8. General evaluation of the educational teaching work

In the recent years, Chief Assist. Prof. Dr. Sevdalina Hristova has led lectures and seminars for students at bachelor's degree in a total of 5 academic disciplines: “Project Management”, “European Funds and Projects”, “Prices and Pricing”, “Local Government and Business” and “Academic Research”. In the master's degree, Hristova leads classes in two disciplines: “Public Procurements” and “European and National Programs and Funds”.

Most of the disciplines led by the candidate are directly related to the topic of the announced competition, as well as to the focus of the main part of her scientific publications. On one side, this justifies the need to hold the competition for the purposes of the department, and on the other side, it gives me reason to believe that the candidate meets the requirements for acquiring the academic position in this scientific specialty.

9. Plagiarism

After reviewing the publications submitted for evaluation by Dr. Hristova and based on the candidate's declaration, I believe that the monograph and publications submitted by her are her personal work and that all requirements of copyright, LDASRB, the Regulations for its implementation and the Regulations for the development of the academic staff at the UE-Varna have been met. I have not found any plagiarism or unreliability of the scientific data presented in the evaluated publications.

10. Critical notes, questions and recommendations

Along with the positive aspects of the candidate and the characteristics of the scientific work with which she participates in the competition, some critical notes and recommendations for her future creative activity can be pointed out. Thus for example, one can think about the more specific and clear formulation of the scientific contributions of the individual publications, especially to their applied nature.

One of my recommendations for the future scientific work of Dr. Hristova is the preparation and publication of an author's textbook on the subject "Public Procurements", which she leads for students in master's degree.

A question suitable for discussion, on which it is worth hearing Dr. Hristova's opinion, is related to two of the theses of her independent monographic work. There she advocates the view that on one side, "dividing the subject of the procurement into separate positions" can enable more active participation of small and medium-sized enterprises. On the other side, the second tool she proposes for achieving economies of scale is "centralized procurement of standardized goods and services." Do you not find a contradiction between these two propositions?

The notes and recommendations made in no way detract from the value of the scientific works presented and do not change my overall positive opinion about the qualities and the work of the candidate in the competition.

11. Conclusion

Taking into account the presented evidence of the results of the candidate's scientific and academic activity in the competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" in PN 3.8 Economics, scientific specialty "Economics and Management" (Investments and Public Procurements), promulgated in State Gazette, issue 100 from 26.11.2024 for the needs of the of "Business, Investments, Real Estate" Department in UE-Varna, I believe that **Chief Assist. Prof. Dr. Sevdalina Ivanova Hristova meets all the quantitative and qualitative requirements of the LDASRB and the regulations for its implementation, and I am convinced to vote "Yes" the awarding of the academic position "Associate Professor" by the scientific jury.**

Sofia, 30.03.2025

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

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(Assoc. Prof. Dr. Dragomir Stefanov)

1. General information

The opinion was prepared by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Yana Georgieva Stoencheva - Department of "Real Estate" at the Faculty of Business at the UNWE, Sofia in implementation of the decision taken at the first meeting of the scientific jury, appointed by order of the Rector of the University of Economics – Varna No. RD 06-24/28.01.2025.

2. Information about the competition

The opinion was prepared in accordance with the competition announced in the State Gazette, issue 100/26.11.2024 for the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the professional field 3.8. "Economics", in the scientific specialty "Economics and Management (Investments and Public Procurement)". The competition was announced for the needs of the Department of "Business, Investments, Real Estate" at the Faculty of Economics of the University of Economics – Varna.

3. Candidate for the competition

The only candidate who submitted documents for participation in the announced competition is Chief Assist. Dr. Sevdalina Ivanova Hristova. She meets the Minimum National Requirements for occupying the academic position of "associate professor" in the professional field of the announced competition, meets the quantitative requirements of the University of Economics – Varna and the requirements of the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at the University of Economics – Varna (PRAS).

4. Candidate data (personal characteristics)

The candidate for the competition holds the ONS "doctor". She has practical experience in various positions as an expert. Has sufficient teaching experience / Has taught over 7 academic disciplines in full-time and distance learning at the Bachelor's and Master's degree programs, participated in teams for the development of 11 curricula for Bachelor's and Master's degree programs, was a scientific supervisor of 35 graduates (at the Bachelor's and Master's degree programs), was a reviewer of over 30 theses (at the Bachelor's and Master's degree programs), was a supervisor of practical training for students, participated in the writing of three textbooks and independently published one teaching aid. The candidate has participated in the development of 4 scientific projects, has high foreign language competence, has conducted four specializations at foreign universities, has a total of 34 scientific publications, of which: 3 monographs (1 independent and 2 co-authored); 1 study, 13 articles (7 independent and 6 co-authored); 17 reports (13 independent and 4 co-authored). Her scientific interests are in the fields of: the procurement process and public procurement, European projects and grant funding, investments and economic development, local government and development, residential real estate market.

5. Description and evaluation of scientific works

The presented monographic work "Effective awarding of public contracts" meets the scientometric requirements mentioned in the Regulations for the development of the academic

staff at the University of Economics - Varna for holding the academic position of "associate professor". It is 179 pages long, published by an academic publishing house and reviewed by two habilitated lecturers. The monograph has a summary in four languages, is dedicated to a current problem, is structured in an appropriate manner, the regulatory framework in Bulgaria and the European Union is taken into account, the separate parts end with summaries and conclusions by the author, numerous Bulgarian and foreign authors and electronic sources of information are cited, an analytical style and professional language are used in terms of terms and categories. Very often, the summaries are presented in the form of schemes, which facilitates perception. The statistical methods used are appropriately selected. The forecast horizon is realistic according to the implementation method used. The full cycle of public procurement implementation is covered. The results of the use of quantitative analysis methods are competently discussed. Special attention is paid to measures to encourage the participation of small and medium-sized enterprises in the procurement process. Effective measures to increase the efficiency of public procurement are identified. In tables 3, 4, 5 and 6 of Appendix 3, the percentage sign could be mentioned only in the title row and not be present in the cells of the tables. Ultimately, it can be concluded that the candidate possesses the necessary knowledge, experience, awareness and computer skills to conduct original, in-depth and comprehensive scientific research.

The study "The Impact of the Public Procurement System Reform on Bulgarian Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises", published in the journal *Economic Studies*, in terms of content shows excellent knowledge of the institutional framework that regulates the conduct of public procurement competitions within the European Union and in some associated countries. However, it offers a very generalized view of the problems. The existing sectoral information advisory systems in Bulgaria, facilitating tender participants in the preparation of bids, have not found a place. These minor imperfections do not belittle the results achieved. The monographs in which the candidate has participated contain original ideas. The parts written by the candidate have both theoretical and scientific-practical significance for the development of the regions in Bulgaria, as well as in a national aspect.

For participation in the competition, the candidate has submitted 11 scientific articles and 12 scientific reports. Six of the articles are in Bulgarian and five in English. Five of the articles are independent and six are co-authored. The articles have found a place in prestigious scientific journals. The articles and reports cover a wide range of issues related to the subject of the competition - including project management, conducting public procurement competitions, career development of teachers, opportunities for financing business projects with funds from the European Union Structural Funds, opportunities for reducing risk in the implementation of European projects, investments in high technologies, opportunities for financing municipal projects, etc. In her scientific articles and reports, the candidate appears as an accomplished scientist with the skills to identify unsolved problems, explore the possibilities for their solution and propose an appropriate approach to increasing the economic efficiency of the economic and organizational activities under consideration.

From the scientific publications proposed for participation in the competition, it can be confidently concluded that the candidate meets and exceeds the accepted scientometric requirements for holding the academic position of "associate professor" and the results of her research are available to scientists, teachers, students and specialists in business practice.

6. Identification of the contributions in the candidate's scientific research work and assessment of citations

I accept as justified and realistic the contributions formulated by the candidate with the caveat that they are too detailed and this creates the impression of fading their significance. It would be useful to reduce the contributions to one or two in each of the indicated areas, as the enrichment of the educational literature could be dropped as a contribution, since in principle, established theoretical concepts usually find a place in textbooks and teaching aids. The candidate has presented a sufficient number of citations of her scientific production in reputable scientific publications, which emphasizes the interest of the scientific community in the results of her research.

7. Participation in scientific projects and scientific forums

Participation in four scientific research projects related to the topic of the competition is presented, three of which ended with the publication of the results obtained in the form of a monograph, which shows their comprehensiveness and significance. There is evidence of the candidate's extensive participation in project management teams co-financed by EU and EEA funds.

8. Teaching work

Sevdalina Hristova has over 15 years of teaching experience at the University of Economics in Varna, of which one year as an assistant and the rest as a senior assistant. The submitted reference for the last three academic years shows that she has experience in delivering both lectures and exercises. The academic disciplines she teaches are directly related to the subject matter of the competition. She is the author of one electronic teaching aid and participated in writing one manual for seminar classes and two textbooks, which were published by the academic publishing house "Science and Economics" at the University of Economics - Varna. They are of a high theoretical level and the parts written by the candidate correspond to the profile of the competition. The candidate has carried out teaching activities, both in the bachelor's and master's degree of student education. She was a scientific supervisor of 35 graduates who successfully defended their dissertations, was a reviewer of over 30 theses and participated in the organization and implementation of practical training, was an academic mentor for the "Student Practices" project, and conducted four specializations at foreign universities. From the information presented, it can be concluded that the candidate has extensive experience in teaching and systematically makes efforts to improve herself and to improve the provision of the educational process with educational literature, which is of essential importance in the program accreditation of the relevant specialties.

9. Plagiarism

I am not aware of any elements of plagiarism in the candidate's scientific works. References to foreign scientific works have been made correctly.

10. Critical comments and questions to the candidate

The candidate's scientific production meets the highest standards in the academic field, has been subject to peer review and contains strong arguments in the defense of the research

theses. I have no significant critical comments about this. Some minor imperfections were found in the evaluation of the scientific production.

11. Conclusion

Based on the long and successful teaching experience and the rich scientific production of the candidate, I confidently propose to the esteemed scientific jury to award Sevdalina Ivanova Hristova the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the professional field 3.8. "Economics", in the scientific specialty "Economics and Management (Investments and Public Procurement)".

17.03.2025

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

PREPARED BY:
/Assoc. Prof. Dr. Yana Stoencheva /)

OPINION

Д-20-556 / 04.04.2025

on competition for occupying the academic position of "Associate Professor",
announced by the University of Economics – Varna

1. General Information

This opinion was drawn up by Assoc. Prof. Dr Todor Stoyanov Raychev, lecturer at University of Economics – Varna (UE – Varna). The basis for submitting an opinion on the competition are order No ПД 06-24/28.01.2025 of the Rector of UE – Varna for appointing the members of the Scientific Examining Jury and the decision of the first sitting of the Scientific Examining Jury of 07.02.2025.

2. Information about the Competition

The competition for occupying the academic position of "Associate Professor" is announced in scientific area 3. *Social, Economic and Legal Sciences*, professional field 3.8. *Economics*, scientific specialty *Economics and Management (Investments and Public Procurement)*. The advertisement for the competition is published in SG, issue 100 of 26.11.2024. The competition is announced by the Faculty of Economics of UE – Varna, for the needs of the Department of Business, Investments, Real Estate (BIRE).

3. Candidate in the Competition

The only candidate in the competition is Chief Assist. Prof. Dr Sevdalina Ivanova Hristova. The candidate fulfils the respective minimum national requirements for the AP of "Associate Professor" under Art. 2b, Para. 2 and 3 of the LDASRB, as well as the additional quantitative requirements of UE – Varna under Art. 2b, Para. 5 of the LDASRB. The candidate meets the requirements set out in Art. 101 of the Regulations on the Development of Academic Staff at the University of Economics – Varna (RDASUEV).

The documents submitted by the candidate Chief Assist. Prof. Dr Sevdalina Hristova are completely in conformity with the LDASRB, the RALDASRB and the RDASUEV.

4. Information about the Candidate

Sevdalina Hristova receives her educational and qualification degrees in the UE – Varna. She is awarded a diploma as a Bachelor degree holder in the programme "Economics and Management of Construction" in 1999, and after that also as a Master degree holder in the programme "Economics of Construction". In 2000 she attains the ESD of "Doctor" in the scientific specialty 05.02.18 Economics and Management (by industry),

Diploma No 29622/31.03.2005, after a successful defense of a doctoral dissertation on the subject of "The market for residential real estate in Bulgaria".

Professionally, Chief Assist. Prof. Dr Sevdalina Ivanova Hristova begins her development in February 2001 as an accountant in two private companies successively. During the period November 2005 – February 2010 she works as a Senior Expert, and after that also as a Chief Expert in DG "Programming of Regional Development" with the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works. During the period 01.07.2011 – 21.07.2015 she holds the position Director of Sector "Project Management" at the University of Economics – Varna. During the years 2020, 2021 and 2024 she works as an External Expert – Project Appraiser under the Programme "Youth Activities" at the Municipality of Varna. During the period 01.03.2021 – 30.09.2022 she holds the position "External Expert – Projects" with the "Union of Tour Guides in Bulgaria" Association. From 07.06.2022 till 22.08.2023 she is Chief Expert in the Department of "Logistics" with the TD of the NRA Varna.

The academic career of the candidate begins in September 2009 as an Assistant Professor with the Department of "Agricultural Economics" of the Faculty of Economics at UE – Varna. In June 2010 she is promoted to the academic position of "Chief Assistant Professor". In June 2013 she is transferred to the Department of BIRE.

The scientific interests of the candidate are in the following areas: awarding process and public procurement; European projects and grant funding; investments and economic development; local self-government and development; the market for residential real estate.

5. Description of Research Works

In the competition for occupying the academic position of "Associate Professor" Chief Assist. Prof. Dr Sevdalina Hristova participates with 31 scientific publications, totalling 918.1 standard typewritten pages. The structure of the presented scientific publications is as follows: 1 independently written monograph; 2 co-authored monographs (participation with one independently written chapter); 1 independently written study (in English) in a Journal that is referenced and indexed in Scopus; a total of 11 articles, of which: 5 independently written articles (3 of those in English), indexed and referenced in international scientific databases; 1 article, as a co-author, in a Journal referenced and indexed in Web of Science; 5 articles, as a co-author, in Journals indexed and referenced in international scientific databases (2 of those in English); a total of 12 papers, of which: 3 independently written, published in the proceedings of international scientific and practical conferences in this country; 1 independently written, published in the proceedings volume of a scientific and practical conference with international participation in this country; 1 independently written, published in the proceedings volume of a scientific conference with international participation in this country; 2 as a co-author, published in the proceedings volumes of scientific seminars with international participation in this country; 5 papers, published in the proceedings volumes of international scientific

conferences abroad (incl. 2 in co-authorship, referenced and indexed in Web of Science); a total of 4 manuals and handbooks, of which: 1 manual (with an independently written chapter); 1 manual (with 3 independently written chapters, 1 independently written paragraph and 4 independent appendices); 1 Guide for seminars/tutorials (with 7 independently written chapters, 4 independently written paragraphs of a chapter and independent appendices); 1 independently written handbook (electronic resource).

A principal position among the publications in the competition is occupied by the habilitation monographic work on the subject of "Effective Public Procurement" (Publication 9.1). It is published in "Prof. Tsani Kalyandzhiev" Library, Iss. 88, Publ. House "Science and Economics" at UE – Varna and reviewed by two habilitated persons. The habilitation work of Chief Assist. Prof. Dr Sevdalina Hristova represents a complete study of a topical issue of significant practical and applied orientation, consisting in the discovery of reserves both for improving the efficiency in the disbursement of public funds, and for the more rational utilization of the capacity of the economic contracting parties, including that of the SMEs, in the process of awarding public procurement contracts. The main goal of the work is to study the principal issues of the process of assigning public procurement contracts, in the theoretical as well as the practical and applied aspect, and on that basis to point out the possibilities for raising the efficiency of the awarding process in Bulgaria. In this regard, in the work there is formulated and substantiated the research thesis that public procurement in Bulgaria is ineffective, but it can be improved through a better understanding and, respectively, the full application of the common European measures introduced with the reform of 2014.

As a result of the conducted research, a critical analysis of literary sources on the theme is presented in Chapter One. The essential characterization of public procurement as a tool for the disbursement of public and European funds is examined. Brought to the fore are the peculiarities of investment projects and public procurement.

In Chapter Two the emphasis is placed on the manifestations of the efficiency in public procurement based on the "value for money" concept, and the peculiarities of its assessment. Worked out is a system of indicators for the evaluation of effectiveness at the procedure for awarding the public contract level, and at the contracting entity/market level. Adapted by the author are the transaction costs "before and during the procedure" and "after the procedure" of the individual public procurement contract.

In Chapter Three the normatively defined principles of awarding public procurement contracts as well as those drawn in the specialized scientific literature are summarized, and on that basis their significance for the effectiveness of the awarding process is systematized.

In Chapter Four the normative and the institutional framework of the market for public procurement for the supply of goods, the provision of services or carrying out construction in Bulgaria are examined and the trends of its development during the period 2011 – 2021 are traced out. The trend of development is modelled out and a forecast for the market for public procurement for the period 2023 – 2024 is drawn.

The relation "public procurement – small and medium-sized enterprises" is studied in Chapter Five. The measures for encouraging the participation of SMEs on the market for public procurement introduced with the reform of 2014 are evaluated and is determined empirically how adequately Bulgarian SMEs are performing on that market.

In Chapter Six, with a view to increasing the rate of efficiency of the process of awarding public procurement contracts, the need for intensive application of two awarding instruments that are scarcely used in the Bulgarian practice, is justified. The first: active use of centralized and joint awarding with standardized goods and services, which will lead to considerable savings of public funds based on the realized economies of scale. And the second: "dividing the object of the order into lots", which will predetermine the involvement of new market participants, including SMEs.

Throughout her academic career, after acquiring the ESD of "Doctor", Chief Assist. Prof. Dr Sevdalina Hristova has worked strenuously and systematically in the main areas of the scientific specialty of the announced competition for "Associate Professor": economics and management of investment and public procurement. The themes and the considered questions, respectively, the issues and the challenges in the scientific publications listed in the competition clearly demonstrate that, for instance: European financing as a tool for raising the competitiveness of enterprises from the sector of "Construction", Project financing as a tool for the development of local potential and the advancement of Bulgarian Municipalities, The impact of the reform in the system of public procurement on the Bulgarian small and medium-sized enterprises, Development of the public procurement market in Bulgaria for the period 2016-2020, Investments in high tech and their role for raising the competitiveness of the national economy, Opportunities for financing business projects using funding from the Structural Funds of the European Union.

6. Identification of Contributions

A careful examination of the monographic work of Chief Assist. Prof. Dr Sevdalina Hristova and the submitted publications in the competition for occupying the academic position of "Associate Professor" give me reason to ascertain the presence of the scientific and the applied research contributions propounded by the candidate in her statement, and to confirm with confidence the distribution of the said contributions in their respective areas. In my opinion, the more significant among those can be classified as follows:

a. scientific and theoretical contributions:

- A more profound understanding of the essential characterization of the efficiency of the process of awarding public contracts as a principal instrument for the disbursement of public funds as well as funds, provided by the European Funds and Programmes, is presented (*Publication 9.1*).

- The theoretical framework of the nature of risk is extended and supplemented, through refining its definition in the context of project planning and the process of

preparing the project proposal for application in an announced procedure for the provision of grant financing from programmes, cofinanced with funds from the EU (*Publication 32.9*).

- A systematic classification of the risks of European projects is proposed, special attention being paid to those manifesting themselves at the planning stage and the stage of implementation (*Publication 20.8*).

b. theoretical and methodological contributions:

- The three main factors which affect the efficiency of public procurement are identified, and is proposed an extended system of indicators, that is suitable for both the evaluation of the effectiveness of the individual public procurement contract, and the evaluation of the effectiveness of awarding the contract, at the contracting entity level or at the level of the market for public procurement in general (*Publications 9.1, 24.1*).

c. applied research contributions:

- Based on an empirical analysis, a rather poor performance of the small and medium-sized enterprises on the market for public procurement in Bulgaria is found, the barriers hindering their participation are identified and tools for overcoming those are considered (*Publications 9.1, 24.1*).

- The specific risks related to the implementation of EU projects for improving the energy efficiency of buildings are analyzed in detail. Adaptive approaches to their management are proposed, including the development of flexible reaction strategies and the use of techniques for minimizing the potential negative consequences (*Publications 20.8, 32.9*).

- Contemporary approaches to attracting investment are studied, including the use of high technology and digital platforms. The practices of municipal authorities in Bulgaria are analyzed and are proposed specific measures for improving the local investment policies (*Publications 11.2, 15.3, 19.7, 21.9, 25.2 – indexed in WoS, 26.3 – indexed in WoS, 28.5, 29.6, 30.7, 35.12*).

In her statement Chief Assist. Prof. Dr Sevdalina Hristova also specifies contributory points related to the enrichment of theory and supplementing the contents of academic literature (*Publications 36.2, 37.3*), as well as points connected with project financing and the quality of Higher Education in Bulgaria (*Publications 14.2, 16.4 – indexed in WoS, 23.11*), which are of complementary nature and I evaluate those positively.

To sum up, there can be drawn the conclusion that the candidate possesses in-depth knowledge in the areas of economics and management of investment and public procurement. It is clear that she uses the terminology and methodology peculiar to those two areas skilfully and has good abilities for analyzing empirical data and summarizing results.

Evidence of 20 citations is given, including 1 in a journal referenced and indexed in *Scopus*, which shows the high quality of the candidate's contributions to the theory and practice of investments and public procurement.

7. Participation in Scientific Projects and Scientific Forums

Chief Assist. Prof. Dr Sevdalina Hristova is a member of the academic teams of 4 research projects financed with state budget funds for the financing of research activities that are inherent for the state higher education institutions. 3 of which have concluded with a published monographic study on the respective theme, incl. this one, which is a habilitation work in the present competition, and one of the projects is ongoing.

During the period from her occupying the academic position of "chief assistant professor" in June 2010, until the present moment, she has participated in the management teams of 8 projects cofinanced with funds from the EU and the EEA, in the capacity of expert, functional expert, technical secretary or coordinator.

Since 2016 she has been a member of the organizing committee of the international scientific and practical conference *Construction Entrepreneurship and Real Property* organized annually by the Department of BIRE at UE-Varna as well as a member of the editorial board of the Conference Proceedings Volume of the same name.

Since 2021 she has also been a member of the editorial board of the first magazine in the area of human resources in this country *HR & Technologies*.

Since 2024 she has been a reviewer in the electronic scientific journal *Construction Entrepreneurship and Real Property* issued by the Department of BIRE.

8. Teaching Activities

As regards the teaching activities of the candidate, the following has been ascertained:

- According to a statement of the academic workload in bachelor's degree by the administrative department *Academic Affairs and Students* during the last 3 academic years (from 2021-2022 till 2023-2024) Chief Assist. Prof. Dr Sevdalina Hristova has a total curricular workload of 696 hours, including 96 lecture hours, and in the academic year 2022-2023 she is on unpaid leave as per Art. 160, Para. 1 of the LC. She conducts training in the subjects *European Funds and Projects, Project Management, Prices and Pricing, Local Self-government and Business, Academic Research* to students in the full-time and/or distance learning form of study.

- According to a statement of the academic workload in master's degree by the sector *Master Degree Students* during the last 3 academic years (from 2021-2022 till 2023-2024) Chief Assist. Prof. Dr Sevdalina Hristova has a total curricular workload of 83 hours, including 38 lecture hours, and in the academic year 2022-2023 she is on unpaid leave as per Art. 160, Para. 1 of the LC. She conducts training in the subjects *European and National Programmes and Funds and Public Procurement* to students in the part-time form of study.

- As regards the content and the specifics of the subjects that are taught by Chief Assist. Prof. Dr Sevdalina Hristova as a lecturer with the Department of BIRE, one is under

the favourable impression that of the 15 subjects (in EQD "Bachelor" – *Project Management* (S, FTS and DL), *European Funds and Projects* (L and S, FTS), *Auctions in Construction* (L and S, FTS), *Local Government and Self-government* (L and S, FTS), *Local Self-government and Business* (S, FTS), *Prices and Pricing* (L and S, FTS), *Investments and Investment Process* (S, FTS), *Financing the Construction Enterprise* (S, FTS), *Academic Research* (L and S, FTS) and in EQD "Master" (L and S, PTS), *Public Procurement* (L and S, PTS), *Contracts and Public Procurement* (S, PTS), *Business Negotiations* (S, FTS), *Management of International Programmes and Projects* (S, FTS), 13 refer directly to the themes of the announced competition for occupying the academic position of "Associate Professor" at UE – Varna.

- She is a co-author in teams for the development of the following 8 syllabuses for EQD "Bachelor" and 3 for EQD "Master": *European Funds and Projects*, *Corporate Social Responsibility*, *Local Self-government and Business*, *Local Government and Self-government*, *Organization of Real Estate Brokering*, *Professional Condominium Ownership Management*, *Tenders and Competitions in Construction*, *Project Management and Business Negotiations*, *Public Procurement*, *Principles of Project Management*.

- During the period from 2014 – until now she has been a scientific supervisor of 35 graduates and a reviewer of over 30 diploma papers in EQD "Bachelor" and EQD "Master".

- She is the Head of the practical training of 3-d year students, programme "Real Estate and Investments", FTS and PTS, from 2018 till 2022.

- She is a member of a commission in the Review of Students' Scientific Activities for the period 2020 – 2022 and in 2024.

- She is a member of the SEB for the programme "Project Management", EQD "Master", in 2024.

- For a large part of the subjects taught she regularly organizes throughout the years visits in the business and the public administration, as well as meetings with guest speakers from the practice.

- She is an academic mentor in project No BG05M2OP001-2.022-0001 *Student Placements – Phase I*, financed under OP *Science and Education for Smart Growth 2014-2020*.

- In 2017, 2018 and 2019 she takes part in a total of 3 mobilities with the purpose of training, financed by the Erasmus+ Programme, carried out at the University for Applied Sciences – Nysa (Poland), Polytechnical University – Valencia (Spain) and Corvinus University – Budapest (Hungary), respectively.

- In 2016 she carries out an individual mobility on the subject of "Multicultural Communication through English for Academic Purposes", financed under measure "Mobility Projects in Higher Education" of Programme BG09 "EEA Scholarships Fund" at the Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences (Norway).

The evidence presented by the candidate is the reason to give a high rating to her teaching activity.

The candidate possesses sufficient teaching experience and professional competence, which shows a high degree of preparedness for occupying the academic position of "Associate Professor".

9. Plagiarism

Following an inspection performed using the recommended by the MES Internet-based system of StrikePlagiarism.com, no plagiarism is ascertained in the monographic work of the candidate. The literary sources, including the normative matter, are used conscientiously in the body of the work. This is also claimed in the Declaration on Observance of Copyright Requirements, signed by the candidate and enclosed with the documentation for participation in the competition, relating not only to them, but also to the authenticity of the monographic work and the publications accompanying it.

10. Critical Remarks and Questions

I do not have any critical remarks or questions on the submitted scientific publications for participation in the competition.

11. Conclusion

The careful examination of all submitted documents and publications of Chief Assist. Prof. Dr Sevdalina Hristova shows that there are met all requirements of the LDASRB, the RALDASRB and the RDASUEV for occupying the academic position of "Associate Professor" in professional field 3.8. *Economics*.

Based on the above, I state my positive opinion and recommend that the esteemed members of the Scientific Examining Jury propose to the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Economics at UE – Varna that they choose Chief Assist. Prof. Dr Sevdalina Ivanova Hristova for the academic position of "Associate Professor" in professional field 3.8. *Economics*, scientific specialty "Economics and Management (Investments and Public Procurement)".

I recommend that the candidate continue her research activities in the chosen scientific field connected with investments and public procurement and publish the obtained results in journals referenced and indexed in *Scopus* and/or *Web of Science*, with a view to her further academic development.

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

27.03.2025
Varna

Opinion drawn up by:
(Assoc. Prof. Dr Todor Raychev)